



Ideas for successful business projects are inspired by real life

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INTERNATIONAL

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## Spiky the Hedgehog named 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship mascot

Minsk hosted an official mascot presentation ceremony for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship to be held in Belarus and Latvia in 2021. The two cities will co-host the event from May 7th-23rd, 2021.

Over 100 entries from Belarusian and Latvian hopefuls competed for the title of the forthcoming worldwide event's mascot. The designers who worked on the project-winner hope that Spiky the Hedgehog will become a favourite of all the fans. "The image of the hedgehog is well suited for the national teams of Belarus and Latvia — known for their intransigence and readiness to fight for victory until the final whistle," added Nikita Ustinovich, the Director of the DAB creative agency which came up with the mascot.



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# Protecting each metre of the border

## President approves the resolution concerning the protection of the state border in 2020

**Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked that border security is a priority of state policy. Therefore, the resolution on the protection of the state border is approved by the President every year. Sadly, the number of challenges and threats on the Belarusian border is not reduced year after year, noted Mr. Lukashenko.**

In his words, flows of illegal migration, drug trafficking and other criminal activities are increasing.

*“There is an escalation of military activities on the other side of our border. Belarus has never threatened anyone and will never threaten anyone in either the economic or the military sphere,” the President said.*

Last year, Mr. Lukashenko made a decision to increase staff numbers

at border protection agencies in order to make them more efficient, set up new border outposts and battle-ready manoeuvre groups, which had ceased to exist after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Such divisions should be able to be effectively deployed for border protection and have cutting-edge equipment for the prompt resolution of emerging issues in various conditions, the Head of State remarked.

He also stressed that Belarus looks forward to greater support and assistance of the European Union in strengthening security on the common border,

*“We need to utilise the interest of the European Union in closer co-operation with Belarus in countering common threats. There are dozens of such common threats facing both Belarus and the EU. Improving the border infrastruc-*



BELTA

*ture is, of course, not cheap. We look forward to greater support and assistance — not only on the part of the European Union: we share the border with the Russian Federation.”*

According to the President, ensuring efficient transit and the attractiveness of Belarus to tourists remains an important issue. The country consistently optimises the visa policy, while keeping the border secure.

Mr. Lukashenko noted,

*“Violations should be detected, and even better anticipated and prevented. Each metre of the border must be protected, including with the help of state-of-the-art technical means, and, of course, with the help of locals, as has always been the case. We need to raise this to the highest level.”*

As the Chairman of the State Border Committee — Anatoly Lappo — later told journalists, the agency is set to expand the border infrastructure and keep demarcating the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. “Last year, we hired more people. We set up six fully-fledged manoeuvring forces and put into operation two border guard stations on the Belarus-Ukraine border,” he added.

The situation on the Belarusian border in 2019 remained stable and predictable. About 4,000 people were detained for violation of border laws. More than 370 of them were detained for illegal border crossing, almost half of the 2018 figures. The decrease in the number of detained border violators was registered in all areas.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**

# Straight and to the point

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Igor Orlov, the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Region, met at the Palace of Independence to discuss joint projects and promising areas of co-operation. Construction, agriculture and field development were among the issues on the agenda. The Head of State emphasised that Belarus is interested in direct contacts with the Russian regions and also shared details of a telephone conversation with Vladimir Putin that took place just before the meeting with the Governor.



Igor Orlov

## Promising directions

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus enjoys sufficient volumes of industrial products and consumer goods for trade with the Russian region. The Head of State believes construction is one of the areas where there are prospects for increasing co-operation, “If you ask us to work on a block of housing on a turnkey basis, to design, conduct research and build — as we usually do in the Russian regions — we’d be grateful: we can show our capabilities.”

The President also said that Belarus is ready to share its experience in agricultural development with the

Arkhangelsk Region. According to the Head of State, it is the development of an efficient greenhouse economy which enables Belarus to grow vegetable products competitive in the Russian market, among others. “We trade not only in Russia but also a considerable amount in the EU and even more in China,” he said.

In addition, the President proposed to organise joint ventures to develop the peat deposits in which the Arkhangelsk Region is rich.

## Important conversation

Aleksandr Lukashenko shared the details of a telephone conversation with Russian President, Vladimir Putin. The heads of state, in particular, discussed energy supplies. “The President of Russia called (you know we sometimes have disputes on certain issues). He made a proposal for us to think about, including on oil supplies to Belarus,” he said, clarifying, “Vladimir Putin proposed to calculate a formula of how much we will lose from reducing the customs duty in 2020 against 2019 levels. For example, if we received \$1bn from duty last year, we’ll get \$700m due to the reduction of this duty this year (it is always decreasing). He said: ‘We’ll compensate \$300m, including

through bonuses to companies’. This is the proposal and is at least a way to resolve the dispute. As for oil, the issue is that Russia is keen to preserve the financial level of oil for the last year. It’s at least a step forward.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that he instructed the Prime Minister to calculate everything and finally reach an agreement on further work in this area.

## Emphasis on practical matters

Later, in his talk with Belarusian journalists, Igor Orlov noted that the Arkhangelsk Region is interested in creating Belarusian residential districts in major cities of the region. In addition, according to the Governor, it is impossible to imagine such industries as agriculture, urban transport and forestry without Belarusian machinery. The Russian delegation is particularly interested in Belarusian technologies for the development of peat deposits.

“All these areas don’t simply strengthen but support the highest level of relations that exists between Russia and Belarus, between the regions. I’m convinced this will further develop,” Mr. Orlov added.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**

# Enough budget resources

**Finance Minister Maksim Yermolovich reported to Aleksandr Lukashenko at Palace of Independence last week**

The Head of State was interested in the situation with the budget, salaries in the public sector and the fulfilment of social obligations. “A week ago, we agreed that you will analyse the budget formation for 2020. Please report on the implementation of the 2019 budget. Tell me about the situation in general. We are now fighting on various economic fronts and such battles always have a financial impact on the budget,” the President said, being interested also in budget implementation.

After reporting to the President, Maksim Yermolovich spoke to journalists, clarifying the issues discussed with Mr. Lukashenko. According to the Finance Minister, the implementation of the 2019 budget was above target in all aspects. Moreover, all social obligations of the state in 2020 envisaged in the budget will be fulfilled. “We are working in a normal regime. We have enough budget resources for urgent expenditure and payment of debts,” Mr. Yermolovich said. “All social obligations — salaries, pensions, financing of budget services and such sectors as health, education and social policy — are provided for in the 2020 budget with an increase compared to 2019.”

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**



# Minsk-Cairo: stake on technology

Last week, the Head of State paid an official visit to Egypt. On the first day, Aleksandr Lukashenko held several rounds of talks with his colleague — Abdel Fattah el-Sisi — and met with the leadership of the House of Representatives and Egyptian parliamentarians. The second day was no less eventful: the President of Belarus visited the new administrative capital of the country, as well as the *Belarus-Egypt: Partnership for the Future* exhibition.

## Partnership dynamics

The two leaders held talks at the Al-Ittihadiya Palace. As protocol dictates, they initially communicated in a narrow and then in an expanded format. Afterwards, the leaders told journalists what had been agreed and how bilateral relations would be built. Aleksandr Lukashenko shared his view, “Belarus and Egypt are important partners. We have great prospects. In recent times, we’ve made significant progress in our co-operation — which is facilitated by the ongoing dialogue between Minsk and Cairo. We have no closed topics, all issues are discussed thoroughly and frankly with the President. This is what today’s talks were like.”

