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INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

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Irina and Andrei Dubko from Minsk have been together for 25 years, they have seven children. In 2013, Irina was awarded the Order of Mother. In the photo: Irina and Andrei with their younger children Anastasia, Yelizaveta and Anna.

## Happiness lies in the family

The Week of Parental Love is being held in Belarus from October 14th to 21st. Events are taking place across the country to promote parenting and family values. These dates were not chosen by chance — Belarus marks Mother's Day on October 14th and Father's Day on October 21st.

Family values are at the heart of Belarusian traditions, passed down from generation to generation. The family lays the foundation for moral, spiritual and patriotic values, and plays a significant role in shaping personality. Every family cherishes its bonds and values and reflects the unity of our society. The protection of motherhood and childhood, support for veterans, family well-being, respect for parents and care for children as the future of Belarus are the key directions of our country's social policy. The multifaceted support for families in our state serves as an example for other countries. The family is indeed a crucial component of our society.

**On October 14th, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated Belarusian women on the most touching and heartwarming autumn holiday — Mother's Day.**



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# ‘We need a strong union of powerful, economically self-sufficient sovereign states’

A three-day working visit by the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, to the Russian Federation took place last week. In Moscow, Aleksandr Lukashenko participated in a meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council and held talks with the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin. There were also numerous meetings in an informal setting.

FOCUS



## ‘Attempts to demonise the Soviet past do not stop.’ Who and why in the West is fighting against the ghost?

The summit in Moscow was attended by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the prime minister of Armenia. The CIS leaders exchanged views on co-operation in a narrow format, and then continued discussions in a broader setting.

The meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council in a narrow format was opened by President of Russia Vladimir Putin, “The member states of the Commonwealth are the closest neighbours, friends, and strategic partners for us. We are committed to strengthening our co-operation across the board. I am confident that we have possibilities for launching new major mutually beneficial projects in industry, agriculture, finance, and infrastructure.”

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko put forward a number of proposals to bolster regional integration, which is particularly relevant in the context of the profound crisis in international relations. Our adversaries in the West are opposed to the formation of a new multipolar and just world order. They do not want another centre of power, which is why they will try to divide our countries and peoples. This means that we need to cherish what we have, as stated by Aleksandr Lukashenko,

*“The Soviet Union ceased to exist long ago, yet the West’s attempts to demonise the Soviet past do not stop. They are still fighting against a ghost. This means that we need to cherish what we have. All those who have not broken away from our Commonwealth show solid results today, have control over their countries, and remain full-fledged subjects of international relations. The overall goal is clear — we need a strong union of powerful, economically self-sufficient sovereign states.”*

## CIS priorities in the quotes by Aleksandr Lukashenko

During the summit, the President of Belarus outlined Minsk’s initiatives regarding the priority areas for the CIS development:

- **Strengthening the CIS international status**

*“We are united in our assessment of many events that affect the development of the region and humanity as a whole. We need to more frequently unite our voices into one voice of the CIS. It is important to stand together against illegal unilateral economic restrictions. They affect not only Belarus and Russia. All CIS countries are under threat of secondary sanctions.”*

- **Countering the imposition of alien extremist ideologies and attempts to involve citizens in illegal activities, including terrorism**

*“I propose to instruct the CIS Executive Committee to intensify the experience exchange among law enforcement agencies that specialise in cybersecurity issues.”*

- **Achieving technological sovereignty in the CIS space**

*“The economy is the backbone of everything. Technological sovereignty today is the number one task to ensure the normal functioning of our states’ economies. It is vital for us to introduce our inventions and developments into production. We need our own component base.”*

- **Promoting and cultivating the CIS value system**

*“Historically established values, rather than imposed European or American ones, is what remains when new generations come to the fore.”*

## SUMMIT OUTCOMES

At the meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council, the issue of the activities of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly aimed at strengthening integration co-operation was discussed. The summit participants approved amendments to a number of documents on interaction in the legal and security areas. The co-operation programme for deradicalisation for the years 2025–2027 was endorsed. Cultural capitals of the Commonwealth for the next three years were

## RIGHT GRANTED BY HISTORY ITSELF

**Aleksandr Lukashenko delivered the addresses to the CIS peoples and the global community in connection with the 80th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, “Our country was granted this right by history itself, being the first Soviet republic to take the brunt of the Wehrmacht divisions and to halt their victorious march across Europe. This right was given to us by the heroes who stood to death in the Brest Fortress and at the approaches to all Belarusian cities, blocking the path to Moscow. Representatives of 70 nationalities fought shoulder to shoulder with Belarusians. All of them knew that they were standing against an absolute, universal evil.”**

The Belarusian leader pointed out that in some countries of liberated Europe, SS legionnaires are honoured, “Neo-Nazis openly march through the streets, demolishing and desecrating monuments to soldiers-liberators. Young people participating in this witches’ Sabbath — raised in the spirit of national superiority and revanchism — have no idea of the course of history. They were made to forget that they owe the fact of their birth to Soviet soldiers who paid with their lives for peace on their land, for the freedom of their countries, for the future of their peoples. **Memory can be stolen, but truth cannot — if it were not for the heroism of the Soviet people, there would be none of those states and people who are now doing everything to discredit the feat of the Soviet people and take away our Great Victory. The historical rightness of our peoples is an obstacle to the implementation of the West’s long-term geopolitical plans, in which there is no place for other strong powers.** We are absolutely united today in protecting the feat of our peoples and our shared memory. Today’s address in the name of peace fully meets the interests of our Commonwealth and humanity, which is on the verge of a new catastrophe.”

In order to preserve military memorials, monuments and sites of memory dedicated to the feats of Soviet soldiers, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed to compile a general register of the memorial heritage of the Great Patriotic War.

## ‘We need to maintain the level of simple human communication’

The Belarusian leader noted that the CIS was created by politicians who understood the value of national unity, “A generation that understands the importance of national sovereignty and independence will come to politics. What should we pass on to them? **Firstly**, the unique Soviet experience of the peoples’ movement towards a common goal without prejudice to national interests. This is a consolidation model of diverse cultures, religions, and traditions in the name of the goal.

**Secondly**, the common historical achievements, such as the Great Victory, the labour feat of the post-war generation, the first flight into space, and many others. **Every success is based on the joint contribution of our peoples. We definitely must pass on this history to those who will come after us.”**

“We need to maintain the level of simple human communication. This could be backed by the revival of international youth construction projects within the CIS,” believes Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The President emphasised that our countries were together when they celebrated the day of the Great Victory 80 years ago,

**“Belarus supports declaring 2025 Year of the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War to be Year of Peace and Unity in Fight against Nazism, which is once again becoming a threat to all humanity.”**

determined: in 2027, this status will be granted to Molodechno, in 2025 and 2026 — to the Azerbaijani city of Lachin and the Armenian city of Meghri, respectively.

A decision was made to establish an honorary title of the CIS — *City of Labour Glory. 1941–1945*.

The chairmanship of the CIS Heads of State Council will pass to Tajikistan from January 1st, 2025. The next meeting will be held in October next year in Dushanbe.

# Union State integration: at the forefront of fierce struggle for a just world

On the final day of the working visit, a meeting between Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin took place in the Kremlin. Members of delegations from both sides also participated in the event. Vladimir Putin presented the President of Belarus with the highest state award of the Russian Federation — the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called.

## 'It was a frank conversation, without any ambiguity'

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko shared his impressions following the recent meetings, emphasising that the parties addressed global issues and hotspots on our planet,

*"I was pleased that we had no disagreements on the international agenda. It was a frank conversation, without any ambiguity. We talked about the Azerbaijani-Armenian settlement. All statements were received positively. This indicates that significant work had been done beforehand. Yesterday [October 8th], we discussed global issues and regional matters. There was unanimity on many points."*

## West has failed to strangle Belarus and Russia

Speaking about the development of Belarusian-Russian relations, Aleksandr Lukashenko highlighted,

*"The most important conclusion is that the West set out plans to strangle us — primarily in the economy and finance — and has failed to do that."*

It has already admitted it. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, we focused on preserving and developing what we had. It has proven useful. Today we are working together in many areas, producing goods that are in demand in the Russian Federation. Russia needs the goods we make — from agriculture to microelectronics."

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, two years ago the leaders of the two countries agreed to boost co-operation, "The world is changing at a furious pace. New threats and new opportunities are emerging for us. Naturally, there are issues that need to be addressed."

