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Spring calling in style of ancient traditions

A spring holiday connected with the awakening of nature is celebrated at the Belarusian State Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Lifestyle in Stročitsy, near Minsk. As in times gone by, young girls make wreaths, dance in a circle and sing spring songs.

European route from Belgium to Belarus

Belarus will always be working hard towards unity and stability in Europe, notes President Alexander Lukashenko, meeting Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Affairs, Didier Reynders, in Minsk

By Vladimir Khromov

"Your visit is a landmark event. Much depends on it, not only in our bilateral relations but in our relations with your empire [the European Union]. I can guarantee that Belarus will always work towards unity and stability in Europe. Even in difficult times we did not create problems for you and will not create them in the future," asserted Mr. Lukashenko.

The Head of State stressed that he is in favour of a multi-polar world and the preservation of the European Union. "The EU is a major centre of power, alongside China, and the United States of America. The European Union is a solid pillar for the planet; if it disappears, the world will be in trouble. Therefore, I don't appreciate 'Brexit' and nationalist movements. It's essential to pre-

serve the European Union, at whatever cost. This isn't just my personal position (although it's personal too). This position relies on international state interests. The more pillars we have, the more stable the system. Therefore, I support the European Union," the President explained.

At the same time, Mr. Lukashenko remarked that he is against the double standards which the EU sometimes applies. "I'd like the European Union to be consistent in its declarations to the world, namely regarding honesty, integrity and democracy," the Belarusian leader said. "If you take a closer look at Belarus, you'll see human rights, democracy, order, and security for people here. We have drawbacks, just like you, but we need dialogue, to be closer to each other. You need to share your experience. We're prepared to learn, but please

remember that sovereignty and independence are sacred to us."

Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus has established mutually beneficial co-operation with a number of Belgian companies, and more is possible. "With trade standing at over \$300 million, investment isn't yet high. I can't say that we lack investment. However, we'd like to see Belgian investment alongside that of China, Russia and other countries. We'd like to diversify our investment activity. If you have the desire, we'll support this in every way possible," noted Mr. Lukashenko. "We'd be happy if the Belgian government supported its investors, or at least kept us advised on which investors we could work with. The most important thing for us is to find good and reliable investors. With this in mind, we're ready to work with you."

The Belarusian leader added that he had mixed feelings regarding the visit of Didier Reynders to Belarus. "It's a pity that this is your first visit to Belarus, and to Minsk. Still, it's good that you have finally decided to come. We'd like to welcome such high-level officials more often to Belarus, so that you can see with your own eyes how the country has been developing," noted the Head of State.

Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Affairs said that his country is ready to step up collaboration with Belarus in various areas. "Belgium is keeping an interested eye on all the economic reforms taking place in Belarus, including those yet to be introduced," he said.

Mr. Reynders underlined the fact that Belarus is becoming a participant in major international processes. He



Didier Reynders

especially noted the country's role in organising negotiating processes for conflict settlement in Ukraine. He added, "We view Belarus as a country which promotes dialogue."

Mr. Reynders has invited Belarus to take part in the *Eastern Partnership* Summit that is to take place in Brussels in late 2017.

"We'd welcome activation of bilateral contacts within the international arena. In particular, we'd be very grateful to Belarus for its support of the Belgian candidate as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2019-2020," emphasised Mr. Reynders. He remarked that, due to positive processes and reforms conducted in Belarus, considerable progress has been made in expanding co-operation with the European Union. Mr. Reynders expressed hope that such interaction will continue and grow.



During the *We Are Citizens of Belarus!* campaign

Birthday of the Citizen

By Nadezhda Dekola

National Olympic Committee's Hall of Olympic Fame hosts *We Are Citizens of Belarus!* for first time, presenting passports to twenty-two young citizens, from the Minsk, Vitebsk and Gomel regions

At the age of fourteen, each of the youngsters has already achieved some success, in education, sports or social activities. Polina Anikeenko is the Gomel Region's top young modern pentathlete, attending the Olympic Reserve School, with plans to be-

come a coach. She's working towards the title of Master of Sports and admits that she found attending the Hall of Olympic Fame more exciting than performing in sports competitions.

"You'll probably understand the value of this day some time later: today, you're celebrating your birthday, becoming an adult citizen, with rights and duties," noted the First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Maxim Ryzhenkov. "You're taking the first steps into adulthood, where you'll be making many decisions independently. Initially, probably, with guidance from your family

and, later, relying on your own vision. Symbolically, this event takes place here. On all the sides, you're surrounded by sporting heroes from Belarus' participation in the Olympic Games: true patriots of their country."

Ivan Safonov, who attends Minsk's school #53, has twice won medals at international forums for young traffic inspectors. He notes, "In the future, I'd like us to not only be proud of our country but for Belarus to be proud of us." The event was held on the eve of Constitution Day, for the 14th time, with twenty-two schoolchildren receiving their passports.

Aspiring to raise effectiveness of the organisation

By Alexey Pimenov

Belarus' Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Austria, Yelena Kupchina, nominated for OSCE Secretary General position

Commenting on the promotion of Ms. Kupchina, Dmitry Mironchik, the head of the Information Office and Press Secretary of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, notes, "The term of office of the incumbent OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier, expires on June 30th. We have decided to promote the Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Yelena Kupchina, to this position."

He stresses that the decision is prompted by Belarus' sincere desire to help strengthen the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, in the interests of all member states. He underlines, "The OSCE's role is once again extremely important, amid acute regional conflicts and escalating contradictions between global players."

Ms. Kupchina is formerly Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, being closely involved in the country's foreign policy. She has worked to strengthen security and co-operation in Europe, establishing dialogue between East and West, and aiming to resolve crisis situations in the region.

"We believe that her knowledge, and many years of diplomatic experience and far-reaching international contacts, will be beneficial in increasing the OSCE's effectiveness. She can help tackle the challenging tasks the organisation faces, including the most important and complicated: that of overcoming the crisis of trust among member states," said the spokesman of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Mironchik comments that the procedure to elect a new Secretary General has only just begun. The first hearings took place in Vienna on March 14th, during which candidates sketched out their priorities before plenipotentiary representatives of member states.

Assembly to bring vital meetings

OSCE appreciates Belarus' involvement in its activity

By Alexander Pimenov

On July 1st, 2016, during the 25th annual session of the OSCE PA, it was unanimously decided to conduct the 26th annual session of the Assembly in Minsk, from July 5th-9th, 2017. An organising committee was set up to prepare and conduct this 26th annual session of the OSCE PA, involving the heads of state-run public authorities and other organisations. Meanwhile, last week, Minsk was visited by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Christine Muttonen.

On meeting Ms. Muttonen, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, asserted, "Your visit is very important to us. We thank you for the trust placed in Belarus and the opportunity to host the Parliamentary Assembly session. Indeed, we need to discuss many issues. I'd like to say, honestly and openly, that we'll do our best to organise the best OSCE PA session in history. We want it to demonstrate that Belarus is committed to the basic principles of OSCE work," noted the Head of State.

"We'll demonstrate this to the whole world but, first of all, to the MPs, and representatives of other countries included in this organisation. We'll show once again that the prejudiced opinions that existed



Alexander Lukashenko and Christine Muttonen

and still exist in the West are groundless. We'll also show that Belarus is a European country. Human rights, the rule of law and democracy are as important here as in other European states, including in the European Union," stressed Mr. Lukashenko.

The OSCE PA summer session will be dedicated to strengthening mutual trust and co-operation for the sake of peace and prosperity in the region. Around seven hundred guests are expected, and an intense programme is planned, including a session of the OSCE PA Standing Committee and general committees covering political and

Alexander LUKASHENKO:
The situation in Belarus is relatively calm against the backdrop of events happening worldwide. I promise to you that the situation will be the same in the run-up to the event, during and after it.

security issues, economic issues, science, technology and the environment, democracy, human rights and humanitarian matters.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that the decision to host the annual session of the OSCE PA in Belarus was the right one. "The situation in Belarus is relatively calm against the backdrop of events happening worldwide. I promise to you that

the situation will be the same in the run-up to the event, during and after it."

