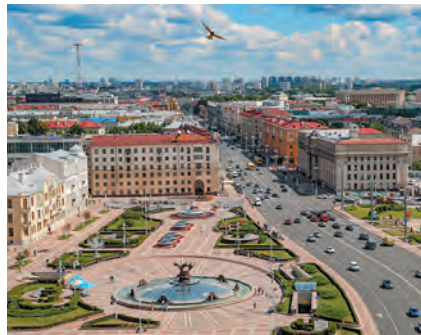




The 10th Forum of Regions has updated absolute records: about 100 co-operation agreements have been signed

4



Our new project *Belarusian Land Treasures* invites you to explore the amazing sights of Minsk

6

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 25 (983) ● THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2023 ● WWW.SB.BY



Yulia Dugina and Bogdan Ushal during the flower-laying ceremony at the *Mound of Glory Memorial Complex*

Main day of the country

On July 3rd, the Republic of Belarus celebrated its Independence Day (Republic Day). This public holiday is established in honour of the liberation of Minsk — the capital of Belarus — from Nazi invaders during World War II. July 3rd is a historically significant date in the fate of Belarus, which has become a symbol of freedom and peace.

In the life of every nation there are fateful dates that become the starting point of a new stage in the history of the state and cause the highest spiritual uplift and unity of all citizens. It is the Independence Day and the historical events associated with it that is such a milestone for Belarus.

Throughout the years, the memory of the feat of our ancestors has been a great unifying force for all Belarusians. This once again emphasises that we are a nation that is always ready to selflessly defend the Motherland and its sovereignty. → 2



9 771991 297007 1 23025

‘Belarus is our greatest value’



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, took part in the celebrations near the *Mound of Glory* on Independence Day. The Head of State laid a wreath at the foot of the memorial and, together with those present, honoured the memory of the heroes-defenders of the Motherland with a minute of silence. The ceremony was attended by senior officials, veterans of the Great Patriotic War and labour, participants in the *Memory Train* patriotic campaign, as well as representatives of public organisations.

Addressing his compatriots, Aleksandr Lukashenko called Independence Day the main state holiday, “We celebrate it at the foot of the majestic monument. The monument that was erected in honour of the heroes who liberated Belarus from the Nazi invaders.

The Mound of Glory is a holy place. It was the place of fierce battles. Thousands of soldiers and officers gave their lives for the sake of future generations. Here, the fraternal ties of the large multinational country were sealed with blood. The fighters did not divide themselves into Belarusians and Russians, Ukrainians and Kazakhs, Armenians and Georgians, Tajiks and Kyrgyz, Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks and others. They did not divide the land into their own and someone else’s. They fought for our Fatherland.”

The President drew attention to the fact that the Minsk cauldron was closed exactly at this place, “The offensive operation Bagration is rightly called the triumph of the Soviet military art. This battle went down in

history as the largest defeat of the fascist troops in World War II. About 400,000 soldiers, officers, generals of the Wehrmacht and the SS were killed and captured. They were shown to the whole world. They were taken to Moscow for a march of shame, the traces of which were



washed away by watering machines that followed. The newly-minted Nazis would better review that footage. They want to forget, but you and I should not let them. No one should forget

this. We must not forget so that it does not happen again.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that Belarus honours and remembers the feat of the Soviet people, “Today, all our memorials are showered with flowers. In every corner of Belarus. The smallest monument, a grave of

Soviet soldiers is showered with flowers. We bow our heads to our compatriots. We thank the soldiers of the fraternal republics. Thousands have found their last refuge in our land. The streets of our cities

bear the names of many of them. They will live in the hearts of the Belarusian people forever. A low bow and eternal memory to the winners!”

The President is convinced that the Great Patriotic War taught Belarusians to value life, peace and freedom, “Therefore, today, July 3rd, on the day of the liberation of our capital, Minsk, we celebrate Independence Day of independent Belarus. I am very happy to see young people from Russia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, participants of the *Memory Train* project, who came to share this holiday with us. Over time, the train will surely gather together all the heirs of the victorious nations. From all the republics of the Soviet Union. I am absolutely convinced of this. After all, we share one memory of that war, one victory and one truth! In such a difficult time, only together we can guarantee peace in our land. Only together can we be free and independent.”

According to the Head of State, the future of Belarus is created by the dreams and aspirations of its inhabitants, and these plans are implemented thanks to the hard work and responsibility of every Belarusian.

“We have one land, one country — our dear Belarus. This is our greatest value. They [the generation of winners] bequeathed us to take care of it. And we will. Now it’s the turn of the youth. Take care of this land, you will not have another,” Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

On this day, a real patriotic holiday unfolded near the *Mound of Glory*. Here one could remember the pages of the history of Belarus, try their hand at sporting events, taste various treats and buy souvenirs with national flavour. An exhibition of modern weapons and military equipment was also organised. *The Mound of Glory* is one of the iconic memorials of Belarus dedicated to the soldiers-liberators. Its construction began in November 1967 and became a nationwide affair. Land was brought here from Belarusian cities and villages, hero cities of the Soviet Union. Over time, it became a museum complex and a venue for various patriotic events.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Congratulations on Independence Day

Congratulations on Independence Day came to the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, and the Belarusian people from the leaders of foreign states, international organisations and integration associations, political and public figures.

The Head of State and the country’s citizens have been congratulated by the leaders of Russia, China, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Turkiye, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Mongolia, Palestine, Tanzania, and the Order of Malta.

Congratulations have also been sent by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, State Secretary of the Union State Dmitry Mezentsev, CIS Secretary General Sergei Lebedev, CSTO Secretary General Iman-gali Tasmagambetov, and Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Qu Dongyu.

“This holiday is of special importance not only for Belarusians, but also for Russians, because it is associated with a significant event in our common history: the liberation of Minsk from Nazi invaders. The bonds of fraternal friendship and mutual assistance, hardened during the harsh war years, remain a reliable basis for allied Russian-Belarusian relations. This is fully confirmed today, when our countries are facing very serious external threats and challenges together. I am confident that — by steadily building up constructive bilateral ties in all directions, strengthening the institutions of the Union State — we will be able to overcome any difficulties and defend the legitimate interests of our countries on the world stage,” the congratulatory message of **Russian President Vladimir Putin** reads.

The President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping, addressed heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Aleksandr Lukashenko and the friendly Belarusian people, “Under your strong leadership, your country’s state-building in various fields is developing dynamically, and China — as an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partner — is sincerely glad about this. The Chinese side strongly supports the path of development chosen by Belarus, which corresponds to its own national conditions, as well as the measures taken by the Government of your country to promote state development. I attach great importance to the development of Chinese-Belarusian relations and am ready to work together with you to bring Chinese-Belarusian relations to healthy and stable development at a high level.”

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also conveyed his warmest congratulations to the people of Belarus

on the occasion of Independence Day, “All the challenges of our modern world — including poverty, inequality, violent conflicts and climate change — require joint actions based on solidarity, mutual respect and understanding. A better future requires every country to look beyond its national borders and support efforts to promote peace, human rights, prosperity and sustainable development for all people, regardless of where they live. The United Nations joins all the people of the Republic of Belarus in celebrating your special day, and we look forward to continuing our joint work to ensure a better, healthier and safer future for people and the entire planet.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wished Aleksandr Lukashenko happiness and health, also wishing prosperity and well-being to the friendly people of Belarus.

In his congratulatory message, **Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev** noted that the countries have celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year, “It is gratifying that, in a historically short period of time, we have managed not only to preserve and multiply the positive results of our common past, but also to reach a qualitatively new level of interaction... I am convinced that our joint efforts will continue to be aimed at further strengthening the traditional friendly ties and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Belarus in the interests of our peoples and countries.”

“On the occasion of Belarus’ Independence Day, I am pleased to express my sincere congratulations and kind wishes of good health and happiness to Your Excellency, also wishing further progress and prosperity to the Government and the friendly people of Belarus,” the

congratulatory message of **King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia** reads.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros confirmed his sincere desire to develop co-operation with Belarus for the sake of well-being and prosperity of the peoples of the two countries. “On this symbolic and significant date, we are happy to celebrate the sovereignty and independence of Belarus, a friendly country and the most ardent supporter in defence of a multipolar and polycentric world,” his congratulatory message reads.

Congratulations from the leadership of **Nicaragua** have been signed by **the President and the Vice-President: Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo**. “Please accept our fraternal and revolutionary embrace on this historic date, and let us confirm the desire to further strengthen our bonds of friendship, solidarity and fraternal co-operation that unite our peoples and governments,” the text reads.

