

Reflection in mirror of demography

Census shows almost 84 percent of Belarus' residents see themselves as Belarusian

By Yelena Prusova

According to 2009 National Statistical Committee census data, about 140 nationalities permanently live in Belarus, with almost 84 percent of the country's residents viewing themselves as Belarusian. Meanwhile, 8.3 percent say they are Russian, 3.1 percent say Polish and 1.7 percent say Ukrainian. The top ten most numerous categories include those who see themselves as Jewish, Armenian, Tatar, Gypsy, Azerbaijani and Lithuanian, with each group boasting 0.1 percent of the total population.

The 2009 census has provided a detailed overview of the nationalities residing in Belarus, with replies recording respondents' self-defined words. The nationality of children was determined by their parents. The census allowed nationality and ethnic group to be re-

corded: those generally recognised and those invented independently.

According to the National Statistical Committee, since the last census in 1999, the number of people in the most numerous nationalities has fallen, as it has countrywide. There are 2.2-fold fewer Jewish people, while the number of Ukrainians and Russians has fallen by a third each and there are 29 percent fewer Hebrews. Specialists believe the trend reflects natural migration.

Simultaneously, migration has led to a growing number of representatives of other nationalities. Since 1999, the number of Chinese living permanently in Belarus has risen almost 20-fold. In fact, 2.7 times more Arabs are registered and the number of Turkmen has risen 2.3-fold. The share of other nationalities remains insignificant.

The national composition of the population in some regions



Census data outlines country's 'portrait'

differs from that seen across the republic. In the Brest and Minsk regions, the fifth most numerous nationality is Armenian (rather than Jewish). In the Gomel region, Hebrews are the fourth most pop-

ular nationality, with Poles shifting to sixth position. In the Grodno region, 67 percent are registered as Belarusian and 22 percent as Poles, with Lithuanians closing the top five (0.2 percent).

Initiatives to find support

By Yelena Safronova

A new project of international technical assistance — International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) — has recently been presented in Vetka (Gomel region); it is expected that about \$330,000 will be allocated for its development

For the first time, the project embraces all post-Chernobyl areas in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. There are 21 such districts in Belarus, including 13 in the Gomel region. The project primarily focuses on supporting local initiatives on the creation of favourable conditions for the economic and social development of areas affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe.

Proposals for project initiatives will be prepared by the affected areas, among other events. These initiatives can deal with the production of agricultural products, improvement of social conditions, recuperation, psychological and medical rehabilitation of the population and popularisation of a healthy lifestyle. Participation in the contest is open to state and non-state non-commercial organisations, local authorities and self-management bodies. After the presentations are analysed, the best projects will receive financing from ICRIN partners (40 percent of the expenses necessary for the implementation of the proposal).

Crossing border with medicines

Transporting medicines remains key issue within Customs Union and beyond, including via international post

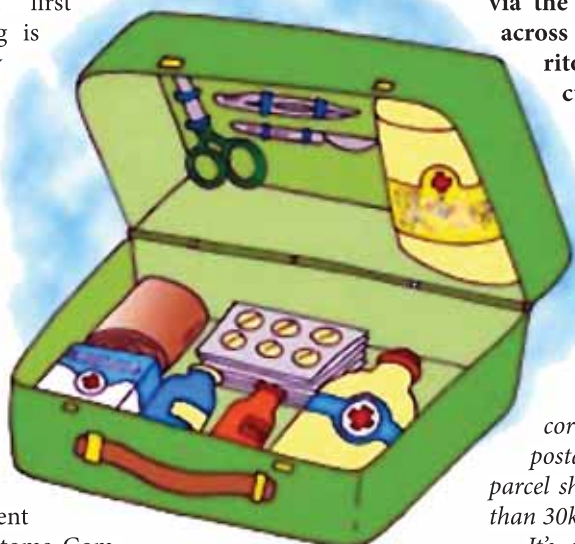
By Marianna Nedomskaia

On going abroad, we often take our medicines with us. As a rule, travellers can easily take medicines for their personal use, as long as they aren't prohibited or marked as psychotropic or narcotic. Of course, those which contain 'prohibited substances' need special permission. At first sight, everything is clear, but many people still have concerns over how to bring medicines into or out of Belarus, transporting them via the Customs Union territory, or via international post. The Chief Inspector of the Customs Clearance and Regimes Department of the State Customs Committee's Agency for the Organisation of Customs Control, Yekaterina Shatokhina, tells us more.

