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Time to act decisively to prevent global unrest

Minsk hosted Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting, with the President of Belarus taking part in the opening of the forum and *East-West Relations* discussion section → **2-4**

Time to act decisively

By Vladimir Velikhov

For two days, the heads of state, leading political figures, representatives of international organisations and the academic community, heads of special agencies and experts in security issues, discussed the development of relations between the East and the West, possible ways of settling regional conflicts, the economic situation in Eastern Europe and issues of energy and transnational security. On meeting them, Alexander Lukashenko noted that today there are no more important issues than the preservation of peace on the planet. Speaking about dangerous tendencies of the world to veer towards disturbances, the President supported his conclusion with concrete examples, “Armed confrontations are happening practically on all continents. Conflicts in the Middle East and Asia are worsened by attempts to divide the regions into spheres of influence. The weakening of central authorities in Africa is accompanied by the strengthening of radical Islamist groups. A ‘simmering’ conflict, an unceasing war in Donbass, is a war in our Europe. Trade contradictions between the USA and China, which are worth hundreds of billions of US Dollars, begin to provoke opposition between Washington and Beijing in other spheres of interaction. Disagreements between the United States of America and the European Union, their closest allies, are becoming more evident. A gap of mistrust between Russia and the West is now much wider than in previous difficult periods of our new European history.”

Alexander Lukashenko stated that great powers are losing the status of guarantors of stability, while the UN Security Council has turned into a venue for finger-pointing. Moreover, world policy and the economy, as well as sport and other neutral spheres of international co-operation are becoming an arena of counteraction for some states. The President underlined that, “Experts and analysts are gradually coming to the opinion that the world has slipped into an epoch of unilateral relations. According to them, ‘we’re moving from a multi-polar world to a world without poles, towards war against everyone’.”

In this situation, Minsk again focuses on the extreme topicality of the idea of launching the process with a conventional title ‘Helsinki-2’.

The President noted that Belarus, by promoting this initiative, isn’t an instrument of a third party. The position of Minsk is independent and clear. “The Belarusian state acts for inclusive dialogue, even if there’s no guarantee that it will end with a concrete result. In this case, years of negotiations are better than one day of war.”

An important and principal issue is that Minsk doesn’t lay claims for monopoly of the ‘Helsinki-2’ initiative. “We understand that its realisation depends on many key players. However, under modern conditions, when great powers can’t agree, other states can and should play an important role.”

According to Mr. Lukashenko, such dialogue will significantly differ from that which was part of the Helsinki Process. “The decision to come out of the crisis



Participants of the forum

shouldn’t repeat the ‘recipes’ of the Cold War. However, today Europe has no single opinion regarding how the renewed security system should work. Nevertheless, despite the absence of political backgrounds for the launch of the new negotiation process, it’s necessary to find opportunities for elaboration of its basis.”

Minsk is ready to continue bearing the mission of the negotiation venue on the security issues in the broadest context. The current forum isn’t the first in this regard. Almost four weeks ago, the Belarusian capital hosted the High-Level International Conference *Preventing and Countering Terrorism in the Digital Age* under the OSCE aegis. This dialogue should be continued, and the President proposed that, “As the next step, Belarus is ready to

on a stable ceasefire and troop withdrawal in Donbass...”

Mr. Lukashenko called for a fair and sincere assessment of the situation, “If there was a desire, the solution for the conflict in Donbass could have been already found. Therefore, I say that it’s a test for us for professional integrity. It’s necessary to continue the work to reinforce opportunities of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group. We’re ready to consider the creation in Minsk of a technical point for the Trilateral Contact Group and other things of which we’ll be able to agree. It’s important to supplement diplomatic dialogue with inter-relations of parliamentarians, representatives of regional authorities, civil society and experts — the so called ‘people’s diplomacy’.”

According to Mr. Lukashenko, it’s necessary to conduct further work on a mutually acceptable decision to place peacekeepers in Donbass, “Probably, it’s necessary to consider a variant of placing a joint mission of the UN and OSCE in Ukraine. It may include military, policemen and civil personnel from the countries which made a strong contribution to the settlement of the conflict during the period.”

Mr. Lukashenko also believes it’s necessary to activate the work in the ‘Normandy Four’ format in order to ensure a clear mechanism of control over the fulfilment of the Minsk Agreements. Though being a relatively small state, Belarus is ready to make its own contribution to settlement of the conflicts.

“We’d like to feel confirmation of our significant role from the major world players. Simply speaking, we can take the responsibility for provision of peace in the eastern regions of Ukraine and control on the Russian-Ukrainian border, as well as for the accompaniment of the elections held in Donbass, proceeding from the understanding that these regions are an indispensable part of Ukraine. In order to bring the proposals, which I have voiced, into practice, it’s necessary to discuss them at the negotiation table involving all the interested parties. Let’s be frank. If we fail

to involve the USA, we won’t solve this issue.”

Later, the President developed the Ukrainian topic during the discussion. He believes that in the process of peaceful settlement, it’s necessary to show people at least some result. Otherwise, it will be difficult to achieve a final solution.

“There have been so many conversations and dialogues regarding the situation in Donbass that some business people are feeling exasperated. In order to achieve anything at least a small result is needed, enabling people to believe that it’s possible to do something.”

The President believes that the most complex factor of the Ukrainian conflict is the loss of trust between the countries, who should attempt to settle their contradictions, “The most terrible thing is that this unceasing dialogue resulted in a complete loss of trust, especially between Russia and Ukraine. Let’s be honest: the solution of this problem depends on them.”

As one more example that could facilitate the normalisation of the situation Alexander Lukashenko mentioned the elections in Donbass, “To conduct elections? Ok. Let’s determine which principles will be involved, not on the organisation — Ukraine will organise these elections on its own — but in the provision of control. It’s necessary to hold elections there in order to remove this issue. When people see that there’s peace, they will forgive us everything.”

The President of Belarus called on all interested parties not to immediately reject the initiatives of Minsk, “This is a well-thought-out decision. Our proposals are based on the role played by Belarus since the beginning of this conflict. We’re ready to solve this problem only if we’re confident that the major world players want peace in our common European home.”

Returning to the topic of pan-European security in general, Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that it should be based on fair, constructive and mutually beneficial economic interaction. The President added, “Belarus is located on the geographical crossing of Europe, being ‘squeezed’ between the geopolitical giants. We don’t want to be on a new fissure line, at the spearhead of a political standoff between the East and the West. Belarusians know well what may come of it. As tensions grow higher, Belarus is promised the

DIRECT SPEECH

Belarus is located on the geographical crossing of Europe, being ‘squeezed’ between the geopolitical giants. We don’t want to be on a new fissure line, at the spearhead of a political standoff between the East and the West. Belarusians know well what may come of it.

welcome a joint UN/OSCE conference on counteracting terrorism and a summit to counteract cybercrime.”

Mr. Lukashenko also suggested all those in attendance to think over the renewal of the activity of a group of experts from the number of leading politicians and analysts under the OSCE aegis.

The Ukrainian problem was one of the central issues during the meeting. The President of Belarus believes it to be a key security issue in Europe, a test for the ability of European states and politicians to make something positive and to solve a problem. However, it’s still long way from removing the tangle of contradictions.

“At present, we have to state that no one is able to stop confrontation in the south-east of Ukraine. Neither the ‘Normandy Four’, nor the OSCE Trilateral Contact Group, nor the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, or the Volker-Surkov format can do this. No one is able to agree

to prevent global unrest

destiny of a buffer between Russia and NATO. On the one side, it's bad. However, on the other, if the strong powers of the world would come to an agreement not to push the Eastern European states into various military-political blocks and not to demand the conformation of loyalty to the detriment of their sovereign interests, this region would have become a trans-boundary belt of stability and interaction."