In turn, **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi** wished prosperity and success to the friendly people of Belarus. “Our states can proudly demonstrate a high level of bilateral relations, which are distinguished by mutual respect and co-operation in various fields. I express my hope that the dynamically developing contacts between our friendly states will continue to be consistently strengthened thanks to our joint work and fruitful interaction for the benefit of our peoples,” he noted.

In his congratulatory message, **the President of Vietnam, Vo Van Thuong**, noted that his country has always closely watched and is glad to see that Belarus continues to achieve important successes in its development, “I am glad to see that the relations of traditional friendship and multifaceted co-operation between Vietnam and Belarus have further developed recently, and I am convinced that — with the determination of the leaders and peoples of our two countries — the bilateral relations will achieve new results for the benefit of our nations, in the name of peace, stability and development in the region and around the world. Taking this opportunity, I wish prosperity to the Belarusian state and happiness to the Belarusian people.”

According to Belarusian leader’s press service

Integration makes us stronger



During the 10th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held at the end of June in Russian Ufa, much attention was paid to new joint projects aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the economies of two countries. Presidents of Belarus and Russia, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin, made vivid video messages at the plenary session of the forum.



The President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko:

'The greatest assets'

— It is symbolic that the anniversary edition of the forum is taking place in Ufa, the capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan, the region with a rich history and culture, located in the very heart of Eurasia. I think the Russian side was right when it decided to expand the geography of the forum and arrange it in different regions of the Russian Federation. It is important for us that Russians living thousands of kilometres away from our country know more about Belarus, see clearly the prospects of Belarus-Russia partnership. Belarusian goods and skill sets are in demand in Russia's large cities, industrial towns, in the regions, including remote ones, beyond the Urals, in Siberia, Khabarovsk Territory, in Kamchatka. Our fraternal Bashkortostan is no exception. We complement each other in the supply of raw materials, component parts, industrial products. We address the common task of promoting import substitution and technological sovereignty.

Yet, the greatest assets are human relations, a common history, culture, mindset, a traditional view of the family, respect for elders, great prospects and support for young people.

'No obstacles to co-operation'

— Even in the most difficult times, Belarus and Russia kept promoting inter-regional contacts. It helped us survive amidst the collapse of statehood and the interruption of established economic ties after the disintegration of a great country. Now strong relations help us to withstand a new attack from the West on all fronts: economic, political, ideological, information, cultural and others. The uniqueness of the partnership between the countries lies in the fact that from the very beginning the system of interaction between Belarus and Russia was built on the idea to ensure self-sufficiency of economic ties and technological sovereignty of the two states. This advantage must be used as much as possible. This is what we are doing.

In fact, all the necessary decisions have been made by the Presidents. The regions that directly have resources, both human, material and financial, have no obstacles to co-operation.

'The basic principle of partnership'

— In the current conditions, there is no need to convince anyone, neither in Russia nor in Belarus, of the advantages of our partnership. The responsibility of local authorities, business and society has noticeably increased. And things got off the ground. Mutual trade in goods and services exceeded a record \$50 billion last year. Of course, economics is the basis of co-operation. It should be so, because the economy is the basis of any social processes... In general, our positions remain unchanged — no barriers and restrictions in interaction. This is the basic principle of partnership.

'We have many interesting ideas'

— We need to increase our competitiveness by deepening industrial co-operation, to address issues of specialisation, import sub-



stitution, primarily in microelectronics and other high-tech industries, to make the most of interregional trade, to develop transport and logistics corridors, and to find additional drivers to further integration processes.

Belarus is ready to participate in the modernisation of key sectors of the Russian economy, the creation of joint ventures.

We have many ideas that can be interesting and relevant for Russian regions. These are co-operation projects in agriculture, construction, mechanical engineering, wood-working, equipment supplies, production of component parts, food production, light industry, space exploration, pharmaceuticals.

'An effective dialogue platform'

— Science, culture and education are also important elements of the Belarus-Russia co-operation. This is eloquently confirmed, among other things, by the results achieved during the past nine forums of the regions. There are 81 agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation between the Republic of Belarus and 73 regions of the Russian Federation.

The forum has become an effective dialogue platform where relevant decisions are made. It is important that representatives of various spheres - politics, business, culture, and science are at the forefront of developing these decisions. This is what they call people's diplomacy and it is proving its effectiveness.

'The most important conditions for peace in our common land'

— Today, the Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia needs to step beyond the Union State format and intensify co-operation with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the SCO, BRICS, ASEAN and everyone who is willing to be friends and work with us. We must make the forum a centre that generates interregional ideas, projects and initiatives... I often say that the Union State of Belarus and Russia is not a private members' club. We are not against anyone.

I will say more: Belarusians and Russians are interested in the development of the entire Eurasian region as a whole. We want all our neighbours to be economically successful. These are the most important conditions for the continent's well-being and for peace in our common land.

If the Western European partners suddenly decide to support the principle of universal economic equilibrium and mutually beneficial co-operation, then we will not be against joint similar events. All the same, they will eventually return to co-operation with us.

The President of Russia Vladimir Putin:

'The heart of truly allied relations'

— The co-operation between regions, which is growing stronger from year to year, is the heart of truly allied relations between Russia and Belarus, integration processes within the framework of the Union State.

Mutually beneficial multifaceted contacts are maintained among themselves by almost all subjects of the Russian Federation and all regions of Belarus.

At the same time, our Far East, Siberia, the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol began to more actively build partnerships with Belarusian colleagues. Interest in connecting to interregional co-operation is also shown by new regions of Russia.

'Positive trend is getting stronger'

— Belarus is the first partner of Russia among the CIS members in terms of trade volume and the fourth in the world.

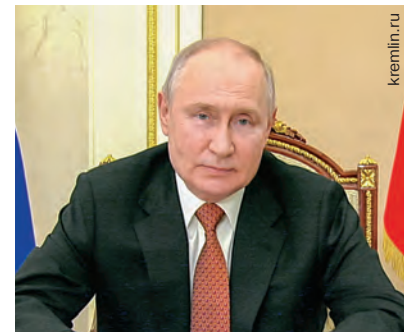
Last year, trade increased by 12 percent and exceeded three trillion rubles.

This positive trend is getting stronger. In January-April, mutual trade added another 11 percent. Such high indicators have become possible thanks to the active integration work carried out, including through the regions. This work is aimed at removing trade and administrative barriers, at convergence of the legislations of the two countries, at coordinated solutions to the problems of national development and improving the well-being of citizens.

'To create the most equal conditions for the activities of economic entities'

— Since 2021, 28 sectoral programmes approved by the Supreme State Council have been consistently implemented.

Their main purpose is to create the most equal conditions for the activities of economic entities in our countries.



Common financial and energy markets and transport space are being built together. Coordinated macroeconomic, technological, industrial, agricultural, and digital policies are being pursued. Russia and Belarus are doing everything to ensure the stability of their economies, their immunity to the negative impact of sanctions. Naturally, it is difficult to achieve success in this matter without a close interregional partnership. One could say it's even unrealistic.

'Russian and Belarusian regions are intensively developing mutual trade'

— Import-substituting investment projects totalling 80 billion rubles have been launched in a number of regions of Belarus, with Russian support. These are such industries as mechanical engineering, machine tool building, microelectronics and a number of others.

Thus, a full cycle of competitive high-tech industries is being created.

In the context of an unfavourable external environment, the refusal of Western countries to co-operate and the closure of their markets by unfriendly states, Russian and Belarusian regions are intensively developing mutual trade. This helps us maintain the manufacturing sectors, redirect supplies to consumers in our two countries. Thus, Belarus' exports to Russia surged by more than 70 billion rubles thanks to shipments of machinery and equipment, food, chemical, textile and other products previously supplied to the West.