## Trade and economic ties are developing in the best possible way

President of Russia Vladimir Putin is also filled with optimism, "We often meet with you. Trade and economic ties are developing in the best possible way, at a good pace. According to our statistics, the volume of trade turnover is \$46.5bn. Russia ranks first in terms of direct investments in the Belarusian economy, with \$4.5bn.

*"We continue to develop interaction in industrial co-operation and agriculture. In the last year and a half, we have been actively engaged in microelectronics. Now opportunities are opening up in the aviation industry."*

Vladimir Putin emphasised that since Soviet times, Belarus has been referred to as the assembly shop of the Soviet Union, "Thanks to your efforts, these economic advantages have been preserved for Belarus, which gives us the opportunity to move together, complementing each other, in all directions."

## UNION STATE CAN BE AN EXAMPLE OF BUILDING EQUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES

The concluding and solemn note of Aleksandr Lukashenko's visit to Moscow was the ceremony of awarding the President of Belarus, Chairman of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, with the highest state award of the Russian Federation — the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called. It is symbolic that Vladimir Putin presented the award to his Belarusian counterpart in the Andreyevsky Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace.



*"We share the same historical roots, traditions, and values, which are intertwined through an endless number of ordinary human relationships. We — Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians — all stem from the same root. Our main achievement is that we have preserved our basis. It underpins the vast potential of our co-operation."*

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, we have managed to cement the economic, cultural, and spiritual ties that our ancestors had established over centuries, "Our unique integration association — the Union State — is successfully developing. **Today, we are together fighting for a just world. The union of Belarus and Russia stands at the forefront of this fierce and serious struggle. There is no alternative to this course amid the escalating and tense international situation. The Union State may well be a model for new equal relations.**"

## Belarusians have never let Russians down. We will not do it in the future, either.

Aleksandr Lukashenko underscored that Belarus had been faced with choices many times, "We have never turned our back on Russia. **Belarus is a reliable ally. I want Russia to know that Belarusians have never let Russians down. Accept my assurances: we will not do it in the future, either.** God has decided that we share successes and difficulties in a brotherly manner. As President, elected by the Belarusian people, I will always stand guard over our common interests, centuries-old good neighbourliness, and friendship. The more than 300-year history of the order awarded to me, the dedication of many generations of ancestors who built and defended our Fatherland, oblige me to strengthen our union and unity."

The President of Russia noted that according to the statute of this order, it is conferred on prominent Russian state figures and foreign leaders for exceptional merits in strengthening ties with Russia, "You, dear Aleksandr Grigorievich, certainly deserve this highest award. **Presenting you with the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called reflects Russia's appreciation for your outstanding contribution to the development of Russian-Belarusian allied relations and strategic partnership.**"

According to Vladimir Putin, these relations are premised on the unshakeable principles of friendship and good neighbourliness, mutual respect, and consideration of each other's interests, "We have a shared history, common moral

and spiritual values, strong family and kinship ties between many Russians and Belarusians. It is on such a solid basis that Russia and Belarus are building their Union State, ensuring common defence and security, while creating a single economic, legal, and humanitarian space."

## 'Russia has always been and will be more than just a neighbouring state for Belarus'

Aleksandr Lukashenko warmly thanked his Russian counterpart for the high award, "I consider it as recognition of the merits of the entire Belarusian people, consistently strengthening unity with our fraternal Russia. **For our country, Russia has always been and will be more than just a neighbouring state.**"

## History of the highest Russian order

The Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called is the highest state order of the Russian Federation, the first order and the highest award in the Russian Empire, established in the late 17th century by Peter I in honour of Apostle Andrew the First-Called. Until 1917, over



1,000 people received the award. After the October Revolution, the order was abolished. In 1998, it was restored by a decree of the President of Russia as the highest state award.

Since 1998, the order has been awarded to 26 individuals, including Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former leaders of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan Heydar Aliyev and Nursultan Nazarbayev, Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and all Russia, former President of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiyev, and composer Aleksandra Pakhmutova.

## 'For faith and loyalty'

The Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called has an insignia, a star, a chain, and a ribbon. The order insignia is designed as a saltire of silver with gilding, covered in blue enamel, featuring the figure of crucified St Andrew the Apostle. The cross is superimposed on a relief gilded figure of a double-headed eagle, crowned with three crowns connected by a ribbon covered in blue enamel.

The order star is silver and has eight rays. In its centre, within a round medallion covered in red enamel, is a gilded image of the double-headed eagle, crowned with three crowns, with the image of the blue enamelled Andrew's Cross on the eagle's chest. The medallion is surrounded by a border covered in blue enamel with a gilded edging. The border bears the order's motto: *For Faith and Loyalty*, inscribed in straight gilded letters.

The order chain consists of 17 alternating links of three types: gilded images of the State Emblem of the Russian Federation, a cartouche with the monogram of Peter I, and a medallion with the Andrew's Cross. The chain links are connected by rings, and the chain is made of silver with gilding, using hot enamel.

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# Commonwealth of common destiny

Integration allows states to develop and strengthen their sovereignty

The meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council held in Moscow last week cannot be described as routine. Against a critical moment in international politics, it demonstrated close positions of the CIS countries' leadership on most pressing issues. The very fact of this is a significant element in ensuring stability in our shared geopolitical space. There are also problems, including serious and long-standing ones, yet the main thing is that a path has been outlined for their resolution.



## ON THE GREAT VICTORY

The address of the CIS heads of state to the peoples of the Commonwealth and the global community in connection with the 80th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 became a symbol of our ideological unity. It is significant that the right to announce it was entrusted to the President of Belarus. This is a tribute to the feat accomplished by the Belarusian people during the war and to the sacrifices in the name of the Great Victory. This also acknowledges the immense contribution of modern Belarus — and personally of Aleksandr Lukashenko — to the preservation of the memory of that feat and those sacrifices. The struggle for historical truth began from the first days of the election of the President of Belarus. It has become exemplary for many.

By Vadim Gigin, deputy of the House of Representatives, Candidate of Historical Sciences

## Dimensions and transformations

When the CIS was established, its participants adhered to two opposing strategies regarding the development of integration. For most, the CIS became a new form of union of the former Soviet republics, which naturally emerged after a long period of being within the same space of one great power. For some, the Commonwealth represented a variety of a civilised divorce, which did not imply any advanced co-operation. This position was largely maintained by Ukraine. Georgia acted similarly, and recently Moldova has also taken this path. Such contradictions hindered a more dynamic development of the CIS. The leaders of the states sometimes reached compromises, taking into account the views of those colleagues who showed pessimism regarding the prospects of the Commonwealth. As a result, other integration formations among the member states were established: the CSTO, the EAEU, and the Union State. Thus, integration took on a multi-speed character.

Nevertheless, a great deal has been achieved over the past years. A full-fledged parliamentary dimension has been formed. The CIS Interparliamentary Assembly has become an authoritative international institution that plays an important role in ensuring the conduct of elections and monitoring electoral processes, inter alia. The CIS' humanitarian component allows us to continue speaking the same language — both in a narrow practical sense and in the broad philosophical sense. Strong co-operative contacts have been established between executive authorities, enabling the implementation of numerous joint projects, including those related to national security.

**Moreover, the very format of regular meetings of heads of state and government is an important factor in co-ordinating actions on the international stage.**

Thus, at the meeting in Moscow, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan found themselves sitting at the same round table.

Firstly, there is a direct military threat. The USA and its NATO satellites are actively advancing offensive infrastructure towards the CIS borders. Strike groups are being formed with the aim of targeting the territories of our states. This is not limited to the Union State. The USA is beefing up military presence in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East. Secondly, the West continues to impose illegal sanctions in the economy. In the case of Russia and Belarus, they are direct while secondary sanctions are applied to our partners and allies. Notably, the USA and the EU intend to tighten their sanctions strategy. Thirdly, there is ongoing blatant interference from the West in the CIS' internal affairs. This includes biased attitudes towards electoral processes, and attempts to coerce a change in foreign policy and align it with US interests. Fourthly, there is a systematic promotion of an ideology alien to the CIS countries, with attacks on historical memory and the traditional foundations of our societies.