The presidents have met three times in two years and the dynamics of political contacts are fully reflected in economic co-operation. The number of mutually beneficial projects is growing, as does trade turnover: last year, the latter increased by a third to exceed \$140m. The figure is significant, though not the highest possible. Mr. Lukashenko sees growth reserves in expanding industrial co-operation and developing joint ventures, “We started with projects dealing with the establishment of assembly plants in Egypt. The assembly of the Minsk Automobile Plant and the Minsk Tractor Works machinery has been launched and, in the near future, production of Bobruiskagromash, Amkodor and engines of the Minsk Motor Plant will begin. I am convinced that the development of industrial co-operation fully meets the interests of the two countries and enables us to ensure access to the markets of neighbouring African countries — which is very important for us. God willing we will be able to access the hundred million market of Egypt. From Cairo, we can work together for almost the entire North African area, also considering ways to further jointly penetrate into the continent.”

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi did not object, especially since Cairo, of course, has its own interest in developing such co-operation. “The location of Egypt and Belarus on the international map will open new markets for Egyptian and Belarusian products in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as in the Arab world and African countries. This will be facilitated by the creation of a free trade zone in Africa and the signing of the same agreement between Egypt and the EAEU countries, as well as the formation of a special economic zone of the Suez Canal,” he said.

The Belarusian side is interested in participating in the creation of this zone. Mr. Lukashenko commented, “Belarus is very interested in participat-

ing in large-scale projects initiated by the Egyptian leadership, first of all, in creating a special economic zone of the Suez Canal, focused on exports.”

In addition, Belarusian partners could take part in modernisation of Egyptian enterprises. According to Belarus’ Industry Minister — Pavel Utyupin, it’s a chance for the domestic machine tool industry. With this in mind, the promotion of high-tech products to Egypt — with the subsequent creation of joint ventures — as the President of Belarus mentioned — has been placed correctly.

## Diplomatic proposal

Our countries enjoy full mutual understanding on the world arena as well. “We stand for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts, against all types of hybrid wars, as well as artificial destabilisation of the situation in different countries,” the President of Belarus said. “Belarus condemns all manifestations of terrorism and expresses its full support for Egypt’s efforts to combat this threat. We know what role Egypt plays in the fight against terrorism and what contribution the state has made to countering it.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko is confident that, through joint efforts, the countries will be able to bring co-operation to a qualitatively new level, “We are always happy to see you in Belarus. The people of Belarus know you well and respect you. You will always be a welcome guest in the centre of Europe — just as you receive us here.”



Cairo

The opening of an Egyptian embassy in Minsk will help speed up the implementation of plans. As Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei explained to journalists, earlier the Belarusian side provided Egypt with several sites to choose from for building an embassy, “After a certain period of reflection, they have activated this process, and now the plots are under consideration. We are waiting for an answer. We are ready to open an embassy. I think this will serve as an incentive to deepen our interaction.”



## City of the future

On the second day of his official stay in Egypt, Aleksandr Lukashenko visited the new administrative capital of the country and, jointly with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, familiarised himself with the progress of its construction. At the same time, businessmen agreed on new contracts at the first meeting of the Belarusian-Egyptian Business Co-operation Council.

The concept of a large-scale project to build a new administrative capital was presented several years ago. The Egyptian authorities developed it to solve the problem of overpopulation in Cairo: according to forecast estimates, the city’s population may reach 40m by 2050.

Mr. Lukashenko was informed that

centres, a new international airport and a high-speed railway to Cairo.

## Machinery issue

Before leaving for the airport, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi returned to the Al Masa Capital complex to view an exhibition of joint scientific and technical projects. The Egyptian President was introduced to Belarusian developments in the military, medical, industrial and engineering fields. Then the heads of state visited an exhibition featuring Belarusian-Egyptian products: MAZ trucks, MTZ tractors, Amkodor, Bobruiskagromash and Minsk Motor Plant vehicles.

## Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

## ON THE TOPIC

The talks in Cairo ended with the signing of a number of bilateral documents: an intergovernmental executive programme on co-operation in higher education and an agreement on co-operation and mutual assistance in customs matters. A memorandum of interaction was signed by the foreign ministries; it envisages the creation of a high-level joint commission on bilateral co-operation and political dialogue between Belarus and Egypt at the level of foreign ministers. As Belarus’ Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei explained, the commission aims to force all ministries and departments of both countries to work in close co-operation, so that there are no bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties. Another memorandum of co-operation was signed between the National Bank of Belarus and the Central Bank of Egypt.

## DIRECT SPEECH

### Mostafa Kamel Hadhoud, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Egypt’s agriculture company:

*In the last three years, Belarusian machinery has entered the Egyptian market with the first tractors. MTZ is already a brand here. Belshina, Bobruiskagromash, Gomselmash, Amkodor have recently diversified their line of cars here and we are now talking about assembling almost all Belarusian equipment in Egypt. We plan to localise more than 40 percent, to sell in Africa. We will sign this agreement at the current business forum.*

## COMPETENTLY

### Belarus and Egypt plan to launch joint production of drones

Vladimir Ulakhovich, the Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has told reporters that — in parallel to the official programme of the President’s visit — a contact and co-operation exchange was held gathering over 30 Belarusian and more than 120 Egyptian companies which represented various fields — including mechanical engineering, petrochemistry, food and new technologies. In addition, a meeting of the Belarusian-Egyptian Business Co-operation Council was held in the format of a business forum. Contracts worth about \$16m are ready for signing and Mr. Ulakhovich commented, “There are serious technological opportunities. In particular, we expect that there will be a noticeable and rapid movement in the production of drones developed in our country. If everything works out, we’ll start this year.”



# Industrial, agricultural and humanitarian co-operation



The Government hosted a meeting of Prime Minister Sergei Rumas and Georgia's Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Natia Turnava, who came to our country to participate in a session of the Belarusian-Georgian intergovernmental commission on trade-economic co-operation. The PM expressed his confidence that the visit would contribute to the development of relations between the two states.



By Olga Korneevea

"I am convinced that — by co-operating with Belarus — Georgia can successfully solve important social and economic problems, such as providing the population with comfortable and environmentally friendly passenger transport, high-quality and inexpensive medicines, food and other Belarusian products. We are ready to move forward in both industrial and also agricultural co-operation," Mr. Rumas said.

At present, Georgia assembles Belarusian elevators and packag-

ing medicines. Belarusian business is interested in establishing milk processing and dairy production facilities in Georgia. Georgian cognac is bottled in Minsk. In addition, Georgia has a desire to update its fleet of fire-fighting vehicles. Tbilisi is also planning to purchase cars for the metro.

"We have already supplied Stadler's cars, and I've heard they have proven their worth in Tbilisi. Agricultural engineering companies are also ready to fully meet the demands of Georgian farmers in advanced vehicles and attachments. We have exper-

ience in adjusting their technical specifications to the soil and climatic conditions of Georgia," the Prime Minister added.

Apart from our significant economic liaisons, we should not forget about humanitarian co-operation. Projects in healthcare are being implemented and the participation of Belarusian specialists in the launch of a Georgian liver transplantation programme can be considered the first landmark project.

Mr. Rumas stressed that Georgia is an important and time-tested partner of Belarus.

"It is important that we maintain good dialogue at a high level. We maintain stable trade links. Georgia works better on this front, as your export to Belarus has been growing at a faster rate," he noted, adding that Belarus also has something to offer.

In turn, Natia Turnava said that the countries have grounds to intensify co-operation in different areas, "There is every possibility of even closer co-operation in the economy, energy, transport, tourism, healthcare, culture, education and innovations."

Mr. Rumas also announced

that, this March, he plans to go to Georgia. He expressed confidence that this will further strengthen Belarusian-Georgian co-operation.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Georgia, Mikhail Myatlikov, later said that an economic forum will be held during the PM's visit, organised by the two states' chambers of industry and commerce. A dairy plant with Belarusian capital is to open, receiving Belarusian raw materials for its production. The company will be called Tbilisi Dairy Plant.