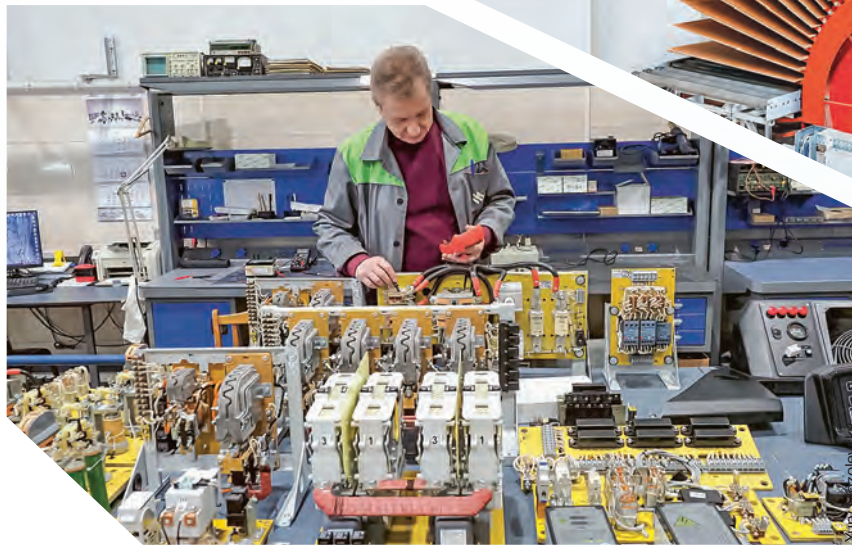
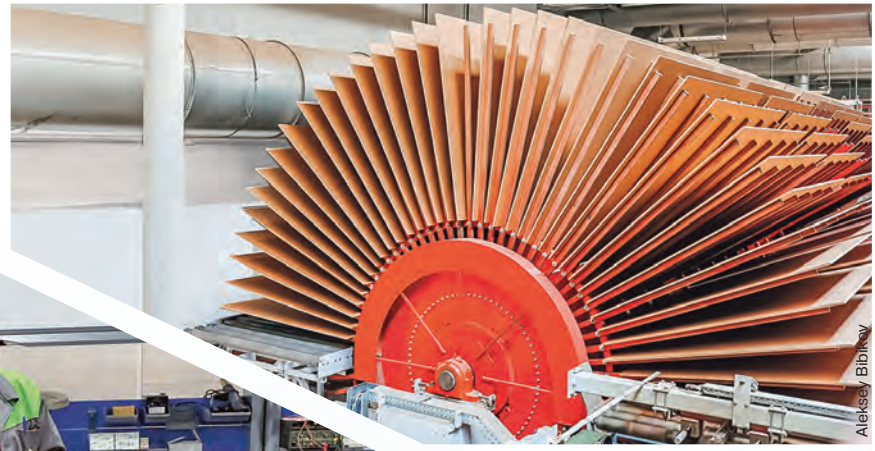


The 10th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia was held in Russian Ufa

There is a record. We are waiting for new ones!



Agreements and contracts worth 110 billion Russian rubles were signed at the 10th anniversary Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia in Ufa



The Forum of Regions of Belarus clearly pushes the boundaries and builds up skill sets year by year. If at the first congress in 2014 the utilitarian topics of ensuring food security were discussed, then following the results of the 10th Forum of Regions, it was noticeable that the event was becoming an important place for discussing allied topics in the field of the economy as a whole. At the same time, the meeting is clearly ready to take the next step in development, outlining its claims to the status of a new authoritative analytical platform for shaping a development strategy for the entire Union State.

By Maksim Korotkin

Scope of achievements

One of the key venues of the Forum of Regions is traditionally the exhibition of achievements of the regional economy. On the second day of the forum, it was opened by Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Natalya Kochanova and Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia Valentina Matviyenko.

This year, the centre of Ufa has housed the products of 35 companies from 19 regions of the two states: more than 100 pieces of equipment, a large part of which is produced at joint ventures and in co-operation programmes.

In the pavilion with an area of 2700 metres there are stands of 10 companies from Belarus and 19 Russian companies. More than 1000 representatives from 58 subjects of the Russian Federation and all regions of the Republic of Belarus took part in the forum. In total, the number of participants involved in the organisation and preparation of the forum was about 5,000.

Economy as the heart of co-operation

Also, by tradition, the main, final day of the forum is set aside for the programme of business negotiations. Natalya Kochanova and Valentina Matviyenko held

a meeting with the heads of state authorities of the constituent entities of Russia and regions of Belarus.

“Of course, economy is at the heart of Belarus-Russia co-operation.

Over the four months, the trade between Belarus and Russia reached some \$17 billion. I think this year’s trade will be bigger than last year’s.

And the forum will contribute to that in many ways. About 450 documents of various levels are in force between regions, districts, cities of the Republic of Belarus and constituent entities, municipalities of the Russian Federation. Intergovernmental agreements have been concluded with more than 70 Russian regions. By now, sister city relations and partnerships have been established between 52 Belarusian cities and towns and 117 Russian cities, districts of large cities,” Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic said.

“Over the past year, the trade turnover between Russia and Belarus increased by 12 percent, reaching a serious figure of \$45 billion [including services — \$50 billion], Russian investments in the economy of Belarus increased 1.5 times. Last year, nine joint (Belarusian-Russian) assembly plants and enterprises for the production of agricultural, transport and municipal equipment were created in the Russian Federation,” Valentina Matviyenko added.

It turned out to be important that the regions of Belarus and Russia are not going to stop at today’s indicators, looking ahead and actually invading the area of strategy.

Governor of the Astrakhan Region Igor Babushkin made a proposal to partners from Belarus to create their own logistics centre in the port of Astrakhan with the prospect of access to the ports of the Caspian Sea.

Focus is on prospects

The plenary session, the main event of the Forum of Regions, obviously continued the trend towards the formation of a strategic analytical platform within the framework of the regional congress. Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Alexey Overchuk reported on the results of the economic development of the Union State, and First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Nikolai Snopkov — on the prospects for the next period. In both speeches, of course, the idea that the regions make up the state was clear, but nevertheless, the trends indicate that the topics of discussion are going beyond the regional.

“The focus in our joint work with colleagues from the Belarusian government remains on the implementation of 28 union programmes. Today, the integration package of documents has been completed by 80 percent. Completely, we consider, actions on 10 programmes are closed. In all key areas, we are working very actively, and we strive to maintain the established pace.

Our regions play a very important role here, and as part of the work on import substitution in the period from 2022 to April 2023, 66 subjects of the federation signed 2,717 contracts worth 75 billion Russian rubles,” Alexey Overchuk explained.

First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Nikolai Snopkov, in continuation of his colleague’s speech, dwelled on the strategic future. The new phase of integration for 2024-2026 is based on three main principles, he said, “The first and most important thing is to ensure technological independence, technological sovereignty. Sectoral projects will be created on the basis of the activities of the union programmes. A number of sectors of the economy have been outlined where we are already implementing joint projects.

The first steps have been taken in micro-electronics, we will soon make a decision in the field of machine tool building, we have approached the solution of ambitious tasks in the field of space and aircraft construction. This approach will be consolidated in all major sectors: industry, agriculture, energy sector, transport. The second component of the new programme is the construction of a single digital space of the Union. The third component is the removal of the remaining barriers and exemptions.”

New ‘think tank’

As a result, the plenary session of the forum left a rather clear impression of the emergence in the Union State of a new structure that controls and influences its development. No wonder Natalya Kochanova proposed to create an analytical session within the framework of the congress and ensure its interaction with the ‘think tanks’ of our countries and abroad. Moreover, the Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic noted the need for a unified analytical platform of the Union. This is all the more relevant because the Forum of Regions has become a powerful bond between Belarus and Russia in ten years, Natalya Kochanova, “The 10th Forum of Regions has updated absolute records: about 100 co-operation agreements have been signed, contracts worth about 110 billion Russian rubles have been concluded. However, it is clear that this is not the limit. Today it seems important to focus on the development of new promising areas and approaches to work that contribute to the qualitative development of the Forums of the Regions of Belarus and Russia.”

The proposals of the Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic were adopted at the meeting. This means that the Forum of Regions has reached a new level of influence on the processes in the Union State.



The right to be right

The term 'electoral sovereignty' was first introduced in the National Security Concept project, which is currently in public comment. This is the inalienable and exclusive right of our state to independently and directly organise and hold elections, referendums in order to ensure the exercise of the sovereignty of the people and their freedom of choice under the supremacy of the Constitution and national legislation, and to prevent interference in the electoral process. In addition, the document says that ensuring electoral sovereignty is our strategic national interest. It is also indicated that the implementation of actions aimed at discrediting or disrupting electoral campaigns is one of the internal sources of threats to national security.

By Svetlana Isaenok

What the consequences might be

Political scientists dealing with this issue note that interference in elections by other states almost inevitably has negative consequences, increasing the risks of a political crisis based on a loss of confidence in democratic political institutions. However, most likely, foreign interference in elections does not so much lead to any significant changes in the voting results as it contributes to the emergence and expansion of conflicts and splits within society. Our country has experienced in practice what some researchers study in theory.

Therefore, it is not surprising that such a formulation appeared in the concept. Now we can confidently defend our ability to determine our own future through the calculation of the opinion of the majority, based on national interests in this matter.

How it works

The end of the 20th century was marked by the elimination of the bipolar global system. The dominant economic, military-political and ideological position in the world began to be occupied by the United States of America. The strengthening of American positions in the world community was associated with the conduct of forceful actions of 'humanitarian intervention', the use of a strategy of unilateral action and infringement in a number of cases of the national interests of other states.