I've bought biologically active food additives in Belgium. Can I bring them into Belarus?

Yes. You can. You need no special documents.

I'm going to Europe, taking my anti-depressants, which contain psychotropic substances. Do I need permission from certain state bodies or is it enough to have my prescription with me?



You have the right to carry drugs for your personal use, containing narcotic and psychotropic substances. However, only limited quantities are allowed (enough for personal purposes). In line with national legislation, enough

doses can be carried for administration over a period of three days, in addition to 90 single doses of psychotropic substances. Moreover, the corresponding medical prescriptions are required. Those containing narcotic or psychotropic substances should be declared on entering Belarus.

Does this mean that we can now send medicines via the international post, across Customs Union territory, without paying customs fees?

Yes, as long as those medicines do not contain psychotropic or narcotic substances. Moreover, their value should not exceed 120 euros (in equivalent); otherwise, a fee is due. According to international postal requirements, the parcel should weigh no more than 30kg.

It's also necessary to remember that these are customs bodies decide which products are for personal use and which are not. Medicines which come in their own individual container packaging are usually beyond suspicion but, if a parcel contains

50 such containers, it may not appear to be for a single person's use. In this case, you must prove that it is for personal use. Everything depends on the particular medicine. Customs officers are unlikely to be wary if they see 50 packs of activated carbon, since it is often used in large quantities.

Can I bring herbal preparations from Norway without permission?

If these herbs are not on the 'prohibited' list (whose movement via the border is restricted or prohibited), then you can. However, sending plants or seeds (in any condition) by post is banned.

Where can we learn which medicines are subject to restriction or prohibition within the Customs Union?

Study the instructions on your medicine to see whether it contains psychotropic or narcotic substances. There is a full list of such substances (over 300 in total) on which restrictions or bans are applied regarding transporting them in or out of Customs Union territory. Medicines are listed under their international non-patented names, which may differ from their trading names.

Passengers in 'net'

By Veronika Ivlieva

By late 2010, some inner-city shuttle buses of Minsk to have Internet

Soon, passengers of inner-city shuttle buses will be able to expand their entertainment on route. Reading, playing mobile phone games and looking through the windows will be supplemented with an interesting new activity. By late 2010, some routes will have access to the Internet. The idea was recently discussed at the *Business Internet-2010* conference.

This will be implemented by one of the largest Belarusian autotransport centres, jointly with a mobile communication opera-

tor. "The cars will be equipped with wireless Wi-Fi access, necessary to access the global network," explains the autotransport centre's marketing service staff. "Passengers will be able to log on using any device which supports this technology — i.e. a notebook, a mobile phone, an e-book or a tablet computer. High-speed 3G Internet will be available."

Other countries are already experimenting with the Internet services on passenger inner-city routes. Vilnius has recently introduced 15 trolley buses equipped with wireless connection free of charge. The innovation aims to enhance the popularity of public transport.

Belavia extends its fleet



National Airline extends its fleet

National Airline Belavia purchases another CRJ-200LR

A Canadian Bombardier aircraft is being leased in line with the state programme of civil aviation development. The plane can travel 3,148km before needing refuelling, at

a maximum cruising speed of 860km/h. The aircraft is planned primarily for the airline's regular flights.

Belavia currently operates six Boeing 737/500s, three Boeing 737/300s, four CRJ-100/200LRs and four Tu-154Ms.