Mr. Lukashenko called on the European elite and businesses to pay closer attention to the intensification of all components of collaboration with our country.

At present, we're observing a dissonance. We are told that Europe is interested in Belarus' sovereignty. However, as soon as it comes to concrete issues of interaction, it turns out that we have problems with human rights. A serious-minded and constructive approach is necessary, "It's appropriate to mention in this respect that the developed European democracy has been formed over centuries, while they want a breakthrough from us within two decades. If this is made in leaps and bounds, via pressure, the result won't be stable. Therefore, we're going through evolution rather than revolution. Yes, the topic of democracy is delicate, and it shouldn't become an obsession."

The President noted that Belarus provides reliable and trouble-free transit of energy carriers, which is very important for Europe. Moreover, more than a hundred million tonnes of various cargoes are annually shipped through the country.

"Belarus is doing much for the EU in the security sphere. We've created an efficient barrier in the way of illegal migration. As far as drug traffic is concerned, we haven't seen such big drug traffic as that of recent years. Moreover, we also arrest criminals with ammunition and weaponry, as well as nuclear materials. Moreover, we don't lay claim to membership of the EU or come to Europeans with a begging bowl."

During the discussion, the President was asked how to ensure the security of small and middle states. What role do the large geopolitical players play in this? Mr. Lukashenko doesn't have any illusions regarding this issue and believes that large states often behave irresponsibly even towards their own countries. During the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting, Mr. Lukashenko noted, "The statement about short and medium-range missiles, about strategic offensive arma-



Alexander Lukashenko expresses his views on security issues

ment and others are at the level of statements by politicians and noise in the mass media. For now, we manage to cope with this, though, of course, we're concerned. If, for example, politicians in Poland say that they are ready to spend billions of US Dollars to place US weapons and bring battalions of Americans there, to create some sort of 'Trump front'. Of course, we react to this, having a similar recent history. We do it openly and don't hide anything. Of course, with our major ally we think about how we can counteract this and how to find an adequate answer in this situation with minimum expenditure."

The President of Belarus made the following statement in the context of global security, "Will the West or the East be concerned with our state of affairs? Do they worry about our security? It seems that by unwrapping such issues in the mass media and brandishing nuclear warheads, they don't even think about their own security and that of their peoples. Do you think they worry about us? Does Donald Trump think about Belarus when he makes statements about the US leaving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty? He probably doesn't even know that there's such a country as Belarus and millions of people here want simply to live a normal life."

The performance of the Belarusian President aroused the sincere interest of all participants of the conference. They openly expressed their opinions regarding sensible subjects, suggesting ways and means to solve the accumulated problems. Many ideas were voiced but practically all those speaking agreed that Belarus is making a significant contribution to strengthening stability in the region. It's logical that Minsk hosted the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting.

Politicians, diplomats and experts spoke at length about how the modern world desperately lacks mutual understanding and trust. And without this it's difficult to hope for the successful solution of global problems. As far as Ukraine is concerned, experts don't share the fatalism that was voiced regarding the future of this country. The problems of Donbass can be solved much quicker than it seems. However, concrete actions are needed for this, rather than fruitless conversations. In other words, it's necessary just to strictly fulfil the Minsk Agreements and to form a clear mechanism for this. This thought was voiced many times during the dialogue. In this respect, new proposals by Alexander Lukashenko on the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine found a positive response among the foreign guests. Some even sug-

gested to call them a 'Lukashenko's plan' and attract the attention of the OSCE and UN institute towards its implementation. The President of Belarus looks on this wider issue and called on his colleagues from the OSCE states to get together at the negotiation table to discuss not only the Ukrainian topic, "Let's send my colleagues in the OSCE, heads of state one more strong signal. Let's get together and discuss all problems either at this table or at any other table. Let it be a step towards 'Helsinki-2'. If we get together more often and discuss problems, the world will be more predictable and normal. Let's preserve this world for our children."

Mr. Lukashenko believes that preservation and strengthening the multi-polar world is the major factor in achieving this goal.

We can say for certain that the meeting in Minsk was a significant step on the way to establishing trust and mutual understanding in the world arena. Foreign guests could see with their own eyes that Belarus is a civilised European country which has never been and is not a threat to the world. Participants at the meeting emphasised the fact that Belarus is increasing its weight and authority on the international arena due to real steps in strengthening peace and security in the region.

About policy of influence without formalism

By Alexey Fedosov

Interaction along the East-West line, regional conflicts and the economic situation in Europe are only several topics of the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting. The format of the session in Minsk was special, combining participation of representatives of official powers and various experts.

The current forum gathers together dozens of politicians and experts to discuss important issues, both of a regional and global character. It's interesting that the discussion about the architecture of security was being built through the prism of discussions in the Chatham House format — i.e. less formality but more real ideas and trust. One of the most important

aspects of the forum became the 'Minsk Process' discussion session which tackled the issues of settling the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Experts noted that the major merit of the Minsk Agreements is a considerable reduction of the number of victims of the opposition, i.e. the agreements of the 'Normandy Four' in Minsk stopped the hot phase of the conflict. The position of the participants of the meeting is that the Minsk Agreements should be fulfilled as having no alternatives. Proposals were voiced to negotiate in the 'Normandy Four' format at the level of presidents or foreign ministries, dealing with the issue of launching a peaceful mission to Donbass under the UN aegis. Despite the ongoing discussion, the participants of the meeting unanimously asserted that Belarus remains a donor of stability in the region.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE FORUM HAVE THEIR SAY



Vladimir Makei, Belarus' Foreign Minister:

The Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting discussed issues which are of huge importance for our region. We see constant growth of tension and we can't be satisfied with this. The goal of our event is to try to find points of coincidence and common backgrounds that would enable us to solve the problems which exist in the region. Of course, it's difficult to find within just one meeting a consensus in many issues; however, we see that all sides show readiness for dialogue which, our country believes, is the only means to settle problems.



Elena Korosteleva, Professor of International Politics at the University of Kent (UK):

We should react to the challenges which currently exist in the region and in the world or at least determine the areas of further development. I'm pleased that the Belarusian side continues the events in such a format. I hope that all this will lead to concrete results on a whole range of problems, including the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Of course, concrete political decisions are needed for this and the basis for them is being laid down in Minsk. Therefore, the current meeting is, undoubtedly, important for building a policy of stability and security in the whole European region.

Future requires change

Alexander Lukashenko hopes for gradual improvement of relations between Belarus and the USA, noted the President of Belarus as he met the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Aaron Wess Mitchell

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Aaron Wess Mitchell, has been to Minsk on October 30th-31st. He had a range of planned meetings, including at the top level which tackled the development of the bilateral Belarusian-US relationships, as well as issues of the world and regional agenda.

“The fact that you are visiting the Belarusian capital speaks volumes. I personally hope it will be a truly historic visit that will give impetus to the gradual improvement of Belarusian-US relations,” noted the President of Belarus welcoming the guest.

Alexander Lukashenko stressed that the two countries have made serious progress in bilateral relations. “I would not, however, call the changes that are needed in the region today insignificant,” stressed the Head of State.

The President emphasised his commitment to the sovereignty and independence of Belarus and noted the country’s readiness to develop relations with partners from different regions of the world. “We want to be sovereign and independent. In this regard, we stay equally close to all centres of power on our planet. Even in the most difficult times in our relations, I have never stopped saying that we are extremely interested in good relations with your country.”

The President highlighted Aaron Wess Mitchell’s experience and knowledge of the problems in the region. “We



know your attitude and the attitude of your country to these problems. I hope you, as the world’s leading country, will pay more attention to solving these issues. If necessary, we’re ready to assist in solving the most difficult problems in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe,” said the Belarusian leader.