Ms. Muttonen remarked that the forthcoming OSCE PA session is very important, playing a vital role in the development of ties between nations. "We had very productive talks yesterday. I'm sure that all necessary things have been done and will be done to ensure that this session is a success," she said.

The Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, Vladimir Andreichenko, joined Ms. Muttonen in officially signing an agreement to conduct the 26th OSCE PA summer session in Minsk. Chatting to journalists after the signing ceremony, Mr. Andreichenko expressed his opinion that the visit of the OSCE PA delegation to Belarus is a significant step in the development of co-operation with this authoritative international organisation. He views the decision to allow Minsk to host the forthcoming session as significant.

Ms. Muttonen under-

lined that the OSCE PA has always enjoyed good relations with the Belarusian delegation and hopes this will continue. As far as the 26th summer session is concerned, hosted by Minsk, she forecasts interesting and contradictory discussions among politicians and parliamentarians. She feels certain that the Minsk declaration, with recommendations to participants, will become the final document, saying, "In recent times, Minsk has become a venue for international negotiations and international events and we hope that our event will make its own contribution."

This was the first visit of Ms. Muttonen to Belarus but she noted that she is already looking forward to her meeting in July, for the OSCE PA's annual summer session, when it elects its leadership and executives, and adopts declarations and resolutions. She commented that the Belarusian delegation has always been one of the most active, saying, "We appreciate your involvement in our activity."

Ms. Muttonen is the second female President of the OSCE PA within the last twenty-five years and is very pleased with the attitude she has observed towards women in Belarus. "When we were driving from the airport, I learnt that March 8th is an official public holiday and said that I'd like to borrow this tradition and bring it to Austria," she admitted.

Integration is better than ghosts of cold war

By Alexey Fedosov

Belarus remains a decisive and string supporter of integration and suggests using Minsk as venue for strengthening mutual ties and integration processes in Central and Eastern Europe, notes Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, in Minsk, on meeting heads of delegations of Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership member states

Mr. Makei stressed that practical co-operation between the Visegrad Group and *Eastern Partnership* member states is vital as never before. These sub-regional integration initiatives bring together states that, while being geographically located between the major power centres

of Europe, traditionally aspire to self-determination and sustainable development. "Such a geographic position is both a curse and a blessing," explained Mr. Makei. "Its disadvantage lies in greater susceptibility to the influence of external factors, which is of particular concern in the context of the tense situation in the region."

The Minister noted that, on the other hand, this position opens up great opportunities for trade, collaboration and intercultural dialogue, which increases the coun-



tries' role in shaping the future of Europe. "Being located at the geopolitical watershed, our states have their own influential voice in choosing the future: creating bridges or new dividing lines. I'm convinced that half-hearted, painful and slow integration is better than surrendering to the ghosts

stressed Mr. Makei.

The Head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry underlined the increased topicality of the *Eastern Partnership* that should be preserved in future and should be developed as an efficient instrument of pragmatic collaboration between the EU and its eastern neighbours.

of the cold war. Restoring the curtains will not lead us to economic prosperity. Neither will this help us find solutions to complex regional problems,"

"In this respect, we welcome the efforts of the EU to realise a reformed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), including turning of the *Eastern Partnership* into a more structured and result-oriented initiative. In particular, we highly appreciate the launch of exchanging proposals across the bilateral *Priorities of the Partnership* and the start of negotiations on key priorities and tasks for the *Eastern Partnership* through until 2020," asserted the Minister.

Mr. Makei is hopeful that implementation of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy will consistently promote the achievement of major goals for the *Eastern Partnership*, including enhanced stability, security and prosperity across the region.

State promises to provide further support to IT development countrywide, notes the President as he visited Minsk companies working in the sphere of high technologies



In EXP Capital's office

Investors looking to the future

By Vasily Kharitonov

The President has visited the offices of Banuba Development and EXP Capital. Investors Victor Prokopenya and Mikhail Gutseriev reported to the Head of State on work at these companies and their promising developments. In particular, there are projects in the sphere of augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

Mr. Prokopenya has expressed confidence that most companies, regardless of their field, will use IT technologies in the future, including our industrial giants.

"Belarus should focus on IT, making products to promote Belarus as a centre of world IT. We can do it. We just need to amend our legislation slightly. Our objective is to turn Belarus into a production venue for new technologies," notes Mr. Gutseriev.

He explains that Belarusian IT specialists are currently using outsourcing to

fulfil orders from foreign companies, which brings only modest revenue. Rather, they should be producing finished commercial products, to raise investment inflow, while creating desirable jobs.

Regarding legislative amendments, the experts suggest advertising IT products on major foreign platforms. At present, Belarus is hampered by various bureaucratic procedures.

The Head of State has promised to find solutions to this and other problematic issues, switching them round into benefits. "Thanks to you, we'll make others abandon this paperwork, for which we'll be grateful. The Government and the National Bank should simplify regulations, and they're doing so now," says Mr. Lukashenko. He underlines that the state will continue providing assistance, including regarding the adoption of necessary legislation, and covering working conditions in this sector

of the economy. He stresses that a major requirement is transparency and legitimacy of processes in doing business and relating to taxation. "Living in Belarus, we need to construct a beautiful country," notes the Head of State. "It's good to think about the future, but our present should also be fair and decent. You'll receive everything we've agreed, in line with legislation."

Mikhail GUTSERIEV:

Belarus should focus on IT, making products to promote Belarus as a centre of world IT. We can do it. We just need to amend our legislation slightly. Our objective is to turn Belarus into a production venue for new technologies.

Mr. Lukashenko has instructed the establishment of a council for the development of the IT industry in Belarus, as Vsevolod Yanchevsky, Aide to the President, notes. He tells us, "We've considered setting up a council of civil servants, responsible for making deci-

sions (especially legislative), alongside investors working in high-tech spheres, and scientists."

Investor Mikhail Gutseriev stresses that this council would focus on raising investment and attracting investors to Belarus. "This will include new companies, personnel training, and product making in Belarus. The President has set us the task. We'll prepare

the necessary documents within the next two or three months," he added.

Mr. Prokopenya is also confident of good prospects within the IT sphere in Belarus, saying, "I think that today will go down in history as the turning point in IT develop-

ment for Belarus. The President completely supports the idea of creating an IT country, bringing a number of significant changes to improve legislation." He believes that creating a product model for IT business and venture funds, while establishing the necessary regulatory environment and supporting education, will bring results. After meeting with the Head of State, he noted the readiness of Mr. Lukashenko to support the necessary changes.

He emphasised that the meeting tackled a range of issues, explaining, "I'm pleased that the state will continue its support of IT related businesses. I'm delighted that Belarus will be entering a new level of development, to create more product companies and to be more recognisable globally."

Mikhail Gutseriev believes that these decisions open up major prospects, and that the first stage in developing the IT sector in Belarus has been completed. "We're now

talking about adopting additional regulations, to make Belarus one of the most IT advanced countries worldwide," he explains.

Mr. Lukashenko also supports the idea of creating conditions to use self-driving vehicles. Mr. Prokopenya tells us that certain regulations need to be passed in Belarus, to permit such vehicles on the roads. "Mr. Lukashenko doesn't only support this idea but has agreed to be driven himself in such a car, when it becomes possible." He would like to see Belarus become one of the first states to support the development of self-driving vehicles and hopes to see them appear on the country's roads very soon. "At present, self-driving vehicles aren't regulated by legislation in most countries, so our passing of such laws would enable global companies to come here to launch these vehicles on our roads. People will then see modern technologies in action," he explains.

