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Belarus has activated the process of joining the World Trade Organization

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Excessive control only hinders

At certain times, we all need help and support; sometimes, the best help is for others not to interfere. The same can be true in the business world.

By Vasily Kharitonov

In today's world, it's vital to allow freedom of business activity, to allow entrepreneurs to flex their creative muscles. We should give people the opportunity to take risks and generate income.

There's no need to disturb people repeatedly for no serious reason if they're engaged in business, bringing benefits to the country, creating jobs and paying their taxes. We can't do away with all inspections, since our health and security are at stake, but we need a happy medium of social responsibility.

At a recent session, the President noted, "Before opening a new enterprise, you should check, report on and clarify everything; there's no need to return repeatedly with various revisions and inspections. After opening, all responsibility lies on the shoulders of business heads. Let them deal with issues of fire safety, sanitation and other types of security."

Alexander Lukashenko also asked that a closer eye be kept on ungrounded



Alexander LUKASHENKO, President of Belarus:

Let's not interfere; rather, let's help small businesses develop. There's no need to burden businesses with unnecessary requirements. They shouldn't live in fear of being 'caught' by inspectors, and punished. I'll personally approve a minimum set of regulations for launching business activity, dictated by life itself. Legal entities should be aware of their obligations. This is how it will be! Don't demand anything else from them!



Participants of session have much to discuss

revisions and that numbers of inspections being conducted by commercial organisations be cut. Departmental control also needs significant re-organisation; it shouldn't substitute the activity of law enforcement units. The President asked that requirements for doing business be simplified, especially regarding technical acts and administrative procedures.

Definite progress is apparent. The Ministry for Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, together with the Health Ministry and business representatives, has developed new sanitary norms and rules. Only 170 points remain, of 300, significantly simplifying methods of

doing business. Entrepreneurs have long questioned fines and their relation to degree of violation, with authorities hearing the message. The Head of the Ministry for Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, Vladimir Koltovich, proposes settling the issue peacefully, refraining from punishing violators without giving them the opportunity to improve. Punitive sanctions will be applied only in cases of repeated violation.

The President has called on representatives of the business community to be unafraid, working to improve the business climate in the country by the end of the first quarter.

Electoral proposals made just in time

By Maxim Osipov

An important parcel has arrived at the President's secretariat, containing analysis of the ODIHR/OSCE recommendations given to our country after parliamentary elections in 2016. A working group of experts, created at the Central Election Commission, was instructed to analyse these recommendations and they have reported on their conclusions.

"In my opinion, the group has elaborated on many qualitative proposals which meet about half of the ODIHR/OSCE recommendations," notes the Chair of the Central Election Commission of Belarus, Lidia Yermoshina. "The OSCE were probably hoping for further amendments to our electoral legislation. However, considering our practice, we've developed the recommendations we see as possible to be submitted to the Head of State."

The CEC Chair has already familiarised diplomats — Chargé d'affaires of the United States to Belarus, Robert Riley and the Head of the EU Delegation to Belarus, Andrea Wiktorin — with the results of the experts' work.

Ms. Yermoshina characterised their reaction by saying, "They have responded positively to the fact that, during the work of the inter-departmental expert group, representatives of civil society were also involved in the process and have given their suggestions. The participation of alternative politicians in the work of the group was highly appreciated by the diplomats."

Meanwhile, the final session of the working group was held on the day the CEC Chair and diplomats met. Alongside experts, it involved a deputy of the House of Representatives, Anna Kanopatskaya, and the Head of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee public association, Oleg Gulak. They presented alternative proposals for changing electoral legislation.

The inter-departmental group has completed its task but it won't be dissolved. Ms. Yermoshina believes that the professionalism and competence of its participants will make this team more in demand.

Reasons for good memoirs

Despite Belarus having not long gained its statehood, it already enjoys rich diplomatic traditions. Some are centuries-old, connected with our participation in creating and working with the United Nations. Others began developing in the final quarter of the 20th century. It's twenty-five years since we established relations with France, as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Claude Jolif, reminds us, in his memoirs. It's an important part of our history...

By Claude Jolif

He still recalls his first arrival in Minsk, on May 20th, 1992, coming from the airport by road, into the city. It was spring, the air was fresh and there were flowers at the roadside. The forest was turning green. He felt euphoria, not only at this reception but at the thought of his work to come, though he knew there would be challenges. First of all, he needed to set up an embassy in the capital, on a tight budget.

He writes: The first months of life at the embassy were busy. We settled into a deluxe suite at the 'Belarus' Hotel, using it simultaneously as an office, and residence. In one corner was my office;

in the middle was my working space, with a magnificent view of the city; and in the other corner was a large bedroom for our personal use. My only assistant with diplomatic status was on another floor. We also had three locally engaged staff, all women, who occupied the middle room of another deluxe suite. Without them, we'd never have solved the numerous practical problems of daily life.

Nevertheless, both willingly, and out of necessity, it was time of intensive contacts, and a time of discovering reality, simultaneously so similar and so different from our life. The major difference was that Belarusian society was in a state of transition. Pub-

lic opinion was unstable and disjointed. Although people now feel nostalgia for Soviet times, they were then enthusiastic about their nationhood. Most often, people struggled with mixed feelings. However, without exception, they were interested to learn about the new visitors in town: the foreign diplomats upon whom so many expectations centred, often unrealistically.

We very quickly became accustomed to life: my wife and I assimilated promptly into our new environment. I think that the relative geographical closeness to France, our common history and shared cultural roots played an important role. Cultural events were diverse, and we later

tried to bring our own contribution. We have wonderful memories of evenings at the philharmonic society, at the opera, at the theatre of musical comedy, and at the circus. If it was necessary to choose one, most remembered evening, I'd choose the ballet *Spartacus*, for its choreography and interpretation! I want to add that we almost immediately began to meet talented writers and artistes, and visited Vitebsk, being eager to see traces of Marc Chagall.

July 14th, 1992, marked a new stage, being our first national holiday celebrated in our new home. Undoubtedly, it was one of the most successful. We managed to serve many delicacies usually found



in France and welcomed our guests. It felt festive, despite making do with a mediocre recording of *La Marseillaise*. The main thing was that the weather was sunny. Heads of the country honoured us with their presence, as did all our friends.

There were many more meetings and I was keen to meet the future first President of the country, though he was, at that time, just a candidate. Whatever was happening politically, he always received me in the best way. As you can see, I have every reason to recall those memories fondly. I wish Belarus and its people the future they deserve.

Listed among safest countries

We've been seeing heated debate over how the country should develop, as touched upon during the President's recent meeting with journalists, political scientists, economists and leaders of social movements. Looking closely at Belarusians' fears, it's clear that, regardless of political views, beliefs or preferences, our desire to improve our standard of living and comfort unites us. Security is of key importance to everyone.



Evening promenades as safe as in daytime, in this Minsk park

By Nina Vasilieva

Numbeo.com is known worldwide for collating statistics from various countries and cities in various fields. Its recent crime ratings place Belarus among the top ten safest countries, scoring 77.74 (out of 100), behind Qatar in first place, with 84.30. Only four European countries — Belarus, Austria, Denmark and Georgia — were among the top ten.

