

# Architecture to achieve new heights

Minsk's largest hotel — 22 storey Belarus — closes for reconstruction in April

By Vladimir Stepanov

In late January, builders began work on one of the hotel's three wings and, on April 1st, the three star hotel (able to accommodate over 900 guests) will close. Minotel JSC's General Director, Vladimir Stashkevich, notes that the revamped Belarus Hotel will open once more to visitors in the second half of 2013. "It is a unique building in the country, for its space and engineering solutions," he explains.

After reconstruction, the hotel will gain 8m in height, allowing two more floors to be added, one of them hosting a restaurant for 100. The Belarus Hotel is known for having wonderful views over the capital, so its roof is to be converted to allow visitors to take a panoramic lift to its lofty position, allowing observation. Its facade is to be decorated with modern materials, while a glass dome is being installed. Visitors to Minsk's World Hockey Championship in 2014 are



Minsk's largest hotel to gain more floors after reconstruction

sure to enjoy it.

The hotel's 400 staff will be made temporarily redundant, but Minotel

hopes to re-employ them elsewhere, being reluctant to lose its well-qualified and friendly employees.

# Country obtains full measurement



Statistics provide accurate demographic portrait of the country

By Yelena Prusova

**As of January 1st, 2011, Belarus' population totalled 9,481,100 (taking into account 2009 census results)**

According to the National Statistical Committee of Belarus, the country's population has fallen by 18,900 since January 1st, 2010, with deaths exceeding births by 29,200. However, positive migration stood at 10,300, with 17,169 people arriving in Belarus last year while 6,866 left.

The population rose only in Minsk: from 1,843,700 (as of January 1st, 2010) to 1,864,100 (as of January 1st, 2011). The population in other regions of the Republic fell last year, with 1,435,000 residing in the Gomel Region as of January 1st, 2011 and 1,411,400 in the Minsk Region. The Brest Region had 1,394,700 residents and the Vitebsk Region boasted 1,221,800 people. Meanwhile, 1,088,100 people lived in the Mogilev Region and 1,066,000 were registered in the Grodno Region.

# Partners have their own dimension

**Belarusian universities and scientific centres to expand co-operation with Syrian scientists**

Joint projects have been outlined by specialists from the Belarusian State Technological University and Al-Baas University, of the Syrian Arab Republic. Relations are being developed in line with a memorandum of co-operation, signed in December 2010. The Belarusian National Technical University and the affiliated Polytechnic Technopark are to continue liaising with Syrian scientific centres.

This year, Al-Baas University is expected to open a department of the Belarusian-Syrian Centre for Sci-Tech Co-operation.

Scientists from our two countries are to discuss the results of their joint research and new projects at the first Belarus-Syria Sci-Tech Seminar, to be held in Minsk this May. They will explore the latest trends in advanced construction materials, prospects for laser technologies in medicine and engineering, and possibilities for partnership in bio-technologies.

# Former prisoners-of-war and their liberators meet

By Anton Ivanov

**Liberation of Auschwitz film and Krieg.Kryk.Cry exhibition honour memory of Holocaust victims in Minsk**

Dedicated to International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the event was hosted by the Belarusian State Museum of Great Patriotic War History, organised by the UN Representative Office in Belarus and the Republican Holocaust Fund.

In 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution stating that January 27th would annually mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this day in 1945, the Soviet Army liberated the largest Nazi death camp: Auschwitz-Birkenau (Poland).

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's statement regarding

International Holocaust Remembrance Day notes that we must learn lessons from the Holocaust, while honouring the memory of victims. He stresses: "This year, we pay special tribute to the memory of those women who suffered during the Holocaust. Despite terrible discrimination, hardship and cruel treatment, they kept struggling against their pursuers. They joined the resistance movement, helping those in danger, while secretly bringing food into the ghetto. They made sacrifices for the sake of their children. Their courage remains a source of inspiration for us."

The fascists created over 260 ghettos in Belarus during the war, with women and children accounting for over a half of over 800,000 Jews killed in Belarus during the Holocaust years.

# Major hockey contract

**Co-operative agreement signed between Directorate in charge of 2014 IIHF World Championship in Minsk and Infront Company — the commercial partner of the International Ice Hockey Federation**

The signing ceremony took place at Minsk Town Hall, with the Chairman of Belarus' Ice Hockey Federation and the Head of the Directorate in charge of 2014 IIHF World Championship, Yevgeny Vorsin, exchanging signatures with Infront's Winter Sports Division Executive Director Bruno Marty.

Infront has been the commercial partner of the International Ice Hockey Federation for many years and has worked with the



At agreement signing ceremony

organising committees of the 2005, 2009 and 2010 world championships. It is currently planning forthcoming world championships for 2011, 2012 and 2013. The company's goal is to share its expertise and knowledge with organising committees, helping them achieve the highest standards.

According to Mr. Marty, Belarus has already done much to prepare for the championship, with Minsk-Arena open three years ahead of the competition. This is to be the major venue of the event, accommodating 15,000 fans. Another stadium, Chizhovka-Arena, is being built; it will seat about 8,000. Mr. Marty

# First among domestic cities

**Polotsk to take part in new EU project on sustainable energy development**

Polotsk has already hosted an international start-up conference for an EU project entitled *SURE: Sustainable Urban Energy in the Region of the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument — Towards the Covenant of Mayors*. The SURE project is being implemented by the EU's CUIDAD: Co-operation in Urban Development and Dialogue programme, uniting six partners from five countries: Germany, Spain, Belarus, Morocco and France. The project's budget totals around 620,000 Euros and is to last for 2.5 years.

The project's leading partner is German Friedrichshafen — Polotsk's twin city. The new initiative aims to promote sustainable energy development for our two cities, Polotsk and Sale (Morocco), by their joining the Covenant of Mayors, pledging to implement the EU's '20-20-20' target. The latter aims to improve sustainable energy development by 2020, while reducing CO2 emissions by 20 percent and raising the use of alternative energy sources and energy efficiency by 20 percent. Already, 2,181 cities throughout Europe and the EU's neighbouring states have signed the Covenant of Mayors, with Polotsk likely to become Belarus' first participant.

The conference brought together representatives of regional and local authorities from Belarus, Morocco, Germany and Spain, as well as those from ministries and departments, and a delegation from the European Commission to Belarus. Institutes, organisations and experts working in the field of power engineering also took part. A round table discussion was held within the conference, tackling Polotsk's plan for sustainable energy development, which is an obligatory part of Covenant membership. Experts from Spanish Murcia (already a Covenant member) shared their experience and the SURE project was presented, with sustainable energy planning in Belarusian cities discussed thoroughly.

underlines that there is no doubt that Minsk will prepare well for the world ice hockey tournament, holding it at the highest level; Infront will provide Belarus with every assistance.

Commenting on allegations that Minsk might lose the honour of hosting the championship, for political reasons, Mr. Marty emphasised that he is not engaged in politics. He stressed, "We know full well that the International Ice Hockey Federation has granted Minsk the right to hold the championship and there are no grounds to reconsider the decision. Belarus is an excellent venue for the World Championship."

The IIHF World Championship in Minsk will be held from May 9th-25th, 2014.