Practical decision on agreements

Belarus confirms readiness to develop full-scale interaction with Egypt, across all areas

By Vladimir Mikhailov

During his meeting with Mohamed Al-Assar, the Egyptian Minister for Military Production, Alexander Lukashenko recalled his last visit to Egypt, when he reached important agreements in various fields of co-operation with the President. Mr. Lukashenko noted Egyptian intentions regarding fulfilment of agreements, as

proven by the current visit by the Minister, who is accompanied by a delegation of representatives from various spheres.

"We're ready to provide necessary assistance in personnel training and to share technologies across all the avenues of co-operation in which you're interested," stressed the President. "We're ready to set up enterprises in Egypt, and to develop them with you. No area

is off-limits in our collaboration. We're ready to develop contacts in all spheres, ranging from agriculture to the industrial military and defence sectors."

Mohamed Al-Assar thanked the Belarusian Head of State for the opportunity to meet, despite the President's busy schedule. "This reaffirms your interest in developing co-operation with Egypt. We're also interested in this." He

expressed confidence in the success of the visit, and his country's intention to promote Belarusian produce to the large Egyptian market.

Major attention was paid to preparation for the forthcoming session of the Belarusian-Egyptian Joint Commission on Trade-Economic Co-operation (scheduled for May). This aims to help implementation of agreements



Mohamed Al-Assar at top level. Both sides believe it's necessary to move forward promptly. The Minsk visit by the Egyptian delegation was focused on this goal.

EBRD ready to expand sphere of participation

By Alexey Fedosov

Good results expected from European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) interaction with Belarusian state sector, notes Alexander Lukashenko, meeting EBRD First Vice President Philip Bennett

A new four-year EBRD strategy for 2016-2019 was passed last year, abolishing the calibrated approach which limits interaction with the state sector. This has become a good basis for dialogue in Minsk, noted Mr. Lukashenko, saying, "As a fully-fledged member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Belarus has always been against unnecessary bar-

riers, special approaches and other factors limiting our co-operation and mutual understanding. This is the platform we have now."

He continued, "Within the framework of the current strategy, we'll be able to expand co-operation in the public sector. I'm convinced that this co-operation will yield good results. The development of all forms of ownership, including in the public and private sectors, is Belarus' priority. I'm grateful to you for understanding and for having no prejudice in this regard."

Belarus and the EBRD have co-operated for more than 20 years, and this collaboration has been productive. "Major investments have been injected into the Bela-



BELTA

During the meeting

rusian economy over this period. These investments have been allocated for the most promising and successful projects," stressed the President.

In recent years, the level of interaction between Belarus and the EBRD has entered a whole new level. Funds allocated by the bank since 1992 exceed 1.8 billion Euros. Projects realised last

year alone accounted for 516 million Euros. In September 2016, the EBRD's new four-year strategy for Belarus was approved, through until 2019. According to the programme, the bank is focusing on two major areas: the enhancement of competition in the private sector and enhanced sustainability and quality of services for state infrastructure.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development plans to expand investment co-operation with Belarus in the sphere of finances, transport, power engineering and utility services, noted the EBRD's First Vice President, Philip Bennett, after his meeting with President Alexander Lukashenko.

"We'll continue supporting the private sector, as has proven successful over the last few years. We're also going to increase our investment presence in transport and public utilities," noted Mr. Bennett.

In particular, he mentioned that the EBRD will help fund reconstruction of the M10 highway from the Russian border to Gomel and

Kobrin, as well as water purification and waste treatment projects.

"We've reached important agreements on co-operation in energy, with regard to increasing the energy efficiency and energy security of Belarus. We're also going to increase our investment presence in the Belarusian banking and finance sectors," asserted the EBRD's First Vice President. "We've been invited to take part in a number of projects in the non-banking and finance sectors. We're interested in this proposal. Given growing state support, over the next two or three years, we'll increase our investment presence across various sectors of Belarus' economy, as part of planned privatisation."

Providing with employment

How to create more than 6,000 jobs instead of the planned 5,000

By Anna Petrochenko

Some enterprises are reacting to the economic crisis by taking out loans and laying off staff. Meanwhile, others are seeking fresh business solutions. Over the first nine months of 2016, an impressive 6,109 jobs were created in the Brest Region, instead of the planned 5,000. How did they manage to achieve such results?

There was a time when employees at Brest Stocking Mill were given part of their salary in goods from the factory, which they had to sell at the market, to supplement their income. It was a way of reducing warehouse stock. Many viewed the enterprise as hopeless but the situation changed in 2014, when Conte Spa LJJV bought the controlling block of shares for Brest Stocking Mill JSC.

The State Property Committee laid down strict terms: that all jobs must be preserved and that export volumes must be met, with at least \$5 million invested into development. Leaving even one point unfulfilled would result in a fine and shares being returned to the state.

Sergey Zhevnerovich, who previously worked as Deputy Director of Grodno's Conte, became the Director in Brest. Now, the factory is part of the Conte Group of Companies: a self-sufficient enterprise with its own strategy.

"We've studied our segment of the market and are focusing on goods which are known and respected: our cotton hosiery," notes Mr. Zhevnerovich.

In 2014-2015, the enterprise experienced a rebirth, almost completely modernising its equipment. Its knitting workshop — at the heart



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Brest Stocking Mill's section of new computer-controlled machines



Sergey ZHEVNEROVICH

The number of personnel in the most popular areas — retail trade and the production of knitwear — will continue to rise. Salaries remain the second biggest element of expenditure (after materials) so each person is selected carefully, and the enterprise is keen to ensure that everyone receives the best training possible.

of production — uses the latest, contemporary Italian machinery. The Director admits that it was difficult to find specialists with the right ex-

perience, as modern equipment reacts capriciously to any small adjustment. The intuition of a jeweller is needed. However, our country is

predicted to become the 'Silicon Valley' of Eastern Europe.

In the middle of last year, the enterprise elaborated its own collection of underwear for men, from knitted fabric, while the knitting workshop took on several dozen new employees. At present, the workshop employs sixty people, and as many as thirty more are needed this year. Job advertisements can be seen on public transport around the city.

Retailers are taking on extra staff too. In 2016, Brest Stocking Mill opened seven new company stores, making twenty-one in total. According to Mr. Zhevnerovich,

the enterprise plans to open ten more over the coming year.

"We plan to cover all settlements with a population of more than 100,000. Each trading outlet will have at least three or four employees. Our store in Minsk employs ten people," explains Mr. Zhevnerovich.

He's confident that the number of personnel in the most popular areas — retail trade and the production of knitwear — will continue to rise. Salaries remain the second biggest element of expenditure (after materials) so each person is selected carefully, and the enterprise is keen to ensure that everyone receives the best training possible.

Voting with all your feet

Visa-free regime for tourists from eighty countries arriving via Minsk National Airport sees country visited by over 1,100 guests within first nine days, including from remote regions

By Anton Kostyukevich

It may be too early to draw conclusions, since some travellers have been attracted by the new visa-free regime and others have planned their trips in advance. According to



Foreign tourists at Minsk National Airport

forecasts, 15-20 percent more tourists are expected in 2017, against last year. Five days are enough for most people to take a mini-break, with tourist companies offering

guests a wide choice of trips, priced from \$220 to \$750, including hotel accommodation, meals and excursions.

Offers are tailored to guests

from various regions. For example, Asian tourists are keen to go to the Circus, while Europeans prefer the theatre. Others are most eager to try local cuisine. Meanwhile, the

Chairman of the Republican Union of the Tourist Industry's Board, Filipp Guly, believes we should reduce prices.

"Introducing a visa-free regime is a strong marketing decision, demonstrating the country's openness and its eagerness to join the international tourism environment," he explains. "We must make every effort to take advantage of this situation. The country has good infrastructure and well developed services. This is enough for the CIS but we fail to meet world levels, so we must learn quickly, while treating arriving guests with great respect. Our visitors have their own views and, sometimes, illusions regarding how everything should look."