After the collapse of the USSR, the CIS space acquired special significance for American policy. The states that formed in the post-Soviet space became strategic springboards for expanding the American presence, since the ruling political systems, having found themselves in a new state of independence, did not immediately become stable and independent.

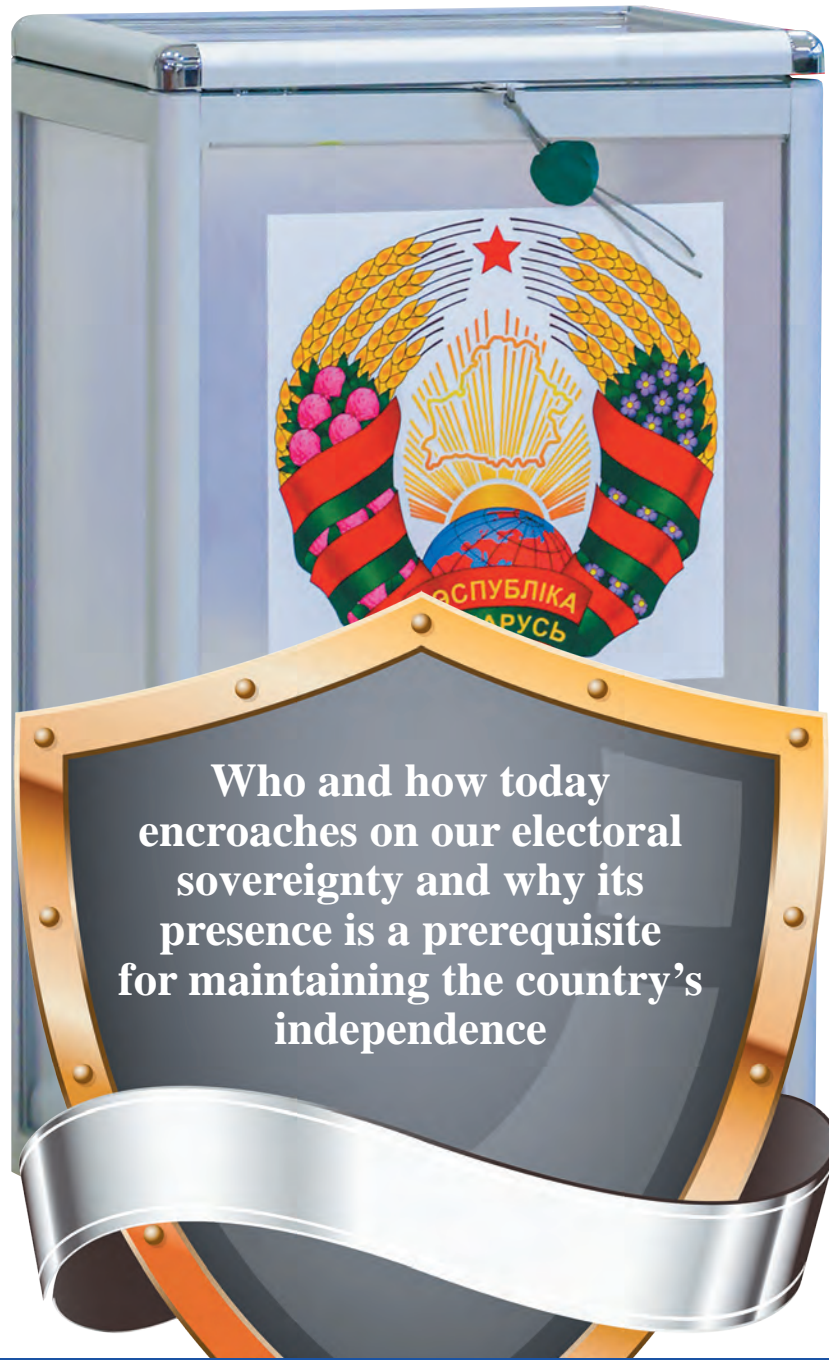
As Zbigniew Brzezinski noted, "It follows that America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space and that the global community has unhindered financial and economic access to it."

In 1983, the A. Einstein Institute was established in the USA to study the technologies of non-violent political struggle, the protection of democracy and human rights. From the moment of its foundation, its employees began to regularly participate in various programmes of 'preparation and support for revolutions' in the interests of American democracy.

According to working plan

As a result of reflections, they focused on 'colour revolutions'. In 2003-2005, 'velvet revolutions' were successfully held in Georgia, Adjara and Ukraine. The states realised that the scheme was really working.

In 2005, a bill is introduced in the US Federal Congress to allocate additional funds under the Democracy Support Act. The law, aimed at countries where 'democracy is under the yoke of dictatorship', provided for the appointment of specially authorised advisers and assistants to the Presidential Administration staff, the State Department, the National



WHAT NEW LEGISLATION HELPS PROTECT OUR ELECTORAL SOVEREIGNTY:

- The Electoral Code establishes a ban on candidates for presidency, deputies, delegates of the National Assembly of the citizenship (nationality) of a foreign state, other documents granting the right to benefits and advantages in connection with political, religious views or national affiliation. 
- Given the threats against members of election commissions received during the electoral campaigns, the personal data of members of election commissions will not be published in the print media. 
- Polling stations will not be formed abroad, which is due to the lack of necessary conditions for the safety of employees of foreign institutions and citizens, and a reduction in the number of employees of diplomatic services. 
- In order to ensure the observance of the principle of secret voting, a ban was imposed on taking the issued ballot out of the voting premises, as well as taking photographs and videos of the completed ballot. 

Security Council, and all US embassies in these states. The goal is to promote democratic values. In 2006, \$180 million were allocated for these funds, in 2007 — \$230 million.


At the same time, an important role in the new conditions began to be assigned to election campaigns as an integral part of the democratic process. The most acute forms of foreign interference in the electoral process acquired from November 2004 to January 2005 during the Ukrainian 'orange revolution'.

The elections in Ukraine have confirmed the high efficiency of using controlled election campaigns as mechanisms for seizing power and implementing a long-term and well-thought-out foreign policy.

Another common tool is the non-recognition and denial of the results of the elections. With the help of powerful information and propaganda pressure, including through diplomatic channels (statements by official representatives of the US State Department, PACE, speeches by foreign observers of the OSCE), an attempt is made to externally legitimise the seizure of political power.

Under the guise of good intentions

All these and other technologies have already been tested in Belarus more than once. Fortunately for our country, the manuals for interfering in the internal affairs of other states have

 **The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,**

"There will be no easy election campaigns. You see the conditions in which our country is living now: uncertainty of the international situation, unprecedented external pressure, information attacks and provocations."

During a meeting to discuss the issues related to the Belarusian People's Congress and the changes in the election laws on October 20th, 2022

Vladimir Andreichenko, Chairman of the House of Representatives,

"The modern world is shaken by the worst crisis of distrust and confrontation in history. The formation of new centres of power is accompanied by the growth of contradictions between the leading states of the planet. Under these conditions, the electoral process is used as a means of interfering in the internal affairs of countries, changing existing political systems and vectors of development. For this, developments in the field of theory and practice of 'colour revolutions' are used, and gaps in national legislation are actively exploited.

The reality is that there is a problem. There are many examples of destructive influence on election results. Such attempts were made in relation to our state. The expediency of introducing a new term 'electoral sovereignty' is currently being discussed by the expert community, scientists and practitioners. The deputies also participate in this process. One thing is beyond doubt: the inalienable right of a sovereign state to conduct electoral campaigns independently, without interference and instructions from outside. As well as the right of society to make a conscious, democratic choice. This is the essence of democracy, which is the basis of the Belarusian statehood."


not changed for years. During this time, a barrier against this type of intervention was built in the republic.

The legislation on the electoral process is regularly improved, as well as other legal acts aimed at ensuring the free exercise by citizens of their right to exercise political will.

Meanwhile, an interesting trend is observed in the world. What exactly do the Americans mean by promoting 'democratic values' by interfering, inter alia, in the electoral processes of other states, is understood by more and more countries. Freedom House recently stated with real American pain that 2021 was the 16th year in a row when more countries abandoned 'American democracy' than they gained.

The danger of the situation for the United States is that in this case the leverage for influence in the States becomes less. For those who directly deal with the wholesale planting of these values, it is obvious that under the guise of good intentions in the form of a bright and just future, the capitalist hegemon wants only one thing — further enrichment at the expense of the resources of other states.

HOWEVER

Between 1946 and 2000, the United States tried at least 81 times to influence electoral processes in other countries. 