Our rating speaks for itself but pub-

lic perceptions are also important. The Head of State recalls events in Ukraine and the importance of Belarus remaining calm and comfortable for its residents. Statistics indicate that Minsk enjoys the lowest level of theft, robbery, street assaults and car theft, while Minsk residents are less likely to suffer from physical attacks because of skin colour or religion. It's safe to take an evening stroll, as locals know.

Belarusians may take these statistics for granted but the reality is different in

neighbouring countries. The Ukrainian cities of Kharkov, Kiev and Lvov are among Eastern Europe's top ten suffering from crime. First place among the most dangerous cities in Eastern Europe goes to Yekaterinburg (Russia). In Western Europe, the three criminal outsiders constitute Lund (Sweden), Naples (Italy) and Marseille (France).

There's much to consider when planning 'a better future'. Challenges remain but we should remember the value of what we've already achieved.

Counter-measures to curb a hazardous phenomenon

By Alexander Pimenov

Draft CIS anti-corruption co-operation policy agreed by experts

An additional meeting of the expert group was held at the CIS Executive Committee in Minsk to agree the draft CIS anti-corruption co-operation policy. The draft was finalised and agreed, considering amendments and proposals from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The proceedings of the expert meeting will be sent to the CIS member states. The draft bill will be submitted for the consideration of the CIS Council of Heads of State according to the established procedure.

Representatives of the CIS Executive Committee underline that improving the CIS anti-corruption co-operation is an essential part of work to continue strengthening the anti-corruption efforts of the international community.

The CIS anti-corruption co-operation concept was elaborated according to the inter-state programme of joint measures to combat crime for 2014-2018. The document is aimed at enhancing the legal and organisational basis for co-operation in this field



while stipulating principles, tasks, main areas and forms of interaction.

The CIS Executive Committee explained that the concept understands anti-corruption efforts as the complex work of the CIS member states, central government agencies and local self-government bodies to develop and implement organisational and other measures with a view to preventing, detecting, suppressing and disclosing corruption crimes and offences. These also imply promoting active rejection of corruption among public officers, civil servants and citizens, as well as the timely detection and elimination of circumstances contributing to such crimes and offences. The anti-corruption measures are compiled in close co-operation with civil society organisations and the general public.

It should be mentioned that the provisions of the policy will be the basis for developing international agreements in the CIS and inter-state anti-corruption programmes.

Staff optimisation is surely to bring benefit

By Vladimir Khromov

Administration of the President of Belarus should be in the vanguard of government bodies' optimisation, notes the Head of State, Alexander Lukashenko, at session discussing optimisation of Presidential Administration

Mr. Lukashenko recalled that, in appointing the Head and First Deputy Head of the Belarusian Presidential Administration some time ago, he gave the instruction to reform the organisation in a calm and rational manner. He commented, "As the political headquarters of the head of state, it should be in the vanguard of government bodies' optimisation, setting an example of the renewal and optimisation that we've launched."

He views this as essential for raising the efficiency of state apparatus, saying, "Fewer resources can be used to perform tasks in various fields."

The Head of State listed the major requirements of optimisa-

tion within the Belarusian Presidential Administration, noting, "Primarily, you should produce and accumulate progressive ideas important for the development of our state. There are enough such ideas in our society, as proven by the recent Big Conversation with the President. The Belarusian Presidential Administration should become a monolithic expert centre for taking balanced decisions on issues of paramount importance for the state. I want its leadership to ensure well coordinated and efficient work. You should be a united team using the skills, experience, and energy of all members for the common good," asserted the President.

Mr. Lukashenko reminded everyone of his instructions regarding continuing work to reduce red tape and enhance performance discipline, while focusing on the role of aides to the President.

The session also tackled the necessity of improving national ideology and establishing a corresponding system of public works.

Regarding the economy, the

Head of State expects the Presidential Administration to analyse all initiatives and draft decisions carefully, ensuring their compliance with the country's social policy. Experts from across all spheres should join the Presidential Administration in realising this task.

Separate instructions have been given regarding assessment of the efficiency of organisations subordinated to the Presidential Administration.

Mr. Lukashenko underlined that special attention should be drawn to performance discipline. He stated, "All tasks must be fulfilled quickly and efficiently, without red tape or excessive paperwork. These requirements apply to the entire power vertical. We're optimising, which includes serious personnel reduction. There should be excellent performance discipline. Either the president has made a decision or the decision was made within the sphere of your empowerment, and it must be strictly fulfilled. This is the only way to preserve state government."

Formula for energy saving

While travelling across Belarus for work, I often see new wind turbines springing up. You can't miss their huge rotating blades. New wind farms are being created in the Grodno and Minsk regions, alongside an increasing number of solar power plants. However, we have some way to go to compare with Denmark, which leads in generating renewable energy. Over 40 percent of its electricity is generated by wind.

By Yevgeny Kononov

What's preventing us from progressing faster, and what are our immediate plans? Experts, parliamentarians and ministry representatives recently met for a round table discussion, at which renewable energy sources (RES) were discussed. Belarus may appear to lack enough wind or sunlight but specialists say that Belarus' potential to use solar panels would create almost 20 percent more solar power than in Germany, Belgium, Denmark and the UK. Meanwhile, wind energy at a height of between 50 and 150 metres is significant: quite different from how we experience it on the ground. As regards wind potential, Belarus is similar to Poland and other EU countries. Yet, the coun-

try lags behind Poland more than a hundred times regarding wind plants.

Belarus' lack of innovation in this sphere, and its state subsidy mechanism, are hampering the development of renewable energy. It seems that the country does not fully appreciate the role of wind energy: just 11MW of electricity is expected to come from this source from 2017 through until 2019. This is not enough to attract major investment. References to the high cost of such projects and their long-term return are untenable.

"Figures speak for themselves. In 2004, states invested \$60-70 billion into renewable energy projects. Today, the figure stands at \$300-350 billion. This is leading to the development of technol-

ogy and is reducing the cost of such energy," concludes the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for Industry, Fuel and Energy Complex, Transport and Communication, Andrey Rybak. "In view of the potential of our science and engineering, we could independently develop equipment and power plants, for export. This would involve huge funds but would bring tremendous opportunities."

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection's Departmental Head, Sergey Zavyalov, agrees, saying, "Nearly 400,000 hectares of land in Belarus could be allocated to solar stations. This is expensive but, over the

past decade, technology has stepped forward, so that the pay-back period has dropped from fifteen to five years. This enables us to put aside elevated ratios, which the country pays to investors for the implementation of renewable energy sources. Tariffs could be lowered."

The Executive Director of the Renewable Energy Association, Vladimir Nistyuk, stresses the ecological angle, commenting, "A single wind turbine of 1MW makes it possible to annually reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,800 tonnes. The whole world is progressing along a path we've joined only recently. If the state, business, science and civil society work together to solve this problem, we'll succeed."

MT REFERENCE:

The technical potential of renewable energy sources in Belarus is estimated at 80 million tonnes of oil equivalent, which is more than the total energy consumption in the country. By 2020, the share of renewable energy generation should reach at least 6 percent.