## New large scale project abroad

Belorusneft signs contract with India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

By Igor Svetlov

The project will be one of the major activities for the Belarusian oil engineering industry in recent years. As part of the contract, Belorusneft will provide services to India's ONGC such as works to increase oil recovery. "The Belarusian company has won a tender held to choose surface-active agents designed to increase reservoir recovery. Specialists of Belorusneft's Oil Industry Research Institute — BelNIPIneft — will carry out the research," say company staff. Attention will be focused on six mature fields located in various parts of India.

According to specialists, these areas have high water content. "The key task of the project is to increase the development of the remaining resources using tertiary methods or flooding with surface-active agents,"

Belorusneft's representatives add.

The Indian contract will be implemented in two stages. A pilot design project will be worked out. Laboratory tests will be performed to select effective compounds for specific sites. Pilot tests will be arranged later on to introduce the best agents at the fields.

When a Belarusian delegation visited India, the sides determined technical and organisational aspects of the work. BelNIPIneft will have nine months to provide engineering services.

ONGC accounts for 71 percent of crude oil extraction and 81 percent of natural gas extraction in India. The company satisfies about 30 percent of the country's demand for crude oil. The corporation participates in surveying and consequent development of hydrocarbon deposits in 26 sedimentary basins in India.

## Belarusian brands in United Arab Emirates



By Natalia Yemelyanova

Belarusian food featured at the world's largest trade show — *Gulfood* — in Dubai

The 'Belarus. The Taste of Nature' exposition showcased products from nine exporters of meat, dairy products and confectionery: Bellakt, Lida Milk Plant, Rogachev Milk Canning Factory, Slutsk Cheese-Making Plant, Turov Dairy Plant, Primemilk, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, Slonim Meat Processing Plant and Lidapishchekontsentraty. All have ISO certificates meeting international standards for food safety management, in addition to Halal certificates.

At the exhibition — organised with the support of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Embassy of Belarus in the UAE, the Consulate-General in Dubai, Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Belarus' Agriculture and Food Ministry — Belarusian participants held seminars and presentations of domestic products. The Be-

larusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised the *Gulfood Breakfast Briefing* conference to discuss trends in the UAE food market and also the UAE customs and logistic regulations on food imports.

The participants of the Belarusian exposition also held negotiations with buyers and importers from over 190 countries. Last year, Belarusian enterprises signed contracts worth \$13m after the exhibition but the organisers believe there is reason to expect higher results this time.

The success of the trade show is partially determined by its venue. The United Arab Emirates is the world's third largest re-export market behind Hong Kong and Singapore. More than 80 percent of food in the Gulf Co-operation Council Region, which includes Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia, are imported through the UAE.

In 2019, Belarus exported \$95m of products to the UAE.





# Import substitution on the rise

## Ideas for successful business projects are inspired by real-life problems

**One of the innovative developments of Vitebsk's machine builders is the highest lift in Eastern Europe, reaching to the 20th floor. It is no surprise that the company's sales geography covers whole continents. This is one of the many examples of successful business projects that offer Belarusians high-quality replacements for imports.**

The Vitebsk Lifting Equipment and Special Machinery Plant has a wide sales geography, including Georgia, Serbia and Mongolia. The units assembled in Vitebsk operate even in New Zealand. Ten years ago, the company occupied an almost empty niche and immediately focused on foreign markets. The General Director of Vitebsk Lifts machine-building company, Andrey Sidorov, recalls, "We were initially engaged in exploitation and began to understand that we needed to do things differently. We now have export-oriented products of innovative technology, high-strength materials and design solutions. We've actively entered the market, displacing the main competitors in terms of price-quality comparison."

The company has no warehouse for storing ready-made machinery: it operates exclusively to the order, performing the buyers' most complex technical tasks. For example, some might need a lift to be installed on a small manoeuvrable car to also be able to use it at an incredible height. One of the innovative developments of Vitebsk's machine builders is the highest lift in Eastern Europe; it is 52m tall and helps reach the 20th floor. Few companies produce such equipment in the world — these are in Germany, Italy, Finland and South Korea. However, the Belarusian lift is much cheaper.

Another example in the top ten is Shchuchin's private enterprise for processing whey. When it was launched, no one in Belarus was engaged in processing this raw material, though it's impossible to im-

agine the food industry without whey-fat concentrate as it's used in the production of spreads, sour cream and yogurts, processed cheeses and fillings for sweets and various glazes. Belarus imported this product and France alone supplied monthly up to a thousand tonnes. Director Anatoly Belyavsky notes, "Our company was set up and the market share of consumption of whey-fat concentrates in our country is now 100 percent satisfied. In addition, the company's products are sold in 26 countries."

The production process is autonomous and human intervention is excluded. Moreover, the incoming raw material does not come into contact with the air at all af-

approach: there's no need to invent the bicycle, we simply needed to learn from world technologies, buy equipment and launch competitive production,

**"We still import so much: from toothpicks to engines. Import substitution is a very important issue. There's no need to invent anything, we should install tools, technological equipment and produce components."**

Products of the Dobrush Paper Mill could become an example of successful import substitution. In line with the business plan, it should have been producing coated cardboard — popular in the publishing sphere and packaging production

Lukashenko, visiting the company, clearly stated that import substitution is a strategic task for Belarusian manufacturers.

**"We must produce all these domestically, if necessary. We need to earn currency, so it is advisable not to pay it away. We will turn to import substitution seriously."**

The Miory Metal Rolling Plant also aims to earn foreign currency. This revolutionary facility is being built in line with the state programme of innovative development and the Presidential decree and envisages 300m Euro of investment and over 600 jobs. The enterprise is now 90 percent ready and will soon produce the first batch of tin-plate which enjoys demand both in Belarus and abroad. The manufactured products will include tin cans, covers for pickled products, containers for paints and varnishes, perfumery and cosmetics. Belarusian companies whose products are subject to packaging in thin sheet steel buy it from abroad: at least 30,000 tonnes a year. The Miory plant will annually produce 240,000 tonnes of tin-plate — which is eight times more than our country needs. The remaining volumes will be exported. Belarusian metallurgists have an undeniable advantage in comparison with competitors from Russia and Kazakhstan: the ability to reduce the thickness of the packaging by half.

This import substitution project has a huge side effect, and it is extremely positive. Construction of a large factory has pushed the development of the social sphere: a new hospital has been launched, a polyclinic and a cardio-centre are being designed, a modern apartment block has been built for the company specialists and a kindergarten is soon to open. Specialists are now returning to this small town and people come even from abroad to work here. These are the 'imports' that work for us.

**Based on the materials of TV News Agency's special project**



Shchuchin Primemilk JSC processes whey and produces whey-fat concentrate



Installation works in workshops of the new plant for production of sheet metal and tin-plate are in full swing in Miory

### DIRECT SPEECH

**Yuri Chebotar, Belarus' Deputy Economy Minister:** Production of our import substituting products is already close to \$20bn. According to our estimates, these account for 40 percent of industrial production.

*The share of sales of import substituting products abroad has increased to 50 percent: in other words, we import half of the products which means they are not only competitive in the domestic market but also enjoy demand abroad.*

ter being pumped into tankers and before the final product is released. At least 70 tonnes of finished products are made daily and soft cheese production is planned.