The Palace of Independence



The Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus



At the Atlant plant



The Museum of History of the Great Patriotic War



MINSK

The Republic of Belarus is located in the centre of Europe and is one of the 15 largest countries in this part of the world. Belarus is often called a 'blue-eyed country': there are thousands of lakes, rivers and protected forests. But the country is interesting not only for its unique nature. Each region of Belarus has its own modern industrial giants, amazing historical sites and sights.

Belarus consists of six regions: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev. *The MT* presents the project called *Belarusian Land Treasures* and invites readers on an exciting journey. Minsk — the capital of the Republic of Belarus — retains an independent status and is not part of any regions. It is a city with a rich historical past. Throughout its history, Minsk has experienced wars more than once, burned to the ground many times, practically disappeared from the face of the earth, but each time it was reborn. Now our modern, beautiful, clean and comfortable capital is one of the hundred best cities in the world.

Belarusian Land Treasures

Historical insight, interesting facts

Minsk is one of the oldest cities in Europe. The first written mention of the future capital of the Republic of Belarus dates back to 1067. It is contained in the ancient Russian chronicle *The Tale of Bygone Years*. At the beginning of the 14th century, Minsk became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1793, as a result of the Second Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as part of the central part of Belarus, Minsk was annexed to the Russian Empire, and in the same year it became the centre of the Minsk Province. Since January 1st, 1919, Minsk has been the capital of the BSSR.

Being ruined to the ground more than once and being reborn, Minsk, like no other city, knows the price of peace and tranquillity. It is it who is the only city in Belarus that was awarded the title of 'Hero City' in 1974 in commemoration of the merits of its inhabitants in the fight against fascism during the Great Patriotic War.

The most important objects and institutions of the country are located in the capital: the Palace of Independence — the state residence of the President of the Republic of Belarus, the Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus, the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers, the National Bank of Belarus.

The Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States is located in Minsk, the diplomatic corps, consulates, representative offices of international organisations are housed here.

It houses the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (founded on January 1st, 1929), the High-Tech Park, the Minsk City Technopark, and the country's largest educational institutions. It is also the only city in Belarus that has had a subway since 1984.

Minsk has a high international prestige as a platform for holding meetings at the highest political level, international events in trade, economic, scientific, innovative and other areas of co-operation.

The city has its own charter, emblem and anthem.

Memory

The main thing that Minsk keeps is history. One of the most majestic and solemn squares of the capital of Belarus is Victory Square. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus from the Nazi invaders, it acquired a majestic monument — a monument to the courage and dedication of all soldiers and partisans who defended the freedom and independence of their Motherland in battle. At its foot, the Eternal Flame was lit — to this day Belarusians, leaders of foreign states, prominent figures of various fields from around the world come to pay tribute to the memory of the dead.

July 3rd, 1944, is a historically significant date in the fate of the country, which has become a symbol of freedom and peace. On this day, Minsk was liberated from the German occupation. Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus — the main holiday of the Belarusian statehood — is celebrated on July 3rd.

On behalf of the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, the Trostenets Memorial Complex of international importance was created on the site of one of the largest sites of mass destruction of the civilian population by the Nazis.

There are many places of folk memory and memorials in Minsk: the architectural and sculptural complex Minsk Hero City Stele; Minsk Bratsk Military Cemetery (1914-1918); the Pit Memorial Complex on Melnikaita Street, dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust (here, on March 2nd, 1942, about 5,000 prisoners of the Minsk ghetto were shot by the Nazis); the Masyukovshchina Memorial Complex, where the mass graves of Soviet prisoners of war and civilians are located (part of the territory of the Nazi Stalag-352, in which more than 80,000 people died); the monument to soldiers-internationalists on the island of Courage and Sorrow and many others.

Geographical position and population

The capital of the country is located on the southeastern slopes of the Minsk Upland. The relief of Minsk is diverse: it is characterised by significant hilliness, the difference in elevations within the city is about 100 metres.

The Belarusian capital can be called not only the administrative, economic, scientific and cultural, but also the territorial centre of the country — the geographical centre of Belarus is just 70 kilometres from it.

About 2 million people live in Minsk — more than 20 percent of the total population of the country.

Economic development

Minsk is the largest industrial centre of Belarus. It occupies a leading position in the formation of the gross domestic product, providing almost a third of the republican volume. Its main direction is mechanical engineering. The largest assembly enterprises operate in Minsk: the world leader in the production of agricultural machinery, the Minsk Tractor Plant, the Minsk Automobile Plant, the manufacturer of road-building and other specialised machinery and equipment Amkodor.

The leaders of the city's electronics industry are Integral, the Gorizont electronic and household appliances plant, and the Atlant manufacturer of refrigerators and household appliances.

The food industry is represented by the Kommunarka and Slodych confectionery factories, the Minskmlchprom enterprise, a dairy plant, a meat processing plant, etc.

The largest enterprises in the clothing industry in Minsk are Milavitsa, in the textile industry — Kamvol. The Minsk FEZ plays a significant role.

Natural resources

The Svisloch River flows through Minsk, into which six more small rivers flow within the city limits. Within the existing boundaries of the city, there are 10 main reservoirs: Komsomolskoye Lake, Chizhovka Water Reservoir, Tsynyanka Water Reservoir, Drozdzy Water Reservoir, Lebyazhy Water Park, etc.

Sports and tourism

The city of Minsk is famous for its sports traditions and Olympic achievements.

Among the Minsk Olympic champions are Aleksandr Medved, Elena Belova, Aleksandr Gazov, Aleksandr Portnov, Nikolai Alekhin, Sergey Bulygin, Aleksandr Karshakevich, Tatyana Ledovskaya, Dmitry Dovgalyonok, Ellina Zvereva, Vadim Makhnev, Victoria Azarenka, Max Mirny, Darya Domracheva, Anton Kushnir, Hanna Huskova.

There are 3,724 sports facilities in Minsk: stadiums and sports grounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, a ski-roller track and other facilities. Among the largest are the Dinamo National Olympic Stadium, the Sports Palace, the Tennis Palace, the Football Arena, the Ice Palace, the Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena sports complexes, the Freestyle sports and recreation complex.

Culture and main attractions

Despite the immense destruction suffered during the Great Patriotic War, Minsk managed to preserve, restore and create its image. Today, the State List of Immovable Historical and Cultural Values of the Republic of Belarus includes 382 Minsk objects, including the historical centre of the capital as a monument of urban planning.



The architectural object, unique in its beauty, called the Gates of Minsk, is the first thing that tourists see when they arrive in the capital. Minsk is a very beautiful and friendly city that gladly welcomes visitors with its city gates!

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Modern Minsk is the biggest political, economic, cultural, and business centre of the country. This is a very beautiful city with sincere and warm atmosphere where everyone wants to live, study, work, and bring up children. Many heroic and tragic pages are inscribed in the history of our capital. But every time, having gone through severe ordeals, the city was restored to become even more magnificent. And today it is proudly called the Hero City.

Preserving its unique architectural landscape, Minsk is developing every year. New residential districts, cultural and sports facilities, comfortable parks and public gardens are being built. However, people are the main wealth, the soul of our city."

From message of greetings of the Head of State on the occasion of the 950th anniversary of Minsk on September 9th, 2017



At MTZ



The National Library of Belarus

The construction of the central city highway of Minsk — Independence Avenue from Independence Square to Masharov Avenue — is a unique ensemble of the 20th century, which most fully embodied the principles of classical urban planning art.

The hallmarks of the capital of Belarus are the Victory Monument on Victory Square, the snow-white town hall on Svobody Square, the building of the National Library of Belarus, the cosy Trinity Suburb, the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and the Catholic Cathedral of the Virgin Mary, the Church of Saints Simeon and Helena (it is also called the Red Church), an Orthodox church-monument in honour of All Saints and in memory of the victims who served to save our Fatherland, the building of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre. And, of course, the Gates of Minsk — tower buildings on Privokzalnaya Square — this is the first thing that guests see when they arrive in the capital by rail.

The title of the first Belarusian skyscraper is claimed by the House of Government — one of the few sights of Minsk that survived the occupation of the Belarusian capital intact during the Great Patriotic War.

Minsk is home to the Central Botanical Garden, which is one of the largest botanical gardens in Europe both in terms of area and the composition of collections of living plants (more than 15 thousand items).

Large-scale cultural events are held annually in the capital of Belarus, including the Minsk International Film Festival *Listapad*, the *Minsk Starazhytny* International Festival of Historical Reenactment, the Minsk International Festival of Circus Arts, various international art projects, jazz evenings, classical music evenings and holidays of national cultures.



