

# Viewing future with optimism and confidence

Belarusian model of socio-economic development has worked under crisis conditions, notes Sergey Ling, of Council of Elders of Minsk Region and former PM

By Nadezhda Radivonova

“Last year was ambiguous; however, our socially oriented market economy demonstrated itself to be an economically viable model for development. Despite setbacks — objective and subjective — the private sector is moving with the times, developing industry and farming. Moreover, employment has been ensured, inspiring complete confidence

that we’ve survived the test,” believes Mr. Ling.

Mr. Ling is convinced that the liberalisation of prices has been the correct path to avoid shelves becoming empty; devaluation has raised the real price of imports. “The move to equalise prices and simultaneously raise pensions, salaries and scholarships has balanced the situation, with a single exchange rate established. The high rate benefits exporters

and, positively influences our economy, so I’m viewing the future with confidence. I believe we’ve chosen the correct course of development. We’re coming out of the crisis. However, taking into account the international economic situation and the threat of a second crisis, we can’t relax,” Mr. Ling stresses, adding that heads of enterprises need to encourage efficiency and maximise profits.



Optimistic mood helps us more confidently enter the new year

## Knowledge to assists mutual understanding



Top level guests from China attend Confucius Institute in Minsk

By Galina Grishkovets

### Institute of Sinology at Belarusian State University is among top twenty Confucius Institutes worldwide in 2011

In December, Beijing hosted the 6th Annual Confucius Institute Conference — a network of international cultural and education centres, set up by the International Chinese Language Council (Hanban). At present, over 350 institutes and around 500 Confucius classes operate in 104 countries worldwide.

The conference brought together representatives of two Belarusian universities: the Confucius’ Republican Institute of Sinology at the Belarusian State University and the Confucius Institute at Minsk’s State Linguistic University.

During the event, it was announced that the BSU Institute of

Sinology is now ranked among the top twenty Confucius institutes — as proven by corresponding certificates.

The Confucius’ Republican Institute of Sinology was established at the Belarusian State University five years ago, aiming to form a highly professional sinology environment, uniting sinologists from all branches, and ensuring all-round support for our country in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. The Institute is keen to popularise Chinese language and culture and assistance is provided to both states in trade-economic and scientific co-operation.

In September 2011, the second Confucius Institute in Belarus was opened at Minsk’s State Linguistic University, officially launched by the Chairman of the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress, Wu Bangguo.

## Fairy-tale characters settle in Nalibokskaya Pushcha

By Yelena Stasyukevich

### Estate of Zimnik Naliboksky and Baba Zavirukha — local rivals of Father Frost and the Snow Maiden — appeared in Grodno Region’s Ivye District

New tourist facilities have been set up in the district, with the residence of the magical winter fairy-tale characters located

in Zaleiki village, in the Nalibokskaya Pushcha. An ancient inhabitant of the Pushcha — kind old Zimnik — lives on the ancient banks of the River Gaviya, alongside Baba Zavirukha. He is joined by Mikhaïlo Potapych, who has now been awoken from hibernation, and Baba Yaga and her escort.

Visitors to the Pushcha can

enjoy a New Year programme filled with characters from well-known cartoons, dancing around a grand fir tree, horse and sleigh riding (if there’s snow) and buying wonderful souvenirs and hot tea. Father Frost and the Snow Maiden have been invited to the Nalibokskaya Pushcha, as Father Frost is the older brother of 647 year old Zimnik.

## Shklov solemnly awarded title of child friendly city

### District centre in Mogilev Region joins UNICEF Child Friendly City initiative

So far, the initiative embraces Belarusian Borisov, Dobrush, Pinsk, Pruzhany, Svetlogorsk, Grodno, Brest, Gomel, Novopolotsk and Lida, aiming to create harmonious urban environments for children, which allow them to play and live freely and safely.

Aspiring to be a child friendly city is an ongoing mission rather than a prize title to be awarded, envisaging never ending efforts. It covers a range of aspects, relating to management, infrastructure and services. The initiative differs from other social projects as it involves children and teenagers in the decision making process, allowing them to speak for their own interests.

“Children and teenagers have independent ideas on what should be done to develop their courtyards, schools and suburbs, making them child friendly. They can later realise their projects with adult assistance,” explains UNICEF information programme co-ordi-



Lessons of mastery for young Shklov residents

nator Yulia Novichenok. “Children gain the chance to participate in public life and influence decisions — through school self-management bodies, youth councils and parliaments (operating within local law making and executive authorities).”

According to Ms. Novichenok,

the *Child Friendly City* initiative aims to counteract the negative influence of our urban environments on children, enhancing advantages and making the most of opportunities. Participating cities aim to meet the obligations taken on by Belarus at its signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.