There are many examples of successful business projects that offer Belarusians high-quality replacements for imports. Ideas are suggested by real-life issues and the Head of State promotes a reasonable

— for five years but the long-running modernisation has affected the plans. However, a year of the new line idlesse costs \$100m: this sum is spent by Belarus to import the products that could be made in Dobrush. The situation affected not only workers but also the development of the country's economy. This explains the attention of the Head of State to the problem. Aleksandr

### NEWS IN BRIEF



**Belarusian confectioners win 16 medals at the IKA/Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart (Germany)**

The event was attended by more than 2,000 confectioners and cooks from all over the world. In five days, 22,000 dishes were cooked, with Belarusian confectioners presenting the most complex art compositions made of chocolate, mastic, marzipan, pastille and salted dough using various manufacturing techniques — to win 9 gold, 5 silver and 2 bronze medals.

The IKA/Culinary Olympics is organised by the World Association of Chefs' Societies (WACS) and is held once every four years. This is a kind of Olympic Games in the culinary and confectionery sphere. In 2016, at this competition, the team of Belarusian confectioners won 5 gold, 11 silver and one bronze medal.

**Ticket sales for the 29th International Festival of Arts — Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk — are launched**

For fans of the festival, its Directorate holds a campaign until March 20th: *First 29 Days in Honour of the 29th Festival*. There is a 10 percent discount for tickets



bought in the Summer Amphitheatre and Vitebsk Concert Hall.

The *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* Festival will be held from July 13th-21st, with the official opening ceremony scheduled for July 16th. The closing ceremony will take place on July 20th. Among the main events of the forum will be the 29th *Vitebsk-2020* International Pop Song Contest, the 18th *Vitebsk-2020* International Children's Music Contest. The *Festival Picnic* open air event and the *On Seven Winds* Street Art Fest are expected to be interesting events.

**Belarusian border guards hand the Victory Relay to representatives of the Russian border service**

The ceremony was held at the Friendship Mound in the Verkhnedvinsk District, at the junction of the borders of Belarus, Latvia and Russia.

The Victory Relay started on February 5th in Brest and Russian Murmansk, to continue through ten countries along two routes. In Belarus, it has visited many localities. Rallies, meetings and concerts were held with the participation of border service servicemen, public organisations and veterans.



The symbol will continue its glorious journey along the external borders of the CIS and, on May 28th, it will come to Moscow — at the Monument to the Border Guards of the Fatherland, on Poklonnaya Hill.

**National Statistical Committee announces 2019 census results**

As the 2019 census indicates, 9,413,446 people reside in Belarus, with the Minsk Region in the lead (1,471,240). The Gomel Region is the second most populated (1,388,512), followed by the Brest Region (1,348,115). 1,135,731 people live in the Vitebsk Region, 1,026,816 — in the Grodno Region, and 1,024,751 — in the Mogilev Region. Minsk's population has increased significantly: 2,018,281. According to the National Statistical Committee, it was at 1,986,572 last year.

The population census — third in the country's sovereign history — was held last October, with three ways of participation available: to fill in a census form online, at a census site, or with the help of a census-assistant at home.







34travel.me



Aleksey Stolyarov

By Olga Kruchenkova

The simplification of the visa regime and direct flights contributed but the Director of the Republican Centre for Health and Spa Treatment of the Population — Gennady Bolbatovsky — believes the ratio of price to the quality of services was

key. “The high quality of medical services is a brand of Belarusian health resorts. These well-equipped modern complexes use advanced equipment and spa therapy technologies. The total revenue from exports of services was around \$100m. The year was a success for the system as a whole. For the first time, we exceeded the figures for the occupancy of the resorts and the numbers of children admitted for recuperation: over 55 percent of young guests recovered there in 2019 — which is the largest figure so far. Last year, almost 800,000 people took advantage of free and cheaper vouchers (the price was cut at the expense of the budget),” he explains.

At the moment, 303 places are on the list of Belarusian health resorts and

# No subtropics needed

## Our resorts set new records

**More than 1.3 million people visited Belarusian health resorts last year and, for the first time in ten years, the average occupancy rate rose to 84 percent. 2019 also proved a record year with regards to children’s health improvement and guests from abroad: with 243,000 foreign visitors.**

these can also be supplemented by recreation centres and summer camps. Health improvement, treatment and travel services are very popular and profitable businesses in any country.

The geography of exports of spa and wellness services is constantly expanding and our resorts are welcoming guests from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Germany, Italy, Israel and China.

On average, a one day stay at a Belarusian health resort costs about \$26 (in equivalent) but there are also more expensive (\$70 and above) proposals. Meanwhile, the 2019 results showed that the demand for health and wellness services remains stable and many projects are set for 2020. Not all have managed to increase the growth of revenue from exporting services, we also

lack promotion on the international market and multilingual Internet sites. It’s also necessary to continue creating conditions for people with disabilities. Requirements for the medical profiles of institutions will also be tightened and this area needs to be developed and maintained. After all, the most profitable investments are those in health treatment and recuperation. A healthy nation means a rich nation.

Over \$50m (or 10 percent more) of additional services — not included on a standard voucher — were provided, and the highest rate was shown by health resorts in the Grodno Region (121 percent), followed by Brest (114 percent).

# New trend in Belarus’ image

## Specialists-in-demand come to our country to stay

By Konstantin Bakun

The global labour market is no longer divided by state borders. Countries actively compete for high-quality specialists and seek to attract them to work in their economies. An increasing flow of labour is a trend that is gaining strength all over the world, including in our country: many in-demand specialists come to Belarus and they have become the focus of a book — *Taste IT in Belarus* — released jointly by the Foreign Ministry and Minsk’s Wargaming Development Centre. The official presentation of the publication was held in the National Press Centre.

The book features a collection of the stories of IT specialists who have lived and worked all over the world but decided to stay in Minsk — speaking not only about the people but also the urban environment, national cuisine and the IT cluster. The book will be distributed at specialised conferences and Belarus’ representations around the globe. A second edition — in English — is also planned.

The Head of the Department of Information and Digital Diplomacy, the Foreign Ministry’s spokesman — Anatoly Glaz — believes the initiative is a good example of public-private partnership, “The project shows a new trend in the image and positioning of our coun-



Vladimir Shlapak

At the official book presentation

try in the international arena. We should speak of Belarus not only as a hospitable country with considerable tourist potential but also as a place for a comfortable life and the professional development of everyone — regardless of gender, age and I’d like to specially emphasise, their country of origin.”

The author of the idea and producer of the *Taste IT in Belarus* project, an employee of Minsk’s Wargaming De-

velopment Centre — Kristina Mikhalleva — tells us more about the book’s characters. They have all worked and lived in different countries, including the United States, Italy, Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan but ultimately chose to stay in Belarus. “Minsk is now becoming a top city for the IT industry. Professional projects for the whole world are developed here. Our characters’ stories prove the point,” she says.



BELTA

# Spring recovery comes in winter

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

**Spring grouse arrival has begun in the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve. This is the earliest start to the breeding season for this species, since observation of the phenological phenomena of birds started at this environmental institution.**

Field studies by the zoologists at the reserve took place on the Postrezhskoe bog. On February 11th, scientists recorded 16 males voicing the mating call, later joined by the female birds. “This could have been triggered by this year’s abnormally warm and light snowy winter. Both day-time and night-time air temperatures on the day of

observation exceeded 3 degrees Celsius. Such weather conditions are more typical for March: there was practically no snow cover in the swamp, no wind, and no precipitation — an ideal setting for courtship matches,” they said in the reserve, noting that it’s still premature to talk about the continuation of the season.

Usually, spring arrival of black grouse in preparation for mating in the south of the area begins in late February and early March. In the north of the habitat, in the reserve, the time for courtship fights usually falls in the last week of March. At first this is only singing by individual males at the feeding place, but gradually the intensity of the mating call

increases. And only then do the males begin to gather in the mornings for their competitive displays.

