

Active position increases level

Belarus among top 27 countries for women's placement at top level decision making

Marianna Shchetkina, Belarus' Minister of Labour and Social Protection, recently took part in the 54th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (held at the UN headquarters in New York). She reported that Belarus is among the top 27 countries for placing women in decision making positions.

One third of Belarusian parliamentarians are women and 45 percent of local council positions, at all levels, are occupied by women. Moreover, women account for 20 percent of all heads of republican state-run public authorities and two thirds of state officials, at all levels.

Ms. Shchetkina took part in high-level discussions relating to the Beijing Platform for Action and the development of gender equality in education, stipulated in the Millennium Declaration. Ms. Shchetkina stressed that violence against women is a com-

mon problem, being tackled by the Millennium Declaration. "Belarus supports the *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* global campaign, initiated by the UN Secretary General. We support the idea of forming a database on states' national efforts," the Belarusian Minister noted.

The head of the Belarusian delegation explained that Belarus was one of the first countries to initiate discussions on human trafficking at the UN. At the UN Millennium Summit, in September 2005, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, put forward an initiative to intensify international efforts to counteract human trafficking.

"Via the UN, Belarus is actively promoting the idea of global partnership to counteract human trafficking — closely connected with the observance of human rights, primarily, those of women and girls. We are looking forward



Women already take a large share of representation at Belarus' National Assembly

to consultations dedicated to the global action plan to combat human trafficking, which will be a UN contribution to Millennium Development Goals," underlined the Belarusian Minister.

Ms. Shchetkina shared Belarus' experience of protecting women's rights and noted that the

country is taking decisive measures to reduce unemployment among women. She emphasised that Belarus implements a policy of gender equality through its national action plans, aiming to expand opportunities for women in various areas. The National Council on Gender Policy is the

co-ordinating body. "Today, we can see definite success in terms of equalising the social status of men and women. As a result, there is a steady trend towards reducing the share of women registered as unemployed and the duration of female unemployment," Ms. Shchetkina asserts.

Tourism industry to represent itself abroad in London and Dubai

Belarus to participate in six international tourist exhibitions this year

By Andrey Asfura

This year, Belarus is to double the number of tourist trade fairs in which it takes part (last year, we attended only three international exhibitions).

The Belarusian travel industry has already been represented at the *IMTM* (Tel-Aviv) and *Vivattur* (Vilnius) exhibitions. By the end of this year, we'll have also taken part in the *ATM* exhibi-

tion in Dubai, the *WTM* exhibition in London, and the *MITF* and *Intourmarket* exhibitions in Moscow.

Belarus is taking part in exhibitions in those countries of special interest from the point of view of incoming tourism. The Head of the Marketing and Publishing Department of the National Tourism Agency, Valery Boldyrev, tells us, "In particular, many Israeli citizens are immi-

grants from Belarus; they speak Russian fluently. The same situation is seen in Lithuania. These are obvious sources of incoming tourism." As yet, most tourists are from Russia, staying at health spas and taking various sightseeing tours (primarily, military-patriotic and historical).

Belarus is to take part in the *ATM* exhibition in Dubai for the first time. "It is a new and promising market for us. Taking into

account that local tourists have high financial solvency and an interest in Belarusian nature, with a direct flight between Minsk and Abu Dhabi, we are looking forward to achieving good results," smiles Mr. Boldyrev. The Belarusian stand has attended the *WTM* exhibition in London on numerous occasions. This year, Belarus' National Tourism Agency intends to intensify its contacts with British travel companies.

Desire and ability to find common language

By Valery Sidorov

Gomel region and Czech Vysocina region to develop twin city relations

The Deputy Chairman of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, Boleslav Pirshutok, has signed an agreement with the Honorary Consul of Belarus to the Czech Republic, Irzi Krzivan. The town of Trebic (home town of Mr. Krzivan) may become the first Czech town to establish partnership relations with a Belarusian counterpart. According to the Honorary Consul, "it's time to restore the previous level of co-operation." "We are Slavs, so, will find a common language very quickly," he underscored.

Close interregional ties have been created already, with good prospects for business co-operation. Czech company TRADO — headed by Mr. Krzivan — is an official dealer for some large Belarusian machine-building companies, such as Gomselmash. In 2009, Bel-Czech TRADE trading house was set up to help Belarusian businessmen find commercial partners in the EU, aiding their participation in international fairs and exhibitions. According to the Honorary Consul, Czech businessmen have a number of commercial proposals for their Belarusian counterparts.

The chambers of commerce and industry of the two regions shall soon sign documents. The Mayor of Trebic will then visit Gomel. A delegation of Czech businessmen and officials is to attend the Gomel Economic Forum, being held this May. Further collaboration will then be outlined.

New exhibits open to wider public

Showcased for the First Time exhibition on show at National History Museum

By Marat Gorevoy

The exhibition unites almost 150 decorative artefacts, manuscripts and objects, including unique 17th century printed editions (from the former library of the Budslav Bernardine Monastery, in the Myadel district of the Minsk region), digital copies of 18th century Belarusian magnates, documents of the Emperor's Chancellery in St. Petersburg, and pictures by Belarus-born Mikhail Gorshman and Belarusian graphic artist Victor Stashchenyuk. Among the exhibits are war postcards (from 1941-1943) of auto-battalion captain Ivan Zuev (from Minsker Galina Kunts' family archive), liturgical clothing and personal belongings of the Head of the Belarusian Orthodox Church — Filaret, Archbishop Metropolitan

of Minsk and Mogilev — Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz. Also on show is a Belarusian team uniform from the Beijing Olympics of 2008.

The Director of the museum, Sergey Veher, notes that, last year, the museum significantly increased its collection — adding over 15,000 artefacts. "Our collections of documents, porcelain, photos and coins have increased most of all," he says, adding that new exhibits have been purchased using Culture Ministry funds, as well as money from sponsors and from the museum itself (including that earned by the establishment). Some artefacts have been presented or added from archaeological digs.

At the exhibition's opening, the first ten 'Museum Friend' certificates were awarded to those who've greatly contributed to its funds.



Many new artefacts showcased at exhibition