Windpark in the Novogrudok District

Just one small thing is lacking

The level of registered unemployment is falling: in early 2016 it stood at 1.1 percent of the economically active population against the current level of 0.8 percent

By Valeria Gavrusheva

Last November saw the number of unemployed fall below the number of vacancies. The situation has definitely improved, and, according to Katerina Bornukova, an expert at the Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Centre (BEROC), the labour market in our country is flexible.

"Adaptation towards new economic conditions happens not only through dismissal and growth of unemployment. An important response channel is the reduction of salaries. In 2016, our real salaries were falling, enabling enterprises to reduce the salary fund while continuing to provide people with jobs. Those who had to leave their job were actively

supported by employment services. If a person can't find employment in their home town the state will help them to move to another location. As of December 1st, 2016, 144 families of the unemployed were assisted with resettlement," she notes.

A recent new instruction has approved the process and conditions of providing such assistance by the labour, employment and social protection authorities. An important aspect is that those who are going to move to rural areas, small or middle-sized towns, as well as satellite towns, are to be awarded a bonus — two minimum living allowances on average per person, in addition to the sum received by any 'settler' of seven minimum living allowances.



Plenty of vacancy announcements

Ms. Bornukova continues, "Provision of support for resettlement is part of active measures on the labour market which have already proved their efficiency in other countries. Such an approach significantly enhances the mobility of the labour force. Often a situation occurs when lack of a labour force in one region is compensated for by a surplus elsewhere. Since resettlement to another town is expensive, assistance from the state is very helpful.

This is not the only type of assistance in employment. She explains that retraining and promotion of self-employment are among other active measures on the labour market. For example, as of early December 2016, employment services have sent over 10,600 unemployed people for retraining. Moreover, around 1,600 have been given subsidies to organise entrepreneurial or craft activity, as well as for the development of agrotourism. Ms. Bornukova

believes that these areas are very important, "The economy is changing considerably. Jobs which disappear are unlikely to return in the future. It's necessary to either help workers move to another sphere via retraining or create conditions for self-employment and the creation of new jobs."

Meanwhile, last year, more than 54,000 jobs appeared and this year the target is 70,000 — so there should be enough work for everyone.

Changing hands

By Semen Vasilevsky

Belgian B.S.A. International buys almost 70 percent of shares in Lyakhovichi Milk Plant, paying \$9.4 million

Since 2012, 85 percent of the plant's shares have been in the hands of private companies and individuals. The Deputy Chair of Lyakhovichi District Executive Committee, Tatiana Kotsuba, notes that the controlling stake has passed from one entity to another. "Further development of the company is now the responsibility of its new owners. Local authorities expect that the plant will continue to operate successfully, developing new products and launching new jobs," she says.

Specialists from the Moscow office have come to Lyakhovichi to work on introducing international financial reporting standards, and production managers are expected to soon arrive, to decide the enterprise's product range and brands.

Major road leading to WTO

By Dmitry Kozurov

Minsk has entered the final straight in its marathon race of joining the World Trade Organization. The first such plans appeared in the country's leadership back in 1993 and when, in 2016, EU sanctions were lifted from Belarus, the WTO itself decided to resume negotiations.

The Belarusian delegation, headed by the First Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrey Yevdochenko, has spent several days working in Geneva where the WTO headquarters are based.

"I support the speediest accession of our Republic to the WTO," said WTO Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo. The session of the working group, dedicated to

Belarus has activated the process of joining the World Trade Organization

Minsk's joining the WTO, featured representatives of 40 states.

"To a large degree, Belarus has been de-facto using the WTO standards and is going to actively aim for membership in order to use all progressive mechanisms of the organisation," noted Mr. Yevdochenko. "The opening of the national market for external competition should proceed on the prepared ground, enabling Belarus to gradually move towards a new position."

The next such session is scheduled for the second half of 2017. By this time, Minsk plans to implement recommendations received at the session. In line with the existing programme of the country's socio-economic development, Belarus should become a WTO member by 2020.

"We hope that Belarus will join the WTO as quickly as possible," Tatyana Valovaya, the Eurasian Economic Commission's Minister in charge of Integration and Macroeconomics, commented on the negotiations. "I think that the course of the EAEU states for WTO membership is a positive trend."

Russia has joined the WTO, already being an EAEU member. Other members of the WTO are Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Courageous warriors with iron nerves

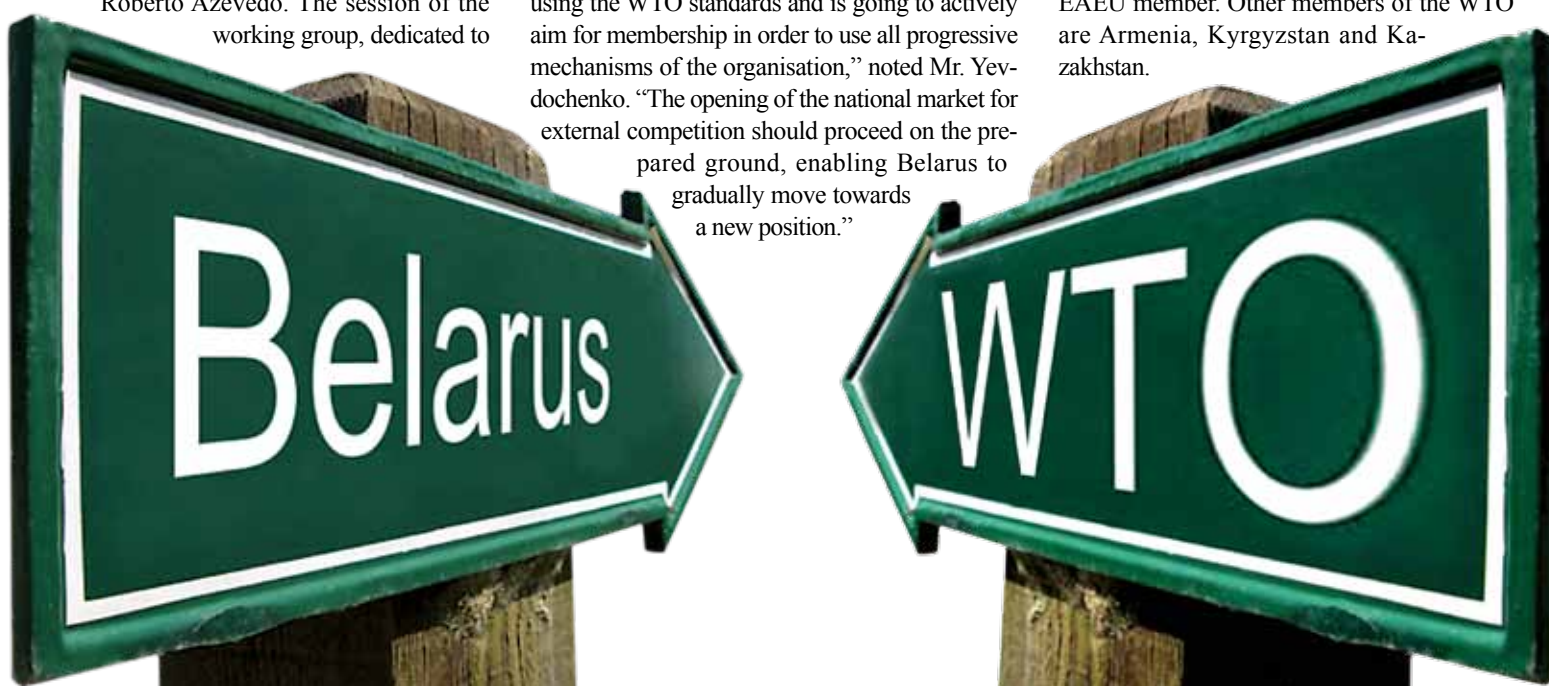
By Olga Strakhova

Gomel to host Open Robotics Tournament — RoboFest Gomel — organised by the Regional Palace of Children and Youth and Educational Centre of High-Tech Park

Following the *RoboFest Belarus* tournament in September 2016, organisers have decided to bring robotics to the regions. In Gomel, participants are to exchange experience and discuss problems of teaching educational robotics. The *Sumo Robots* competition is expected to be the highlight, requiring robots to push each other outside the ring within a set period of time. Youngsters spent months preparing their robots for the festival, eager to win prizes.