Anger in France

Protests and unrest erupted in France after police shot dead a 17-year-old who failed to stop when ordered to by traffic police

Unrest has flared nationwide, including in cities such as Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg and Lille, as well as Paris where Nahel M., a 17-year-old of Algerian and Moroccan descent, was shot on June 27th in the Nanterre suburb. His death, which was caught on video, has reignited longstanding complaints by poor, racially mixed, urban communities of police violence and racism.

Some 2,800 people have been arrested since the incident. The violence, in which buildings and vehicles have been torched and stores looted, has plunged President Emmanuel Macron into the gravest crisis of his leadership since the Yellow Vest protests that started in 2018.

Underscoring the gravity of the crisis, President Emmanuel Macron scrapped an official trip to Germany after nights of unrest across France.

Around 45,000 police and gendarmes — along with elite Raid and GIGN units — were deployed in several cities, with curfews imposed in municipalities around Paris and bans on public gatherings instated in Lille and Tourcoing in the country's north. Despite the massive security deployment, violence and damage were reported in multiple areas. Hundreds of police and firefighters have been injured in the violence though authorities haven't released injury tallies for protesters.

Videos on social media showed urban landscapes ablaze. A tram was set alight in the eastern city of Lyon and 12 buses were gutted in a depot in Aubervilliers, northern Paris. In Nanterre on the capital's outskirts, protesters torched cars, barricaded streets and hurled projectiles at police.

Thirteen people who didn't comply with traffic stops were fatally shot by French police last year. This year, three more people, including Nahel, died under similar circumstances. The deaths have prompted demands for more accountability in France, which also saw racial justice protests after George Floyd's killing by police in Minnesota, US.

UK calls for referendum on sanctions against Russia

More than 10,000 people in the United Kingdom support a petition to hold a referendum on the lifting of sanctions against the Russian Federation, British parliamentary sources said

Quoted by London television, the request indicates that, if it does not change its policy, the Government must hold a referendum on this issue within a maximum period of six months.

According to the document, London intervened in the Ukraine conflict without any mandate from the nation's citizens, who are forced to suffer economic consequences such as increases in energy prices, cost of living, interest rates, inflation, and unemployment, the increase in taxes and rates, as well as strikes, damage to companies and cuts in public services.

The imposition of restrictions against Russia due to the Ukrainian conflict and retaliatory measures by Moscow have hit millions of British households, while the country experiences a wave of strikes and employees of railway companies, airports, lawyers, postmen and workers in other sectors of society come out to protest.

According to the UK Financial Services Authority, the number of citizens experiencing serious problems with utility payments rose from 7.8 million last spring to 10.9 million in January this year.

The British Government is obliged to respond to a popular initiative supported by more than 10,000 people and if it reaches 100,000 signatures, the request must be debated in Parliament.



Slavery's descendants: America's family secret

Every currently-living person who has served as the President of the United States is descended from ancestors who owned slaves — except for Donald Trump

That's according to a new investigation from *Reuters* examining the ancestral history of American lawmakers and presidents. In addition to the Presidents, the investigation found that two Supreme Court Justices, 11 governors, and 100 members of Congress are the direct descendants of slaveholders.

They include prominent members of both parties, including Republicans like Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Lindsey Graham and Democrats like Sens. Elizabeth Warren

and Tammy Duckworth.

Even Barack Obama — the country's first Black President — is the descendant of a slave-owner on his white mother's side of the family.

The Trumps, meanwhile, arrived in the US after slavery was abolished.

Two Republicans competing with Trump for the 2024 GOP nomination, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, also come from families with slave-owning pasts, *Reuters* reports.

UN accuses Ukrainian security forces of torturing detainees

Dozens of prisoners in Ukrainian prisons were tortured and sexually abused by Ukrainian security forces — as noted in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report on the detention of civilians in Ukraine, RIA Novosti reports

The UN has recorded an increase in the number of cases of violation of the law by Ukrainian security forces since the beginning of the Russian special operation in Ukraine. In particular, among the interviewed detainees, 43 people (9 women and 34 men) spoke about the cruel treatment and torture on the part of law enforcement officers, the military or guards. Basically, this refers to secret detention centres.

Moreover, according to the report, civilians who helped with the distribution and delivery of humanitarian aid to Russian-controlled territories were detained in Ukraine for 'collaborating with the enemy'.

"OHCHR is concerned that the law criminalises 'collaboration acts' without defining these acts or other important terms precisely enough to enable individuals to regulate their behaviour and reasonably predict the legal consequences of their actions or omissions. This raises concerns about the compliance of the law with the principle of legality and creates a risk of arbitrary detention," the UNHCHR said.

The report also points to a sharp increase since February 24th last year in the number of violations by Ukrainian security forces of human rights to freedom and personal integrity.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

The exhibition of one of the most prominent domestic sculptors of the last century Alexei Glebov at the National Art Museum was timed to coincide with the anniversary date. Despite the rather chamber format of the presentation, it turned out to be something like a textbook review of the history of Belarusian (or, more broadly, Soviet) sculpture of the 20th century, where war heroes were put face to face with swimmers, gymnasts, folk poet Yanka Kupala and pioneer printer Francysk Skaryna. The exhibition space was supplemented by portraits of Glebov himself, created by his colleagues in the creative workshop, as well as documents, a video film and a radio programme about the sculptor with recordings of his voice from the funds of the Belteleradiocompany.

Sculpture with a human face

The National Art Museum hosts an exhibition dedicated to the 115th anniversary of the birth of People's Artist of the BSSR Alexei Glebov

The Alexei Glebov. Glorifying Man exhibition will run until August 13th



By Yuliana Leonovich

He didn't manage to do much, but he dreamed of many things

The Alexei Glebov. Glorifying Man exhibition is the first event in a new position for the newly appointed General Director of the National Art Museum, Anna Kononova. Opening the exposition, Anna Kononova admitted, "It is a great honour and joy for me to accept this post, to get in touch with the main place of power of art in our country. Of course, I am overwhelmed by the solemnity of the moment, and this state is connected, among other things, with the scale of the personality of Alexei Glebov, People's Artist of the BSSR, laureate of the State Prize. His personality is as integral and monolithic as the sculpture itself, and great as the monumental tasks he solves."

The exhibition covers almost 20 years of the master's creative life: from the 1940s to the 1960s, from the war years to the last year of his life. Each of the works is not only connected with the main stages of Glebov's path in art, but also reveals the main directions of his artistic searches.

"It is difficult for me to single out one specific work, this exhibition is more about the versatility of the sculptor's personality. Just look how expressiveness in his works is combined with the softness of forms, respect for the elaboration of details," Anna Kononova explains.

The First Deputy Chairperson of the Belarusian Union of Artists, art critic Natalya Sharangovich, in turn, believes that the audience has yet to discover Glebov, despite all his many obvious achievements and awards, "Of the four masters (Zair Azgur, Andrei Bembel, Sergei Selikhanov, Alexei Glebov), who worked together,



Accountant Returns from Work. 1957



Head of a Girl. 1959

including on the high reliefs of the Victory Monument, we know the least about Glebov. He always seemed to be a little aloof... This is due to the fact that Alexei Glebov did not have time to leave behind numerous monumental objects, unlike the rest of the listed classics. He did not have much time, although he dreamed of many things: about the monument to Francysk Skaryna, Lev Dovator... We inherited mainly his easel works, in which he raised important topics. However, working, for example, even with the theme of war, he continued to be a romantic..."

The imagery and plasticity of works is something valuable that today's youth should learn from Glebov, Natalya Vasilievna is convinced, "His plasticity is abso-

lutely free — and this freedom is manifested not only in the sculptural portraits of Glebov, but also in his multi-figured compositions. He did not concentrate on small details, but rather thought about the image as a whole. If this is a man at war, then he is fiery, moving, ardent... And in this imagery Glebov was insanely talented. It's just impossible not to notice."

To be continued

In addition, according to the recollections of relatives, Alexei Glebov was a very sociable person, an excellent storyteller.

himself considered this work one of his most significant, gave it his last strength and all his talent... Glebov, alas, did not live to see the opening of the monument. The bronze sculpture was already cast by his students — sculptors Igor Glebov and Andrei Zaspitsky.

For the monument to Skaryna in 1976, Glebov was posthumously awarded the State Prize of the BSSR. At the exhibition at the National Art Museum you can see his wooden Skaryna — in 1955 this sculpture was exhibited at the Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy in Moscow.