Remarkably, not far from the newly discovered lekking ground, scientists noticed a pair of white-tailed eagles — natural enemies of grouse. Their nest here was first noted two years ago. “Eagles usually appear at nesting sites in the first half of March. The earliest observation in the Vitebsk Region was recorded on March 1st, and in the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve — no earlier than March 9th,” added the environmental institution.

In total, about 300 grouse and 3-5 pairs of eagles are registered in the reserve, depending on the year.



# The experience economy: rapid growth and clear prospects



Rynkovka Homestead tourist complex

The national character of Belarusians with their tolerance, sincerity and cordiality naturally fits into the hospitality industry: picturesque nature, an absence of social unrest, a rich history and distinctive culture as a manifestation of the Belarusian soul. This mentality, on the one hand, and state support, on the other, have created the brand that we're now proud of — agro-ecotourism. No industry has ever known such a rapid rise. In just three years since the signing of the President's Decree 'On Measures for the Development of Agro-ecotourism in the Republic of Belarus', the number of rural tourism facilities has increased more than ten times.



By Yelena Klimovich

## Who was there at the start

The pioneer of rural tourism, Eduard Voitekhovich — at that time the Director of the Svir vocational school, specialising in training machine operators, and today Head of the educational and practical institution for supporting entrepreneurship, BIKomarovo, in the Myadel District — likes to quote Plutarch: 'I live in a very small city, and I'd love to stay there so that it may never become smaller'. The small homeland for the Voitekhovich family — their village — is the most beloved place in the whole world. How do we make rural life better than in the city? Eduard turned this idea into his life's work and began to lead by his own example. In 2002, on the advice of a friend from Poland, he opened the Podkostelok farmstead. Then, based on his experience, he wrote a book on rural tourism.

"In 2006, thanks to his work with others, including with the owner of the Ganka agro-estate, Anatoly Gants, and the Chair of the Country Escape Agro- and Eco-tourism Public Association, Valeria Klitsounova, we presented materials to the State Control Committee about the possibilities in this area of activities which open up the region for villagers," the entrepreneur recalls. "On our initiative, the most liberal and best decree on agro-ecotourism was prepared and signed by the President. It's even better than in western countries. The document gave a powerful impetus to the development of this industry."

There were those who believed that rural tourism would take root, that our village huts could be equal to French or Swiss chalets. No one could have imagined that we would soon compete with such a recognised leader in this field as Italy.

"Gradually, we came to the creation of a business incubator to teach people how to develop the rural economy. It may seem strange but it's easier to start a small business, with less investment. Today, Germany is not just a Mercedes or a Bosch, it's a small business. About 80 percent of GDP is created by people from small enterprises. We need to learn that it's not necessary to just copy; we must try to do this in our own way but learn from the best. Tourism without small business will never be the tourism that we need.

His thoughts, in general, are consonant with those of the President.



## Attractive features of agro-ecotourism

Agro-ecotourism does not amount to entrepreneurial activity. The decree was adopted in order to give additional income to villagers. The most attractive point is a symbolic tax. In fact, this is one of the most preferential areas of activity in Belarus. Of course, businessmen with solid incomes had their attention drawn to such benefits. It was not difficult for them to turn into rural residents and take advantage of preferences. Gorgeous tourist complexes such as Nanosy-Novoselie in the Myadel District have developed. In 2006, there were only 34 agro-estates, and, in 2018, there were already almost 2,500. Businesses and farmers also focused on agro-ecotourism. In the Minsk Region, for example, seven agricultural organisations are engaged in this business. In all, more than 800 farmsteads are operating in the Minsk Region. Last year, these were visited by about 200,000 tourists who paid over \$5m for their holidays.

In 2017, the President, listening to the wishes of the tourism community, signed a decree that regulated some of the issues from the previous document. A wide range of additional services was fixed, allowing them to hold presentations, anniversaries and banquets. A residential building to accommodate guests can belong both directly to the owner and to members of his family. In this case, the construction of guest houses that are not subject to inclusion in the housing stock is allowed. Indeed, there is no difference to holidaymakers in how the structure is designed; the main thing for them is comfort, and more recently, content. Three Ss are replaced by three Ls: the sun, sea, sand are replaced with landscape, legacy and leisure. And here the Belarusian village has lots to offer!

## Creativity is most important

In terms of leisure, the owners of agro-estates are inventors! In many places, whole expositions are on show, dis-



Nanosy ethno-cultural complex



Alla Nizhnik — the host of Zarechany Homestead — treats her guests

playing all kinds of antiquities, retro cars, irons, samovars and radios. The Volozhin District's Koni-Poni estate boasts horse-drawn agricultural equipment of different eras — from a wooden plough to an engine. Stagecoaches, boats, kayaks, bicycles, horseback riding and hiking, river rafting, performances and ceremonies, workshops on various crafts, baking bread and cheese — all for a moderate fee. Guests have equally good impressions from their hospitable tables. However, holiday prices do vary; you can find a house from \$10 to \$60 per day, and this is not the limit.

Creating a cluster is not a one-day business, but the advantages of the association have already been appreciated in the Volozhin and Kobrin districts. The farmsteads of Svisloch, Volkovysk and Zelva districts now give rise to the idea of a single tourist product.

Everyone dreams of foreign guests, but Belarusians visit the farmsteads most of all. These account for about 70 percent and only 30 percent of visitors are foreigners. The picture is fundamentally different in the border regions of Brest and Grodno, focused on guests from abroad. On average, they take breaks of 4 days



Nikolaevskie Prudy eco-tourist complex

away from the city's noise.

Today in Belarus there are generally two operating clusters: Volozhinskie Gostintsy and Mukhovetska Kumora. This is clearly not enough. It's necessary to establish relations with tour operators and to certify more estates. It's also necessary to train the owners of the newly opened estates, including in the English language.

At present, the experience economy — the best-selling product in the 21st century — is coming to the forefront. Everyone needs to find their enthusiasm and the creativity of local residents is the main component of success, attracting tourists to the region.

INSIDE

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## Tapestries by Raphael make brief return to the Sistine Chapel

**An artistic masterpiece conceived by the Renaissance master Raphael was on display for one week in the Sistine Chapel to help celebrate the 500th anniversary of the artist's death**

'It's an important moment' and a way to celebrate a truly great artist, Barbara Jatta, the Director of the Vatican Museums, said. Raphael died in Rome on Good Friday, April 6th, 1520, at the age of 37.

The enormous tapestries designed by Raphael for the lower walls of the chapel were in the Sistine Chapel, 'putting them in the place they were

commissioned for in 1515 and where (some) were hung in 1519', Jatta said. The tapestries are normally displayed behind glass on a rotating basis elsewhere in the museums.

The colourful and detailed tapestries depict the lives of Sts. Peter and Paul and events from the Acts of the Apostles. They were designed to specifically correspond to the frescoed images higher on the walls depicting scenes from the lives of Moses and Jesus, and Michelangelo's images from the story of Genesis.

After Michelangelo had completed the Sistine Chapel ceiling in 1512, Pope

Leo X wanted to leave his mark on the chapel, but every surface had already been painted by Michelangelo, Pietro Perugino, Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio.

Pope Leo chose the young and rising star, Raphael, to create the designs for a special set of tapestries for the chapel's lower walls, whose panels had already been adorned with 'trompe l'oeil' drapery. Tapestries were a popular art form at the time and the church liked to use them for special liturgical ceremonies. Miraculously, they have survived the centuries despite numerous unfortunate events.