Before the competition, each robot is placed in 'quarantine', and is checked for compliance with the rules. Each 'warrior' should weigh no more than a kilo and be no more than 25cm in height, length or width. However, once the battle has begun, they may 'autonomously' change in dimension.

The *RoboFest Gomel* Tournament — hosted by Gomel's Regional Palace of Children and Youth — will bring together fifty-nine future engineers and programmers, aged 7-14.



Foreign priorities are now definitely known

Belarusian Railways determines areas of international co-operation

By Vladimir Veremeev

Belarusian Railways is focusing on cargo transportation between China and Belarus, and co-operation with residents of the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park in the transport-logistics sector, as well as the organisation of international traffic. It is also developing collaboration with Chinese provinces, using high-speed container trains.

Special focus is on interaction with railways in Russia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Po-



Kolyadichi transport and logistics centre, near Minsk

land, Germany, and Estonia.

The goal is to attract additional freight traffic, further developing passenger transportation, and following a co-ordinated and competitive tariff policy. To ensure efficiency, electronic documents are to become the norm for inter-

national transportation, and there will be a co-ordinated joint plan to develop near-border railway infrastructure.

Plans also include the completion of line electrification between Molochno, through the state border, to Naujoji Vilnia and organisation of passen-

ger transportation between Minsk and Vilnius, via modern electric trains.

Belarusian Railways offices in Russia, Kazakhstan and Poland will be closely liaising with railways, freight owners, rolling stock operators, forwarders and shipping agents, to attract additional traffic.

More than 280 state standards require further development

By Oleg Bogomazov

Plan of state standardisation approved for 2017

State run public authorities, technical committees on standardisation and other organisations have helped formulate the plan, which aims to tackle 346 topics in 2017. These include technical regulation via the 'Electronic Means of Communication: Security' programme, and more than 280 state standards across various branches of the economy; 189 of these will be harmonised with international and European standards.

The plan aims to realise technical regulations set by the Eurasian Economic Union (state, sci-tech and branch programmes). It will promote a higher technical level and quality of domestic produce, raising its export potential, elimi-



nating technical barriers to trade and protecting the interests of consumers.

In particular, tractors and machinery, elevators, cryogenic vessels, household appliances, information technology, materials for road construction, fire protection equipment, timber, fabrics and textile materials, lacquers and paints, cosmetics, tinned fruit and vegetables, bread and bakery goods, textiles, footwear, service meters and heat meters will come under scrutiny through the plan.

Children could soon start school by the age of five

Belarus changes regulations of admission to schools

By Gennady Morozov

Deputies change regulations of admission to schools. Today 98 percent of Belarusian children go to an educational institution from 6 years old. Since September 1st, it will be possible to accept a child in school at the age of 5. It could be done even earlier, but permission of the Ministry of Education was first required.

On the one hand, it has become easier for gifted children who are ahead of their age in mental and physical development. On the other hand, is it right to take away childhood from a child? This question has caused serious debate. The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly on Education, Culture and Science, Igor Marzalyuk, considers people's fears ill-founded, "Many have not paid attention to the keywords — on the wishes of the parents, instead of obligatory. Though in my opinion as a parent: it is still too early to take a child to school at such an age."

Since January 20th, parents' committees in kindergartens and schools have been forbidden to collect money from parents for



Lessons at Ushachi secondary school

repair and other economic needs. Any donations must be voluntary and can be received only on account of the educational institution. Nobody has the right to define the amount or to demand payment receipts from parents for making a report.

There are no queues for child

care places in kindergartens even in the capital. The state provides a place in preschool institutions for each child. Even if it is not always near the house, but one-two bus stops away — it is still obligatory. Soon each child could go to kindergarten 'within walking distance'.

"We will not stop the programme of building kindergartens, we will increase it," said the Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Andrey Shorets. "The problem with kindergarten groups will be completely eliminated during the next five-year period."

No need to have a visa in Brest

By Pavel Losich

It will become easier for foreign tourists to visit Brest and they won't need to have a Belarusian visa. This year, the visa-free regime operating in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, is to be extended to the regional centre.

"This step will enable us to increase the number of tourists visiting the region," said the Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee, Anatoly Lis. "Avgustovsky Canal and Grodno were united into a single visa-free zone. We also need to start working on this, enabling the border regime operating in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha to spread to the city of Brest."

A simplified regime for visiting the Belovezhskaya Pushcha for foreign tourists became operational in June 2015. Over this time, around 5,000 foreigners have arrived in the National Park via the Pererov-Bialowieza border checkpoint and the Pushcha was visited by guests from 30 states. Primarily, these were tourists from Poland, Germany and the Baltic States. "Foreigners independently choose a tour programme and pay for it via the Internet. As a rule, they order a package of services, including a general sightseeing tour, visits to museums of nature and folk life, open air parks with animals and the Father Frost Estate," explained the Tourist Department of Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.

Precautions against falling ill

In our previous article, we focused on measures to treat patients suffering from acute respiratory infection at home, but what can we do to prevent this disease blossoming?

One of the most effective methods is vaccination. The WHO states: 'Vaccination is the basis for the prevention of influenza'. This measure reduces the spread of the disease and mortality, while being 3-4 times cheaper than the cost of flu treatment, saving money to treat influenza and its complications. Moreover, it can significantly reduce temporary disability, is accessible, effective and safe for adults, children over 6 months, and pregnant women.

Various hygiene measures are also recommended, to limit the spread of respiratory viral infections:

- Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell,

who exhibit a high temperature, or who have a cough.

- Avoid crowded places (or reduce time spent there).
- Avoid touching your mouth and nose.
- Observe hand hygiene by washing your hands frequently with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based sanitiser, especially if touching your mouth or nose.
- Increase the supply of fresh air to your living space, opening windows frequently.
- Use a protective mask when in contact with a sick person.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: get some good sleep, eat well, make time for exercise, and take regular walks in the fresh air.

Recommendations for the home care of patients:

- Isolate the patient from others, at a distance of at least one metre.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask while caring for patients.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after each contact with the patient. Use separate towels for each family member.
- Apart from caregivers, the patient should not be visited by anyone.
- If possible, only one adult family member should take care of the patient.
- Pregnant women are advised not to care for the sick.