Minsk's forty-nine hotels of various star levels can accommodate around 10,500 guests. The country's official tourist portal — belarus.travel — uses Russian and English, with German and Polish versions soon to be launched.

Problems of old age

Advice from Dr. Zhukova
According to the World Health Organisation, osteoporosis is perhaps the most widespread disease caused by lifestyle choices

Worldwide, huge numbers of people suffer, with 25 million people in the USA alone. Each year, 250,000 Americans are diagnosed with cervical hip fractures, while 500,000 receive vertebral fractures, and 3.24 million endure wrist fractures or radial bone fractures. The USA spends over \$10 billion annually on its osteoporosis problem.

Special epidemiological research into osteoporosis in Europe reveals 40 million cases (11-12 percent of the entire population). According to the same data, 40 percent of women over the age of 70 suffer. For Belarus, the problem is complicated by exposure to radiation, which is thought to contribute to the condition (following the catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power station).

Osteoporosis is a systemic skeletal disease, characterised

by loss of bone mass and micro-architectural abnormalities in bone tissue, leading to increased fragility of bones and risk of fracture. We might call it a 'silent epidemic'. Although genetic factors do have a part to play in the occurrence and distribution of the disease, the condition tends to appear as we age, and our hormone balance changes.

Other factors include diet, physical activity, and environmental (ecological) and behavioural (smoking, alcohol) elements.

We achieve peak bone density at the age of 20, with little change in our bones until the age of 40-45 years among women, and 50 among men. Bone density then begins to fall by 1-2 percent annually, with women tending to see the most change during menopause.

Osteoporosis develops gradually and over a long time, so changes can go unnoticed until 10-15 years after first onset. It can lead to general deterioration of health and ability to remain mobile and to work. Some people even become physical disabled.

Symptoms include bone and

fatigue quickly and lose flexibility in their spine.

Patients may be wrongly diagnosed, and given treatment for radiculitis, myeloma, metastasises of malignant tumours, and spine trauma. In connection with demineralisation and low loading, muscles become flaccid. Meanwhile, the person becomes more prone to stones in their gallbladder and urinary bladder, and kidney.

One of major displays of osteoporosis is bone fracture, which brings real suffering, physical disability and, even, death in older people. Accordingly, it's of huge social importance to society that we attempt to reduce the problem. A quarter of women aged over 65 will experience a spinal fracture while

one in five fracturing their femur will die within six months of the injury. All who survive such a fracture experience loss of mobility; often, this means loss of independence and the need for extra care. The gold standard of early diagnosis of osteoporosis is the measurement of the mineral density of

bone tissue, via x-ray densitometry. This painless test takes only a few minutes, allowing reasonable estimation of the risk of fractures and the best course of action. Minsk's Centre of Osteoporosis offers examinations and consultations, as well as treatment.

By Tatiana Zhukova,
Doctor of higher category,
M.D. Ph.D.



joint pain and unexpected bone fracture, with lumbar and thoracic spine pain most common, alongside pain in the sacrum (similar to symptoms of radiculitis or osteochondrosis). Some height can be lost, as can body weight. Also, due to the shortening of the body, skin on the stomach may show more folds. The person is likely to



Aurochs increase in number each year

Resettlement plans for Pushcha aurochs

Belovezhskaya Pushcha is home to 512 aurochs of various ages, according to February calculations of territory and surroundings

By Valentina Kozlovich

A senior research officer at the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, Alexey Bunevich, says that aurochs are registered in eleven (out of sixteen) forestries. "Our giant lives in the Kamenets and Pruzhany districts of the Brest Region and in the Grodno Region's Svisloch District. In total, we've counted 512 aurochs of various ages: up by thirty-two animals on 2016. There are 323 adults, but only a third are males. In 2017, we registered the biggest company of adult bulls: nineteen in a single herd, which is a record for us."

Growing numbers do present some problems, as there are more than the Pushcha can 'feed'. In winter, feeding stations are estab-

lished but, even so, aurochs seek out fodder in our farming fields. Mr. Bunevich notes that the Pushcha giants love winter rape, grown on neighbouring farms. "During our study, we registered mixed bison herds of up to 150 animals. People living in the villages of Murava, Dmitrovichi and Verkhovichi meet aurochs most days. However, unlike tourists, they aren't delighted, as the animals damage crops."

Fields can be fenced but it's not the best solution. Resettlement may be more practical. Mr. Bunevich notes, "Nobody wishes to buy animals but some would love to receive them free of charge. Scientists from the National Academy of Sciences are now studying the idea of resettlement."

Models replicating to smallest detail

Their hands have created models of almost every sort of transport found in Belarus, plus vehicles found in neighbouring countries. Famous people have such models in their homes, including our President. Our *MT* correspondent drops into the Minsk workshop to find out more.

By Galina Kiseleva

It's fascinating to see model vehicles, even though we see the 'real thing' every day on our streets. Adults and children alike are entranced by the tiny details, such as seats and rear-view mirrors. Models are made to a scale of 1:20, 1:10, 1:87 or even smaller. Often, they're made for presentation at a trade fair or exhibition, or to give as corporate gifts or souvenirs, though they're expensive to make, requiring many hours of care, by hand.

The director of the workshop, Ivan Tirinov, spreads the small parts of a future bus on the table, all a hundred times smaller than the real thing! He tells us, "We've been making models for more than ten years: vehicles, planes, ships, military hardware and even figures of people. Often, our clients are manufacturers."

Ivan takes buses, trains and trolley buses from the shelf. I feel as if I'm in a children's department store, although they're all exact copies of real machinery, at times, serious military hardware. He tells me, "Not everyone can afford to buy these models. Look, here's a bus in which a tiny driver is seated." Ivan holds the model in his hands. "At a scale of 1:20, about a half-metre in size, it would cost \$2,000 to make. A good quality model uses about 200 components, and requires skilful fingers."

The designers have been using software to create a 3D-model of Lebyazhy suburb. Ivan explains, "Many companies are using 3D-technologies to make mock-ups, of any complexity and configuration, using a printer. However, to create a smooth surface, without superfluous elements, and to paint it well, with small details, is far more difficult. You need more than just access to technologies. The workshop has a 3D-printer but this is used only for general preparations; most of the work is done by hand, and with the use of a milling machine.

So, we set about making a bus, from the design on the computer. Information is sent to the milling machine and, before our eyes, it cuts out windows from plastic, with the smallest details, exact and smooth. They'll be some priming, before

paint is applied.

Igor polishes with sandpaper, explaining that their standards are so high that it can take two months to make a single model. In 90 percent of cases, parts are made from plastic, with metal used in just 10 percent.



Ivan Tirinov

Masters use sheet plastic from which flat details are cut out, while liquid plastic is cast into molds, where it hardens. Some materials are domestically made while others are imported from the USA and France. The grass used for models, such as creating a suburb, comes from Germany.

"The larger the model, the more detail it requires. Sometimes, a customer wants everything to be realistic, down to the hand-rail in a trolley bus, the racks covering electronic equipment, windows, the current collector, wheels, buttons, air conditioning, mirrors and fire extinguisher. Sometimes, we add batteries, so that headlights and indicators can be lit," says Ivan.

These masters are sometimes among the first to learn of new vehicles being released. Ivan reveals, "About seven years ago, we made a model of the 'Krasin' Arctic ice breaker, which is now located in St. Petersburg, within an exhibition inside the actual ice breaker. We also made the first red 'Vitovt' trolley buses, before they launched in towns."

