

Travelling from capital to suburbs at high speed and in greatest comfort

First city electric train — purchased by Belarusian Railways from Switzerland — to welcome passengers this June

At the presentation of the Swiss electric trains in Minsk, Belarusian Railways' Director Anatoly Sivak explained that the first city train will launch in early summer. The route is to connect the stations of Minsk-Passazhirsky and Belarus (Zaslavl) which is among the busiest in the suburbs. Belarusian Railways hopes to increase its passenger transportation on the route from today's 470,000 to 9m annually.

Mr. Sivak notes that prices are still being discussed, with day tickets are likely to be used on the new electric trains. "There are several variants possible regarding price; we'll make our final decision in April," the official stresses. Although the exact price is not yet fixed, the tickets are due to cost less than those for inner-city shuttle buses and slightly more than bus tickets.

The first city electric train, supplied by Switzerland, has four carriages, able to accommodate 624 passengers, travelling at a speed of 160km/h. The train is equipped with heated curtains for doors, to keep out draughts, air conditioning/heating, video surveillance and a zone for



Belarusian Railways launches new format of passenger transportation

handicapped passengers.

Belarusian Railways and Swiss Stadler have signed a contract for the delivery of ten trains, each costing

about 6m Euros. Two arrived in February, with another three due by late 2011 and five more in 2012. They have also signed a memorandum

to continue co-operation, envisaging the purchase of new trains for city lines. Mr. Sivak notes that these would initially connect Minsk with

Zhdanovichi and Zaslavl; other satellite-towns would be added at a later date. "If we launch a new train to Smolevichi under this

scheme, we'll need about six electric trains to satisfy today's passenger numbers," he explains. "Additionally, about six trains will be needed to service Machulishchi and Kolyadichi."

Peter Spuhler, Group Chief Executive Officer and President of Stadler Rail AG, tells us that co-operation with Belarus is proving rather successful. "This project has been implemented within a year — a record period. Stadler sees huge prospects for co-operation with Belarus. I'm convinced that our trains will enhance the comfort of urban life for Belarusians," he notes. Stadler is interested not only in satisfying Belarus' demand for modern equipment but wishes to export its products to other countries via Belarus.

Last year, Belarus launched a new format of passenger transportation, entirely new from a technical point of view and in its approach. It envisages the classification of lines into international, inter-regional, regional, city and commercial. 'City Lines' will become the first stage of the project, connecting Minsk with its suburbs and satellite-towns.

Reading books and enjoying art works while drinking coffee

By Lilia Rybakova

Belarusian Petrus Brovka Encyclopaedia Publishing House opens shop in Minsk

ated within libraries, children's toy shops and book shops. Europe abounds in such places, which inspire interest in reading.

Not long ago, a unique venue

Publishing House, Tatiana Belova. She notes that the shop has another name: Encyclopaedia of Taste. "We'd like Belarusians to have good taste in all fields: in what they read and watch and in their lifestyle," she stresses.

During the launch ceremony, a symbolic red ribbon was cut, and a cake in the shape of a book eaten. Really, knowledge should not always be associated with granite — especially in our modern times. Public access to information is growing, while interest in reading is falling.

The new shop creates an extremely comfortable environment for those wishing to spend time with books. You can sip coffee as you listen to classical music, log on to the Internet and choose any book you like from the shelves. Of course, you can buy the edition if you wish to. Moreover, authors will organise regular meetings with readers, to discuss their works. No doubt, it is sure to become a true cultural centre, uniting book gourmands.

The Publishing House is planning another project, envisaging the exhibition of a new painting each month. Modern Belarusian artist Victor Korolev's *April* opens the way.

opened in Minsk, like those seen abroad. It serves as a coffee shop and a site to host presentations, while having computers, bookshelves and sculptures. It displays art works in such a refined interior that you can't help but think of old, aristocratic libraries. The Presentation shop has been officially opened by the Director of the Petrus Brovka Encyclopaedia



New shop offers comfortable environment for book reading

Some time ago, I was sitting at a book store café in Vilnius and happened to see a copy of Petrus Brovka Encyclopaedia Publishing House's *Bulba* (Potato) encyclopaedia. It sat on a shelf above the bar counter, amidst the most remarkable editions. I felt proud that the book was being seen in a foreign state but was also sad that Belarus lacks such cafés, situ-



Services offered by Belarusian clinics are popular with tourists

Status of health gains broad new dimensions

By Andrey Alfimov

By 2015, Minsk's medical tourism to bring in around \$9m

In 2010, exports of medical services from Minsk's medical centres amounted to \$1.7m. However, experts believe this could rise 5-fold in the coming five years. Tourist companies and medical centres in the Belarusian capital have agreed upon a 20 percent commission for attracting foreign tourists: those arriving in Minsk will be diagnosed, operated upon where necessary, rehabilitated in sanatoriums and, finally, will receive another diagnosis.

The National Tourism Agency has joined the Republican Centre for Recuperation and Sanatorium

Treatment in launching the project to promote medical and spa services abroad. "To achieve these goals, we'll distribute catalogues and will work actively online while promoting Minsk's medical tourism at foreign exhibitions," notes Valery Boldyrev, the Head of the National Tourism Agency's Department for Marketing and Publishing Activity.

Services in transplantology, cardiology, traumatology and dentistry enjoy the greatest popularity among foreign tourists. In 2010, medical services in Minsk were rendered to over 25,000 foreigners, including those from Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Germany, Israel, Macedonia, Cyprus, Iran, South Korea and Georgia.