## Priority tasks

The recent meeting was held under conditions of unprecedented external pressure exerted in four areas. Firstly, there is a direct military threat. The USA and its NATO satellites are actively advancing offensive infrastructure towards the CIS borders. Strike groups are being formed with the aim of targeting the territories of our states. This is not limited to the Union State. The USA is beefing up military presence in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East. Secondly, the West continues to impose illegal sanctions in the economy. In the case of Russia and Belarus, they are direct while secondary sanctions are applied to our partners and allies. Notably, the USA and the EU intend to tighten their sanctions strategy. Thirdly, there is ongoing blatant interference from the West in the CIS' internal affairs. This includes biased attitudes towards electoral processes, and attempts to coerce a change in foreign policy and align it with US interests. Fourthly, there is a systematic promotion of an ideology alien to the CIS countries, with attacks on historical memory and the traditional foundations of our societies.

## Holding together

**Foreign critics of our Commonwealth have been confounded. The leaders of the CIS not only demonstrated optimism regarding the prospects of this integration project but also outlined a concrete programme of action.**

The recent meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council can be described as one of the most successful in its entire history. Truth be told, the relationships between the CIS countries have gone through various periods, including some less than favourable ones. A great deal has been done by opponents to sow discord among the once brotherly republics. Now, many understand that only together can we strengthen our sovereignty and ensure a confident, stable, and secure future for our peoples.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

*"We need to more frequently unite our voices into one voice of the CIS. This voice must be heard in full strength and lead to concrete actions, especially today. The overall goal is clear — we need a strong union of powerful, economically self-sufficient sovereign states."*

At the meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council in Moscow, on October 8th, 2024

*All these issues were discussed by the participants of the meeting in Moscow. The President of Belarus effectively formulated a plan for overcoming them and strengthening the CIS as a full-fledged and efficient integration structure. Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, "A strong union of powerful, economically self-sufficient states is needed."*

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to address four tasks: 1) strengthen the CIS international status, 2) counter the imposition of alien extremist ideologies, 3) achieve technological sovereignty, 4) promote and cultivate the value system of the Commonwealth. These clear points of the plan reflect a genuine approach and are aimed at reinforcing the international positions not only of the CIS but also of each member state. This is why the Belarusian leader's plan resonates with other suggestions from his counterparts.

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, highlighted the economic ties within the CIS. According to him, in the first half of 2024, the aggregate GDP of the CIS countries increased by 4.7 percent, with dynamic growth of investments in fixed capital, and industrial production, the volume of cargo transportation, and retail turnover all being on the rise. Independent financial structures are being set up, with the share of national currencies in commercial operations between the CIS countries already exceeding 85 percent. The President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, initiated the adoption of the co-operation programme for deradicalisation for 2025-2027, aimed to eradicate the causes and conditions that contribute to the emergence and spread of radical ideologies. The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, proposed the idea of establishing a CIS Plus format to expand the regional ties within the CIS.



On October 1st, China celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Exactly three quarters of a century ago, the long and arduous struggle of the Chinese people against numerous foreign invaders and internal enemies, who sought to parasitise millions of peasants and workers and exploit natural resources, came to an end. Today, China is a colossal country that influences the development of the planet. Minsk and Beijing have established the highest level of relations in history — all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership. This is largely due to the efforts of the leaders of our countries — Aleksandr Lukashenko and Xi Jinping.

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

*“The past three quarters of a century are forever inscribed in the millennia-long history of China as a time of great victories, patriotic consolidation, and rapid progress. Over this period, your state has achieved truly outstanding results, demonstrating to the world a vivid example of dedication, perseverance, and creative work, which have become the foundation for successes in political, socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian development.”*

**From a congratulatory message to Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, on October 1st, 2024**

# Path to prosperity

## How China defended its future and became a great power



By Anton Popov

### From the depths of the centuries

**China is one of the oldest civilisations in the world, with a statehood that has a virtually uninterrupted history.**

For a significant part of its history, China was governed by emperors and was a highly developed centralised power that shaped the political and social development of the region. However, by the mid-19th century, the country found itself under threat from Western aggression, which had been pursuing a policy of conquest in various parts of the globe for several centuries by that time. To subjugate the vast and densely populated territories of China, a brutal method was chosen — the West attempted to make the Chinese population mass-addicted to opium, which the British actively traded. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, the authorities managed to restrict the spread of the drug through strict prohibitions, but ultimately, the Western forces led by Great Britain imposed unequal treaties on the Chinese Empire during the two Opium Wars.

### Beginning of the revolution

The regular interference of the West in the internal affairs of the country led Chinese patriots to the conclusion that the Qing dynasty could no longer lead the state. The outcome of the Xinhai Revolution was the abdication of underage Emperor Puyi — he would later resurface on the historical stage as the ruler of the pro-Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo — and the proclamation of the Republic of China. The most viable ideas during the Chinese interwar period were national bourgeois and communist views. In 1924, their supporters even managed to form an alliance. The Kuomintang, led by Sun Yat-sen, was desperately lacking in organisation and co-ordination, while the young Communist Party needed an ally with a broad social base. The USSR supported the revolu-



tionaries both in word and deed, assisting the government in Guangzhou in training military and political personnel. Meanwhile, the West, concerned that the rise to power of revolutionary patriots across the country would put an end to the exploitation of the people and the riches of China, got nervous and made a fatal mistake by opening fire on demonstrators in Shanghai.

China's May 30th Movement that emerged afterwards seriously weakened the positions of foreigners. A united anti-imperialist front did not last long (by historical standards), although over a few years, the allies managed to achieve considerable success in their fight against the counter-revolutionary forces. The situation changed after the betrayal of Chiang Kai-shek — a new leader of the Kuomintang who succeeded deceased Sun Yat-sen. The Kuomintang government, later recognised by the West and Japan, ruled the country from Nanjing, while the Communists moved to the opposition. However, the situation did not reflect the aspirations of the majority of the Chinese population. A new civil war began. The Communist Party enjoyed broad support from workers and peasants.

***In the mid-1920s, the star of Mao Zedong — a key figure in the Chinese history of the 20th-century — rose.***

After the Autumn Harvest Uprising in 1927, he set up the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, and during the Long March, in which Communist troops covered about 10,000 kilometres from the southern regions of the country to the northwest, he confirmed his leadership status in the Communist Party of China (CPC).

### From Nanjing to Taiwan

The exhausting ten-year struggle was interrupted by Japanese intervention. The invaders did not care what ideas the Chinese adhered to — they sought to kill everyone with appalling brutality: suffice it to recall the Nanjing Massacre or the crimes of Japan's Unit 731. In those conditions, the generals of the Kuomintang forced Chiang Kai-shek to co-operate with the CPC for the sake of

the Chinese people's survival. The pause in the civil war lasted until 1946.

The victory over the Japanese cost the Celestial Empire enormous losses — Chinese sources speak of 35 million dead. The question of power remained open, although the CPC, through its policies and active resistance to the Japanese occupiers, gained even broader popularity. Therefore, everything was ultimately decided on the battlefield. Chiang Kai-shek's flight to Taiwan concluded a conflict that had lasted several decades.

***The proclamation of the People's Republic of China became a symbol of a new stage in the life of the country tormented by civil war and foreign interventions.***

### For the sake of entire humanity

***The main secret behind China's success is its ability to objectively assess the results of its own policies and to adapt rapidly.***

Mao Zedong's *Great Leap Forward* policy was necessary for the country, whose development had been hindered by a protracted war, but as soon as a critical mass of excesses was reached, the need for Deng Xiaoping's reforms became evident. Those reforms largely enabled explosive economic growth.

By the 75th anniversary of its establishment, the People's Republic of China has emerged as one of the world's superpowers and — by many indicators — as the leading economy globally. This ancient nation, with thousands of years of statehood behind it, plays an increasingly significant role in global processes, which is undoubtedly beneficial for humanity. The Celestial Empire offers all countries a mutually beneficial concept of a shared future for mankind, which allows for the construction of a truly harmonious and just world.

The PRC and Belarus are connected by special ties. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Xi Jinping are long-standing friends, and this fact positively affects the interaction between our states. Minsk and Beijing are implementing grandiose projects that benefit our countries. Belarus and China share similar views on the strategy for global development — this is clearly evident both in the economic indicators of our friendship and in our mutual support on the international stage.

### FACT

At the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was determined that by 2035 China should achieve socialist modernisation with the Communist Party at its core, and by 2050, the Communist Party intends to create a 'prosperous, strong, democratic, harmonious, beautiful, and modern socialist state'.

### NUMBER

- 400 million people in China belong to the middle class, making it the largest in the world.



- 98.99 million people in China were lifted out of absolute poverty from 2011 to 2021 as part of achieving the first centenary goal.