Ivan opens up a photo archive and shows me shots of other models they've made: ZIS-150 and ZIL-130 trucks, a MAZ-231 bus, and a MAZ-5434 fire engine. There are models of Minsk hypermarkets, of the first Belarusian satellite, of the 'Caiman' armoured vehicle, of a coastal missile launcher with anti-ship missiles, of a marsh buggy, of various tractors, of the



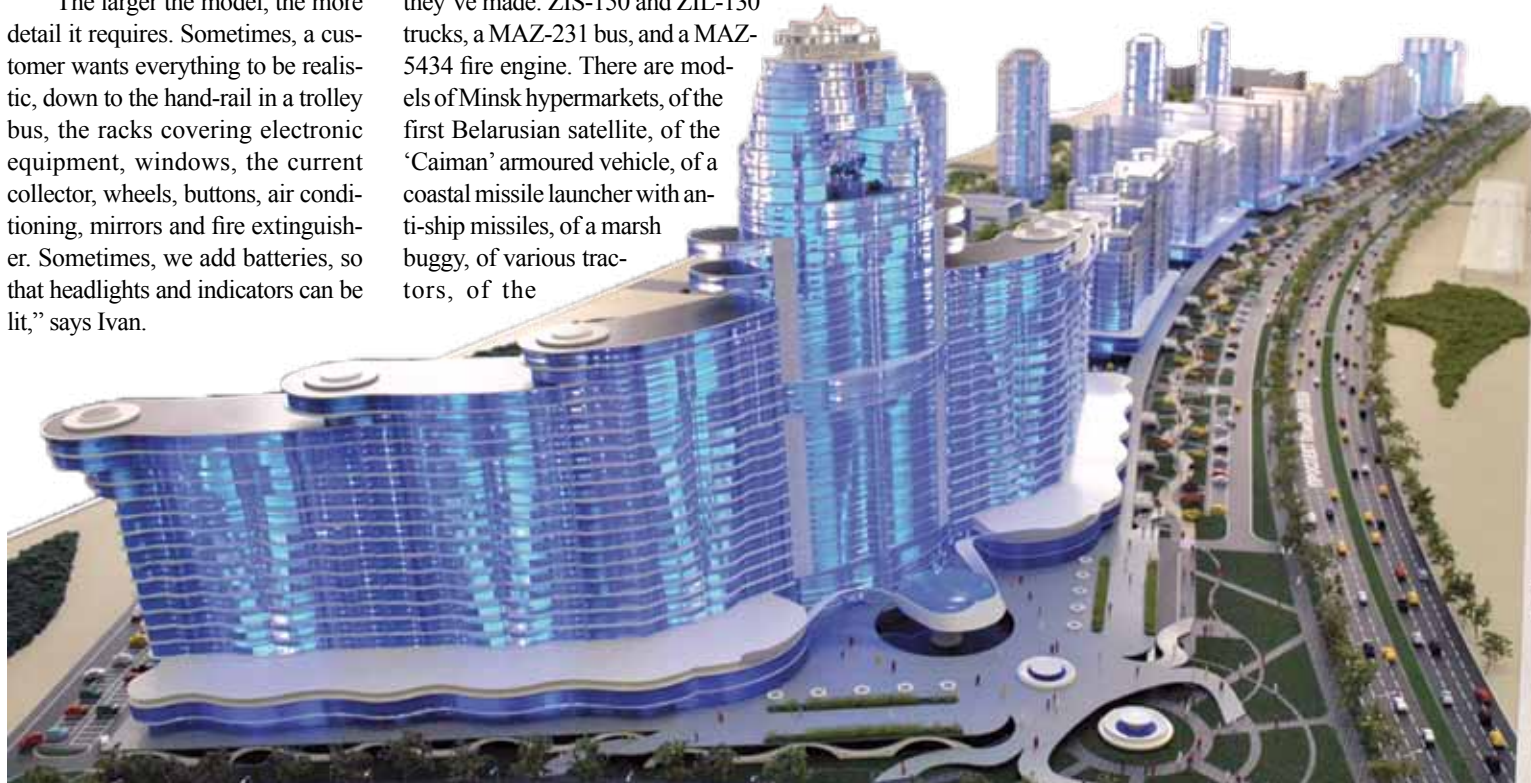
Stadler train and of a Canadian all-terrain vehicle. There's even a model of our embassy in Baku, and another of the hall of the Second World War Museum, with its battering ram tank. There are models of trams from Pyatigorsk and Daugavpils too.

Once, an oligarch from Russia ordered a huge drilling machine. Some customers ask for models plated in gold... Ivan shows me a video, explaining, "We made an interesting model of the cement plant in Krichev, which we illuminated with special lights in various colours, to show how materials for cement making move through the plant."

Customers come not only from Belarus and Russia but from Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. Prices are cheaper here, with those in Lithuania 200 percent higher. He adds, "We rarely follow what happens to the models once they've left us but some go to museums and trade fairs, or are given as gifts. Amkodor-Pinsk placed an or-

der to give to Alexander Lukashenko as a present. The President has our model of the beautification of the bank of the River Naroch, while the Minister of Defence of Russia, Sergey Shoigu, the Head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia, Vladimir Puchkov, and the Mayor of Moscow, Sergey Sobyenin, all have our model fire engines, as does Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev."

We tend to create models for exhibition, at a scale of 1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100. Creating models to a scale of 1:43 is a rarity, as our country has few connoisseurs of miniatures. Moreover, magazines for children and adults offering customers to collect issues containing components and then to assemble a true model from them cost much cheaper. The magazine might only cost Br6 Roubles while our hand-made model cars often sell for \$200. "However, they're worth the price. Like our model trains, the details make them look real."



Japanese companies preparing to unveil new products at CeBIT

A total of 118 Japanese companies are making their way to Hannover for the CeBIT conference

Among the companies in a hub for startup companies creating products destined for the 'Internet of Things' is Cerevo.

It is a firm with a wide range of internet-connected devices — including a lamp controlled by voice command, and virtual reality shoes.

"The shoes are the world's first VR (virtual reality) shoes. Built in are many different types of sensors, and feedback. The motor is inside the shoes. Once we are going to wear these shoes with my foot and walking around the VR world, you can feel the VR world surface — 'oh, here is a



REUTERS

People look on IBM's autonomous driving vehicle during preparations at CeBIT

stone, here is wood, here is the snow' — something like that," explained Takuma Iwasa, CEO, Cerevo.

The Japanese will be at CeBIT to showcase their know-how and pro-

vide a new concept from the government called 'Society 5.0', a vision of an advanced digital world.

Another product making its debut at CeBIT is a tracking sys-

tem from Hitachi. The concept is to gather anonymous data on where people walk, in what direction, and how quickly, to help better manage crowds in public spaces.

Clashes in Brazil as protest against pension reforms turn violent

Thousands of people have taken to the streets across Brazil to protest against pension reforms

The government wants to raise the retirement age as part of its austerity programme. It says the measure is essential to help lift the economy from its worst recession in more than a century.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators however, backed by powerful unions and the popular former president Lula da Silva, have pledged to fight the controversial proposals which are expected to be put to Congress in the second half of this year.

The protests reflect the deep ideological divide among Brazilians, but President Michel Temer has received the backing of senior lawmakers, despite the expansion of a corruption probe that threatens the ruling coalition.

Inditex see profits rise on bigger sales to emerging markets and online growth

Inditex, the world's biggest clothing retailer which is best known for fashion chain Zara, just reported a 10 percent jump in annual net profit

Same-store sales were also up 10 percent in the year to the end of January.

The Spanish firm credited strong growth in emerging markets, as well as a policy of opening bigger stores in prime locations that are then integrated with its expanding online operations.

However, profitability fell due to negative currency effects.

Inditex reports in Euros but makes more than half its sales in other currencies, exposing it to falls in the likes of the Mexican peso and the Russian Rouble.

The company, which has built a business model on speeding the latest trends from fashion show runways to stores in a matter of days, did pull further ahead of its Swedish rival H&M in terms of sales calculated using local currency rates.

Inditex opened stores in 56 countries during the year, including first openings in New Zealand, Vietnam and Paraguay, bringing its total store count to over 7,200.