- Always ventilate the room in which the patient is staying.
- Keep the room clean, using detergents.

Recommendations on the use of masks:

- Wearing a mask is mandatory when in close contact with a patient.
- Carefully put on the mask so that it covers the mouth and nose — ensuring that the space between the face and the mask is as small as

possible.

- When using a mask, try not to touch it.
- After removing the mask, wash your hands with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based disinfectant.
- Replace the used mask with a new one as soon as it gets wet.
- Do not reuse disposable masks.
- Throw away disposable masks after each use and dispose of them immediately.

Advice for parents:

- Teach your children to wash their hands often, with soap and water, for twenty seconds. Parents also need to perform this procedure, serving as a good example to their children.
 - Teach children to cough and sneeze into a napkin or — if the latter is not available — into the elbow bend.
 - Encourage children not to approach closer than 1.5-2m when someone is unwell.
 - Sick children should stay at home (rather than going to pre-school or school).
 - Refrain from frequent visits to crowded places.
 - If the child is in contact with a flu holder, consult your doctor about the need to receive antiviral drugs for the prevention of the disease.
- Keep in mind the well-known principle that prevention is better than cure.

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

Lending a helpful hand

Minsker develops super-cheap bionic prosthesis and puts drawings on Internet for free access

By Taisia Azanovich

Lending a helping hand is literal in the case of Oleg Galtsev: the programmer has developed an electromechanical prosthetic hand which is almost 20 times cheaper than its foreign counterparts. Now, he is looking for some lucky people to receive it for free.

White plastic fingers compress in a fist, unfold in the palm, grab dice and make a pyramid. At first sight, the prosthesis is a poor resemblance to a human hand, but has impressive functions. “These artificial fingers work as if they are real — taking a cup of tea or a book easily,” explains Oleg Galtsev, adding, “If necessary, this hand can even chop firewood or mow grass. With the designer, Sergey Arefiev, we never stop improving it. Our plans envisage ensuring the artificial hand can use a pen or even a needle.”

The invention has become pos-



Oleg Galtsev and Sergey Arefiev plan to improve their electromechanical prosthetic hand

sible thanks to Oleg’s father who lost his arm. The son wanted to buy a modern prosthesis which would be a copy of a human hand. On learning the price however, about \$30,000, he was disappointed. As a result, the idea was born to make the prosthesis independently. For a while his plans were under development, and finally, Oleg and Sergey have made the prosthesis significantly cheaper at just \$1,500. Many

details were 3D printed. Its muscles are replaced by electric motors, and bones by printed details. The fingers are controlled by electronics — responding to the rotation of the stump to both left and right.

Oleg demonstrates their development, “Pay attention to the weight: with a battery, it is 277 grams — at least 150 grams less than other similar products. Moreover, it is less than the weight of a 65kg male hand.

Taking into consideration the fact that this is a prototype, we have an idea of how to make it even easier.”

The process of prosthesis development continues. Designers are constantly improving, acknowledging that the primary task is to make it more durable — to ensure prosthesis holders can wash dishes, repair furniture, clap or move objects. Healthy people do these actions without much thought but the pros-

thesis might fail if used too often, sometimes after only two months. The developers want to prolong this period to six months.

Oleg’s father has become the first tester but two more disabled people have joined recently: former soldier Victor Zhdanyuk and Olga Tovpenets from Vitebsk; the woman lost her arm in 2016 at her workplace. These people will receive ‘hands’ free of charge but will work with the designers of the bionic prosthesis — sharing daily reports. Oleg is in search of other volunteers and even plans to prepare the database of Belarusians who need a prosthesis of this kind. An artificial hand only fits perfectly under particular conditions — without a wrist and forearm — to secure the best fit.

The project developers have done a great deed in placing the prosthesis plans on the Internet. Anyone can now make this artificial hand at home. The details can be 3D printed and then put together like a construction kit. “The free version is the social component but we also plan to prepare a commercial project — based not only on 3D printing but also using casting. The device will be a bit more expensive but will be much stronger and look more aesthetic,” Oleg explains.

The designers plan to make a hand for women which would be more delicate. They also hope to develop prosthesis for children. In just a couple of months, an improved model of the prosthesis will be made, with its first ‘testers’ expected to share their opinions.

Snow bike as fast as the wind

An unusual bicycle with skis instead of wheels attracted attention on snow-covered slopes of the Pyshki forest park in Grodno

By Alexander Pimenov

Some asked to be allowed to drive it, while others wanted to chat about the creation of this unique mode of transport. The inventor of the snow bike is Vladimir Syrakvashin, a blacksmith from Grodno who enjoys telling the story of his invention to anyone who’s interested, “I saw a similar vehicle in Druskininkai. I decided that I could make something similar so I found the necessary information on the Internet and the rest was a matter of technique and imagination. My friend brought me the frame, I ordered some parts from a turner I know, I made the skis from stainless steel, remade the rear shock absorbers. I spent two days making the adjustments.”

It is possible to ride a snow bike as fast as the wind from any ice slope. Vladimir does not look for easy down hills, however, “Recently, I tested my brainchild on a slope



of the Olimp mountain ski resort in Korobchitsy — it was a real adrenaline rush. You should think twice before deciding to slide down the same hill, because you feel breathless just from the speed of the descent.”

‘Kulibin’ from Grodno also plans to create a water bicycle on big inner tubes. But it will be in the summer. Vladimir continues to create original metal sculptures in his improvised workshop. With the help

of a file, welder and hammer, his hands create exclusive things from old auto parts. Among his newest works are practical knight_lamp, the animation character Wall-e, a scorpion, and a motorcycle mock-up in which all the elements move. Vladimir is also a designer and a master of hand-crafted items. Many of them have already taken part in exhibitions and can be bought as souvenirs.

Technologies do change their form

By Alexey Fedosov

Biometric passports and national ID cards to launch in late 2018

Alexei Begun, the Head of the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Interior Ministry of Belarus, notes, “We’re planning to launch biometric passports for travelling abroad and an ID card.”

According to the plan for the development of biometric technologies for 2014-2018, Belarus is initiating measures to infuse national documents with biometric technologies: passports for travel abroad and national ID cards. Plans have also been made to introduce these into Belarus’ integrated service-



payment system.

ID cards are plastic cards with biometric information stored on the chip. They are successfully used in many countries, being compact and durable, and almost impossible to counterfeit. Meanwhile, biometric passports make travel across state borders faster and more convenient.



Protester holds a sign as demonstrators gather to protest against President Donald Trump's executive order

'Dreamers' fear deportation after DACA recipient detained

The first arrest of a so-called 'dreamer', like so many of Donald Trump's first acts as president, sparked public outcry in the US

In Tacoma, Washington DC, a young Mexican who entered the country illegally as a child with his parents and recently covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme was taken into custody.

Protest organiser Rolando Avila said, "We're here in solidarity and we demand that he be released because he is someone that is very valuable in his community, and we are seeing this across the coun-

try where we're seeing attacks on immigrants. And we don't want to stand idle."

Known as the 'dreamers', they are 750,000 non-American youths to have obtained temporary protection against deportation under Barack Obama's DACA, implemented in 2012. To apply for DACA, you must have lived in the US since 2007, be enrolled in or have graduated from school, and not have a criminal record.