# Growth indicators

From strengthening the economy to enhancing the well-being of each citizen — how to achieve this and what global experience indicates

**In the context of the transformation of the global economy, Belarus is demonstrating high rates of economic growth — ranging from 2.8 to 5.5 percent month-on-month from January to August 2024 compared to the previous year. We strive to catch trends and find our niches in the new realities of the global market, thereby ensuring our citizens have stable and well-paid jobs, which will improve their well-being. What is being done to develop the country?**

By **Aleksei Avdonin, analyst**  
at **Belarusian Institute for Strategic Research (BISR)**

## Generating wealth

According to classical economist David Ricardo, for the last 400–450 years, humanity has been in a state of what can be referred to as the capitalist mode of production, where goods and services are produced not for self-consumption but for sale in domestic and foreign markets. Those countries that possess advanced technologies are the wealthy ones since they can meet domestic demand, reduce imports, and generate revenue from exports. The rules for generating wealth for nations have remained unchanged over the centuries (if we do not take into account the speculative economy, where gains on stock exchanges and other trading platforms are achieved through value manipulation of assets such as stocks, bonds, and their various derivatives, including cryptocurrencies).

*Despite the complex current restructuring of the entire global economy, Belarus boasts high GDP growth rates. This is largely due to Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko, who constantly emphasises the necessity of developing domestic production capacities alongside significant investments in science and technology.*

Over the past 30 years, our country has actively expanded the range of domestic goods and services. As a result, we have essentially achieved self-sufficiency in food, as well as both fast and slow moving consumer goods. Based on new technological solutions, we have continually improved our production lines, adapting and enhancing the products we manufacture, thereby maintaining and expanding our market shares, keeping pace with competitors, and earning good profits.

## Going our own way

The renowned American financier, Ray Dalio, has recently published data assessing the annual economic growth rates of different countries over the past 10 years. The study considered 81 indicators, including labour productivity,

education, and levels of debt obligations. The highest GDP growth rates are found in countries such as India (6.3 percent), the UAE (5.5 percent), Indonesia (5.5 percent), Saudi Arabia (4.6 percent), Türkiye (four percent), and China (four percent). The lowest GDP growth rates were in Germany and Italy (minus 0.5 percent).

The Republic of Belarus was not accounted for in this ranking; however, the World Bank's data indicates that our country demonstrated high growth rates in 2023 — 3.9 percent.

*According to estimates by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Belarus' GDP is expected to grow by 4.2 percent this year. This is a positive trend. It is important to maintain this growth, which also involves the younger generation.*

Along with that, the President stressed during a recent ceremony for the presentation of credentials by ambassadors that, regrettably, peaceful, prosperous, and sovereign Belarus causes irritation with some Western politicians, which turns into prejudice, "They consider it normal to have their one-sided outdated perception of the world order where there are first and second-class people. If someone disagrees with their point of view, they impose sanctions and various restrictions. Minsk has been facing such injustice for many years. Nevertheless, we take the courage to pursue independent domestic and foreign policies. We always defend our position based on international law and justice."

## Space for mutual benefit

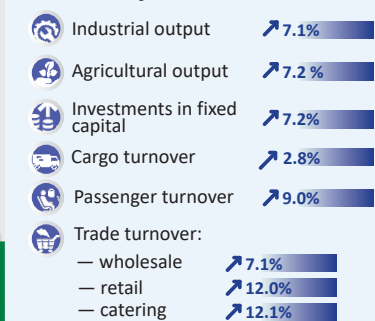
In these challenging conditions of external pressure from the world's power players, Belarus is successfully building its economic base — shops are fully stocked, there is no food shortage, inflation rates are low, and savings in the national currency among the population are growing. Citizens of our country are actively purchasing durable goods, the purchase of cars being an important indicator of citizens' confidence in the future.

Last year, despite the illegal pressure exerted by Western countries on certain EAEU states, Belarus demonstrated high rates of development, as noted by Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko during a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council. Belarus' trade turnover with EAEU countries in-

## FOR REFERENCE

The GDP in Belarus from January to August 2024, in comparable prices, was **4.9 percent** higher than in the same period last year. From January to July of this year, the economy of our country grew by **5.5 percent**.

## Economic growth rate from January to August of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 (in percent):



creased by 7.4 percent over 11 months. Industry has become the main driver of the economy. Today, we look confidently to the future and know what needs to be done to ensure sustainable and long-term partnerships within the union.

It is clear that the sanctions policy of the collective West against sovereign states is unlikely to end in the near future. Therefore, we need to bolster our economic base focusing on attracting maximum investments and technologies from friendly countries, creating new products and services, and forming favourable conditions for the most convenient export regimes for our goods.

*In fact, we need to support the popular formula Buy Belarus-Made Goods with several slogans: Invest in Your Homeland, and Export Belarus-Made Goods — meaning we must continue to pursue a policy aimed at expanding sales markets for domestic products and securing our position in the wealthy centre of the Eurasian space. This will provide us with the opportunity to develop the economy and improve the welfare of our citizens.*

## FOR REFERENCE

In Belarus, the last month of summer recorded the highest growth of fixed-term deposits in Belarusian roubles from the population since the beginning of the year — they increased by **Br292 million**, amounting to **Br9.7 billion** as of September 1st. Over the eight months of this year, citizens' deposits have grown by **Br1.7 billion**.

In August 2024, car dealers sold **4,916** passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. This is **more than twice** the figure for August of the previous year.



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

*"Work like masters! Over the next five years, we must polish our country, we must bring it into perfect condition. We must do it in an exemplary way. Young people — who will come after us — must maintain the order and learn from us. Therefore, act without looking back! You are going [to your places of work] as independent players and leaders. You have clearly defined boundaries within which you must act as persons in charge. If you do so, I will be very glad. Success attend you."*

**During the meeting on personnel issues, on September 26th, 2024**

### Key forecast parameters for Belarus' development in 2025:

- GDP growth of 4.1 percent
- export of goods and services to increase by 5.4 percent
- investment in the economy planned to be 7.8 percent more than in 2024
- growth of real disposable income of the population by 4 percent
- target task to curb inflation to a level not exceeding 5 percent

### Target indicators of monetary policy for 2025:

- consumer price growth — no more than 5 percent
- international reserve assets — no less than \$7.1 billion
- share of banks' non-performing assets in terms of credit risk — no more than 10 percent
- availability ratio of automated systems for payment market participants for conducting settlement operations — at least 99.8 percent
- growth of bank claims on the economy — no less than 11 percent

Source: Presidential Decrees No. 384 and No. 385 dated October 1st, 2024

# New points on the export map



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

*“Despite all kinds of external challenges, we keep working in international markets and feel quite confident there. However, we should keep pace. There are too many obstacles and barriers that we have to overcome.”*

**During the meeting on the export of Belarusian goods, on October 3rd, 2023**

By sea, by rail, by motor transport — how Belarusian goods are delivered to foreign buyers today

**Despite the West’s incessant pressure on Belarus, the country’s economy continues to develop dynamically and Belarusian products are in demand in the foreign market. According to the National Bank, Belarus’ foreign trade turnover of goods and services in January-July 2024 increased by 4.6 percent compared to the same period in 2023 to reach \$56.2 billion in equivalent. Sales to Asia and Africa have grown significantly. Experts note that this is the result of timely measures taken at the level of the country’s leadership and prompt logistics restructuring.**



By Vladislav Sychevich

## Route has been rebuilt

Geopolitical processes and sanctions restrictions have led to the rupture of traditional supply chains and the reformatting of foreign trade logistics, which has become a new growth point for Belarus and Russia. The established transport and logistics flows in Eurasia have been radically restructured and re-orientated, mainly to the east and south. Today, the diversification of trade and transport logistics flows takes place in the direction of friendly countries — to the east and south-east, as well as along the International North–South transport corridor, which uses the infrastructure of the Caspian ports of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This transport corridor enables logistics companies to arrange cargo transportation to the countries of Southeast Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent.



as Senegal, Peru, Mali, Uruguay, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Tunisia, Algeria and more have been added to the export map.

The export of Belarusian products through the Russian port infrastructure increased by 10 percent in eight months compared to the same period last year. Today, 14 Russian ports are involved in transshipment of Belarusian goods. Belarus continues to build logistics using the infrastructure of the International North–South transport corridor while the necessary conditions are being created to ramp up the volume of export supplies of domestic enterprises’ products by containers to the Chinese market. In April 2024, Belarus joined the international transport corridor ‘Russia – Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan’.