## Scientists built a genius device that generates electricity 'out of thin air'

**Scientists have worked out a way to generate energy from nothing but the air around us, and not by using wind turbines**

Researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst have developed a device that uses a natural protein to create electricity from humidity and moisture present in the air across the globe. They say the new technology could have change the face of renewable energy with the potential to put the brakes on climate change by burning fewer fossil fuels.

The 'Air-gen' or air-powered generator contains tiny electrically conductive wires called protein nanowire, which are produced by microbes. The generator connects electrodes to the nanowires meaning electricity is generated from water vapour in the atmosphere.

"We are literally making electricity out of thin air," says electrical engineer Jun Yao, who was behind the invention alongside microbiologist Derek Lovley.

The new technology developed is non-polluting, renewable and low-cost. The pair claim it can generate power even in areas with extremely low humidity and has advantages over solar and wind energy because the 'Air-gen' does not require sunlight or wind, even working indoors.

"The ultimate goal is to make large-scale systems," adds Yao. "For example, the technology might be incorporated into wall paint that could help power your home. Or, we may develop stand-alone air-powered generators that supply electricity off the grid. Once we get to an industrial scale for wire production, I fully expect that we can make large systems that will make a major contribution to sustainable energy production."

## Indonesia's most active volcano Merapi erupted

**The pre-dawn eruption lasted just under two minutes and the ash cloud could be seen for miles around**

Indonesia's Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, erupted as fiery red molten lava streamed down from the crater and it belched clouds of grey ash 2,000 metres into the sky.

Authorities did not raise the rumbling volcano's alert status after the early-morning eruption, but they advised commercial planes to take caution in the area.

But any activity at Merapi raises concern and local residents were ordered to stay outside a three-kilometre no-go zone around the rumbling crater near Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta.

Volcanic ash rained down on a 10-square kilometre area, according to the Volcanology and Geological Haz-

ard Mitigation Centre.

Mount Merapi's last major eruption in 2010 killed more than 300 people and forced the evacuation of some 280,000 residents.

It was Merapi's most powerful eruption since 1930, which killed around 1,300 people, while another explosion in 1994 took about 60 lives.

The Southeast Asian archipelago has more than 17,000 islands and islets — and nearly 130 active volcanoes.

It sits on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire', a vast zone of geological instability where the collision of tectonic plates causes frequent quakes and major volcanic activity.

In January, Taal Volcano in the neighbouring Philippines erupted, resulting in widespread travel disruptions and the displacement of over 376,000 people.



## Government under fire over post-Brexit changes

**The Government's post-Brexit immigration system has come under fire as industry leaders warned it could spell an 'absolute disaster' for businesses**

Labour also criticised the plan, with Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott saying it will need so many exemptions that the changes are 'meaningless'.

The new rules, which are set to come into force in January next year, seek to lower the salary threshold for skilled migrants from £30,000 to £25,600 for those coming to the UK with a job offer.

However, the Government said that if the applicant earns less than the required minimum salary threshold — but no less than £20,480 — they may still be able to enter if they have a job offer in a specific shortage occupation or if they have a PhD relevant to the job. There

will not be a visa option for low-skilled migrant workers.

Ms. Abbott said, "This isn't an 'Australian points-based system', which is a meaningless Government soundbite. It's a salary threshold system, which will need to have so many exemptions, for the NHS, for social care and many parts of the private sector, that it will be meaningless. Ultimately, it will also be very difficult to attract the workers we need at all skill levels while the Tories' hostile environment is in place. It needs to go."

Liberal Democrat Home Affairs spokeswoman Christine Jardine said the proposals were based on 'xenophobia' and not the 'social and economic needs of our country'.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**





# Love for the brightness of life



A riot of paint and an explosion of colour — in this way viewers see the world through the eyes of artist Tatiana Chernykh. She loves her native land down to the smallest detail, and each flower and petal in her works is an object worthy of admiration. An exhibition by artist Tatiana Chernykh — entitled *I See, Feel, Write...* — has opened in the ArtHaos Art Gallery.



By Maksim Nikolaev

There are people for whom a creative destiny is mapped out. Tatiana Chernykh is Russian by nationality, was born in Moscow, but draws inspiration from nature in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. The artist's genes are in her blood, as her father was a painter. It's no surprise that painting captured Tatiana from a young age. With her parents, as a girl, she often went to open air workshops and saw with her own eyes how to notice the beauty of our native land. She often worked next to her father, standing behind a neighbouring easel — both in the workshop and in nature. She always listened carefully to the advice of her mentor, adopting his invaluable creative experience.

Today Tatiana Chernykh is a recognised master. She is a member of the creative Union of Russian Artists and the painting section of the International Association of Art, as well as a full member of the New York Art Club named after Catharine Lorillard Wolfe (USA) and winner and diploma holder of many prestigious art competitions.

Tatiana has been living and working in Belarus for many years already. She recently left Minsk for a village in the Vitebsk Region; where, according to her, there's much more inspiration. The lifelike, almost scented peonies in the exhibition hall hanging on their heavy heads from a vase in one of her paintings, were grown by herself.

Tatiana Chernykh's paintings are based on realism, but it's the realism that delights us. Her work has no less sensuality than those of the Impressionists, because she really loves what she paints. Her landscapes depict rural motifs with an underlying note of nostalgia, while her still-lives admire the simple but unsurpassed beauty of wildflowers. This is a reflection of her native land, which Tatiana Chernykh knows how to see, feel and depict.

"People perceive everything associatively. If you look at a picture, and it touches you, these are your associations. You've seen this somewhere, you've felt something similar. These are emotions. The brain does not know everything that the eyes saw!" Tatiana Chernykh smiles.

The painter admits that she has a need to paint and does it all the time. The exposition in the ArtHaos Gallery includes pieces created over the past year, a snapshot of the moods and impressions that were collected in Belarus and the Russian Tver Region.

"In the USA, my landscapes are called interesting, but this is not their nature, and it does not capture them. They do not have such associations, while completely different feelings are awakened among the audience in Belarus, Russia or Ukraine because this is their own, their dear land! Moreover, I love the riot of colours. It's like an explosion! I don't like it when there are one or two flowers in a bouquet. Let it be big, bright and magnificent! I'm very attracted by spring, summer and autumn — the time for active, hot, and passionate flowering of nature. This is a very beautiful time!" says the artist.



According to the Director of the ArtHaos Art Gallery, **Lilia Lukashenko**, the new exhibition is both inspiring and eloquent. The value of the exposition is in how the artist was able to convey her feelings, what she was inspired by. "Nature is perfect. A person, no matter how hard he tries, can never be as perfect. He can only feel and show others the beauty and originality of the world around him. This is the calling of the artist. Tatiana Chernykh tries to convey to us the mystery and incredible charm of sounds and silence, the colour and smell of her native land — that real and sensual part that only artistic natures can feel. I look at her canvases and see love in a riot of colours of cut herbs. This is love towards one's native land, and above all — love of life!" believes Ms. Lukashenko.





# Best books of Belarus

An exhibition of publications awarded this year by the National *Book Art* Contest is held at the National Library of Belarus



Aleksandr Kushner

Denis Romaniuk

By Svetlana Savelieva

Every year, from 1960, the works of Belarusian publishers are traditionally summed up by the National *Book Art* Contest. Founded by the Ministry of Information, the purpose of the competition is to develop the art of the Belarusian book, to enhance its competitiveness, as well as celebrate our artistic and printing culture. It is a sort of creative report by publishers, artists and typographers, who have created the best examples of printed materials over the past year.

The contest featured 35 publishers with 180 publications. Less than half reached the short list, from which the competent jury selected the winners across sixteen categories: main, thematic, special and personal.