With all boxes ticked, the programme gives immigrant youths a renewable two-year period of protection against deportation, and the right to work legally, obtain a drivers license and to apply for scholarships. The former US president intended the programme to remove some of the uncertainty surrounding young illegal immigrants.

"Let's be clear, this is not amnesty, this is a temporary stop-get

measure that lets us focus our resources wisely while giving a degree of relief and hope to talented driven, patriotic young people," he said in 2012.

But now the uncertainty has returned. President Trump has remained typically vague about his intentions regarding DACA, but some of his advisors, perhaps most notably the ultra-nationalist Steve Bannon, are in favour of repealing the programme.

Challenges in Egypt's economic recovery remain

Five years on from the revolution that saw the fall of the Mubarak regime, and Egypt is still on its knees

Economically speaking, the people are still waiting for promises to be fulfilled. The change they dreamed for remains elusive and, as the country endures its worst economic crisis in decades, many can barely afford the tomatoes and cucumbers that are a staple of the poor.

Inflation continues on its upward trajectory, from 13 percent in September, to a massive 30 percent at the beginning of 2017.

The plunge in currency has sparked shortages in anything imported, from medicine, to sugar — one of the only luxuries Egypt's millions of poor could afford. And with scarcity comes price hikes. Imported staples such as wheat flour, rice, sugar, and coffee have seen costs increase by 80 percent in just a few months, while food prices in general are up 40 percent.

Egypt is one of the world's biggest food importers. This year the country is forecast to consume close to 20 million tonnes of wheat, almost half of which will have to



A man walks past a bread stand at a street corner in Cairo

be imported. However, some businesses are thriving. Price hikes on imported goods have seen a boom Egypt's manufacturing industry.

An increase in tariffs on more than 300 products shipped from abroad has proved to be a nightmare for importers, but not for domestic manufacturers like Salam.

But while Egyptian-made products may suit the price conscious, importers say local producers don't have the capacity to fill the gap left by declining sales of foreign goods.

Two years on from his swearing in ceremony, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi still has much work to do.

Pope backs Native tribes in Dakota Access Pipeline row

Pope Francis appears to have taken the side of Native Americans in the Dakota Access Pipeline dispute

The Pope said that indigenous cultures have a right to defend 'their ancestral relationship to the earth'. Although the Pontiff did not mention the Native Americans by name he clearly stated that development had to take into account 'the protection of the particular characteristics of indigenous peoples and their territories'.

The Standing Rock Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes have argued the project would prevent them from practicing religious ceremonies at a lake they say is surrounded by sacred ground. Thousands of tribe members, environmentalists and others set up camps last year on Army Corps land in the North Dakota plains as protests intensified.

In December, the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama denied the last permit needed by Energy Transfer Partners, which is building the \$3.8bn pipeline. But recently the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted a final easement, after President Donald Trump issued an order to advance the project days after he took office in January.

More rescue boats, more migrants drowning in the Med

Europe has been sending more rescue vessels to prevent migrants from drowning in the Mediterranean

Yet the number of people dying en route from Libya to Italy has hit a record high, as smugglers pack ever more people onto unseaworthy boats. It's a 'sad paradox' and the trend is unlikely to change this year, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex said. In its report 'Risk Analysis for 2017', the agency said smugglers have grown more bold and reckless.

"The number of migrants now on very small dinghies or fishing boats has increased, on average there are 160 migrants this year while in 2015 there was approximately 100 migrants per boat," said Fabrice Leggeri, the Agency's Executive Director.

Frontex expects as many migrants will cross from Libya this year as last.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Portraits eloquently remind us of role of personality in history



Exhibition of works from Maciej Radziwiłł's collection, *The Radziwills: Fate of the Country and the Family*

Exhibition of works from Maciej Radziwiłł's collection, *The Radziwills: Fate of the Country and the Family*, opens at National Art Museum of Belarus

By Vladimir Mikhailov

Without exaggeration, this exhibition is a landmark event for national culture. Picturesque and graphical portraits, miniatures, medals, artistic fabrics first go on display for a wide public in the



Essential viewing

country's major museum.

The project showcases a gallery of famous representatives of our common history: Barbara Radziwiłł, the Queen of Poland; her father Jerzy Radziwiłł, known as the Lithuanian Hercules; Mikolaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'Sierotka', the founder of

the Nesvizh residence; his brother Grzegorz, the Cardinal and Bishop of Krakow; Michal Kazimierz Radziwiłł 'Rybeńko', the founder of Slutsk sash manufacturing; and Karol Stanislaw Radziwiłł 'Panie Kochanku', known for his freedom-loving lifestyle and independent na-



Portraits remind us of history

ture, as a member of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Undoubtedly, the collection is very precious since some of these portraits may have survived in a single copy, e.g., like Maria Cecilia Sieniawska (born Radziwiłł), Antonina Aniela Radziwiłł (born Miączyńska)

and Teofilia Magdalena Brzostowska (born Radziwiłł).

The exhibition features portraits by famous European artists: Italian Marcello Bacciarelli, who worked at the Court of Stanislaw August Poniatowski; Austrian Franz Xaver Lampi, the son of famous Johann Baptist Lampi the Elder; and engravings by Flemish master Dominicus Custos, who worked at the Court of Rudolph II in Prague, working from G. Fontana's drawings.

Portraits of the Radziwiłł Dukes are also on show, from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus, kept at Nesvizh Castle until 1939.

The Radziwills: the Fate of the Country and the Family exhibition marks the importance of the historical memory of the Belarusian people. It's hard to name another family which has played such a significant role in the history of the country. It's impossible to overestimate the activity of its descendants, who continue the tradition of charity and peace-making. The exhibition emphasises our common historical past and aims to strengthen the cultural ties of Belarus with Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Poles.

Unobtrusive beauty in focus

By Veniamin Mikheev

Yulia Gaidukova's *Adoration of the Simple* exhibition of paintings makes worthy addition to country's major museum

Yulia Gaidukova's picturesque style is expressive and sensitive, similar to that of the Impressionists and Henri Matisse, weaving a hymn to the universe from pure flowers. The first thing you notice about her works is her use of



Author's shared impressions

colour; it's the major instrument of her creativity, showing her mood, whether she's painting bouquets of flowers

or Belarusian landscapes. Combining simple spots, texture and smooth surfaces, it's

her use of colour that draws us in.

Flowers and landscapes are the vehicles of her storytelling, exploring the subtleties of the human soul and our lyrical emotions. Her canvases are filled with poetry and positive energy.

The keynote of the *Adoration of the Simple* exhibition is the observation of nature as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the artist. The exhibition displays works from various years but

most are still-life paintings, of flowers, and landscapes. Yulia Gaidukova's paintings capture a moment in time, as if to find a foothold in the transiency of life. She displays adoration of the simple, the observation of time, and our search for the truth of the eternal, such as we may see in the life of a flower. Blooms quickly fade, but are timeless in their beauty.