## Eurasian vector

Within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), consistent work is ongoing to develop the Eurasian transport corridors and infrastructure to increase traffic capacity. Global changes have opened up new opportunities for the development

of the transport industry while the value of the common market for transport services and logistics in the integration association has increased many times.

A digital environment for business processes is being formed, with the work on the creation of a unified transit system and a mechanism for transportation traceability, as well as control of cargo movement using navigation seals entering the final phase. The legal foundations for access to the inland waterways of the union have been laid, and an agreement on navigation has been signed.

“As part of the transit potential development, an agreement on the requirements for the masses and dimensions of motor vehicles carrying out transportation along the Eurasian transport corridors is being prepared for signing,” stated Arzybek Kozhoshev, EEC Minister in charge of Energy and Infrastructure. “A new stage in the implementation of transport policy based on the roadmap for 2024–2026, which is planned to be approved at the level of heads of government, is coming. Our task is to ensure that the upcoming

period is a logical continuation of the current work. There is a lot of work to be done to fulfil the transit potential of the Eurasian countries. Measures will be required to create a competitive environment in the transport services market, determine the legal regulation of transportation conditions, co-ordinate efforts on the joint development of infrastructure for international transport corridors, and identify financing mechanisms for infrastructure projects.”

## Union State direction

In the current geopolitical and geo-economic conditions, Russia has become a key partner of Belarus in logistics, and not only. Significant work has been done to set up new logistics relying on the transport infrastructure of the neighbouring country.

“The volume of joint cargo transportation by Belarusian and Russian companies by rail in 2023 is estimated at 46 million tonnes. This is 30 percent more than in 2022,” pointed out Dmitry Zverev, Russia’s Deputy Minister of Transport. “It is expected that in 2024 Belarus will transfer about 4.3 million tonnes of petroleum products alone through Russian ports. At the same time, the volume of other Belarusian cargoes declared for transshipment is 8.6 million tonnes. As of September 1st, Russian ports have already shipped seven million tonnes of cargo for export. For comparison: there were no such figures last year. We started from scratch, built our railway system, road transport and established coherent work in multimodal communication. The further development of our transport complexes has quite ambitious plans.”

By the way, in 2024, the first shipments went through the International North–South transport corridor. Belarusian and Russian transport companies have discovered new markets in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is not about capturing the transport markets of these countries but about redistributing the traffic volume to them.

## TO THE POINT

EDB analysts have estimated the traffic volume on the eastern route of the International North–South transport corridor last year at 1.6 million tonnes. Of these, 1.1 million tonnes were transported by rail. The average annual traffic growth rate over the past three years has been 52 percent. The year 2022 marked the launch of the first regular container service. Bulk oil cargo transportation was successfully tested last year, and coal container transportation to India — in June 2024. The use of competitive railway tariff rates contributes to the positive dynamics of transportation. “The eastern route of the International North–South transport corridor is the main meridional traffic artery in Central Asia. We expect its share to grow from 10 to 16 percent by 2030 thanks to new container services and the implementation of the Chelyabinsk – Bolashak – Iran freight traffic initiative,” shared Evgeny Vinokurov, Deputy Chairman of the Board and Chief Economist at the EDB.

According to the forecasts of EDB analysts, the volume of rail freight transportation along the eastern route of the International North–South transport corridor may grow by 4.5 times and amount to five million tonnes by 2030. The corridor development will be facilitated by the modernisation and electrification of railway lines, improved border crossings, co-ordinated tariff policy, creation of an end-to-end logistics operator, digitalisation of transport documents and procedures.





## Hurricanes accused of interfering in US presidential elections

The hurricane season has become one of the factors that now have a significant impact on the election campaign in the United States — according to an article published in *The Washington Post*

As the newspaper notes, hurricanes Helene and Milton 'have collided with the final stage of the presidential campaign, amplifying the nation's sharpest political divisions as millions prepare to go to the polls'. "For a turbulent presidential race that has already been jolted by a felony conviction, assassination attempts and a late-stage candidate switch, the arrival of back-to-back monster hurricanes is testing the nation's political fabric even as it challenges the government's ability to mount a comprehensive response," the publication reads.

The article also says that Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump crit-

icises the Washington administration for ineffective actions to eliminate the consequences of Hurricane Helene. In turn, American leader Joe Biden and Vice President, candidate for the highest state post from the Democrats Kamala Harris accuse Trump of spreading deliberately false information about this. According to *The Washington Post*, natural disasters 'have become particularly consequential for Harris, whose truncated presidential campaign is focused on introducing herself as a steady leader in contrast to Trump's erratic governing style'.

"It is too early to know if the storms will have a significant electoral impact, but

both campaigns have begun gaming out how votes in key hurricane-ravaged states could shift," the publication underlines.

On October 7th, Joe Biden signed an order declaring an emergency in Florida due to the approach of Hurricane Milton and ordered federal assistance to be provided to local authorities. Meanwhile, only in late September, Hurricane Helene hit the southern American states, which killed more than 200 people. The damage caused is estimated at about \$35bn.

The hurricane season in the Atlantic usually lasts six months: from early June to late November. The presidential elections will be held in the US on November 5th.

## Chagall's heirs putting up for auction more than 70 artist's works

Christie's auction house has launched a series of online auctions dedicated to the works of great painter Marc Chagall — one of the most famous natives of Belarus. Twenty-three of the prominent artist's works have already gone under the hammer. At the upcoming auction, the heirs of the famous impressionist plan to sell 72 more paintings, the auction house reported.

Last week, the *Impressionist and Modern Art Works on Paper* auction ended at Christie's, selling 23 paintings by Marc Chagall. The most expensive work — *Lovers with Red Bouquet (Les amoureux au bouquet rouge)* — fetched \$461.5 thousand.

The most striking, unmistakable feature of the work is the exquisitely intricate and detailed bouquet at the centre of the composition. Historically, flowers have alluded to the fleeting nature of beauty and life, with their ephemeral existence symbolising transient moments



Most of the artist's works will be sold during the auction, entitled *Between Heaven and Earth*. The heirs of Marc Chagall exhibited 72 works on it; most of them being graphics. Online auctions will be held until October 22nd.

The top lot of the auction will be *The Holy Family in Red (La Sainte famille en rouge)* estimated at \$49-82 thousand.



## Police protest in Poland

Police officers belonging to the Solidarity independent trade union held a protest action all over Poland — as reported by the *Wirtualna Polska* edition

The protest was organised due to the deterioration of the staff situation in the Polish police, as well as difficult working conditions. Police officers are demanding significant salary increases and the creation of the necessary conditions to fill vacant positions. According to the protesters, the police budget for 2025 should amount to 25bn Zlotys instead of the stated 20.2bn.

The protesters addressed their demands to Interior Minister Tomasz Siemoniak while a petition was also sent to Polish PM Donald Tusk.

The action included an 'Italian strike' (deliberately slowing down the performance of the official duties) and refusing to issue fines. Instead, the guards limit

themselves to warnings. Another measure is that police officers do not answer management calls outside of business hours, even in cases of emergency.

"Crime is really on the rise, especially criminal groups of foreigners, which is already noticeable in large cities. If we don't start investing in the police now, in a year we will wake up in the middle of a gang war for influence in Poland," Jacek Lukasik from the Solidarity trade union noted.

There are 2,468 vacant positions in the Warsaw police headquarters. "The police in Warsaw are working in an emergency mode," Head of the Warsaw Police Main Department Dariusz Walichnowski stated.

## Finnish newest nuclear power plant haunted by bad luck

Delays and emergency shutdowns are nothing new for Finland's troubled nuclear reactor

Olkiluoto 3 was in normal production when one of the reactor's control rods unexpectedly dropped into the reactor. The drop was caused by a failure in the control rod drive mechanism. As a result of the incident, the plant's production power automatically decreased to approximately 1220MW.

In early June, energy production at the Olkiluoto 3 nuclear power plant in Finland was suspended due to a turbine malfunction. In spring, annual maintenance was delayed at this reactor, it was extended

several times. Last autumn, the nuclear power plant was stopped several times due to accidents.