In turn, the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Aaron Wess Mitchell, thanked Mr Lukashenko for the hospitality and stressed the importance that the US attaches to the issue of the independence and territorial integrity of Belarus. “We understand the deep and historically close relations between your country and the Russian Federation. We also understand the successes you have achieved in ensuring stability and territorial integrity, and, first of all, political stability in Belarus,” he said. Aaron Wess Mitchell also assured the

President that the United States sees great potential in the development of both diplomatic and economic ties with Belarus.

At present, Belarus and the United States co-operate in areas of mutual interest and on matters important for global and regional security, including the fight against international organised crime and international terrorism, as well as the prevention of illegal transit of nuclear and radioactive materials. Furthermore, the United States supports Belarus’ WTO accession process. The two countries have intergovernmental agreements on economic co-operation, the promotion of banking activities, reduction of strategic weapons and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and in other areas.

In trade with the United States, Belarus uses the regime of normal trade relations. In 2017, Belarus’ major exports to the United States included potash fertilisers, seamless pipes and profiles from ferrous metals, X-ray equipment, furniture, liquid crystal devices, lasers, linen fabrics, and fiberglass. Belarus’ imports comprised passenger cars, medical devices and equipment, vaccines and medicines, internal combustion engines, frozen fish and electrical generating sets.

In 2017, Belarus’ export of services to the United States reached a record high of almost \$570m. The export supplies were largely represented by computer, telecommunication and information services.

Last year, the United States invested more than \$66m into Belarus, including \$55m of direct foreign investments.



More than partners

By Oleg Bogomazov

Prime Minister of Serbia delivers an invitation to Alexander Lukashenko to visit Belgrade

After the work of the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting, Alexander Lukashenko conducted one more bilateral meeting. This time, the President of Belarus welcomed the Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, who has also arrived in Minsk as a participant of the conference.

Mr. Lukashenko warmly welcomed the guest and said that he is pleased to see, in Belarus, a representative of brotherly and friendly Serbia. He underlined that our country attentively follows events in Serbia and worries about the problems of this country, while feeling joy when everything is going well. The President assured the guest that Belarus is ready to expand joint projects in the economy, culture and sports with Serbia.

In turn, Ana Brnabić delivered an invitation to Mr. Lukashenko from his Serbian colleague to visit Belgrade. “You would do us a great honour if you visited our country,” noted the Head of the Serbian Government.

Global problems should be solved by joint efforts

By Konstantin Bakun

The recent forum showed that the demand for peaceful dialogue, advocated by Belarus, is today extremely high, therefore Minsk’s proposals to make Eastern Europe a trans-boundary belt of stability and interaction are especially acute

The Chairman of the Munich Security Conference, Wolfgang Ischinger, told journalists that the world community should listen to the Belarusian proposals.

“I was deeply impressed by the adherence and aspiration towards the settlement of the conflict, shown by President Alexander Lukashenko during the meeting. I was also impressed by the relation and aspiration to settle the existing situation in the east of Ukraine and to achieve peace as soon as possible. I hope that the international community will listen to the suggested proposals, including the mission in the east of Ukraine.”

Moreover, the Chairman of the Munich Security Conference called on the



USA and Russia not to leave the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty but to provide its complete fulfilment. Belarus views this document as one of the most important items of modern architecture of international security which facilitates the reduction of tensions in Europe.

Answering journalists’ questions, Mr. Ischinger stated that there’s no significant progress in the efforts taken as



part of both the Minsk negotiation process and of the ‘Normandy Four’. Commenting on the proposals voiced at the forum about changes in the format, the Chairman of the Conference underlined that progress will take place only when there’s corresponding political will in the sides involved.

“Of course, the expansion and change of the format and a range of participants may help, but political will remains the decisive aspect. I’m deeply convinced, and have many times repeated, that the USA should be present at the negotiation table. However, I believe that the EU should also take part.”

Nevertheless, he once again noted that the proposals voiced by Alexander Lukashenko can give a definite impulse to the negotiation process. Wolfgang Ischinger asserted that he would be pleased to see the President of Belarus at the Munich Security Conference that traditionally takes place in February.

Summing up the results of the forum, many experts noted that the Belarusian capital has become a venue for settling conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and the east of Ukraine, as well as between Serbia and Kosovo, while the negotiations, conducted as part of the forum, were characterised as the beginning of the new ‘Minsk Process’.

Kind attitude is always returned

By Vladimir Khromov

The friendly partnership between Belarus and Armenia was confirmed at the recent meeting between the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, and the President of Armenia, Armen Sarkissian

“Despite all kinds of views in the democratic Armenia, Belarus has always been and will be your good and reliable friend. We both work in the single economic space — our Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO military and political bloc. No matter what some people say or write, we strictly abide by our agreements, by all provisions of these organisations,” asserted the Head of State during the meeting.

As far as trade-economic co-operation is concerned, the Belarusian Head of State called it the backbone of bilateral relations with Armenia. “We could

easily have \$150m in bilateral trade today, and this could take our relations to a higher level. Any proposals put forward by Armenia will be considered within the shortest time possible and corresponding decisions will be made.”

Mr. Lukashenko added that Armenia is going through another period of difficult democratic changes. “There is no escaping it. Naturally, it’s very important for me to get information first hand from my friend and colleague.”

The President thanked his Armenian counterpart for supporting the Belarusian journalists who were sent to Armenia to provide impartial coverage of the ongoing events there. “We want to know



what is going on in Armenia, in our friendly nation. I’m grateful to you for that.

You even gave an interview to our journalists. It drew a lot of attention in Belarus and beyond. We got an idea of what was going on in Armenia. It is very important for our people. Therefore, in you we see a person who is objective and ready to maintain relations with Belarus. We will return the favour,” added the Head of State.

During the meeting, the presidents discussed various aspects of the bilateral agenda and international situation. They especially emphasised the role of Minsk as a stable and predictable platform for resolving various international issues. One of the cases in point is the

OSCE Minsk Group that spearheads the OSCE’s efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Speaking of promising areas of collaboration, the Armenian President named new technology, including science, information technology, and electronics. Another promising area is the food industry, as the two countries can not only cooperate, but also sell joint products on the markets of third countries.

Tackling the conduct of the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting in Minsk, Armen Sarkissian noted that the Belarusian capital wasn’t accidentally chosen for this event. “Your country is unique; the image of Belarus today is one of stability and predictability. In the new world, where we live, these qualities are rarely seen. Not only the regions but the whole world has become unpredictable and unstable,” stated the President of Armenia.

State will always support capable private businessmen

During his working trip to the Vitebsk Region, Alexander Lukashenko attended the Vitebsk Fur Factory unitary production enterprise which is part of the Belarusian Marko Leather and Footwear Holding Company

By Alexander Pimenov

It’s a solid manufacturing business with clear prospects and high-quality produce. The enterprise has undergone serious modernisation and the major work has been finished recently, though the results are already evident: the personnel of the successful factory can confidently look to the future.

As far as the Marko Company is concerned, Mr. Lukashenko didn’t hide his positive reaction to the redevelopment of the fur business, “I personally also wear Marko footwear. When I meet heads of state (who show off Italian or other brands) Nazarbayev asks me where I got this. I tell him it’s from Belarus. ‘It can’t be so!’ he exclaimed. I took off the footwear and showed it him where it was written ‘Marko’. I don’t need either Italian or French. It’s a wonderful company!”

The factory is unique. It was launched in 1975 though dates its history from handicraft workshops in 1909. At present, the factory is one of the major enterprises in Belarus and one of the leading in the CIS in natural fur finishing and the production of ready-made fur items. Today it’s the only company of the country’s fur branch which specialises in the processing of a big range of down-and-fur, sheepskin and fur coats and caracul raw material and manufacture of fur items from them: clothes, headgear and accessories.



