

Multi-vector policy and openness to new relations

President of Belarus receives credentials from new heads of diplomatic missions of Ukraine, Azerbaijan, India, Brazil and Turkey, alongside those of new EU Delegation head to Belarus

By Igor Slavinsky

The ambassadors of important partners for Belarus on the international arena have presented their credentials to President Lukashenko, opening a new

page of relations with these states. "Belarus is open to mutually beneficial partnership," the President told the foreign diplomats.

Several months ago, Maira Mora was appointed as the first head of the EU

Delegation to Belarus and is the only diplomat to have twice presented her credentials to Mr. Lukashenko. From 2004-2010, Ms. Mora headed the Latvian Embassy. She returned to Minsk recently, representing all 27 EU states. The President noted that she is 'extremely knowledgeable' regarding the situation in Belarus. "I hope that her rich experience of working for neighbouring Latvia's diplomatic



Ceremony of credentials presentation by foreign ambassadors

service — a country far from alien to us — will allow her to actively promote Belarusian-European relations while ensuring principles of equal rights and mutual respect," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko is convinced that any problems observed in Belarusian-Ukrainian relations can be resolved. On accepting credentials from Viktor Tikhonov, he admitted that he expects 'consistent and

systematic work to build a true partnership' from the new Ukrainian ambassador.

Azerbaijan is another important partner of the Republic within the post-Soviet space. On accepting credentials from its new ambassador, Isfandiyar Vahabzade, the President asked him to send 'words of the greatest gratitude, as — however strange it might seem — Azerbaijan was the

first to back Belarus in hard times'.

Among other states sending their ambassadors to Minsk were Brazil, Greece, Zambia, India, Malaysia, Namibia, Serbia, Thailand and Turkey. Minsk is keen to develop active co-operation with all of them; as Mr. Lukashenko stressed, all nations are equally important to Belarus, whose foreign policy is multi-vector.

Progress evident but there is further room for improvement

International Telecommunication Union ranks Belarus 52nd worldwide (up six places on 2008) for its level of information-telecommunication technologies

By Irina Yurkovskaya

The ICT Development Index is calculated upon 11 parameters, showing progress in the field of information-computer technologies. These include access, the level of development and the population's skill in operating ICT. Over the past two years, the report states that some developing states have achieved significant improvements, with the pace of growth outstripping the average regarding the access sub-index and the use sub-index. This indicates that these societies are moving with the times. Pleasingly, Belarus is among these countries; we have also been recognised for achieving significant growth in the number of broadband communication subscribers.

Belarus enjoys good results across all three parameters. Regarding the IDI access sub-index, we've advanced by 10 positions (from 61st place to 51st) and from 72nd to 57th



Internet services become more accessible

place for the use sub-index. Meanwhile, we've improved by three points in the skills sub-index. Among CIS states, Belarus is second only to Russia, which is ranked 47th.

As regards the IDI price basket, Belarus is ranked 56th (having an index of 2). The most accessible services are registered in Monaco (0.2)

while Niger offers the lowest access (71.6). Countries with comparatively high prices for information-computer technologies demonstrate low figures of access and use. Meanwhile, affordable access brings greater use.

The Communications Ministry is convinced that Belarus could join the top 50, as

Pavel Petrulevich, the Deputy Head of the Telecommunications Department, explains, "Our programme of accelerated development in the field of information-telecommunication technologies is aimed at the International Telecommunication Union's rating — among others. We've just begun to analyse the details and, of course, are primarily focusing on those aspects in which we lag behind."

As is traditional, the list is topped by South Korea and Sweden (1st and 2nd places respectively). Iceland has shifted from 7th to 3rd position, with the fourth and fifth places are shared by Denmark and Finland. Among our neighbours, Estonia enjoys the highest position — 33rd (down from 28th in 2008) while Lithuania is ranked 35th (keeping its position from 2008). Poland is 38th (up from 41st), Latvia is 40th (down from 39th) and Russia is ranked 47th (up from 49th).

Tourist compass indicates new direction

By Vyacheslav Belyatsky

Visa issues simplified for foreign tourists visiting Avgustovsky Canal

The reconstructed Avgustovsky Canal has been one of Belarus' major tourist symbols for several years and was recently the subject of discussion at a session of the

Council of Ministers' Inter-departmental Expert and Co-ordination Council on Tourism. Its participants are keen to develop the site to encourage domestic and inbound tourism. The session — held in the Grodno Region — was chaired by Anatoly Tozik, Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister.

Those in attendance have

visited the Avgustovsky Canal, Svyatsk Palace and Park Estate, Rudavka-Lesnaya border checkpoint and Gostiny Dvor motorway service station, alongside Tyzengauz's Estate and Garadzensky Maentak agro-tourist facilities.

A range of decisions were adopted, aiming to enhance

the park's tourist attractiveness. In particular, the simplification of the visa regime should encourage foreign guests. Local authorities are working with the Transport and Communications Ministry to develop infrastructure along the Avgustovsky Canal, including cruise routes and camp sites.

Towards safe and reliable world through dialogue

By Tatiana Polevaya

Belarusian delegation takes part in 66th session of UN General Assembly, held at UN headquarters in New York

Andrei Savinykh, the Press Secretary of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, has told journalists that the political discussion involves heads of states, heads of governments and foreign ministers. UN member states are to exchange opinions on the most urgent international issues during their political debate.

"In the context of sustainable development, global climatic problems will be

discussed, alongside the role of regional and sub-regional organisations. They'll debate preventive diplomacy to build a safer and more secure world, while discussing how best to support those countries most hit by the global financial and economic crisis," notes Mr. Savinykh. He explains that nuclear arms and ordinary weapons will also be highlighted on the agenda.

Other regional problems will receive particular attention — such as the Palestinian-Israeli settlement and the status of Palestine with the UN, as well as how best to bring stability to the riot-hit regions of North Africa and the Middle East.

'Winged Lion' award acknowledges merits

By Sergey Kochetov

Vitebsk State Medical University Rector Valery Deikalo awarded international order for reviving motherland

The 'Winged Lion' award is given by the International League for the Development of Science, Education, Culture and Sport, uniting over 50 states. On presenting the award in Vitebsk, the President of the public organisation-founder, Anatoly Yezhov, noted that international experts chose Valery Deikalo and his University staff for their contribution to medical and pedagogical sciences. "The possession of

this order confers prestige and moral satisfaction, giving recognition to your work, showing that your efforts have been worthily appreciated," Mr. Yezhov emphasised.

Other holders of the 'Winged Lion' award are the former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, scientist-economist Nikolay Petrakov and the rectors of the Belarusian State Pedagogical University and the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics. Three-time Olympic champion, famous Belarusian wrestler Alexander Medved, is expected to be acknowledged in the near future.