The highest award of the competition was presented in the 'Triumph' nomination to publisher Denis Romaniuk for his *Belarus. Temple and Scape*. This photo album includes 152 photographs, which depict many temples and landscapes, both iconic — recognisable at first sight — and little-known. Those who see the album for the first time are unlikely to hide their admiration; they would say: 'How beautiful is Belarus!' Denis Romaniuk himself, the author of all the pictures, tells us about the idea of creating the album, "I discovered Belarus for myself a very long time ago: in the 1970s. My father, Mikhail Romaniuk, took me — then a pre-schooler — to ethnographic expeditions with him. After-



wards, I travelled alone: first, as an artist, with a sketchbook and paints, later, as a photographer, with a tripod and cam-

eras. My safari (as I call my travels) passed through an endless number of villages, cemeteries, the Chernobyl

zone, but more and more through the hills, forests, riverbanks, lakes and heavenly expanses... and over the time, the beauty of the Belarusian landscape captured me. ...I noticed that with the image of the shrine, the landscape becomes special, and the temple building never interferes with the environment — they are always harmoniously combined and complement each other. Art photography helped me put, like notes, the duet on the pages of the album."

The winner's diploma in the 'For Contribution to the Preservation of Spiritual Heritage' nomination was bestowed upon the National Library of Belarus for the facsimile publication *Brest Bible. 1563*.

Vladimir Dovgyalo was recognised as the best illustrator for illustrations to the book *Miraculous Ring*, the best designer — Vladimir Lukashik for Vasily Gigevich's *Island*, Ales Badak's *Farewell with Eternity* and a series of books *The Written Will Remain*. The jury named Andrei Shchukin as the best photographer for the author's photography of the book, entitled *The Taste of the Belarusian Cuisine*.

The National Library invites everyone to get to know Belarus' 2019 best editions until April 18th.

## Heritage silhouettes

At what point does photography become art? Is Goethe right when he says that 'architecture is dumb music'? Answers to these questions can be found in the Vankovich House Museum which hosts an exhibition of photos by artist Vladimir Tsvirko: *Heritage Silhouettes*.



Aleksandr Kushner

Vladimir Tsvirko



Gomel Region, village of Krasny Bereg, Gotovsky mansion, 1896. Art Nouveau.

By Oleg Usachev

Svetlana Yatsevich, who leads the branch of the National Art Museum, admits that the exhibition is a revelation for her, "We have many different expositions but this is special. True architectural masterpieces can be found in Belarus but sadly few of them are well-known."

Vladimir Tsvirko has been working on his *150 Golden Routes of My Belarus* project for eight years. There are now 200 such routes and he is continuing his travels. "What I shoot and show is a mere drop in the ocean. I studied the issue and learnt that only 3 percent of the Belarusian architectural legacy has been preserved in Belarus," he says.

The exhibition features 42 works, including pictures of Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, palaces, estates and chapels from all over the country which impress with their history, beauty and uniqueness. These architectural monuments are at different degrees of preserva-

tion but all are real treasures of the Belarusian nation as they reflect the uniqueness of our land. There are also photos of 16th-early 20th century monuments of palace-and-park architecture from the state list of historical and cultural values of Belarus. Each has its own history and legend. The main idea of the artist is to give the audience a sense of belonging to this rich history. Perhaps someone will not only want to visit these places but also learn more about them. After all, they are unique architectural objects that can only be found in our country.

Yelena Ryabykh, from Moscow, came to the exhibition by accident. "I was walking in the centre of Minsk, noticed a pretty courtyard, came in and discovered a photo exhibition. I could hardly believe my eyes: does Belarus really have all these? This is such a wealth of buildings! I will try to visit at least a few places," she smiles.

Vladimir Tsvirko's *Heritage Silhouettes* show will run until March 12th.



## Belarus national wrestling team among European Championships leaders

By Dmitry Komashko

**Eight awards, including three gold medals, was the result of the performance by Belarusian wrestlers at the European Championships, that recently took place in Rome. This time, only two national teams managed to collect a more impressive collection of awards: Russia and Bulgaria!**

We are used to the fact that representatives of the Belarusian wrestling team climb medal podiums at European tournaments: as we have strong traditions and a successful training school. Last year, at a similar tournament in Bucharest, our teams brought home four medals in three types of wrestling. Two years ago, they brought ten medals from Kaspisk! European tournaments, especially in the Olympic year, are not so popular, but the competition here is still serious and the results are significant. True, many leading teams didn't perform in Rome. But after all, the Belarusian squads weren't represented by their major athletes either. Vanessa Kolodinskaya, who won in the under 53kg,

or Irina Kurochkina, who won bronze in the under 57kg, are, of course, titled fighters. However, Ksenia Stankevich, who took third place in the under 50kg, is a slightly different story. This fragile-looking girl has been performing at adult level for only the second year, but coaches are calling her the major successor of the Belarusian women's wrestling tradition.

The current European Championships is a landmark for many of our athletes. Magomedkhabib Kadimagomedov was included in the national team, for example, only in January, after winning the championship of Belarus. The result is a gold medal, earned in the final, when Magomedkhabib almost 'trampled' Jemal Ali from

### European Championships medal-winners:

**Gold:** Maksim Negoda (Greco-Roman style, 63kg), Magomedkhabib Kadimagomedov (freestyle, 79kg), Vanessa Kolodinskaya (freestyle, 53kg).

**Silver:** Nyurgun Skryabin (freestyle, 65kg).

**Bronze:** Rasul Tikhayev (freestyle, 86kg), Omargadzhi Magomedov (freestyle, 92kg), Ksenia Stankevich (freestyle, 50kg), Irina Kurochkina (freestyle, 57kg).

Bulgaria (10:1). Before that he similarly rode over Ukrainian Vasily Mikhailov and Greek Alexandros Tsanikidis. He has definitely outgrown the European level! Maksim Negoda,

who is just twenty-one years old, claimed one more gold medal for Belarus. Less than a year ago, he was fighting at the World Youth Championships, where he clinched bronze. The European Championships in Rome is his adult debut, and it immediately turned out to be gold.

According to the head coach of the Belarusian national freestyle wrestling team, Aleksandr Lasitsa, past European Championships showed the future of Belarusian wrestling, "The level of the European Championships was quite high. Everyone is preparing for the Olympics, for Olympic selection, taking any competitions very

seriously. Of course, I would like us to have a medal in each of the weight categories. But the Belarusian athletes performing in Rome are actually our second team, yet they still showed excellent results. This means that the right work is being done with our reserves... The level of our squad today allows us to talk about leadership positions in Europe, and in the Olympic weight categories. The guys have enough power to win qualification for the Games, and, I think, at least medal at the European Championships. They are already breathing down the necks of our leaders. This competition will definitely bring results!"



Vanessa Kolodinskaya's Final Fight



Magomedkhabib Kadimagomedov

## Bronze in the bag!

Raubichi has hosted the FIS Freestyle Ski World Cup Aerials stage and international synchronised aerials event

By Arina Novikova

Belarusians didn't manage to get onto the medal podium at the Freestyle World Cup event. Victory in the women's competition was celebrated by Australian athlete Laura Peel, who received 106.53 points from the judges. Silver went to the titled Chinese, Xu Mengtao (95.06), while bronze was claimed by another representative of the Heavenly Empire, Sicun Xu (87.92).

The best of the Belarusians — Valeria Bolmatova — couldn't make it to the final and reached no further than 11th place in the final standings.

In the men's competition, US Justin Schoenefeld was unequaled, earning 124.89 points. Second place went to Canadian Lewis Irving (124.43) while bronze was clinched by another US representative, Christopher Lillis.

Belarusian ski acrobats weren't able to qualify. The best of the Belarusians — Maksim Gustik — finished his performance at the World Cup home stage in 15th position, earning 94.35 points.