The Finnish NPP faced a series of emergency shutdowns, which led to short-term interruptions in electricity production. Part of the reason for these situations is understandable: a notoriously problematic structure, which was put into operation 14 years later than planned, cannot work without failures. Areva built Olkiluoto 3 with numerous violations that began to come out during operation.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Floods and issues in healthcare have exposed bureaucratic chaos and embezzlement in Poland

### SITUATION IN SOUTHERN POLAND

The flood has affected the lives of **57,000 people**. **More than 6,500 people** have been evacuated. **Over 11,500 residential houses, 6,000 outbuildings, and 700 utility facilities** have been flooded or damaged.

# Problems run deeper

**Cyclone Boris caught Poland off guard. Torrential rains led to the declaration of a state of natural disaster in the country. Even in these challenging circumstances, official Warsaw has managed to stand out — instead of providing real assistance to the people, it first blamed Russia for all its troubles, then beavers, and ultimately just asked Brussels for money. The Polish authorities have also attempted to silence the deteriorating situation in the healthcare sector. However, if they had not been erecting expensive yet pointless fences on the border with Belarus or funding the Ukrainian regime, there would have been enough money to address the aftermath of the natural disaster and support medical professionals. What are foreign publications saying in this regard?**

By Yulia Demeshko

## Where to find a billion?

According to the Polish *TVP Info* television news channel, Poland's authorities have officially estimated the damage from the floods at \$1bn — these figures are preliminary. What is more interesting is that while the entire country was busy combating the consequences of the flooding, Polish president Andrzej Duda whisked off to the United States. He explained his decision by saying he did not want to interfere with the work of the relevant services. Undoubtedly, Polish society experienced mixed feelings about such behaviour from their president. Even greater outrage was directed at the indifferent NATO troops. The publication *Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny* pointed out,

**“There are constantly around 20,000 NATO military in the country. This enormous contingent, funded by local taxpayers and provided with**

**medics, equipment, and helicopters for evacuations, has not come to the aid of the Polish people. This shows that care for the citizens of the host country is not among their priorities.”**

The author of the material, Maciej Pakuła, posed a valid question, “Do ordinary citizens believe that the USA and NATO troops stationed on our land will stand firm for our freedom and independence?”

In a recent interview with the Polish *Radio Zet* commercial radio station, the Minister of Finance stated that budget revisions would be necessary due to the flooding, “This may lead to the government increasing taxes or cutting expenditures.”

After reports of a budget deficit, another problem emerged — carried away by the enthusiasm to assist Ukraine, the Polish government had significantly cut funding for the health of its own citizens. Now the authorities are short by around \$1.3bn to settle all debts to medical institutions. As a result, hospitals are forced to reduce planned procedures and postpone some until 2025. Doctors have started to resign due to insufficient funding and delays in payments for overtime. The chief doctor of the hospital in Żywiec, Wadim Kurpias, stated, “The situation is catastrophic. We have to cancel 6,000 procedures.”

The European Commission will still provide support to the countries affected by the flooding. Ursula von der Leyen even personally flew to Wrocław to announce this joyful news.

**Overall, Brussels will allocate €10bn: Slovakia will receive €1bn, Poland — €5bn, the Czech Republic — €2bn, Romania — €1.5bn, and Austria — €500m. One can only hope that this money will indeed reach ordinary Europeans and not end up in someone's pockets.**

## Beavers are made a scapegoat

During a meeting of the crisis headquarters in the town of Głogów, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk named the main reason for the extensive consequences of the bad weather. The news portal *Wrocław.Wyborcza* noted that Tusk officially announced the start of a ‘war’ against beavers. He accused the animals of having destroyed the dams that were supposed to hold back the river floodplains. To be fair, the article also includes the opinion of zoologists who defend the beavers. Doctor of Biological Sciences and researcher Andrzej Czech remarked, “Beavers restore connections between waterways and their natural floodplains, creating small areas of wetland where water

flows more slowly than in rivers and can be absorbed into the ground, which raises the groundwater level and prevents droughts.” Apparently, when the Polish authorities wanted to shift the blame for their mistakes onto someone else, these facts were overlooked.

However, some media outlets see the root of the problem. The publication *Mysł Polska* directly states that the scale of the disaster would have been much smaller if the Polish authorities had allocated funds for preventive measures.

**“For more than two years, we have been spending hundreds of millions of zlotys on maintaining the military conflict in Ukraine,” observed the author of the article, Arkadiusz Miksa. “Our pockets are empty, while those of arms companies are full. We have no money for reservoirs, no money for dams, but for military action and to help Ukrainians we have found them. Our governments are leading the country to ruin.**

I hope that thousands of Ukrainians, who have been enjoying themselves at our expense for the past two years, will now volunteer en masse to help Poles restore order after the flooding as a sign of solidarity and gratitude.”

## Wave of distrust

The Polish *TVP Info* television channel has drawn attention to yet another problem that has arisen after the flooding. The water has eroded cemeteries and animal burial sites, putting Poland on the brink of a sanitary-epidemiological disaster.

**In particular, this concerns the burial sites of those who died from dangerous diseases such as cholera, plague, smallpox, and anthrax. Polish journalists have counted around six such cemeteries across three voivodeships. To address the consequences, the authorities have enlisted the help of military chemists, yet it is still too early to judge the effectiveness of their assistance.**

The news portal *Polsat* quotes Donald Tusk, who stated that from his conversations with numerous victims of the flood, it was clear they felt unprotected by the police and other services. As a result, they refuse to evacuate from the danger zone. This is compounded by the increasing number of looters being caught. The Polish publication *Onet.pl*, citing law enforcement, has reported nine documented cases. At the same time, cybercriminals have become more active and set up 34 fake fundraising campaigns allegedly for the flood victims.

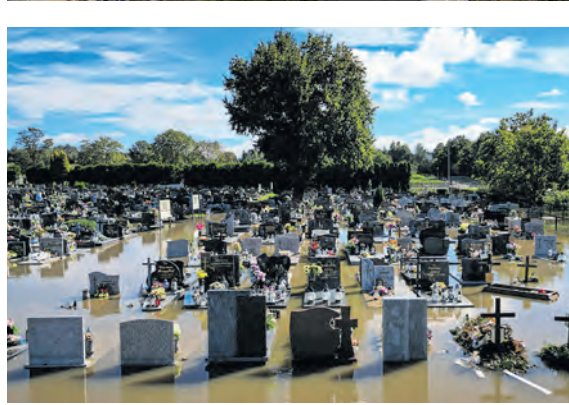
All of these consequences could have been avoided had European officials taken the interests of ordinary citizens into account in their political decisions. The Polish authorities have not even made the simplest gesture — no one has apologised for the chaos that ensued after the natural disaster. Meteorologists had offered warnings in advance, but politicians simply dismissed them. Now, due to their indifference, money, efforts, and the lives of many flood victims have been wasted.

## Budget misappropriation

If we recall one of the most high-profile scandals in Poland in recent times, much about the authorities' response to the flooding becomes clear. They are deeply indifferent to the interests of their citizens. The only thing that has always concerned the elite is money. According to an audit initiated by a coalition led by Donald Tusk, corruption schemes have been uncovered at the highest levels of power. *The Associated Press* revealed that the previous government, headed by PiS (the Law and Justice party) leader Jarosław Kaczyński, illegally spent around zł100bn (\$25bn), involving situations with the financing of election campaigns for Kaczyński's associates, manipulations with state contracts, and even raider seizures of entire enterprises. Charges have been filed against 62 members of the former ‘ruling elite’.



REUTERS



REUTERS



**EUROPE IS GOING UNDERWATER**  
The recent flooding has also affected cities in Austria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary.  
**At least 44 people** have died across Europe. In the Czech Republic, **nearly 20,000 people** have been evacuated, and **250,000 homes** have been left without electricity. In Romania, **more than 5,000 homes** have been damaged. In Lower Austria, **ten districts** have been cut off from the outside world.

# Made by hand, inspired by heart

## Handicrafts in Belarus are developing on the basis of national traditions



Svetlana Krugopolova

**Our country is famous for its authentic and original crafts — blacksmithing and pottery, straw weaving and weaving, cooperage and wickerwork... The regulation of craft activities continues to improve at the legislative level.**



Anton Stepanishev

Items created by craftsmen are unique



Ivan Yarinovich

By Kristina Khilko, Katerina Charovskaya

### Seamless transition

On August 21st, the Head of State signed Decree No. 328 *On Implementation of Craft Activities by Individuals*. The government determined the list of relevant types of work, which encompasses authentic, original crafts, including the manufacture of national musical instruments, hand-woven products, blacksmithing, and more. The document came into force on October 1st.