At the Vitebsk Fur Factory

Since 1999, the production of sheepskin has been organised here to be used as lining for footwear. It’s no surprise that, several years later, the business joined the Belarusian Marko Leather and Footwear Holding Company and is experiencing its second revival. The President connects its further success with one more important industry, “Previously I instructed them to develop and suggest measures aiming to develop sheep breeding in our country. It’s high time to tackle this issue and I feel that agrarians underperform in this respect. In spring, the governors will report to me about the development of sheep breeding.”

The attention of the Head of State towards this industry is

no accident. Not all Belarusian regions are suitable for highly-efficient farming and plant growing while sheep breeding is a wonderful alternative, which also produces raw material for the country’s fur industry. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised, “It’s necessary to develop the industry. Sheep grow well in our country and this is a promising area, especially for the Vitebsk Region. When our fur factory begins sewing items from domestic sheepskin, this business will become even better and more efficient.”

The effect is expected to be significant. The company has currently organised on its premises a modern production facility able to process 300,000 sheepskins and up to 250,000 furs annually. Howev-

er, the most important thing is the huge social effect from the development of this and many other enterprises like it. In the course of his working trip to Vitebsk, the President set a task before the Government, “We have many commercial Chinese loans we have yet to spend — \$7bn. Recently, I gave instructions to stop focusing on large companies only [when making investments into industry]. When there are capable private businessmen — who we know are trustworthy — we need to assist them. They will create hundreds of thousands of jobs in exchange for 20-30 million.”

The Vitebsk Fur Factory can serve an example of this approach. Today, around 300 jobs have been created here and it’s

planned to increase them to 500 in the future. Mr. Lukashenko summed up everything he saw, making it a guideline to follow for all businessmen in the country, “It’s an excellent enterprise. If the Director General [a member of the Council of the Republic, Nikolay Martynov] had not proven himself, I would not talk to him about this holding company. He has proven himself as a good private business manager and it’s necessary to focus on such companies.”

At the end of the visit to the Vitebsk Fur Factory, a small presentation of men’s and women’s outer clothes from the Autumn-Winter 2018-2019 collection was organised for the President and Mr. Lukashenko admitted that he had selected a couple of items for himself.

New changes to Bolbasovo are very pleasing to the eye

A pilot project has been implemented in the region as an example for the modernisation of urban-type settlements. This was emphasised by the President as he visited the Vitebsk Region on a working trip.

By Vasily Kharitonov

Minsk, regional centres and even agro-towns have already experienced serious modernisation and beautification in Belarus. Now, it's high time to pay attention to urban-type settlements, with Kopys becoming the first in line. One more pilot project aiming to become an example for the modernisation of urban-type settlements, has been realised in Bolbasovo. Until recently, it was a gloomy settlement with single storey grey houses but now it really astonishes the imagination with its bright colours, renewed monument to the Hero of the Soviet Union, Sergey Gritsevets, and reconstructed house of culture.

Walking along the streets of Bolbasovo and stopping several times to chat to its residents, Alexander Lukashenko drew their attention to an important moment, "We have cleaned up and it is you who will maintain order here from now on."

Nevertheless, Mr. Lukashenko underlined that he is not a supporter of an exclusively market approach. The state will continue playing the necessary role in developing regions, in creating new jobs and conditions for the recuperation of people.

At present, construction has been launched near Bolbasovo to give an additional impulse to economic development. Moreover, an airport is currently being built nearby, where a large indus-



Residents of Bolbasovo feel comfortable today in their environment

trial and logistics centre will also be located. "We have wonderful logistics here — an international automobile highway, a railway junction, and an airport," noted Mr. Lukashenko.

The President also tackled the demographic issue, voicing the wish that families would have at least three children. "We need people for the existence of Belarus. A sovereign and independent Belarus, first, means people," said the Head of State.

Local residents gathered along the President's route, and many of them thanked him for the positive changes that have

taken place, alongside expressing their wishes about the further development of the urban-type settlement. One such area relates to trade servicing. The President personally assessed the range of goods in two food shops, with one being state-owned and the other one being managed by a private company. It was noted that in general, both enjoy demand among buyers, although prices for some goods may differ. Mr. Lukashenko called for a cautious approach towards the construction of large chain stores in this area so as not to 'ruin' the small convenience shops.

During his talk with the residents of the Bolbasovo urban settlement, Mr. Lukashenko noted the solely peaceful policy of the Belarusian state. "We're peaceful people, we don't want war. We are not rich, but we do not ask anyone for anything. We will earn our happiness ourselves. If we work, we will do everything ourselves. I have already said that many, many years of negotiations are better than one day of war. We don't need anything belonging to others. We have an average state by European standards. We are in the very centre of Europe and we value this."

Mr. Lukashenko paid attention to the transit importance of Belarus which, with its transportation infrastructure in the region, turned out to be in great demand for transshipment of certain goods in the current situation. However, this also creates additional risks, "Speaking before representatives of the West at the Munich Conference [the Munich Security Conference Core Group Meeting in Minsk], I said that it's necessary to value Belarus and not impose sanctions against us. Drugs, banditry, nuclear elements, and illegal migration, everything goes to the West through us. We stop it all at our own expense."

As far as the Belarusian foreign political line is concerned, the President underlined that it comes from life, "I didn't invent anything new. One should get on well with the neighbours." In this respect he mentioned the proposals to build a US military base in Poland. "I told the Foreign Minister who was speaking in Minsk that we are not going to fight against you. There is no need for additional bases. Otherwise, we and the Russians will have to respond. We will have to set up bases in a counter-move," asserted the Head of State.

After examining the well-landscaped settlement and chatting with local residents, Mr. Lukashenko learnt about the construction of a multi-modal industrial and logistics complex in Bolbasovo, as well as the restoration of an airport.

ADVICE FROM DR. ZHUKOVA

Progressive danger

Recently, the problem of obesity in children has become urgent. What are the modern approaches to its solution?

A. Sevostyanova, from Mozyr, Gomel Region

According to new estimates by of the World Obesity Federation, by 2025, some 268m children and adolescents between 5 and 17 will be overweight. Over 90m of them will be officially registered for obesity. In Belarus, it is estimated that 25-32 percent of young people under the age of 18 are overweight. The underlying cause of overweightness and obesity in children is believed by the WHO to be due to the energy balance between consumed and spent calories.

It should be noted that the global increase in overweight in children is caused by several factors, including:

- A global shift in nutrition towards increased consumption of high-calorie foods high in fat and sugar and low in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients.

- A downward trend in physical activity because of the increasing prevalence of sedentary forms of recreation and entertainment.

Yes, obesity in children is mainly caused by unhealthy diets and low levels of physical activity. However, this problem is also related to social and economic development, policies in agriculture, transport, urban planning and the environment. Unlike most adults, children and adolescents cannot choose the environment in which they live or the food they eat. In addition, they are only limited in their ability to understand the long-term consequences of their behaviour.

Adipose tissue is a hormone-active organ that produces a variety of hormones that are involved not only in the regulation of body weight but also others, such as growth and sexual development. This means that problems can be expected in these systems in the future. It is proved that if there were cases of diabetes mellitus of the second type among close relatives, then a child with obesity could develop diabetes at an early age.



Adults can help children lose weight if they limit their consumption of high-sugar beverages. Over the past few decades, the number of calories taken by an average citizen not while eating but when quenching their thirst has almost doubled. In 1965, the share of drinks accounted for about 12 percent of the daily dose of calories, now it's 21 percent. Accordingly, the number of calories supplied to the body by drinks has increased by about 222 per day. At the same time, regardless of what a person drinks — lemonade, milk, orange juice or beer — the body absorbs an additional portion of calories, and their surplus is not compen-

sated for by reducing food consumption.