It is difficult to talk about Alexei Glebov without mentioning his students. For more than 10 years, Glebov taught at the Belarusian Theatre and Art Institute and sincerely considered pedagogy one of the main parts of his life. Perhaps he remembered well how much effort the most famous teacher and sculptor Mikhail Kerzin put into him. In 1926, Glebov entered the painting department of the Vitebsk Art College. Professor Kerzin's class was truly stellar: Zair Azgur, Andrey Bembel and many other talented artists studied there, but it was Glebov who became Kerzin's favourite student. Subsequently, Alexei Glebov admitted more than once that all



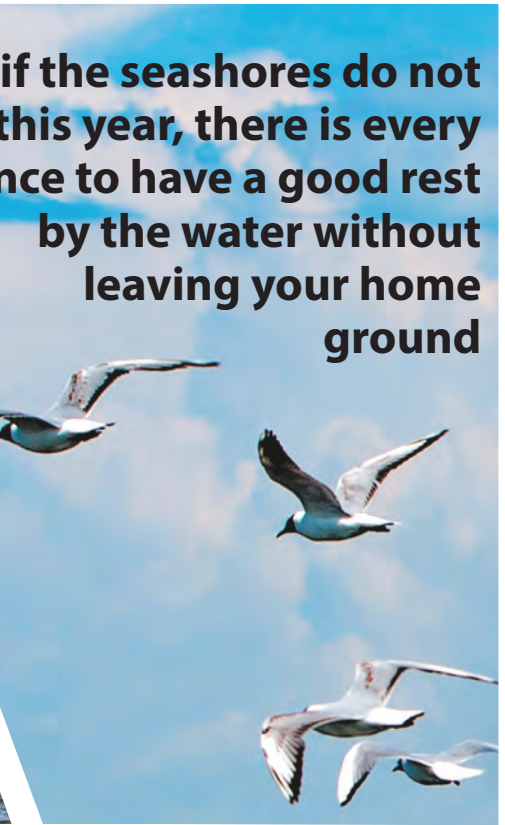
Skaryna. 1954



Perhaps that is why he was best at sculpting from nature — where it was necessary to convey a lively look, plasticity of the muscles of the face. The People's Poet of Belarus Yanka Kupala and the famous Kupala resident, People's Artist of the USSR Vladimir Vladomirsky turned out to be unconventional. In 1967, Glebov created a model of the monument to Francysk Skaryna for Polotsk — the sculptor

the best he had as a sculptor came from Kerzin. He owed his success to him and his school.

Today, the new Glebovites continue the work of the master — within the walls of the Minsk State Art College, named after Alexei Glebov. Students were among the first to be invited to the exhibition at the National Art Museum. By the way, very soon future sculptors, painters, designers and masters of arts and crafts will move to a new old house — a building on Khmel'nitskogo Street, demolished in 2008, and now rebuilt and ready to receive students soon.



Even if the seashores do not shine this year, there is every chance to have a good rest by the water without leaving your home ground

Cool beaches near Minsk

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Minsk Sea

Residents of the capital are incredibly lucky: only ten kilometres northwest of the metropolis — and the waves are splashing on the shore. Indeed, they are not very rough and salty. But they are domestic and clean! The Minsk Sea (aka Zaslavl Water Reservoir) appeared relatively recently — in 1956 after the construction of a dam on the Svisloch River. Its dimensions are — ten by 4.5 kilometres. Along the water, there are a dozen modern beaches with the necessary infrastructure. A nice bonus — many city cafes and restaurants open seasonal catering points here in the summer.

If you wish, you can relax in style — rent a yacht or ride water skiing with the breeze. That's not including the countless dance parties and concerts that on weekends by the water drag on until late at night.



Andrey Sazonov

Petrovichi Water Reservoir

It is another large man-made reservoir near Minsk, which appeared in Soviet times. Initially, clean water was accumulated here to water the adjacent farmland, but the people quickly realised that they could also relax.

The shallow depth and the absence of dense thickets allow the water to heat up quickly. At the same time, there are no sharp breaks — the entrance is smooth. Because of this, the reservoir is held in high esteem by families with small children. There are several cosy farmsteads in the area where you can spend the night. Nevertheless, there is also a significant minus — there is no rescue station.

Dubrovskoye Water Reservoir

The feature of this place is two beaches. On a paid one (entrance for adults — a little more than a hundred Russian rubles) white sand, pure water and no flea market. Sun loungers, kayaks, sapboards are available for rent. In addition to birches and pines, ornamental flowers and outlandish trees grow on the shore, not at all from our latitudes. There are always more people on the conditionally wild beach, but in general, this does not spoil the rest.

By the way, on the southern shore of the reservoir is the village of Raubichi, familiar to fans of winter sports. Of course, you cannot go skiing there in the summer, but you can look into the trendy Dubrov restaurant — the views of the water from the window are simply amazing.



Sergey Lozju

BELTA

Vyacha

Rest on this reservoir, named after the river of the same name, will be appreciated by lovers of relatively wild conditions. Amazingly beautiful dense coniferous forests, no buildings and excellent ecology. Only rest alone with nature! At the same time, all the beaches are wide — you definitely won't have to fight for a place with a neighbour, there are much fewer people here than on the Minsk Sea. Despite the bias towards the natural environment, the area near the water is regularly mowed. There are gazebos and barbecues, locker rooms and toilets, sports grounds and car parks.

In addition, it was on Vyach last autumn that the first wood-cutting championship among journalists and bloggers was held. Aleksandr Lukashenko personally gave master classes to press tribe.

Ptich

If you leave Minsk in the direction of Brest, at the sixteenth kilometre you will see a dam that blocks the Ptich River. The local reservoir has served as a base for water skiing competitions for decades. In addition, there are always many fishermen on the shores, occasionally pulling out pike or zander on a fishing rod.

There are also beaches for summer holidays — with sun loungers, cabanas and cafes. It is on this reservoir that capital companies often arrange tours and corporate parties. However, it is convenient for the townsfolk to get here by public transport: there are buses from the Malinovka metro station to the nearest village of Volkovichi.



aneta/belaru.by



Alexander Golubash

Fair choice

The European Handball Federation opened the Hall of Fame: Siarhei Rutenka is among the legends

To be honest, we were surprised! The Vienna office of the European Handball Federation recently summed up the results of the past season, celebrated and awarded the best, and did not forget about the anniversary date — their own 30th anniversary. That's it, the EHF was founded relatively recently, and the first European Championship took place in 1994. Let us remember that among the 12 participants of the final stage there was the men's team of Belarus. On the occasion of the festive celebration, the EHF decided to create a Hall of Fame, where 60 of the most stellar European representatives of the handball of both sexes over the past three decades have been solemnly enrolled. It is pleasant to note that the choice was not politicised and among the members of the pantheon is now our Siarhei Rutenka, as well as Russians and trainees of the Soviet handball school.



Siarhei Rutenka — second from right in the honorary row

By Sergei Kanashits

During this time, an unprecedented number of stars have lit up in the handball sky, and, frankly speaking, it is not an easy task to choose the brightest among them. Specific criteria were used is not disclosed, however, the choice of EHF, although it turned out to be quite controversial in several points, in general can be considered quite objective and fair. Among the three best goalkeepers, the candidacy of the French maestro Thierry Omeyer looks absolutely indisputable, but Arpad Sterbik and Tomas Svensson are, of course, good, but hardly better than, say, Russian ace Andrey Lavrov — a three-time Olympic champion, by the way.



Siarhei Rutenka

Although we understand: the Hall of Fame is not endless, and you can't cram everyone into it.

All the more honourable choice, which was awarded to Siarhei Rutenka in the position of the left back. His

partners in this nomination are Frenchman Daniel Narcisse, Serb Momir Ilic (today he is the coach of the Hungarian Veszprem KC, for which our Mikita Vailupau plays) and Czech Filip Jicha. There are best of the best, but Rutenka stands out in this series as well. Generously endowed by nature, he also possessed another, the most important talent — determination and the ability to sweat blood. Siarhei, one might say, made himself: he decided to leave for Slovenia, managed to loudly make a name for himself there, became the leader of the legendary RK Celje, with whom he won the first Champions League title (he has six in total), became the most expensive handball

player in the world, excelled in BM Ciudad Real and was the main star of Barcelona. At the same time, at a certain stage of his career, having the citizenship of Slovenia and Spain, as well as tempting promises from representatives of the Pyrenees to join their national team, he returned to Belarus, where he became the foundation of the national team and the main figure in the revival of our handball. However, the EHF certainly did not take this fact into account when choosing Siarhei Rutenka. As well as the fact that after the end of his career, the handball player did not stay in Europe, but settled in his homeland, organised a business here and does not hide his political position — he supports the authorities in the country, stands for stability, development and peace.

The given point of view is not at all popular in Europe, but to miss the elephant like Rutenka and not include him in the Hall of Fame would be too blatant injustice. So congratulations from the bottom of our hearts: this is a great honour for both the athlete and the country.