It launched online sales across its stable of brands in Turkey and said it would start online sales in India in 2017.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Bust of ancient Egypt's ruler is lifted from ditch

A bust of a statue believed to depict one of Egypt's most famous rulers has been lifted out of a Cairo slum

Local archaeologists and a team from Leipzig, Germany, think the quartzite figure could be a likeness of Pharaoh Ramses II, who led Egypt over 3,000 years ago.

The discovery of parts of the eight-metre sculpture and a limestone statue of Ramses II's grandson Pharaoh Seti II, was announced in early March. But they were sub-

merged in groundwater and excavation has proved difficult, so far.

"Now my colleagues of the conservation department in the ministry will work on it, and the colossus, as well as the head, as well as the statue of limestone of the Seti II, will be in display in a few days in the garden of the Cairo museum. It's a big discovery. In my opinion, it's one of the greatest discoveries of the last years," said Khaled al-Anani, Egyptian Minister of Antiquities.

Dutch election: end of domino effect?

For governments across Europe facing a rise of nationalism, it appears there is a huge sense of relief. Dutch centre-right Prime Minister Mark Rutte sealing an election victory — seeing off the challenge of anti-Islam and anti-EU rival Geert Wilders.



Mark Rutte

In the wake of Brexit and Donald Trump in America, Mr. Rutte declared the Netherlands had said 'stop to the wrong kind of populism'.

But delve beneath the headlines, and you will see Wilders' Freedom Party did make gains in this election, showing all is not lost.

So what should the rest of Europe take from this vote, with the big French and German elections looming large?

Many people across Europe are breathing a sigh of relief that Mr. Wilders did not finish in first place. However, he did make gains and the hard-

line policies that he was proposing, he attracted more than one million votes. This is a founding member of the European Union, where policies about banning the Koran and closing mosques appear to be very popular amongst key parts of the electorate.

So, it's far too early to really talk about the end of the domino effect that Mark Rutte was referring to over the past few days. We'll just have to wait and see. Obviously, huge elections coming up in France and Germany, but whether there is any link with Mr Wilders' supposed defeat, we'll have to wait and see.



During opening of the exhibition

Minsk's unique art project makes a stop in Moscow

International contemporary art exhibition — *From Lisbon to Vladivostok via Minsk* — opens at Business and Cultural Complex of Embassy of Belarus to Russia

By Veniamin Mikheev

Initiated by Belarus, the project brings together works by 28 artists, from 27 European countries. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Russia, Igor Petrishenko, noted at the launch in Moscow that the exhibition's title is based on the words of the legendary speech by Charles de Gaulle, in 1959. In Strasbourg, he voiced a thesis on the importance of building a common space 'from Lisbon to the Urals'. Since then, this thesis has not lost its relevance. In fact, it has gained new meaning. Now, we speak of the need for real convergence of European and Eurasian unions and the establishment of a Great Europe, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We need not only economic integration but a common cultural space, without borders.

Symbolically, Minsk — lately a venue for settling international conflict — has taken on the role of a conductor of cultural diplomacy, launching this unique art project. Belarus' Foreign Ministry has joined forces with the Belarusian Embassy to France and Minsk City Executive Committee (under the patronage of UNESCO) to launch the exhibition, which opened last December at the Gallery of People's Artist of the USSR Mikhail Savitsky. Recently, Moscow took up the baton and, as the Charge d'Affaires of Portugal to Russia, Paulo Santos, promises, Lisbon aims to host. There are also hopes for the show to visit Astana.

The exhibition on show in Moscow presents works by

recognised masters of modern art: Zurab Tsereteli from Russia, Victor Alshevsky from Belarus, Lyuben Genov from Bulgaria, Tudor Zbârnea from Moldova, Luis Rodrigues from Portugal, Cornelia Vasilescu from Romania and other young artists. Their works are truly individual yet united in showing the identity of European countries in a common cultural space.

"The scale of this art project involves study, an intellectual journey and creation of a new information space through world capitals. It's an inspiration to see, compare and reflect on the phenomenon of the spiritual culture of each state, capital and author's project, seeking to comprehend the ultimate unity of our spirit," explains artist Victor Alshevsky — the exhibition's curator and a representative of Belarus. The main concept of the art project is the lack of any of the usual themes, underlines Mr. Alshevsky. Each artist selected their own works for inclusion, resulting in great diversity of style, and worldview, while creating a strange harmony.

The exhibition in Moscow was attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Vasily Nebenzya, alongside the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Tigran Sargsyan, and the State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, joined by artists Zurab Tsereteli and Victor Alshevsky. Also in attendance were European ambassadors, and heads of leading galleries, art universities and Moscow schools, Russian charitable societies and cultural centres.



Zurab Tsereteli's works

The Moscow show features paintings by 28 artists, from 27 European countries. According to Mr. Rapota, its diversity, and extraordinary artistic techniques, make it unique. "I love provocative exhibitions," he comments, adding, "A show is a success if it provokes us. The present exhibition worthily represents every taste — making it individual, covering various directions of contemporary art

— including hyper-realism and abstract minimalism. *From Lisbon to Vladivostok via Minsk* offers an intellectual journey into the diverse and fascinating world of painting."

People's Artist of the USSR Zurab Tsereteli admits that he's impressed by the show, and delighted with how his works look amongst the others.

Modern European culture acts as a counterweight to po-

litical, humanitarian and social conflict, drawing on centuries-old traditions, while showing us the most modern forms of painting and sculpture. Minsk has become, in recent years, one of the most active hosts in negotiating the settlement of international conflict in the European region, becoming a centre of cultural diplomacy.

As Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, said at the opening of the exhibition in Minsk, speaking also as the Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO, "Belarus, at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has always sought to promote peace and good neighbourly relations in the region. We stand for the development of friendly relations with other countries of the world, regardless of their geographical location or boundaries. We respect our partners and hope for an appropriate attitude towards Belarus on their part. The opening of this exhibition contributes to Belarusian diplomacy, with a diverse pal-

ette of cultural events taking place in our country."

"It's symbolic that Minsk is becoming a centre of consolidation and building of a common cultural space that brings together countries and peoples," says the Chairman of Minsk City Executive Committee, Andrey Shoretz.

Many artists have brought their works to Minsk, and have attended the opening show, confirming their interest in Belarus as a country and as a centre of the cultural community. The exhibition unites artists living in European capitals, as well as those from Vladivostok — the easternmost city of the Eurasian continent, and from St. Petersburg — the recognised cultural capital of Russia.

Among those attending the Minsk exhibition was Berlin artist Ulrich Uffrecht, who demonstrated his vividly coloured abstract works. He and his wife have been housing refugees from Syria and Afghanistan, and hopes that his artworks bring something positive to the life of people affected by problems. He conjures streets filled with rain, overlooked by the cosy evening light from windows, evoking the urban landscapes with which we are so familiar.

The capital of Portugal was represented by artist Luis Rodrigues, who tells us, "It's important for me not only to reflect my ideas on canvas but to communicate with the audience, to see their reaction to my works. When I received an invitation to come to Minsk, I had no doubt. This is an opportunity to become acquainted with the Belarusian audience."

Transformation of the magic flute into dagger

The Magic Flute has been staged at the Belarusian Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre for almost three decades, enchanting audiences with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's wonderful music. However, we all love to be surprised, which has inspired a 'reboot' for the staging of this much-loved opera, inviting progressive German director who promises a fantasy in the style of *Lord of the Rings* and *Game of Thrones*.

By Natalia Savrasova

Who is this brave man who dares to transform a classical piece into a contemporary performance? German director Hans-Joachim Frey is known to Belarusian opera lovers for his staging of *The Flying Dutchman*, by Richard Wagner, three and a half years ago. He changed the traditional plot in several places, including rewriting the tragic finale. This time, Mr. Frey assures us of even more 'hooliganism'.