As noted in the WHO report, prevention is considered the most appropriate way to contain the epidemic of obesity among children. WHO recommends that children increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as legumes, whole grains and nuts. Doctors say it's desirable to reduce saturated fats in children's diets and reduce sugar consumption. They believe that at least 60 minutes of physical activity should be given daily.

By T. Zhukova, doctor of the highest category, Candidate of Medical Sciences

Top performance centre

The work of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Traumatology and Orthopaedics can be described in numbers. Every year, more than 32,000 patients receive consultations, about 9,000 are treated, surgeons perform almost 6,000 operations, at least half of them of critical importance. This Centre is unique in the CIS. Even in Russia, there is no similar concentration of specialised care in a single institution. The centre unites everything, including a call-centre and telemedicine in action, where round the clock, any doctor from the region can consult with leading experts from Minsk. Can you imagine how much time, so precious in medicine, is saved due to this? A typical working day at the Centre is described below.

By Lyudmila Gabasova

The Republican Spinal Centre operates at the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Traumatology and Orthopaedics round the clock. It oversees the worst spinal injuries in the country. It takes 3-4 hours for a mobile team to reach any place, with its equipment and instruments, ready to perform surgery on the spine immediately, on the spot. On the day of our visit, the doctors were rushing to Mogilev, having just needed to attend the site of a bus crash near Volozhin. Four people were injured, including a child; they are now undergoing treatment at the Centre.

The Head of the Spinal Centre and Doctor of Medical Sciences, Sergey Makarevich, opens a red suitcase which he proudly keeps as the rightful intellectual property of an orthopaedic surgeon: it contains all kinds of titanium metal structures which have been developed over the last 20 years as part of over 15 state sci-tech programmes and 10 innovative projects. The German spinal system, which is indistinguishable from the Belarusian to an amateur, is kept by Mr. Makarevich as a rarity. In this respect, Belarus has complete import substitution. In co-operation with the domestic manufacturer, traumatologists completely cover the needs of the country and even export implants to the CIS. In Russia alone, our innovation is used at 64 clinics. After all, Belarusian constructions are 3-4 times cheaper than western counterparts, but are no worse. Our specialised orthopaedic surgeons also had the idea of making a thread so that the system would fix itself in the bones and, accordingly, be more reliable. According to Dmitry Satskevich, the Centre's Deputy Director for Medical Work, another breakthrough is expected in 2020: in line with the Union State programme — *Development of Surgical Technologies for Treatment of Children with Severe Congenital Deformities and Spinal Injuries*. Fundamentally new designs and implants that have no counterparts anywhere in the world will be created.

Paediatric traumatology and orthopaedics are another issue. Since Soviet times, our doctors have taken the lead. Of the great pride is the 'Belarusian osteotomy': this method attracts doctors from all over the world to learn from us and, 8 years ago, it was awarded the State Award. One of the laureates — Doctor of Medical Sciences, Oleg Sokolovsky, has another goal: to create the



DIRECT SPEECH:



Mikhail Gerasimenko

Director of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Doctor of Medical Sciences

The Centre is one of the leading centres in Belarus and key in Eastern Europe and the CIS, which provides highly specialised assistance, co-ordinates the work of the entire orthopaedic and traumatology service of the country, being also a scientific and methodological centre for the regions. In the last 5 years alone, more than 100 patents for inventions have been obtained, more than 600 scientific works have been published, including 15 monographs. We conduct arthroscopic and reconstructive surgery on the ligaments of the knee, all kinds of endoprosthesis, a wide range of corrective and stabilising interventions on the spine, osteotomy of the pelvis and hip, and more. Moreover, our operations are carried out at the most modern world level. A very promising new direction, which is now being put into practice, is the use of stem cells in different pathologies. We have experience, regulatory framework and instructions approved by the Ministry of Health. Here, we are ahead of Russia. The fact that more than 40 countries come to us for help speaks for itself. Last year alone, 697 foreign patients came to us — including 41 percent from Russia, 31 of residents from other CIS countries, and those coming from the USA, Iraq, Iran, China, Sudan, Israel, Germany and elsewhere.

best method of preventing hip dislocations for children with cerebral palsy. "Such dislocations are much more common among children than among adults. Previously, we had practically no alternative: there was possibly only a major operation, plaster castings and month-long rehabilitation. Jointly with colleagues, we have been thinking about how to improve the quality of life of such patients by installing special screws in the femoral head, so that over time it will be reduced to the acetabulum as it grows. The next day a child can return home. We are now investigating who else could use this method. We are defining clear criteria. It seems, the method has prospects in cases of congeni-

tal dysplasia, osteomyelitis and Perthes' disease. Doctors speak of the past with humour: 'We had plaster, nails and a hammer'.

Doctors describe their daily work with enthusiasm. Among them is the head of the Centre's operating unit, neurosurgeon, Alexander Kandybo; he participated in construction of the unit which has now 9 operating rooms at the highest level of sterility. Our journalists were lucky: on the day they arrived, one of the operations — vertebroplasty, stabilisation of the vertebra (which, because of haemangioma had become like a porous sponge) was performed. Sometimes it is fraught with the development of a malignant process, and sometimes the vertebra

is so fragile that it can crack at the slightest load or cause pain. "These all are grounds for the operation," explains Alexander. "It's minimally invasive. Through a puncture under the control of x-ray, a needle injects a special bone cement. We also use it when fixing the spine in patients with osteoporosis. Their vertebra is often extremely fragile, making it impossible to fix a construction. In turn, the bone cement enables us to strengthen the bone and the strength of the screw dozens of times."

Here, doctors work skilfully with an arthroscope and a fine endoscope, as well as turning to computer navigation. A medical team can work for 14 hours without a break.

Numerous auxiliary medical and diagnostic departments operate to help the doctors. For example, the laboratory of pathomorphology is next to the operation unit and specialists can share their opinions immediately. According to the Candidate of Medical Sciences, Takher Mokhamadi, this is especially important when a strange growth is detected, and urgent biopsy is needed. "Depending on its result, during the operation, surgeons can change tactics. We help to determine the decision. The equipment enables us to study the biopsy in 10-15 minutes rather than usual 20-25."

Sometimes, none of their methods can help find the source of the problem, then the laboratory of clinical electrophysiology helps. 70 percent of its patients suffer from a complex, combined pathology of the spine. The head of the laboratory, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Inessa Ilyasevich, explains, while demonstrating the magnetic inductor, "We use not only the oldest method, electromyography, but also the latest like the evoked potentials and motor responses that occur in tissues in response to stimulus by electric or magnetic pulses. The method is safe, although the field penetrates deep — up to 9cm. However, we never limit ourselves to only one method: we conduct a whole complex range of tests."



Death toll rises to 29 in Italy's historic storms

With the deaths of 12 people in Sicily, the death toll in Italy's historic flooding has grown to 29, the country's Interior Minister said

"Twelve dead in Sicily, people that were having dinner and were swept up by the water," Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said in a statement to the press in the northern region of Veneto.

Nine of the people were members of two families dining together when the house was submerged by water from a near-

by river that overflowed suddenly, the Fire Brigade said. It also added on Twitter that its divers had found the bodies. Among the victims were two children, 1 and 3 years old.

The Civil Protection Agency said it's still looking for a doctor who had been on his way to work at a hospital and is now missing.

High winds and heavy rain have devastated parts of the country over the past week, causing the worst flooding in at least a decade in Venice, damages

of more than 1 billion Euros in Veneto and landslides that have cut off villages, authorities said.

The situation in Sicily is 'dramatic', Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said. Italy's Civil Protection Agency continues to monitor the situation, issuing weather warnings via Twitter, while volunteers from the Italian Red Cross work to rescue people.