The international synchronised aerials competition also attracted many participants and spectators. In the women's competition, Belarusian freestyle athletes failed to get into the finals but, in the men's category, two of our couples fought for medals — Pavel Dik and Andrey Kuzmin, Igor Drebenkov and Makar Mitrofanov. Dik and Kuzmin



failed to find their way onto the medal podium, as they fell when they landed and took fourth place. However, Drebenkov and Mitrofanov became bronze medallists with a final score from the Belarusian duo of 72.12 points. Victory was celebrated by the Swiss duo Noé Roth and Pirmin Werner, who earned 86.50 points. Their fellow countrymen Nicolas Gygax and Andrin Schaedler finished the tournament with 76.56 points.

This bronze was the only medal of our freestyle team on the home slopes. The head coach of our junior team, Dmitry Dashchinsky, commented on the performance of the team, "It's not a very good start for our athletes. Unfortunately, due to injuries, not all the athletes of the main team performed in Raubichi. As far as the juniors are concerned, the guys were not able to fully express themselves. The con-

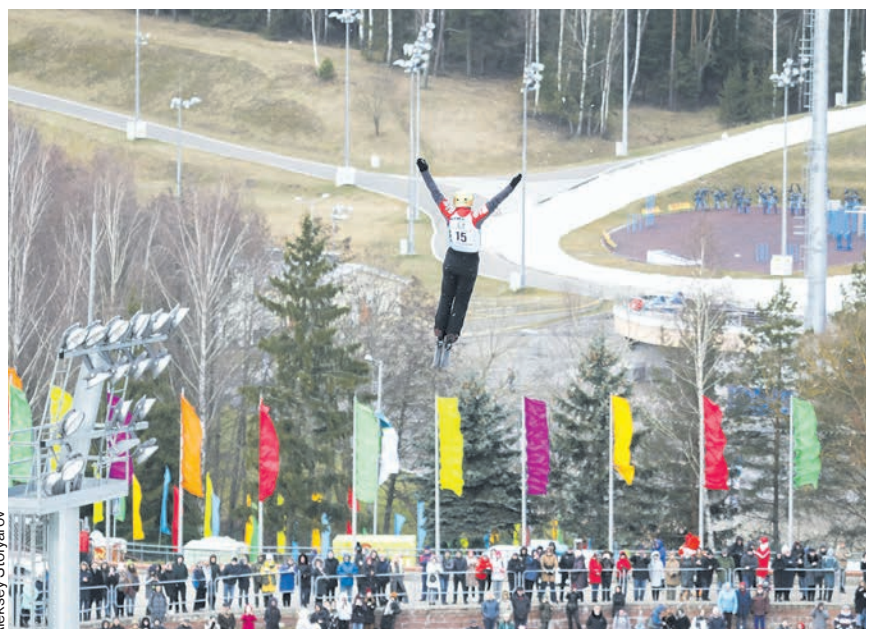
ditions were not easy: the acceleration was fairly mild and the springboard was icy, so it was difficult for young athletes to adapt, and for some of them it was their first appearance at the World Cup. Only Valeria Bolmatova was successful in her jumping, but with their level of difficulty, it would be difficult to fight for medals."

According to Mr. Dashchinsky, under current weather conditions it was impossi-

ble to prepare the slope better. Specialists worked day and night to successfully conduct the competition.

Joe Fitzgerald, a freestyle co-ordinator of the International Ski Federation (FIS), on the eve of the competitions in Minsk, noted that the organisers created comfortable conditions for ski acrobats, "This applies to both preparation of the slope and the living conditions. The Belarusian side managed to observe the main principle: with the minimum amount of snow, necessary for the launch, of very high quality."

The freestyle season continues, with the principal team of Maksim Gustik, Pavel Dik, Dmitry Mazurkevich, together with Igor Drebenkov, Makar Mitrofanov and Snezhana Drebenkova going onto the next stage of the World Cup, while the junior team will be holding a training camp in Ufa, after which they will perform at the European Cup in Switzerland and Italy, and then at the Junior Freestyle World Championships.



Aleksey Stolyarov



BELTA

## Photo of the week



Brest residents celebrate the beginning of Maslenitsa

### EXHIBITIONS

#### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> March. *Enchanted with Homeland*  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> March. *Classics and Ethno-Modern of Victor Markovets*  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> April. *We'll Be Understood in 100 Years: Lazar Khidekel*

#### NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marks Street  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> March. *Yan Komar: a Photographer from Nyankovo*  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> March. *From an Idea to Theatrical Stage*  
Until 31<sup>st</sup> March. *Young Talents of the Capital*

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> March. *Space of Estonian Book*  
Until 23<sup>rd</sup> March. *Return*

#### GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 27<sup>th</sup> March. *Heirs of Great Victory*

#### YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> March. *Valeriana Zholtok: Passion for Life*

#### BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY MUSEUM

13 Maksim Bogdanovich Street  
Until 29<sup>th</sup> February. *1692-1696 Bible for the Nation of Vasily Koren*  
Until 14<sup>h</sup> March. *Valentin Taras and Rygor Baradulin: On Height of Memories*  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> March. *Wisdom of Centuries*

#### NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> March. *Horizons*  
Until 8<sup>th</sup> March. *Tangency of Light and Shadow*  
Until 8<sup>th</sup> March. *A Heart of Birdwatcher*

#### YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> March. *Valeriana Zholtok: Passion for Life*

#### MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square  
Until 27<sup>th</sup> February. *Zdravnevo in Faces and Fates*  
Until 8<sup>th</sup> March. *Women's Tricks*  
Until 8<sup>th</sup> March. *Patsinka*

#### TROITSKY SUBURB

7A Bogdanovich Street  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> March. *Robo Art*  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> July. *Live Exotics*

### THEATRES

#### BOLSHOI THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskey Komuny Square  
27.02. The Bat  
28.02. Swan Lake  
29.02. The Queen of Spades  
01.03. Creation of the World  
03.03. Opening of 6th International Vladimir Spivakov Invites Festival: Virtuosos of Moscow  
04.03. Don Quixote / Night of Sergei Rakhmaninoff music  
05.03. Eugene Onegin

#### YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
27.02. ART / Paulinka  
28.02. Pinsk Gentry / Evening  
29.02. Once in a Large City  
29.02 and 01.03. Nobleman Zavalnya, or Belarus in Fantastic Stories  
02 and 03.03. King Lear  
03.03. Harvest  
04.03. Prudok Radio / Paulinka  
05.03. Shabany

#### MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street  
27.02. Merry Widow  
28.02. Hello, I'm Charlie's Aunt!  
29.02. Tristan and Isolde  
01.03. Jane Eire  
03.03. A Letter from a Foreigner  
04.03. Titanic  
05.03. I Want Your Husband

#### MAKSIM GORKY THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street  
28.02. Oscar and Pink Lady  
29.02. Twelfth Night  
05.03. Ideal Husband

#### BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street  
27.02. Portrait  
28.02 and 05.03. Gender Tricks  
29.02. Marriage with Wind  
01.03. Medea's Syndrome  
03.03. Three Giselles  
04.03. Serezha

#### CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street  
28.02. Mothers  
29.02. Luxurious Wedding  
03 and 04.03. Corporate  
05.03. Featherhead

#### THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

33 Masherov Avenue  
27 and 28.02. Wolves and Sheep  
29.02. Mechanical Man  
01 and 02.03. Nobody Promised Easy Life  
03 and 04.03. Midnight Robbery  
05.03. Mixed Feelings

#### BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya 3  
29.02 and 04.03 Inspector  
05.03. The Last Ardent Lover