Since ancient times, the flower has been a symbol of awakening nature, the arrival of spring, youth and renewal. The Japanese term 'Hanami' can be translated as 'flower viewing'. The Japanese sakura (cherry tree) blossoms



At Yulia Gaidukova's exhibition

for just one week each year, inspiring the admiration of its flowers not only for their beauty but for their very transience, which reminds us of the brevity of human life. The essence of beauty is revealed in its fragility, and its varia-

tion. This is its power. Traditions, handed down from our ancestors, live on, from year to year.

Visitors to Ms. Gaidukova's exhibition will surely feel the beauty and joy of our adoration of the simple.

Creating delicate work with truly meticulous details

Former library building in Stolin District's village of Tereblichy houses museum of folk life



Ivan Suprunchik is both painter and sculptor

By Olga Korneeva

Local residents say that time spent at the museum enables more learning about Polesie than is written in books. The author of the unique exhibition is painter and sculptor Ivan Suprunchik. He is only person in Belarus who carves his sculptures

with an axe alone, creating delicate works with meticulous detail. You'd think he was using a surgical scalpel. His form is suggested by the structure of wood, while his themes are inspired by local folklore.

Almost all works are dedicated to heroes of long forgotten oral folk arts, yet some

modern characters are also included. Mr. Suprunchik follows the news, giving his own interpretation through his pictures and statues, creating figures with computers instead of heads. Another has bandaged eyes (symbolising Europe), while one is dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy.



One of the images

"When I'm inspired, I can carve a single statuette in an hour," comments the Polesie resident. "The most important thing is the idea."

Within just a few decades, he turned his workshop into a unique museum, whose exhibits allow the study of the culture of Polesie. He has over 1,500 artefacts from the 17th-19th century: utensils, clothes, wooden bowls and, even, ancient skis, more than 150 years old. Polesie residents used them to walk through the snow-covered marshes.

The exhibition in remote Polesie is often visited by foreigners, who are impressed that the museum looks like a true rural house. Ivan Suprunchik happily chats for hours with guests, telling them about his hobby. He dreams of Tereblichy being included in the official tourist routes of the region.

Groundbreaking exhibition for all those who dream of recognition

House of Pictures is currently hosting an exhibition, showcasing the works of everyone who came to the gallery and brought their pieces

By Yulia Matusevich

There are many good painters — too many for them all to become famous. Not everyone who can transform a canvas in a talented way is good at self-promotion.

For them, as well as for all those who dream of recognition, the House of Pictures Gallery has prepared a groundbreaking exhibition. To become an entrant one just needed to bring any work to the gallery. The only condition is that the work must fit through the door and have a means of hanging in the exhibition hall.

Project curator Olga Klip has no doubts of success, and quotes the example of the exhibition entitled *36 Hours* organised in Washington by the famous gallerist, Walter Hopps. Over one and a half days Hopps showed



Near the exhibition

all the work brought to him by both professionals and amateurs on the eve of the event. His idea looked absurd on paper, but the exhibition received great acclaim far beyond the borders of Washington and people were talking about it long afterwards. For some entrants, their path to glory started there, and Walter Hopps is still viewed as the unrivalled master of art promotion.

Belgazprombank returns Francysk Skaryna's legendary book to Belarus

By Vladimir Mikhailov

In the year of the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing, the corporate collection of Belgazprombank has expanded to receive a monument of national book culture: *The Small Travel Book*, printed by Francysk Skaryna in Vilno in 1522. Experts believe that this is the first book released on Belarusian lands. Today, it's the only copy of this book in our country.

The Small Travel Book is a 'prayer book for lay people': a collection of church books designed for travellers, including *The Psalter*, *The Book of Hours*, *Everyday Church Rules for Reading and Praying*, *The Collection of Epistles*, akathisti and canons.

It is more than simply one edition. It comprises eighteen books, collated in a single volume, decorated with unique engravings and initials. Nine books have an afterword by the printer.

In 2017, our country is celebrating the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing: on August 6th, 1517, Francysk Skaryna released his *Psalter* in Prague.

In 1968, researcher Nemirovsky first suggested viewing the component parts of *The Small Travel Book* as separate editions, since each had its own numeration and, often, a title page. Francysk Skaryna printed at least twenty-two editions in

Vilno: *The Psalter*, *The Book of Hours*, *Everyday Church Rules for Reading and Praying*, *The Apostle*, a short church calendar, and seventeen akathisti and canons.



No complete set of books from within *The Small Travel Book* survives but the most complete copies are kept in the libraries of Moscow,

Copenhagen and St. Petersburg. The Russian National Library boasts of set of twenty books and a set of eighteen is kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

Alongside the copy from the corporate collection of Belgazprombank, engravings of *The Baptism of our Lord* and *God Teaches Judaic Teachers of Religion in the Church* remain only in the University Library of Krakow.

"The return of this unique national artefact to its homeland in the year of celebrating the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing is a landmark event for the whole country," notes the Head of Belgazprombank, Vic-

MT REFERENCE:

In 1520, Francysk Skaryna arrived in Vilno with the support of Mayor Jakub Babicz. He released *The Small Travel Book* in 1522 and *The Apostle* in 1525.

tor Babariko. "This gives us an opportunity to demonstrate the unity of Belarusian and European culture through the centuries. We're pleased to say that Belgazprombank is working to implement a new international project, dedicated to this date — remarkable for all Belarus and Europe."

On February 12th, 2017, the 24th Minsk International Book Fair finished. It included the presentation of *The Governing Crosier*, released by Simeon Polotsky in 1667, which is part of the corporate collection of Belgazprombank. The bank commissioned a reproduction, together with the National Library of Belarus, in 2013.

Recognition at world level

Belarusian canoeist Nadezhda Makarchenko receives World Paddle Awards in the category of most promising young athlete — Sports Junior

By Semen Bondarev

The World Paddle Awards is held annually for rowing sports. World Paddle Award winners are selected by on-line secret ballot, by WPA members and by general public and fans (the latter select their favourites online from the nominees as presented on the WPA website). Alongside Nadezhda Makarchenko, four more athletes laid claim to awards in the junior category: from the USA, the Czech Republic, the South African Republic and Poland. The awards ceremony took place at the prestigious resort in Portugal.

Nadezhda has received this prestigious award for her high achievements over the last two years, having won five gold medals at the World Junior and U23 Canoe Sprint Championships in Portugal and Belarus, in 2015 and 2016: C1 200m (twice), C2 200m (twice) and the 500m.

“The award is an advance for



Nadezhda Makarchenko

the future. It's pleasant to have your merits recognised early in your career. However, such attention is also a big responsibility, since people are expecting even greater results from me. This award also recognises the work of my coaches. I'd like to thank my canoe partner

and friend, Yelena Nozdreva, who's worked as hard as I have,” Ms. Makarchenko commented, speaking after the awards ceremony.

Another representative of Belarus, 11-time Paralympic champion and the most titled athlete of the Rio Paralympics, swimmer Igor Boky, was nominated for the prestigious Laureus World Sports Award, in the ‘Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability’ category, but lost to Italian wheelchair fencer Beatrice Vio.

Winners of Laureus World Sports Awards are determined in two stages. First, the selection commission, comprising leading international sports editors, writers and TV hosts, from more than 120 countries, select six contenders in each nomination. Then, fifty members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, which includes famous athletes from the past, vote via secret ballot. Belarusian Igor Boky was viewed as a favourite, despite the award finally going to Beatrice Vio, who claimed gold at the Paralympic Games (with impairment in all four limbs).