Several of last week's deaths were caused by falling trees as winds as strong as 190 kilome-

tres per hour toppled acres of woodland, including the famous 'Violin Forest' that provided wood for violin maker Antonio Stradivarius' instruments.

Two young people died south of Rome when a tree hit their car. Another was hit by a falling tree while walking in Naples.

Around 300,000 trees were flattened after winds swept through the Val d'Assa in the Asiago plateau, Roberto Ciambetti, president of the Veneto Regional Council.



A gigantic emerald has been unearthed

The world's largest producer of green stones has unearthed a 5,655-carat emerald crystal at its mines in Zambia

The stone, which weighs more than 1.1kg, was found at the Gemfield mines in Kagem, the company said in a statement.

The emerald is being called 'Inkalamu', which means 'lion' in the local Zambia Bemba language. It will be cut into smaller pieces and auctioned in Singapore in November.

The stone was found in an open mine by geologist Debapriya Rakshit and emerald miner

Richard Kapeta.

Emeralds are rare and more valuable than diamonds, driving their demand in the market.

Elena Basaglia, Gemfield's gemologist, said there's been increasing interest in Zambia's emeralds, particularly from dealers in Europe.

"We are experiencing strikingly increased demand for high-quality Zambian emeralds from the major brands, particularly in Europe, all of whom admire the rich color and unique transparency of our gems — qualities that make them unique among emeralds," Basaglia said.

Facebook now has 2.27 billion active monthly users

Facebook avoided a repeat of its disastrous second quarter, reporting that the company's social network now serves 2.27 billion monthly users

The company announced that it generated revenue of \$13.7bn in the third quarter of the year, slightly below what Wall Street analysts expected — but good enough to avoid another stock price plunge.

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's Chief Executive Officer, said in a press release that the company's suite of services — Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp — now serve more than 2 billion people

every day.

"We're building the best services for private messaging and stories, and there are huge opportunities ahead in video and commerce as well," Zuckerberg said.

Facebook generated \$5.1bn in profit this quarter. While the days of its meteoric growth in the US are over, Facebook said it added users in the Asia-Pacific region and in other parts of the world, more than offsetting a slight dip in European users.

In July, Facebook shares plunged more than 20 percent after the company warned that it would be less profitable in the years ahead.



UK to unveil new measures for tackling organised crime

The UK government is getting tough on dirty money

The new Serious and Organised Crime, or SOC, strategy includes a pledge of \$61.3m for 2019/20 designed to target 'illicit finance' that drives the networks behind organised crime.

The National Crime Agency, known as NCA and often dubbed Britain's version of the FBI, estimates 4,600 organised crime groups operate in the UK, using violence and intimidation as they prey on vulnerable members of society, 'from victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to young people suffering sexual exploitation and abuse'.

"Sharp suits swan around the nation's capital, while all along they head up networks that covertly trade millions of pounds in financial transactions online. They profit from the hidden misery and suffering of others, and it is not just their victims, but all of us who suffer the consequences," said Ben Wallace, the UK's Minister for Security and Economic Crime.

Divers retrieve flight data recorder from sea

Indonesian investigators have found the flight data recorder from Lion Air Flight JT610, a discovery that should help explain why the new Boeing 737 crashed, killing all 189 people on board

News agencies showed images of divers bringing the device, commonly known as a 'black box', on board one of the rescue ships in the sea close to Jakarta, several days after the Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet disappeared off radar during a routine short-haul flight.

The cockpit voice recorder (CVR), which records audio from the cockpit, is yet to be found, but is believed to be located on the seabed, some 35 metres deep.

National Transportation Safety Commission (KNKT) Deputy Director Haryo Satmiko said that it will take two to three weeks to read the data from flight data recorder, and a further two to three months to analyse it.

Satmiko confirmed that in addition to the recorder 'some parts' of the plane's fuselage had also been found.

The ill-fated flight crashed 13 minutes after takeoff. It was supposed to be a one-hour flight to Pangkal Pinang on the island of Bangka.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Chronicle of the country captured in young and fearless faces

Komsomol Youth exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League takes place at the National Art Museum of Belarus, displaying more than sixty paintings, graphical and sculptural works, created from the 1920s through to the 1980s

By Veniamin Mikheev

The National Art Museum's collection currently shows the historical and topical diversity of the Komsomol movement in various aspects — from its beginning to the last decade. Artistic pieces reflect episodes of civil war, elimination of illiteracy, events and heroes of the military years, participation of youth in post-war and beyond construction and production. They depict industrialisation and the collective farm movement, as well as familiarisation with various spheres of culture. Moreover, the topics of education, leisure, sport activities and army service of Komsomol members have also found reflections in art.

The *Komsomol Youth* exhibition is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of VLKSM — the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, which officially existed for almost 73 years, from October 29th, 1918, until the end of September 1991.

Themes of civil war and education, industrialisation and collective farming are seen in the works of B. Arakcheev, A. Glebov, L. Zilber, Y. Pen, A. Tychina and A. Finsky. Events and heroes of the war are depicted in the works of S. Vakar, V. Gromyko, I. Davidovich, V. Zankovich, B. Ivontsiev, and M. Savitsky. Participation of young people in the post-war and further construction and production and the rise of the national economy are displayed in the works of I. Akhremchik, M. Belsky, A. Bochkarev, V. Borovko, L. Voronova, P. Gavrilenko, V. Gross, A. Lebedok-Yermeeva, L. Leitman, L. Osedovsky, V. Rynkevich, V. Savitsky, I. Tikhonov and M. Chepik. Moreover, education, recreational activities, sports and service in the Soviet army are evidenced in paintings by I. Grigorovich, V. Zh-

dan, A. Zaspitsky, G. Izergina, A. Kishchenko, R. Kudrevich, A. Kuznetsov, N. Liventseva, V. Novak, V. Protasenyia and N. Seleshchuk.

'I won't leave the Komsomol' these lines from the song about the mass organisation of the Soviet era are consonant with the present mood of Vladimir Prokoptsov, Director General of the National Art Museum. He admits that there are several reasons to return to the past in his thoughts, recollect the glorious period of Komsomol adolescence and mark a big anniversary of the legendary organisation.

Firstly, the huge exhibition entitled *Komsomol Youth* has opened in the central hall of the country's major artistic treasury. Secondly, it's an unusual present that has found Mr. Prokoptsov several decades later: his gypsum bust, moulded three decades ago by young diploma student and now famous sculptor and laureate of the Lenin Komsomol Award, Svetlana Gorbunova. The sculpture has found its owner years later and became a central exhibit of the *Komsomol Youth* exhibition. Mr. Prokoptsov tells us the story of its appearance in the museum with great pleasure, "I once visited our famous sculptor Zair Azgur's studio where, at that time, his pupil Svetlana Gorbunova was

studying under his guidance. On seeing me, Zair immediately became inspired: 'Svetlana, come here quickly. Just look what an interesting young man he is. We need to mould him'. While we were talking with the maestro, Svetlana began to work. Azgur approved her endeavours but asked me to come back several more times. Of course, I couldn't say no. Sometime later, Gorbunova completed her work, we parted, and I forgot about it. Several weeks ago, I attended Svetlana's studio. 'Look, here is your portrait. Do you remember it?' she asked and pointed to the bust of the unknown person. Exactly! This is me! It turned out that decades later, my meeting with youth took place. We modi-



fied this bust in bronze specially for the exhibition and Svetlana presented it to the museum."

Alongside the sculpture with an interesting creative fate, the exhibition of the *Komsomol Youth* exhibition also included more than sixty works from the vast museum collection. Specially for the big anniversary, museum employees 'liberated' their store rooms. Most works — sculptural and pictorial — were on show to a wider public for the first time. These included a picture of Marc Chagall's teacher, Yudel Pen, dated to May 1925.

