

Finding new promising partners

Novopolotsk hosts first Belarusian-Latvian Forum of Twin Cities

By Grigory Semenov

Twelve partnership agreements have been concluded between our local authorities and those of our neighbours as a result of the forum. Meanwhile, 300 similar agreements have been signed between 30 Belarusian cities and other municipalities across the globe (mostly with those in Latvia).

Representatives of several twin cities attended the forum, allowing them to meet their partners; over 250 Belarusian and Latvian heads of cities and districts took part, alongside directors of enterprises and diplomats. Molodechno has long established twin city relations with Yelgava, while Vitebsk has been closely liaising with Daugavpils. These two have been implementing a project to restore the traditions of famous folk celebrations such as Kupalle and Ligo, with a contemporary con-



During forum's work

cert ground soon to be constructed in Vitebsk.

The host of the forum — Novopolotsk — has close ties with Ludza and Ventspils and is a member of the border Ozerny Krai Euroregion. The

latter is helping equip qualitative illumination at a roller skiing track at Novopolotsk's Children and Youth Sports School of Olympic Reserve — to be open to professional athletes and tourists alike.

According to the Head of the Belarusian Twined Towns Organisation, the Chairman of Minsk's Regional Executive Committee, Boris Batura, the active development of twin city

relations between Latvia and Belarus is logical. "We — nations who have historically lived side by side and boasted close cultural contacts — have an innate need for this. No sanctions can

alter this fact. Moreover, the development of good neighbourly relations is a major element of our state's foreign policy," he notes.

Our two states have been actively co-operating in such spheres as tourism, nature protection and economics. Meanwhile, Belarusian exports to Latvia have more than tripled over the last year. According to the Chairman of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee, Alexander Kosinets, the potential for further mutually beneficial collaboration is yet to be exhausted, "We should create more joint ventures to manufacture innovative products. Logistics are a very promising direction, as Belarus is a bridge between the West and East, opening the way to the Single Economic Space, which involves Russia and Kazakhstan."

In Novopolotsk, co-operative agreements were signed by Uzda and Grobiņa, Slonim and Ogre, Svisloch and Rundāle: 12 pairs were formed in total and the list should soon expand, with two dozen more partners added. We may learn more within a month, when Brest will be hosting the Belarus-Latvia Investment Forum.

Reminder of courage, kindness, sensitivity and understanding

German *Chernobyl: People, Places, Solidarity, Future* exhibition arrives in Belarus



Chernobyl: People, Places, Solidarity, Future exhibition

By Yaroslav Demidov

The exhibition details the events around the Chernobyl disaster, its consequences and the international solidarity movement which appeared in Europe after the accident. Numerous Chernobyl initiatives were established across Europe in the early 1990s and continue their work today.

After opening in early 2011, in St. Peter's Church in Dortmund, the exhibition has toured 50 German towns and been visited by over 42,000 people. Now, it is touring 25

Belarusian towns from 2012-2013.

"A unique pan-European movement of solidarity has promoted the creation of bridges of mutual understanding. This is set against a background of conflict resolution between the West and the East, the opening of the 'iron curtain' and the development of contacts. We are implementing definite projects regardless of the political situation," notes Peter Junge-Wentrup, CEO of the Dortmund International Educational Centre.

Twenty five years after Chernobyl, over 500 initiatives have been operating in Germany alone, including via the Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical communities.

The exhibition acknowledges the heroism of the liquidators who extinguished the fire and cleared the reactor's fourth unit during the construction of the sarcophagus. They prevented even greater disaster across Europe, at the expense of their health and, sometimes, their own lives.

The exhibition's tour of Belarus allows us to remem-

ber the liquidators' bravery and is inspiring another project: to record their recollections as an audio archive for the future. It's vital that we understand the sacrifices made by others, as it encourages a responsible attitude towards ourselves and towards all that surrounds us.

The second component of the exhibition comprises works by famous German photographer Rüdiger Lurbricht, who has been inspired by the Chernobyl theme for many years. His shots will be on show in Belarus alongside children's drawings dedicated to the Chernobyl topic.

"It's important that the informative part of the German exhibition is extended in Belarus, to include information on how the Belarusian state has worked to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe. One section describes how energy saving, renewable resources are the most promising for the nation," notes the Director of the Johannes Rau International Centre for Education and Exchange, Victor Balakirev.

Belavia increases number of flights

By Marina Nosova

National Airline shifts to summer schedule until late October

"Previously, each new season has been accompanied by a new timetable. Now, our shift from the summer to winter schedule envisages the introduction of new flights and seasonal routes, increasing the frequency of flights and their number of destinations," explains the company's Marketing Department. This season, more flights will cover routes to Paris, Tel Aviv, Tehran, Larnaca, Ashgabat and Baku.

More flights to London are planned — as the Olympics are coming. Belavia is to carry Belarus' Olympic and Paralympic teams. Meanwhile, seasonal flights to Manchester will begin again.

"Opening a new season, we aim to primarily cater for the wishes of our passengers, choosing routes accordingly. We're eager to offer clients the most convenient routes for their holidays — without long waiting times for plane changes," emphasises Belavia's General Director, Anatoly Gusarov.



Flying high with Belavia