The annual Laureus World Sports Awards is a major international event recognising sporting achievement, with the ceremony attended by the world's leading athletes and broadcasters, from 180 states. This year, the awards ceremony took place in Monaco.



Pavel Seliverstov's golden jump

Only the stars are higher...

By Sergey Kanashits

Our young high jumper, Pavel Seliverstov, not only gained victory in the third stage of the IAAF World Indoor Tour, in Karlsruhe, but set a personal record (2.3m) and the world season record. Only Olympic Games and World Championship medallists have jumped higher.

Perhaps a jump of 2.3m is not so impressive when compared to global leaders. In 1993, Cuban Javier Sotomayor set a world record of 2.45m. Sotomayor is a grasshopper, and his record seems unlikely to be surpassed any time soon. However, while legendary Valery Brumel jumped 2.28m in the 2015 World Championship, Canadian Derek Drouin took gold with a result of 2.34m. Silver and bronze went to athletes with a result of 2.33m. Meanwhile, at the Olympic Games in Rio, with a jump of 2.30m, Pavel Seliverstov would have taken seventh place: not bad for a 20 year old.

Sadly, Seliverstov didn't qualify for Brazil, only meeting the qualifying standard a few days after selection had closed. Pavel had to be content with watching on television.

Rather than wallowing in self-pity, he applied himself to his training, aiming for new heights. He imagined the stands buzzing with excitement and bright spotlights, as in Rio, imagining himself not in Minsk but over the sea, taking part in the world's ultimate sports gathering.

None of his jumps at that time would have brought him a medal, but fruit ripens as days pass and the national team track and field coach, Igor Sivododov, is confident of Pavel's prospects. He tells us, “We're optimistic about the future, including for the Games in Tokyo in 2020. We have some promising young sportsmen and women. Our jumpers have acquired a strong, smooth style, regularly achieving results of 2.29-2.30 metres. Seliverstov, Andrey Churilo and Dima Nabokov are all young, with reserves for growth. These guys have a serious attitude and, while they make errors, they continue to show determination, and the desire to bring results.”

Marina Arzamasova took third place in the 800m in Karlsruhe. From February 17th through until February 19th, the Belarusian Championship is being hosted by Mogilev's Olympiets Sports Centre, giving fans a chance to see their heroes perform.

Bronze medals truly worth as much as gold

Belarusian boxers win three bronze medals at prestigious István Bocskai Memorial International Tournament in Debrecen, Hungary

By Alexey Grishin

The István Bocskai Memorial is one of the oldest European tournaments. This year, it was organised for the 61st time, gathering representatives of twenty-four countries, and over 160 participants. Interestingly, boxing is gaining increasing popularity among women, with twenty-four sportswomen fighting for medals in Hungary. Among them were various champions and Olympic medal holders, as well as

titled contenders from world and European championships. Against that background, the success of our boxers was truly impressive.

In the girls' competition (up to 51kg), Yana Burim, coached by Igor Figurenko, created a stir by defeating multi-titled world and European champion Lisa Whiteside, of the UK, in the quarter-finals, 4:1. Sadly, in the semi-finals, the Belarusian lost to China's Yuan Chang, 3:2. According to boxing rules, box-



Maxim Vislough in the ring

ers who lose in the semi-finals are awarded bronze medals.

Among the heavyweights (+91kg category), Gomel's Alexander Kaleyev secured bronze, after defeating Poland's Kamil Bodzioch, 5:0. Unfortunately, Kaleyev also lost



Yana Burim (second on the right) at awards ceremony

in the semi-finals, to Ukrainian Viktor Vykhryst.

Debrecen saw another bronze for Belarus, won by Maxim Vislough, from Mozyr (up to 64kg). He went through to the semi-finals without the need to fight, as his opponent from Hungary withdrew due to injury. To reach the finals, Maxim need-

ed to defeat an experienced fighter from Moldova, Dmitri Galagot, who took bronze at Minsk's 2013 European Championship. Meanwhile, the Moldovan turned out to be an unyielding rival, winning 3:2. Although Maxim lost in the semi-finals, the bout showed his strength, and his worthiness to claim bronze.

Holiday of the week



Hello, Maslenitsa! traditional holiday held at Brest's park of culture and leisure

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 13th March. Exhibition of Yulia Gaidukova's pictorial works: Adoration of the Simple
Until 14th March. Byalynitsky-Birulya's Memorial Landscapes
Until 16th April. The Radziwills: Fate of the Country and the Family

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 28th February. Time of Miracles: Winter Holidays and Entertainments
Until 9th April. Vladimir Mulyavin: Heritage of Great Maestro
Until 1st June 2017. From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble

MUSEUM OF MODERN BELARUSIAN STATE

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

BELARUSIAN STATE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 26th February. Weapon of Victory

HOUSE OF PICTURES

89/3 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 26th February. Monet, Shishkin and Malevich

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 1st March. Paris, Ahead! Europe Seen in Windows
Until 1st March. Under Dragon's Wings

EXHIBITION HALL OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 13th March. Noisy Feathered Rainbow

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 12th March. Birds in Winter

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY'S ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 26th February. My Belarus: Chronicles of Epoch

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 1st March. Exhibition of Finland's Ari Juhani Harju: Reflection

YAKUB KOLAS STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

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

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
23.02. The Swan Lake 24.02. Madama Butterfly 5.02. Aida 26.02. Tristan and Isolde. Grand-pax from Paquita ballet; Bolero; Yelena Salo's Portraits: Klavdia Shulzhenko 28.02. Carmen

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
23.02. Once in Chicago 24.02. One Thousand and One Nights 25.02. Town Musicians from Bremen; The Bat 26.02. Little-Red-Riding-Hood. Generation NEXT; Yunona and Avos 28.02. Wedding Bazaar 01.03. Masterpieces of World Classical Ballet

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
23.02 Local Cabaret 24.02 Pan Tadeush 25.02 Weltmaster-Accordion 26.02 Crystal Shoe; Two Souls 28.02 School of Taxpayers 01.03 Black Lady of Nesvizh

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
16.02. Interview with Witches 18.02. Morozko 24.02. Tartuffe 25.02. A Wolf and Seven Goats 26.02. Cat in Boots

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
23.02. Run 24.02. Bridegrooms 25.02. Magic Rings of Almazor; Viva Commedia 26.02. Tricks of Khanuma 28.02. Testosterone 01.03. Circle of Love 02.03. Private Lives

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
23.02. The Mechanical Man 24 and 25.02. Nobody Ever Said Life Would Be Easy 26.02. The Makropoulos Case 27.02. Master and Margarita 28.02. and 01.03. #13 02.03. Robbery at Midnight

MODERN ARTS THEATRE

5 Okiyabrskaya Street
26.02. Mad Money

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
23.02. Grandfather 24.02. Love of People 25.02. Cat's House 26.02. Adam's Jokes 02.03. Medea Syndrome

BELARUSIAN REPUBLICAN YOUNG SPECTATOR'S THEATRE

26 Engels Street
23.02. Wings of My Childhood 25.02. Mystery of Great Goodwin 26.02. Road to Bethlehem