The current exhibition is also a project about people who have left their mark in the history of the Komsomol movement and in the history of the

country. Mr. Prokoptsov believes they all are heroes of their time and of ours. We should be proud of their achievements: scientists and athletes, builders and inventors, workers and representatives of the creative intelligentsia. For example, it isn't difficult to recognise Honoured Artiste Svetlana Sukhovei in a thin young girl with hair streaming in the breeze: the eyes, skillfully depicted by the painter Nikolay Seleshchuk, help identify the popular actress. Works by no less outstanding maestros are placed nearby: Gromyko, Savitsky, Glebov, Akhremchik, Zaborov... One hall displays the whole artistic history of the big country and its most numerous organisation.



Cold War has opened *Listapad*

Pawel Pawlikowski's *Cold War* melodrama opens 25th Minsk International *Listapad* Film Festival

By Olga Korneeva

The previous work by the director was the Oscar-winning, *Ida*, which was awarded Gold and Silver at *Listapad* in 2013. "It's a symbolic gesture for us to open the 25th *Listapad* Film Festival with the *Cold War*. Our forum was among the first to celebrate *Ida*, now the classic of new Polish cinematography, which promoted Pawel Pawlikowski to the ranks of the world's leading directors. Moreover, the *Cold War* topic relates to the communist context and the confrontation between the East and West. *Listapad* turns to cinematographies with roots in this past. That's why it's important for us to contribute to the triumph of the film.

However, the movie is not about politics, but is a love story that knows no boundaries or taboos, about hard-won happiness and the paradoxes of human nature. It's an atmospheric film, in the style of the lyrical masterpieces of independent cinematography during its heyday," notes *Listapad*'s Programme Director, Igor Sukmanov.

Cold War narrates an impossible love during an impossible time. Wiktor and Zula, who share names and character traits with the film-maker's mother and father, meet in the ruins of post-war Poland. Due to their different backgrounds and temperaments, they seem to be completely incompatible, but through the decades, they fall together and apart in Warsaw,

Berlin, Yugoslavia, Paris.

This year, the theatrical forum brings together 167 films from 48 countries. Two countries — South Africa and Kenya — make their debut at the festival. Twelve movies were short-listed for the main contest of feature films, while documentaries were represented by 13 entries. Moreover, eleven debut works have been planned for the audience, to be shown as part of the *Youth on the March* competition. Moreover, as is traditional, out-of-competition screenings also took place.

The 25th Minsk International *Listapad* Film Festival was held under the slogan 'Getting to Know the Big, Wide World' and was dedicated to the famous film director, Kira Muratova.

Age is surely no obstacle to creativity

By Oleg Bogomazov

Exhibition of Alexander Soloviev's paintings opens at Vitebsk Contemporary Art Centre's exhibition hall

The exhibition presents around thirty works from the centre's collections. The whole exhibition enables the audience to see the breadth of the master's talent, starting from the 1980s to the present day. Expressiveness of style, rich colours, expression and the multi-vector nature of the pictures' composition surely at-

tract attention. According to his friends and colleagues, who have come to congratulate the 'patriarch' of the Vitebsk artistic workshop on the opening of the exhibition, Alexander Soloviev is a pivotal character in our creative history and a moral symbol, whose works boast their own energy.

"Alexander Soloviev is constantly searching. When there's such a painter whose creativity has such a strong moral path for us to follow, it's very precious for modern culture. It's important that the



Lots of questions for the author during the exposition

master's pictures clearly fit the European context," noted colleague Alexander Malei.

The artist, who celebrated his 92nd birthday in September, remains faithful to himself

Publishers hope for interaction

By Svetlana Savelieva

Belarusian folk fairy-tales will be released in the Serbian language in Belgrade, according to agreements reached as part of the 63rd Belgrade International Book Fair, held in the Serbian capital

The Belgrade International Book Fair was very successful for the Belarusian delegation. "We've conducted many meetings in the National Library of Serbia, at the Belgrade University's Faculty of Philology and in the Children's Cultural Centre of Belgrade. Many agreements have been reached with all these organisations dealing with book projects. Negotiations are underway to release Belarusian folk fairy-tales in the Serbian Publishing House Srpska

književna zadruga," noted the Deputy Director General of the Zvezda Publishing House, Editor-in-Chief of *Neman* magazine, Alexey Cherota.

Another project is the release of Belarusian prose in the Serbian magazine. "Last year, the magazine published a collection of modern Belarusian poetry in the Serbian language. Now, we plan the release of Belarusian prose. Meetings have also taken place with Serbian writers. We've agreed that they will come to us in February 2019 to attend the international literary symposium, traditionally held as part of the Minsk International Book Fair. Our task is to establish closer contacts with Serbian writers," noted the Deputy Director of the Serbian Publishing House. This year, the Belgrade Book Fair was visited by 195,000 people.

In honour of a great painter



By Alexander Pimenov

An evening of memory dedicated to Henryk Siemiradzki held in one of the halls of the Russian art exposition, at the National Art Museum of Belarus, with support from the Polish Institute to Minsk

The event was dedicated to the 175th anniversary of the birth of the painter. Scientific Secretary of the National Art Museum of Belarus, Svetlana Aneiko, and

Director of the Polish Cultural Institute in Minsk, Caesarius Karpiński, gave welcome addresses. A research officer of the Department of Russian and Foreign Art of the National Art Museum, Darya Bartoshuk, read a lecture about the life and creativity of Henryk Siemiradzki.

Moreover, a presentation also took place as part of the event, of a postcard bearing the reproduction of Henryk Siemiradzki's work — Alexander of Macedon Trusts the Doctor Philip.

less of whether his creative activity was appreciated or not. The essence of art is to improve oneself," the master says about his creative credo.

Alexander Soloviev is a Soviet and Belarusian avant-garde painter. When he was 17, he joined the partisan movement and from 1944, was in the active army, taking part in battles. He was awarded the Order of the Red Star. Since 1965, he has worked as a production designer in the Yakub Kolas National Academic Drama Theatre and later (until 1995) — its major artist. He has produced scenery for more than a hundred performances. In 2017, the painter was awarded the Francysk Skaryna Order.

despite the commercialisation of art, and paints pictures reflecting life. "The painter is constantly searching and likes to do extraordinary things. He would have this dream regard-



Ivan Baranchik (L) shows himself to be convincing in the ring

Belarusian boxers are made of star material

Ivan Baranchik becomes the IBF world champion in the light welterweight division and qualifies for the semi-finals of the World Boxing Super Series

By Kirill Karin

The Belarusian athlete competed for the champion's belt in New Orleans against Sweden's Anthony Yigit. Baranchik dominated during seven rounds af-

ter which Yigit's coaching staff decided not to release their boxer into the ring because of injuries received. In the semi-finals of the World Boxing Super Series, Ivan Baranchik will meet the winner of the fight between Josh Taylor and Ryan

Martin. In the second semi-final match, another Belarusian boxer will perform — WBA world champion, Kirill Relikh. In the fight for entry into the finals he will face the US boxer, Regis Prograis, who has beaten Terry Flanagan on points.

Coming in top place

Anastasia Mikhalenko earns gold in double event at European Junior and U23 Weightlifting Championships in Poland

In the under 69kg youth category, the Belarusian made all six lifts with no mistakes. After the snatch, Anastasia Mikhalenko was losing only to Ani Sargsyan of Russia. In

the second exercise (jerk) the Belarusian athlete managed to lift 123kg in her third attempt and showed a final result of 216kg (93 + 123).

Ani Sargsyan of Russia took second place, while the bronze medal at the European Championships went to the Turkish sportswoman.

In the men's competition (under 23) in the under 77kg

category, Artem Shagov of Belarus claimed bronze with a total lift of 328kg (148 + 180) while Bozhidar Andreev of Bulgaria won the event.