Notably, the list is flexible and, depending on territorial features, can be supplemented by local authorities. “The list can be supplemented with original, unique activities typical of a certain area. An activity may be the only of its kind in the world or in the country,” specified Belarus’ Economy Minister Yuri Chebotar. According to the minister, the emergence of this list marks the final stage of large-scale work on the transformation of the business environment.

### Sound of goodness and well-being

The home creative workshop of Grodno resident Svetlana Krugopolova embodies a true fairytale land.

Each of its ceramic inhabitants has not only their own unique appearance and character, but also their own voice. Any animal or bird there is a whistle, which our ancestors endowed with a sacred meaning — its sounds invite goodness into the house and drive away negativity.

The craftswoman made her first folk-style crafts when she was a student at a music pedagogy college, where she had the opportunity to attend an additional course in arts and crafts. Learning the art of creating ‘singing’ toys was not an easy task. For a whole year, the crafts flatly refused to whistle. It was necessary to make special holes at a certain angle at the right level.

At first, creating amusing clay characters was just a hobby for Svetlana Krugopolova. Now she is a professional craftswoman, whose creations are in great demand, “I only have two hands and no factory equipment with which I could crank out a hundred toys per day. The maximum I can do per day is five to seven large pieces or about twenty small ones. Physically, this is not easy. Yet, craftsmanship is undoubtedly a path to self-improvement. I have been working as a teacher for 27 years, and I feel that I have already reached a level in this area that is difficult to exceed. In craftsmanship, in contrast, I can do a lot of new things — for example, I would be interested in making an ocarina. That is, not just a whistle, but a real wind musical instrument on which you can fully perform folk melodies. The Belarusian whistle is the real history of our country.”

### REGIONAL ATTRACTION Marina Lukiyanets, the head of methodology department at the Dyatlovo district centre of culture and folk art,

*“Dyatlovo District is known for its skilled craftsmen who preserve and revive authentic crafts. Thus, Sergei Balykov — a wickerwork master — creates unusual baskets, decorative interior figurines and other fancy products. Straw weaving in Belarus is included in the UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Artistic products and souvenirs made of straw are associated with Belarus and reflect our hard-working nature. For their purposes, the craftsmen use only natural material, which is obtained using traditional methods. Long stems of rye or wheat are cut by hand to preserve their quality and elasticity, as well as colour features.*

*Belarusian craftsmen create original things that delight many. Taking advantage of the visa-free regime, increasingly more foreigners are visiting Belarus with interest, posting beautiful photos on social networks, sharing impressions of what they have seen, and buying distinctive Belarusian gifts as souvenirs — cornflower-shaped brooches, wooden bison, linen shirts with embroidery, a panel with storks, and other products created by our craftsmen. In this regard, it is important to occupy and develop this niche, which is often given over to serial imported goods, although we have enough high-quality, unique handmade products at reasonable prices.”*



### REVIEWS ON THE INTERNET

**Diana\_K:**

“In Belarus, I found myself not just in a souvenir shop but rather a museum where various traditional Belarusian handicrafts, such as straw weaving and embroidery, were presented. All of those are handmade! You can take part in a masterclass. We came there to make a nice souvenir — a straw horse. My colleagues and I really liked it. I highly recommend it to all travellers who like exploring the local culture.”

**Larisa89:**

“I have visited a beautiful gallery, where the collections successfully combine national colour and art of various creative directions. Lots of handmade works of decorative and applied art — toys, macramé lace, decorations, ceramics — everything looks amazing! I buy original gifts, sometimes a herbal doll, sometimes a set of table napkins or a funny cuddly toy. The prices are quite affordable.”



Walesey Stolyarov

### Cultural symbols

Ceramics, painting on wood, macramé, lacemaking are not only an important component of the Belarusian cultural code. Folk crafts carefully preserve the traditions, customs and history of the state. Unique production techniques and artistic craftwork, formed over centuries, continue to be passed on from generation to generation along with the warmth and a piece of heart of those who cherish, develop and promote folk crafts, as noted by Georgy Grits, Candidate of Economic Sciences, economic analyst, “Craftsmen represent the people. They are creators. Their activities are often far from business. A simplified taxation system is important to them. Today, the list of crafts includes those areas that reveal Belarusian traditions.”

The economic analyst is confident that innovations will improve the industry. Various festivals and cultural events that are actively held in the country also contribute to the popularisation of local products. “Crafts are directly related to the regions. Look how diverse and expressive the Belarusian ornament is. Polesie [Gomel Region] showcases one pattern while Vitebsk Region depicts another. This is just one example. Therefore, the development of craft activities also supports the identity of the regions.”

### Fair calculation

Svetlana Bartosh, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Budget and Finance of the House of Representatives, is confident that crafts are relevant when they are based on personal history, local identity and cultural code. It is work at these levels that allows creating a product that develops not only the craftsman but also the surrounding area, since more than 75 percent of craftsmen are concentrated in the regions.

The parliamentarian has reminded that consistent work to create favourable conditions for the implementation of craft activities has been carried out in Belarus for more than two decades. Today, a craftsman does not need to register as an individual entrepreneur or a legal entity, or maintain complex statistical reporting. It is possible to sell handmade products at markets, fairs, to send them to customers, and advertise products on the Internet. The monthly fee for craftsmen is not high — Br6.5. “It is very important and valuable when craft activities become family heritage, and knowledge is passed from grandfather to father, from father to son. Legislative innovations are aimed at preserving and reviving national Belarusian traditions and cultural heritage for its transfer to the younger generation,” the parliamentarian pointed out.

In addition to the medals, the captain and deputy head of the fire and rescue unit No. 23 of the Frunzensky District Emergencies Department at the Minsk City Department of Belarus' Emergencies Ministry — Nikita Ukolov — returned to his Homeland with a unique achievement having broken the world record that had lasted for long 12 years and was considered eternal. There were assumptions behind the scenes that it was simply impossible to complete the distance in the event 'the ascent up the assault ladder to the fourth floor of the training tower' faster than the existing record as it was the human ceiling. The leader of the Belarusian team proved to himself and the whole world that nothing is impossible, while the Order of Honour, bestowed by the President for achieving high sporting results and significant personal contribution to the development of fire and rescue sports, became a worthy reward for his displayed bravery.

Nikita is a good-natured, smiley, and modest young man. Bold, determined, and valiant, yet he utterly dislikes giving interviews on camera. Posing for photographs is not his cup of tea, either. "If it has to be done, it has to be done," agreed the champion and world record holder, but he looked as if he would rather complete a 100-metre obstacle course five times along with a fire relay race and military deployment instead.

— **How many medals do you have?**

— *I only keep count of the gold medals won in individual competitions. There are 44 of them: 23 in the Belarusian championships, 13 in international tournaments, and eight at world championships.*

— **A milestone is approaching! Do you have the most memorable victory?**

— *At the world championship in Saratov in 2019, I won the scaling ladder event and became a world champion for the first time. It feels like a turning point, going from an underdog to a top contender that everyone knows, fears, and respects.*

— **To be honest, fire and rescue sports are not the most obvious choice for a guy. Typically, boys go in for football, hockey, martial arts...**

— *My dad worked as a driver for the Emergencies Ministry, transporting a sports team. During school holidays, he would take me along. I even attended the world championship in 2004 in Minsk. I knew what this sport was about, but I had not planned to participate — it happened by chance. One day, a coach came to school and offered to try... I liked it and stayed.*

— **Your crowning achievement is the assault ladder. At the world championship in Harbin, you aimed to break the world record and you achieved your goal. However, you did not win a gold medal and came second, losing in the final to your teammate Anton Tarasevich. How did that happen?**

— *I broke the record during the preliminary heats, having climbed to the fourth floor of the training tower in 12.47 seconds. Before that, the best result was 12.56, set by a Russian athlete back in 2012. Since then, it had been repeated exactly three times, but no one could surpass it. Talks had been circulating that this was the ceiling that was impossible to break through. However, I was confident the opposite was true. I had been preparing and proved that I was right by shaving 0.09 seconds off the record. I think I broke the 'sound barrier' and now others will run faster as well. This had happened before, when the time stagnated at 12.95 seconds, and only two people in the world could get below 13 seconds — that was considered ultra-class. Then the record fell, and it was as if a dam burst: dozens of athletes started breaking the 13-second barrier. It is probably all about psychology.*

# Fire in the eyes

## Athlete rescuer Nikita Ukolov has spoken about the world record, his dream, and why he loves Belarus

**The question of whether a firefighter should burn with passion at work is not one that Nikita Ukolov grapples with — he always works with zest. There is arguably no more vibrant and prominent figure in fire and rescue sports today than this young man, who has been at the top for five years, breaking records and racking up championship titles. A month ago, Nikita along with his teammates from the Belarusian national team brought home another batch of precious gold medals from Harbin, China, where our team, as always, delivered a stellar performance at the world championships.**



Sweet moment of victory



For Belarus!