A peek inside the Bolshoi Theatre's costume department offers some insight. Diana Abulnagimova, who has worked at the theatre for almost thirty years, is in charge of men's costumes and continues to be amazed by some of the creations envisaged by designers. Austrian Hartmut Schörghofer has sketched those for *The Magic Flute*, using faux leather and braided fabrics to create a 'modern fantasy' feel.

Five horned masks are being used for the performance, which artist-sculptor Tatiana Baidalova notes are unusual, and are sure to surprise the audience. Tatiana throws a 'skull' onto the floor (being used as a helmet) to show us the strength of the materials being used. Like Diana, she's worked at the theatre for almost thirty years, making props, and always inventing something new. For *The Magic Flute*, Tatiana has revived the use of polymer clay to make the 'flute' in the form of a dagger.

The German-Austrian team of Mr. Frey, Mr. Schörghofer and conductor Manfred Mayrhofer is ready to amaze us. The director explains, "The two operas I've worked on for your theatre are absolutely different. *The Flying Dutchman* enjoys Wagner's powerful music; jointly with artistes, we had to penetrate its depth, understanding it and bringing it to the audience. *The Magic Flute* is a beautiful fantasy filled with various stories. It can be perceived as a thriller inside the veneer of a fairy tale. We want to make this shell familiar to modern eyes and



Hans-Joachim Frey reveals his secrets

present perceptions. It's now called 'a fantasy world'. Such films as *Game of Thrones* and *Star Wars* have captured our imagination, so we're attempting to fill this modern-day telling of the fairy tale with imagination, emotions and impressions."

Mr. Frey has chosen *The Magic Flute* — rather than a modern play — for his experiments, having grown up with a love for the opera, which he first heard at the age of seven. By the time he was fifteen, he'd sung in a performance as a soloist. For the past thirty years, the piece has been an integral part of his life, wherever he has worked.



At the rehearsal

He tells us, "At a certain moment, I realised that I admired this opera, and wondered if I could stage it myself. There have been

so many different approaches. When I discussed the idea with performers, we decided that a fantasy world would be a wonderful way of revealing the story. In recent years, fairy tale characters and invented cinema worlds have been presented widely. In *The Magic Flute*, it's difficult to understand when the action takes place: a thousand years ago or three thousand years ago. In this respect, fantasy gives us unlimited opportunities: it covers the historical past and the present."

Mr. Frey won't disclose details, fuelling interest in his unusual setting. What will follow *The Magic Flute*, taking into account

MT REFERENCE:



Hans-Joachim Frey is quite well-known in the European music world. Over the past six years, he has headed the Brucknerhaus Concert Hall, in Linz, simultaneously staging operas in Batumi, Beijing, Vladivostok and other cities. He has worked a great deal in Russia, with Vladimir Putin acknowledging Mr. Frey's efforts, and offering him the position of Artistic Director of the Presidential Cultural Centre in Russia (to develop youngsters' artistic capabilities). This will be located in the former Olympic complex in Sochi. Mr. Frey has no plans to leave his directorial post at the Dresden Semper Opera Ball.

that all good things seem to come in sets of three? "We shouldn't praise the morning until the evening arrives," he says. "Let's just enjoy the first night and, once everyone is satisfied — the audience, the theatre management and myself — we'll start thinking of a third work. It's a great joy for me to return to the Bolshoi Theatre after a three-year break; the theatre occupies a decent place in the Russian-speaking world; it boasts a wonderful opera ensemble, great singers and a good choir. It's a huge honour for me to be entrusted with staging here: first, a Wagner and then a Mozart. I'll return with great pleasure. For now, all my thoughts are about *The Magic Flute*."

Majestic kick in handball

Goal by Belarusian recognised best in 18th round of French Championship

By Igor Svitov

In the last round of the French Handball Championship, Artem Korolek, 21, who plays not only for the Belarusian national team but for Saint-Raphaël (and formerly for

Minsk SKA) sent the ball into Toulouse's net via an overhead kick.

It seemed that the goalie didn't understand what had happened. The goal was recognised as the best in the round, with Saint-Raphaël winning 31:25. After eighteen rounds,

it shares third place with Montpellier (boasting 33 points).

In December 2016, Artem moved to Saint-Raphaël from Minsk SKA, following the final qualification round of the EHF Cup. Minsk SKA lost two match-

es to Saint-Raphaël, sending the French team to the group stage.

By some quirk of fate, two of the three final matches for Minsk SKA saw Artem playing against his new squad, with Korolek scoring 12 goals against Saint-Raphaël.



Artem Korolek's majestic kick



Renan Bressan (on the right)

Head coach has found attackers

By Semen Bondarev

To prepare for match against Swedes, twenty-four players join football team

Igor Kriushenko, as the team's acting head coach, not long ago announced his chosen players for the national team's March matches. Interestingly, he selected four new players for attack (not one or two, as was common under coaches Khatkevich and Kondratiev). One is FC BATE captain Vitaly Rodionov, who was ignored by former coaches for almost three years. Mr. Kriushenko's chosen goalkeepers are Andrey Gorbunov, Sergey Chernik, and Alexander Gutor. Meanwhile, Denis Polyakov and Maxim Volodko, Igor Shitov, Alexander Martynovich, Sergey Politevich, Yegor Filipenko, and Maxim Bordachev and Mikhail Sivakov (both from Orenburg, Russia) are to play in defence.

In midfield, will be Sergey Kislyak, Alexander Hleb, Alex Rios, Yuri Kendysh and Igor Stasevich, Ivan Mayevsky, Stanislav Dragan, Pavel Savitsky and Renan Bressan. Playing forward will be Vitaly Ro-

dionov and Mikhail Gordeichuk, Nikolay Signevich and Maxim Skavysh.

There are no major changes to the composition of the team. Timofey Kalachev is to retire from the national squad, as he previously announced, as will Sergey Kornilenko, largely due to injury (received while playing for Samara's Krylia Sovetov). Having been disqualified during last year's match against Bulgaria, Alexander Hleb won't play in the coming match against the Swedes. With this in mind, Mr. Kriushenko's interest in Renan Bressan (from Portugal's Chaves) is quite understandable.

Nikita Korzun of Kiev Dynamo and Sergey Krivets from Polish Vistula have failed to receive an invitation to the team, primarily due to lack of on pitch experience.

On March 24th, the Belarus national team heads to Stockholm: on March 25th, the Friends Arena will host a qualification match for the 2018 World Cup, at 8pm. The team will then leave Sweden for Macedonia: on March 28th, Skopje is to host a friendly match against its national team.

Flying perfectly into his sporting future

By Dmitry Komashko

Freestyle jumper Stanislav Gladchenko to jump in PyeongChang

Stas Gladchenko is 22 — a 'golden' age for freestyle, and he is often mentioned as being likely to replace Anton Kushnir, the current leader of the Belarusian national team.

Stas seems to have been born under a happy star, as well as having fortunate genes. His father, Alexander, was a great

water ski jumper, winning the European Cup as Soviet champion three times. Meanwhile, his mother was a skier. Alexander took him, at the age of six, to his own coach, Vladimir Dashchinsky, who began training the lad on a ski trampoline.

Vladimir recollects being delighted with Stas from the first, saying, "He was very hardworking; you know, children are often lacking in obedience at this age, but Stas was diligent in following all instructions. He viewed his coach as a Japanese sensei. He was naturally dexterous and had perfect balance."