Anastasia Mikhalenko's gold is the third award for the Belarusian national squad. Previously, juniors Gennady Laptev and Igor Lozko held the top step of the medals podium.



In general, there were nine male athletes in the Belarusian team, including the participant of the Rio Olympic Games, Alexey Mzhachik.

- Belarus' national handball team players achieved their first victory in the 2020 European Championships qualification. At the start of the selection tournament, our squad lost at home to the national team of Bosnia and Herzegovina — 29:30 — but confidently defeated Finland away in the second round — 27:20. In this game, Alexey Shinkel, with seven goals, was recognised as the most productive player. In another match, the national team of the Czech Republic beat Bosnia and Herzegovina — 25:20. After two rounds, the position of the teams in the group is as follows: the Czech Republic is 1st (with 4 points), followed by Belarus (with 2 points), Bosnia and Herzegovina (with 2 points) and Finland (0 points). In April, the Belarusian national squad will play against the Czech Republic and in June will finish its performance in the selection tournament with return matches with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Finland. The two best teams from each quartet will qualify for the European Championships finals, as well as the four best national squads, which are ranked third in the groups.

- Dmitry Shershan claimed bronze at the Grand Slam tournament in judo in Abu Dhabi. The Belarusian athlete, who performed in the under 66 kg category, defeated his rivals from Morocco and the Czech Republic at the preliminary stage of the competition, but lost to Georgian Vazha Margvelashvili who went on to win the event. In the consolation round, Shershan beat Belgian Kenneth Van Gansbeke and the Spaniard Alberto Martin Gaitero.

- Belarus' national team tennis players lost to the Slovaks in the Davis Cup match and lost their place in the Europe/Africa Zone Group I. On the first day of the competition, Belarusian and Slovak tennis players exchanged victories, with the novice of our squad, 17-year-old Alexander Zgirovsky, losing to Martin Kližan — 1:6, 4:6 — while Yegor Gerasimov defeated Norbert Gombos — 3:6, 6:4, 6:4. In the doubles tournament, Max Mirnyi and Andrey Vasilevsky failed to beat Martin Kližan and Filip Polášek — 7:6, 4:6, 3:6. The result of the meeting was decided in the match between Gerasimov and Kližan, where the Slovak tennis player, defeating the Belarusian 6:4, 6:3, brought victory to his team, with a total score of 3:1. Thus, Belarus was relegated to the Europe/Africa Zone Group II.

Fashion show from Darya Domracheva

By Vladimir Dmitriev

While biathlon fans are wondering what awaits our team in the new season, the best biathlete of our time — who left the sport this summer — reminds us about herself

A short time passed since we wondered why Darya Domracheva was still listed in the pool of athletes tested for doping, compiled by the International Biathlon Union on the eve of each new season (the only reason for this is the official letter about the end of her career. "We did not receive such a letter from Domracheva," the IBU has informed us), but the Belarusian has proudly announced a new page in her life. This is not the purchase of a Porsche Cayenne E-Hybrid in Moscow (as she announced on social networks) but the presentation of a line of sportswear made under her name in Minsk.

"The idea to create a collection of sportswear and accessories was born three years ago, when the Race of Legends was held in Raubichi," Darya says. "I wanted to build a kind of bridge between me and



Darya Domracheva and Ole Einar Bjørndalen on the catwalk

my fans. Throughout my career, I have felt their sincere and warm support. I knew how they worried about me and the country, I saw how they attended world cups and championships. That's why I've decided to give people a piece of myself. The

idea of my collection is to inspire movement. It is very important to go to training in a good mood. When you are beautifully dressed and when you feel that you have something from an Olympic champion, then, additional energy is generated."

The holiday was excellent: the fashion show was attended by a scattering of well-known Belarusian athletes such as Nadezhda Skardino, Alexandra Sasnovich, Melitina Stanyuta, Lyubov Cherkashina, Maxim Nedosekov, Yekaterina Andreeva and Sergey Dolidovich. In 2016, Domracheva launched a clothing brand under her name and her online shop offers sports and casual clothing for adults and children, as well as souvenirs and accessories.

"You can see what we've achieved now," noted Darya after the presentation (her husband Ole Einar Bjørndalen also paraded on the catwalk). "We'll see what will happen next and whether I'll get even more involved in the process. Fans can already see something: in December, the German town of Gelsenkirchen will host the Christmas Race, which is arousing great interest since it has an amazing arena. Along with my husband, we plan to participate, and, in November, we are going there for training."

It seems it's probably no accident that Darya has not officially notified the IBU about the end of her career.



Small stage of Belarusian Youth Theatre opens after reconstruction

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 8th December. *Deafart* Until 30th December. *Universe of Yazep Drozdovich*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 12th November. *On the Other Side of Life: German Occupation in Meer Axelrod's Graphics* Until 8th January. *Art of Chocolate*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 16th November. *See Belarus Such* Until 31st January. *Maly Trostenets: exhibition-chronicles of large-scale massacre* Until 7th April. *Fantasy Land*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 11th November. *Romania: 100 Photos Dedicated to 100th Anniversary of Great Unity* Until 18th November. *Muses in Line*

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

11 Sovetskaya Street
Until 30th November. *Belarusian Lawyers of 19th Century*

OUTLETO TRADING CENTRE

44 Zhukov Avenue
Until 1st January. *Tropics* exhibition of exotic animals

LIBRA

37 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st January. *Somewhere to the West of Minsk: Daily Life of Western Belarus* Until 4th December. *20th Century Avant-Garde*

MAGIC MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 15th December. *Tournament of Three Magicians*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 13th January. *Museum of Fir-Tree Toys*

VANKOVICH'S HOUSE

33a Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 10th November. *Exhibition of Polina Korzun-Fomchenko: At Source of Autumn* Until 10th August. *Yakub Kolas and Vilno*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 24th November. *Violeta Bybelite: Own Body*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
09.11. *Cinderella* 10.11. *Figaro's Marriage* 11.11. *Spartacus* 13.11. *La Traviata / From Opera to Romance* 14.11. *Masterpieces of Choir Opera Music* 15.11. *Little Prince*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
09.11. *Fourth Planet* 10.11. *How to Become Rich* 11.11. *Pygmalion* 14.11. *Second Hand Time* 15.11. *Lady for a Day*

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
09.11. *I'm Your Officer* 10.11. *Last Ardent Lover* 14.11. *Do Not Leave Me*

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
11.11. *Romeo and Juliet* 14.11. *House Upside Down*

NEW DRAMA THEATRE

16 Liza Chaikina Street
09.11. *Bonus Season of Psychological Analysis* 10.11. *Polonaise Sounds Heard* 11.11. *Mad Money* 13.11. *If to Know* 14.11. *Factory Girl* 15.11. *Christmas*

PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
09.11. *Belvedere Pension* 14.11. *Graiai Sisters* 15.11. *Interview with Witches*

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
09.11. *Radio Prudok / Tolerance* 11.11. *Paulinka* 11.11. *Radio Prudok / School of Taxpayers* 13.11. *Love as Militarism* 14.11. *Pinsk Gentry* 15.11. *ART*

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
09.11. *Lift* 10.11. *Grandfather* 11.11. *Doctor Raus' Career* 12.11. *Blue-Blue* 13.11. *Concrete* 14.11. *Woe from Wit* 15.11. *This Is All She*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
10.11. *Night of Anton Chekhov's Miniatures* 11 and 12.11. *Even a Wise Man Stumbles* 14.11. *A Very Simple Story* 15.11. *Forgetting Herostratos*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
09.11. *Promise at Sunrise* 10.11. *Bigamist* 11.11. *Zhmurik* 13.11. *Family Weekend* 14.11. *Caught with Love* 15.11. *Double Double*