At the start



Happy family

### ALWAYS BE THERE

"When I found out that I would be awarded the Order of Honour, I felt incredible pride," confessed Nikita Ukolov. "Such recognition of my work means that I am on the right path, doing everything correctly. I am glad to bring glory to Belarus. To love your country and be useful to it is a duty for everyone. And for us — those serving in the Emergencies Ministry — it is also important to always be there and come to the rescue in time."



Order of Honour is a great privilege

*Thirdly, for justice, rule of law, stability, and safety. All of this resonates with me deeply. You know, you clearly understand how wonderful it is at home when you are visiting elsewhere. We often become less perceptive of things around and stop noticing all the beauty of our country, its cities and towns, and its nature. The state's care for its citizens also seems natural to us, yet such attention is far from universal.*

### Two captains

— **Your wife also serves in the Emergencies Ministry, doesn't she? What rank does she hold?**

— *Marina is a captain. Just like me.*

— **Who is the main authority in the family?**

— *It depends on the issues. Marina is the brainiac.*

— **And you represent the strength?**

— *I do not interfere with her. She is smart — she got a gold medal [at school] and a red diploma [at university].*

— **Does your wife cheer for you at competitions?**

— *She worries more than I do! I must admit that sometimes it even threw me off. So now I tell her: don't! I feel more comfortable competing when my family is not in the stands.*

— **Who is your main authority in firefighting sports?**

— *Maksim Shaporev, a long-time captain of the national team. Maksim has been retired from sports for three years now, and we really miss him in the team. It is not just about athletic qualities. He is a person of great stature! At one time, I even thought that the Belarusian national team in fire and rescue sports was him. He epitomises a true captain.*

— **Do you have a dream?**

— *A new world record. To make sure it lasts for ages!*

### For justice, rule of law, stability, and safety

— **Have you travelled to many countries?**

— *When the sporting world was still open, we went to tournaments in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, we visited Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine... Then everything suddenly changed; many have simply stopped coming to competitions, and ignore the world championships. It is a pity. Czechs were serious competitors and always contended for medals. In fire and rescue sports, there have never been any bans on com-*

*peting with national symbols. Those who do not like this situation have left the international federation and do not take part in competitions. However, the Austrian team, for example, participates. Competing under national symbols is a source of pride and a great honour for me. I really like the Belarusian flag. It is beautiful even aesthetically. We participate in competitions primarily to represent our country, not ourselves. When you win and stand on the podium while the anthem is playing — it is a special feeling. It gives you goosebumps.*

— **Why do you love Belarus?**

— *You cannot answer this question in just a couple of words. First of all, it is my Homeland, in the deepest sense of the word. Secondly, for the opportunities it provides to everyone. I can only speak for myself. I serve in the Emergencies Ministry, and there are all the conditions for development there, including healthcare, assistance in housing construction, and more.*



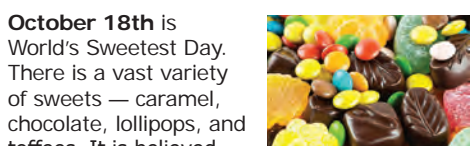
## Photo of the week

**Aryna Sabalenka has become a three-time champion of the WTA 1000 tournament in Wuhan, having secured victories in 2018 and 2019. Belarusian tennis player now has 17 titles at WTA tournaments and has retained the second place in the updated WTA ranking.**

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

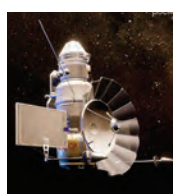


**On October 17th, 1924**, the Museum of Belarusian Polesie was established in Pinsk. Among the most interesting exhibits in the museum are a unique collection of ceramic tiles and a 12th-century sarcophagus, a collection of weapons, documents, and books, including manuscript charters from the 14th to the 17th centuries, the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, printed editions from the 17th century. The museum houses paintings by I. Shishkin, V. Polenov, V. Perov, Yu. Pen, and more.

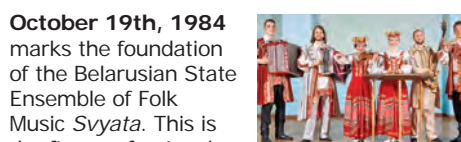


**October 18th** is World's Sweetest Day. There is a vast variety of sweets — caramel, chocolate, lollipops, and toffees. It is believed that candies appeared during Ancient Egypt, accidentally created when the contents of overturned vessels with nuts, honey, and figs mixed together. All sweets were handmade in the past. The 20th century transformed the process of creating candies into mass production.

**On October 18th, 1967**, the *Venera-4* space station received the first scientific data from the surface of Venus. For the first time, direct measurements were taken in the atmosphere of another planet during the parachute descent of the spacecraft



to Venus. The research conducted by the station detected no magnetic field or radiation belts on Venus. It was during this time that the composition of the atmosphere was determined. Subsequently, the process of studying the planet proceeded quite successfully, and as a result, Venus has been studied in detail.

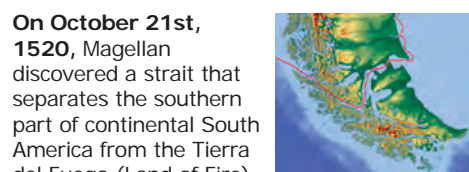


**October 19th, 1984** marks the foundation of the Belarusian State Ensemble of Folk Music *Svyata*. This is the first professional folklore music band in Belarus that began to revive the folk musical heritage of its country. The combination of folk music and dance allows creating vibrant concert programmes, which are received with great success both at home and far beyond its borders. In 2019, the ensemble was awarded the *Honoured Collective of the Republic of Belarus* title.



**October 20th** is known as International Chefs Day. The profession of a chef is one of the most sought after in the world and one of the oldest. The first recipes written on paper appeared in Babylon, Ancient

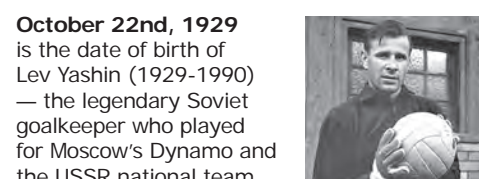
Egypt, and Ancient China, as well as in Arab countries. Some of those have survived in written monuments from that era, and anyone interested can try cooking dishes that were enjoyed by the Egyptian pharaoh or the emperor of the Celestial Empire.



**On October 21st, 1520**, Magellan discovered a strait that separates the southern part of continental South America from the Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) archipelago. It was later named the Magellan Strait. The unknown ocean beyond the strait greeted the sailors with sunshine and calm, which is why Magellan named it the Pacific. The first circumnavigation of the globe was of immense significance for science. Magellan's expedition, by sailing around the Earth, confirmed that the Earth is spherical.



**On October 22nd, 1938**, inventor Chester Carlson made the first xerographic copy in history by using a zinc plate coated with a layer of sulfur. Creating an electrostatic charge on the plate and exposing it to incandescent light through a glass slide with an inscription transferred the writing to the sulfur layer. However, it took more years to refine the electric copying technology.



**October 22nd, 1929** is the date of birth of Lev Yashin (1929-1990) — the legendary Soviet goalkeeper who played for Moscow's Dynamo and the USSR national team. He was recognised as the best goalkeeper of the 20th century by the IFFHS and FIFA in 2000, and was awarded the Silver Olympic Order by the IOC in 1986. FIFA established the Yashin Award for the best goalkeeper at the World Cup Finals.

**October 22nd, 1944** marks the official opening of the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History in Minsk. The first temporary exhibition consisted of two displays: *Weapons* and *Partisan Press*, containing 1,261 exhibits spread across



15 halls. In 2014, a new building for the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History was constructed on Pobeditelei Avenue.

**On October 23rd, 1924**, city bus services were introduced in Minsk. Fifteen buses operated along two routes. Initially, the buses, which could carry 20-40 people, picked up passengers where it was convenient for them — it was enough to give a signal to the driver. It was only years later that a system of regular stops was implemented.