In men, only two more players from the post-Soviet space made it to the Hall of Fame — defender Andrei Xepkin and centre back Talant Dujshabaev (now the coach of the Polish Vive Kielce, for which Belarusian Artsem Karalek plays). The first was born in Nova Kakhovka, the second — in Bishkek. Both played for the USSR national team, and after taking the citizenship of Spain, they were the best in its composition. The girls' pantheon includes the star of the USSR national team, who then took Austrian citizenship, Ausra Fridrikas, as well as two Russians — Ludmilla Bodnieva and Irina Poltoratskaya. Irina, by the way, is married to Timur Dibirov, and only the status of the acting star of the latter apparently prevented both of them from becoming the only married couple in the list of the main stars of European handball over the past 30 years.

Now the EHF officials have only to stop fooling around and finally allow the national team of Belarus to participate in international competitions. Everyone will benefit from this decision.

With arms wide open

Top 7 main features of 2nd CIS Games

Each new day gives rise to another batch of hot news related to the main sporting event of the current season in Belarus — the 2nd CIS Games. A month will pass, and a real colourful festival of friendship, gambling and good mood will sweep across all regions of the country. We have identified for you the main features of the upcoming competition.

By Sergei Kanashits

Location — whole country

One of the main features of the upcoming competitions will be their holding in many regions of the country. This was conceived in order to involve all residents in the sports festival, to show the uniqueness and originality of Belarus, the kindness and hospitality of people. There is no doubt that all participants and spectators will appreciate the beauty of our Motherland.

Open status of the Games

All the CIS states have already announced their participation, except for Moldova. Participants from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, Mongolia are also planning to come to Belarus... In the weightlifting competition, which will be hosted by Grodno, the Cuban team will take to the platform in the strongest line-up. According to the Sports and Tourism Minister of Belarus Sergei Kovalchuk, more than two thousand athletes from 18 countries have passed through the accreditation system of the Games. Russia will put up the most impressive number of participants — 633 athletes. There are about 600 athletes in the Belarusian roster. In total, taking into account all members of the delegations, more than six thousand people will come to Belarus.

Not only young people, but also pros

The 1st CIS Games, which took place in Kazan in 2021, had the status of youth games. Many young people will also perform at the Belarusian arenas, but not only. Deputy Sport and Tourism Minister Aleksandr Baraulya said: "It was decided to hold competitions in five types of the programme at the adult level. Namely, in beach

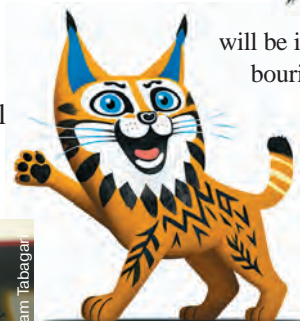


Mogilev is preparing to host archery and karate competitions

football, sambo, weightlifting, rhythmic gymnastics and field hockey. The national team of Belarus will put up the strongest squads here, and the level of competition, I am sure, will be very high. And it seems to me that it will be no less exciting to follow the first steps of promising young people, who will surely grow into real world sports stars in the near future."

Visa-free regime

It has already become a good tradition: fans can come to all major competitions that take place in our country without visas. This was the case during the Ice Hockey World Championship in 2014, at the 2nd European Games in 2019, and this will be the case in the coming August. Press Secretary of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anatoly Glaz said, "Against the background of an aggressive policy to limit communications between people, we, on the contrary, are trying as much as possible to open ourselves to neighbouring states, to show how we live, to invite guests here. In this regard, a visa-free regime



will be introduced for residents of neighbouring countries, for fans at the 2nd CIS Games. We understand very well that now sport is extremely politicised, enriched with the most base political qualities. We want to make and will make a holiday of real sports, where people will compete and sort things out in the arenas. Furthermore, we will give a holiday that is not overshadowed by visa and other restrictions."

Broad cultural programme, rich tourist plan

Participants, fans and all tourists will be offered a variety of leisure and sightseeing options. By the way, this is a great opportunity for domestic tourism: everyone who dreamed of visiting this or that region of our country, but, as they say, never got around, can now get wants and needs met. The 2nd CIS Games is a great opportunity to broaden your horizons, visit exciting competitions, discover new places and gain vivid impressions.

Arrival of sports stars of the past

In almost all sports, it is planned to visit Belarus by famous athletes of past years — Olympic champions, world and European champions: wrestler Aleksandr Karelina, swimmer Vladimir Salnikov and many others. They will not only communicate with athletes and spectators, but also give master classes for young people.

Free admission to all competitions

The icing on the cake will be the fact that every fan and tourist will be able to visit any arena completely free of charge. This, of course, will serve to popularise both the 2nd CIS Games itself and sports in general. Everyone will be able to see the competition without any hit to the wallet, such leisure during the tournament will surely become a popular family vacation.

Photo of the week



Ilya Shvedko

In the Minsk zoo one can not only see pink flamingos, but also listen to the voice of these graceful and extremely beautiful birds

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On July 6th, 1885, the rabies vaccine was first tested on humans by the then famous microbiologist and chemist Louis Pasteur.

Until the 19th century, rabies was an incurable disease. Its virus affected the central nervous system, and the person slowly and painfully died. Today, the rabies vaccine is successfully used in all countries of the world.

July 7th is Ivan-Kupala (Midsummer Day, Kupala Night) — one of the main holidays of the calendar of the Slavic peoples, coinciding with the Nativity of John the Baptist.



Since ancient times, Ivan Kupala is revered among the Slavs as a holiday of the Sun, the maturity of summer and green mowing. Kupala rites, performed on the eve of the holiday, constitute a multiple ritual complex, including: collecting herbs and flowers, weaving wreaths, kindling fires, destroying a scarecrow, jumping over a fire, dousing with water, fortune-telling, etc.



On July 7th, 1881, Carlo Collodi's fairy tale *Pinocchio* was first printed in Rome, becoming one of the funniest and most touching books of world literature. The Russian writer Aleksey Tolstoy offered his own version

of the story, calling it *The Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino*. In his version, the book has undergone a major transformation. Soviet readers immediately loved Buratino, and it soon became one of the symbols of national culture.

On July 8th, 1709, the decisive episode of the Great Northern War (1700-1721), the Battle of Poltava, took place — in which the Russian army of Peter the Great defeated the Swedish army of Charles XII. The victory at Poltava marked a radical turning point in the long exhausting Great Northern War and predetermined its outcome in favour of Russia.



On July 8th, 1944, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR established the honorary title and the order Mother Heroine, as well as the three degrees Order of Maternal Glory and the Maternity Medal of two degrees. These awards were intended for mothers who raised at least 10 children, 9–7 children and 6–5 children, respectively. In the Republic of Belarus, there is the only award intended to



reward women for merits in the birth and upbringing of five or more children — the Order of Mother.

On July 9th, 1762, Catherine the Great ascended the Russian throne after a palace coup. She had a well-defined political programme based on the ideas of the Enlightenment, but also taking into account the peculiarities of the historical development of Russia. Following Peter the Great, Catherine believed that Russia should take an active position on the world stage. During her reign, as a result of the Russian-Turkish wars of 1768-1774 and 1787-1791, Russia finally gained a foothold in the Black Sea.



On July 9th, 1877, Wimbledon hosted the first tennis tournament, which was held to cash in on a new lawn mower. Since then, the tournament on the courts of the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club has become a tradition, and today the Wimbledon tournament is one of the largest tennis tournaments in the world, with a total prize pool of about 45 million pounds.

July 11th is World Chocolate Day. This delicious holiday was established and first held by the French in 1995. It is believed that the Aztecs were the first to learn how to make chocolate. They



called it 'food of the gods'. Previously, the consumption of chocolate in Europe was limited only to aristocratic circles. Chocolate became available to everyone with the advent of industrial production only at the beginning of the 20th century. Chocolate appeared in Russian Empire under Peter the Great.



On July 12th, 1561, the Intercession Cathedral, also known as St. Basil's Cathedral, was consecrated on Red Square in Moscow. When Russian troops took Kazan in 1552, Tsar Ivan the Terrible ordered that temples

be built on Red Square to commemorate this victory. In 1555-1561 the Russian architects Barma and Postnik erected a stone church with nine altars in the name of Intercession. The structure of the cathedral includes eight separate churches, symbolising the days of the main battles for Kazan.

On July 12th, 1943, the largest tank battle of the World War II, known as the Battle of Prokhorovka, took place. More than 1,200 tanks and self-propelled guns took part in the battle on both sides. In one day, the enemy lost about 10,000 people, 400 tanks and was forced to go on the defensive. This battle largely determined the victory of the Soviet troops during the Battle of Kursk.

