

Results act as good foundation

Belarus rises in World Knowledge Competitiveness Index

By Oksana Potvorova

According to the World Bank, Belarus has ascended to 45th position (up from 52nd in 2009). "Our country is ahead of the rest of the CIS — with the exception of Russia — as regards its index of knowledge competitiveness: the ability to generate, accept and distribute scientific knowledge," explained the Chairman of the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences' Presidium, Anatoly Rusetsky, speaking at a session of the Council of Ministers' Presidium. Belarus is 59th in the Knowledge Economic Index (up from 73rd in 2009) — only behind Russia and Ukraine within the CIS.

According to Mr. Rusetsky, these indices prove that the science sector in Belarus functions well and is developing dynamically. Of course, problems do exist, as he admits, "First of all, this is GDP's science-intensiveness. Unfortunately, spending on research and development (R&D) is lower

than the threshold specified by the national security policy. We finance only 0.28 percent of R&D from the budget; the rest comes from our own funds and borrowed funds." The figure is truly low.

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko, notes that Belarus should pay attention to the development of science — since it has few mineral resources. Rather, intellectual potential, innovations and R&D are needed to propel the country to a new level. We must analyse in detail the role of all scientific institutions and laboratories in R&D, to make science more effective.

"We need to define who will remain under conditions of optimisation. Simultaneously, we need to raise the salaries and the prestige of scientists," Mr. Semashko adds. He asserts that these professionals can most effectively integrate academic, university and industrial sciences, while strengthening relations with industry.



Studies at Minsk Linguistic University



Minsk Airport today

Airport to become more attractive

By Inga Velikhova

Minsk National Airport soon to receive new look

Initially, Chinese investors were to help organise the reconstruction of the airport but our own specialists have since developed an alternative, costing around \$81m.

According to the airport's Director General, Dmitry Melikyan, serious reconstruction will soon be launched. The gates and departure and arrival halls are to become wider, while the airport's technical equipment is to be modernised, with the system of luggage transportation improved.

More check-in desks are to open, while fencing of the air terminal (established to meet international standards) will be removed. Meanwhile, the concourse of duty free shops is to be enlarged, making the total floor space of the airport larger by about 10,000sq.m.

Energy efficient housing to compensate for costs of inter-city commuting

By Yekaterina Markovtseva

Deputy Architecture and Construction Minister Dmitry Semenkevich believes each Belarusian city should have its own satellite towns

"Belarus' city planning policy for 2011-2015 aims to extend the use of satellite towns — not only for Minsk but for all regional centres," Mr. Semenkevich asserts. Rather than building completely new towns, the aim is to develop existing settlements, enhancing their economic potential and infrastructure. This would make them more attractive to those seeking housing and /or jobs at the latest enterprises.

Mr. Semenkevich also notes that construction companies are being tasked with building energy efficient housing for satellite towns (accounting for 10 percent of all new-build properties). "Living in a house which uses innovative technologies in its construction is attractive to citizens. Moreover, heating and electricity bills are cheaper, enabling residents to save money," he adds. The Deputy Minister explains



One of the development plans for Smolevichi district centre

that many people are daily commuting to work or study, travelling up to 40km, which is costly. "Daily commuting costs should be compensated for by reducing utility costs; to achieve this, we need energy efficient houses," states Mr. Semenkevich.

Speaking of Belarus' city planning policy for 2011-2015, he notes that it already covers five avenues — including the improvement of Belarus' territorial organisation (to ensure the successful development of the potential of regions and towns — with a new focus on security, comfort

and efficiency.

In line with the new policy, construction will aim to satisfy various needs for accommodation and public buildings. Transport is to be revamped to cut costs and raise the volume and quality of services. In addition, the country is to gain a new architectural face, using international, national and regional achievements in this field to raise the aesthetic beauty of existing suburbs and to construct landmark buildings. According to Mr. Semenkevich, this will ensure a unique visual identity for each Belarusian settlement.

Dostoevsky family estate to become museum

By Andrey Asmolovsky

Dostoevsky family estate being restored in Brest Region's Ivanovo District

The Culture Ministry of Belarus has addressed the Union State Executive Committee with the request to fund the project, which was discussed at a meeting between Belarusian PM Mikhail Myasnikovich and Russian PM Vladimir Putin in late 2011. The initiative is backed by Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister, Viktor Zubkov, who believes the project to be of great importance to the development of cultural co-operation between our countries.

Fiodor Dostoevsky is a literary icon worldwide, so it is fitting that his family estate should house an exhibition dedicated to his life and work. The estate was partially destroyed in 1943 and completely fell to ruin in the 1960s.

As Culture Minister Pavel Latushko tells us, his ministry is planning to open new cultural and information centres to promote Belarus abroad. In 2013, one will open in Moscow and, some time ago, a similar centre was set up in Warsaw. Cultural and information centres are to present our tourist opportunities — following liaisons between the Ministry for Sports and Tourism and the Culture Ministry.

From May 8th-10th, the Yanaka Kupala National Academic Theatre is to perform in London; a presentation on Nesvizh Palace and Park Estate is being organised in the UK capital on the eve of this event.

Closer acquaintance with Chinese language

By Svetlana Savkova

Gomel's Frantsisk Skorina State University to open Confucius Room, with support from the Confucius National Institute of Sinology at the Belarusian State University

The opening of the Confucius Room is part of a co-operative agreement signed between the rectors of Gomel University and the BSU. The goal is to popularise Chinese language and culture and sinology in Belarus. According to the document, staff at the Confucius Room will conduct research in sinology and organise events promoting Chinese language and culture.

The rectors have also signed a co-operative agreement regarding education and science, which makes provision for student exchange, the organisation of joint research and the holding of conferences, seminars and other scientific events.