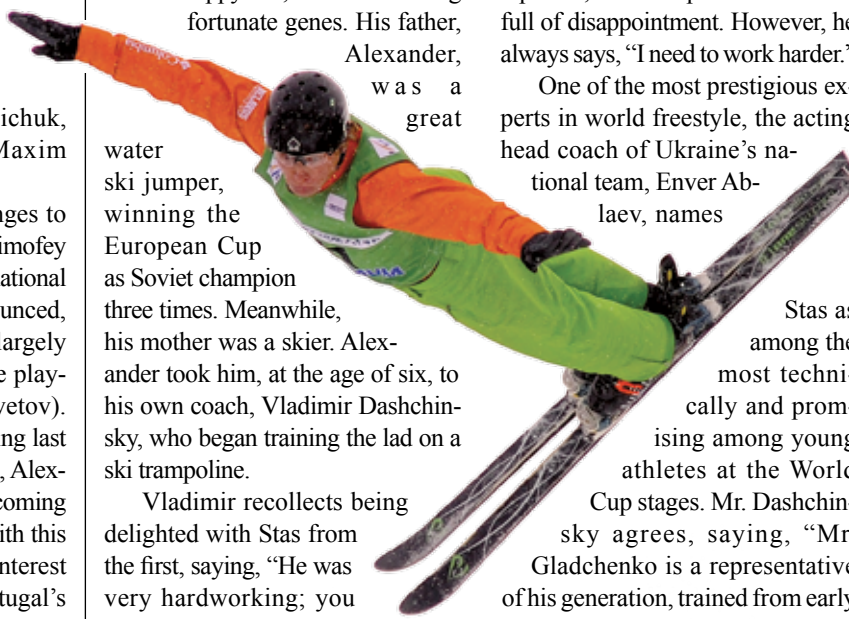
Stas admits that his initial industriousness was a result of his parents' strictness. Happily, Stas quickly realised that diligence bore fruit. "I remember winning my first medal at the national championship. Standing on the medals podium, I thought of how everything had turned out. I then took part in the European Cup

rounds, and realised how much work was still to come. My debut at the World Cup opened up a new world for me: everyone jumped incredibly well!" he recalls.

Stas certainly isn't scared of heights; this season, he's climbed the World Cup pedestal for the first time in his career, taking silver at American Deer Valley. At the recent World Championship, he nearly entered the top three, and was upset with himself, full of disappointment. However, he always says, "I need to work harder."

One of the most prestigious experts in world freestyle, the acting head coach of Ukraine's national team, Enver Ab-laev, names

Stas as among the most technically and promising among young athletes at the World Cup stages. Mr. Dashchinsky agrees, saying, "Mr. Gladchenko is a representative of his generation, trained from early on, according to a carefully planned scheme. The first representatives of Belarusian freestyle were trained in a less organised manner. The second generation — represented by Dmitry Dashchinsky, Alexey Grishin and, even, Maxim Gustik — trained more meaningfully, but still experienced gaps in their skills. However, Mr. Gladchenko was taken on at the age of six, attending training camps from the youngest age. Among freestyle acrobats, the national team of Belarus boasts the best ski training now."



Good gift to tennis fans

By Alexey Grishin

Free tickets to Davis Cup Belarus-Austria match

From 7th-9th April, Minsk's Tennis Palace will host the 2nd round of 2017 Davis Cup Europe/Africa Zone Group I, where Belarus and Austria will have their first men's world championship meeting.

The Belarusian Tennis Federation invites fans to support the team in this important match, which is sure to be spectacular. Entrance will be free.

In February, in the first round, the Belarusian national team of Maxim Mirnyi, Ilya Ivashko, Yegor Gerasimov and Yaroslav Shylo defeated the Romanian squad in Minsk, with a score of 3:2. Austria did not play in the first round.

The national teams of Belarus and Austria will meet for the first time in the Davis Cup. Belarus currently occupies 31st place and Austria 34th.



Sergey Dolidovich

Time to share experience

By Kirill Karin

Famous Belarusian skier Sergey Dolidovich announces retirement, while speaking of his performance at World Championship in Finnish Lahti

Dolidovich, 43, who has participated in six Olympic Games, came 22nd in the 50km marathon at the world event. Even before the start of the 2016/17 season, he had declared his intention to retire, intending to focus on a coaching career. The World Championship is his last event.

He announced, "I lack the strength, drive or reserve to pursue my career. I could go to the Olympics for the seventh time but the thought of it doesn't inspire me. It's time to stop."

Mr. Dolidovich is keen to pursue coaching, although is yet to receive a proposal from the Belarusian Ski Union. The Belarusian skier made his debut at the World Cup in 1993, achieving his highest result in Sochi, during the 2014 Winter Games, where he came 5th in the 50km race.

12 AGENDA

The Minsk Times Thursday, March 23, 2017

Exhibition of the week



Opening of *Creators* photo exhibition by famous photographer Yuri Ivanov, at Minsk's University of Culture Gallery

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 16th April. *The Radziwills: the Fates of the Country and the Family*

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 26th March. *Road to Life Tree* Until 9th April. *Vladimir Mulyavin: Heritage of Great Maestro* Until 9th April. *MirRazh* Until 16th April. Interactive exhibition: *Anatomy of Miracle* Until 1st June 2017. *From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble*

BELARUSIAN STATE MUSEUM OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 16th April. *Army Changes*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st March. *Captured Moments* Until 1st May. *Vladimir Akulov: Moments of Life* Until 30th June. Exhibition of wax figures: *Miraculous Travel*

MUSEUM OF MODERN BELARUSIAN STATE

38 Karl Marx Street
Until 31st March. *Belarus and China: 25 Years of Successful Co-operation*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF MODERN ARTS

47 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 28th March. *Loshitsa Diary*

YAKUB KOLAS STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

5 Akademicheskaya Street
Until 30th September 2017. *In Waves of Endless Movement: Along Kolas' Automobile Paths*

CENTRAL BOTANICAL GARDEN OF BELARUS' NAS

Kalinin Square
Until 30th March. *Small World* Until 30th April. *Lemon Tree Nursery; Colours and Songs of Tropics*

MUSEUM OF BELARUS' MINIATURES

25 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Museum of Miniatures of Belarusian Sights permanent exhibition

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF RSDRP 1ST SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 26th March. *Soviet Poster* Until 2nd April. Exhibition of experiments: *Science Museum*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN FOLK ART IN RAUBICHI

Raubichi village
Until 30th April. *Wedding of Western Polesie*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 ParizhsКОЙ Kommuny Square
23.03. Viva la Mamma! 30.03. The Magic Flute 31.03. Little Prince

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
23.03. Sofia Golshanskaya 24.03. One Thousand and One Nights 25.03. Tours of Lithuania's Russian Drama Theatre: Anna Karenina 26.03. Tours of Lithuania's Russian Drama Theatre: The Snow White and Seven Dwarfs; Hotel of Two Worlds 29.03. Cleopatra 30.03. Buratino.by; The Bat

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
23.03. Double Eternity 24.03. Lion in Winter 25.03. Viva Commedia 26.03. Stars of the Seventh Sky; The Twelfth Night 28.03. Lady for a Day 29.03. Testosterone 30.03. Woe from Wit

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
23 and 24.03. An Unnamed Star 25.03. The Battlefield 26.03. Abduction of Yelena 27.03. Master and Margarita 28 and 29.03. #13 30.03. Robbery at Midnight

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
23.03. Two Souls 24 and 25.03. The Black Lady of Nesvich 25.03. Art 26.03. Kolyady Night 29 and 30.03. Tyke

MODERN ARTS THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
25.03. Comedy about Penny Pincher 26.03. Cinderella; Mad Money 27.03. House Upside-Down

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
24.03. Belvedere Rest House 25.03. Wash'em'Clean 26 and 28.03. The Kid and Karlsson-o-in-the-Roof 29.03. Marynka-Krapiunitsa 30.03. Christmas Story

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
23.03. Gipsy Rada Theatre 24.03. Close People 25-30.03. Bug in Land of Difficult Insects 25.03. Mother Kurazh and Her Children 29.03. Thank You, Margo

BELARUSIAN REPUBLICAN YOUNG SPECTATOR'S THEATRE

26 Engels Street
23 and 29.03. Savage Hunt of King Stakh 25.03. Merry Roger 26.03. Dungeon of Greta Goodwin 28.03. Blue Bird 30.03. Princess Zhabka; Wings of My Youth

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