

Year of Book celebrates publication of new wonderful editions

The flags of twenty countries waved before the BelExpo National Exhibition Centre, which was hosting the 19th Minsk International Book Fair. It was a true holiday and especially significant in the Year of Book. Over 600 publishers took part — of all sizes and both state and privately owned, domestic and foreign.

By Lyudmila Rubanova

Among those attending the opening of the exhibition were publishers, literary experts and representatives of the book trade — everyone involved in creating, promoting and selling books. Many congratulations were offered and attendees wore brightly coloured badges bearing the Year of Book logo, with ribbons of Belarusian ornaments attached.

During the solemn launch ceremony, Belarus' Information Minister, Oleg Proleskovsky, noted, "We're at the start of a major road. A huge campaign of promoting books, national culture and literature lies ahead. We want to popularise reading to support social activity and to create well-rounded citizens. This book fair is a wonderful venue for working in this direction."

After Alexander Radkov, the First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, had read out a greeting from President Alexander Lukashenko, the floor was given over to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Americo Diaz Nunez. Mr. Nunez believes that the Year of Book is a huge cultural triumph for Belarus and views Venezuela's position as an honorary guest at the fair as a great honour.

"Millions of copies of books are being donated free of charge, enhancing the cultural level of those with less money, who have lacked access until recently," noted the Ambassador. "This honour has been given to us by a country which is celebrating 2012 as its Year of Book. This is worth its weight in gold in our contemporary world, where some superpowers spend years on military conflicts while others survive the most serious economic crises."

The Venezuelan stand included a photo album on the country, prepared especially for the exhibition, with a translation made in Belarus.

I met the son of classical writer, Mikhas Mitskevich, near the Belaruskaya Navuka Publishing House stand, which was displaying a 20-volume collection

of works by Yakub Kolas. He helped prepare the edition dedicated to his father's creative heritage. He explained, "When I view the collection of works by my father, I see

young readers while another is dedicated to Minsk. *Minsk* also has a CD, which contains 600 shots of the most significant city sites, alongside songs about the capital. This

oured Artiste of Armenia. "It's the first time I've been to Minsk, although I've taken part in other international forums — such as in Geneva. I make paper using an ancient

programme. These include the country's first collection of poetry written in Braille. All editions are spread free of charge to expand the library fund.



Minsk International Book Fair gathers many visitors to its stands



Venezuelan Ambassador Americo Diaz Nunez at exhibition

the huge efforts made and am grateful. I've just seen the 15th volume for the first time and am now working on Yakub Kolas' original manuscripts. These will be enough to release two more big volumes, as there are more than 1,000 pages!"

The Pachatkovaya Shkola Publishing House stand displayed books from its new series dedicated to Belarusian cities, which has won diplomas from the *Book Art-2012* National Contest. Books are authored by the Director of the Publishing House, Natalia Vanina, and poet Naum Galperovich. Ms. Vanina tells us, "One of the books describes ancient Polotsk to

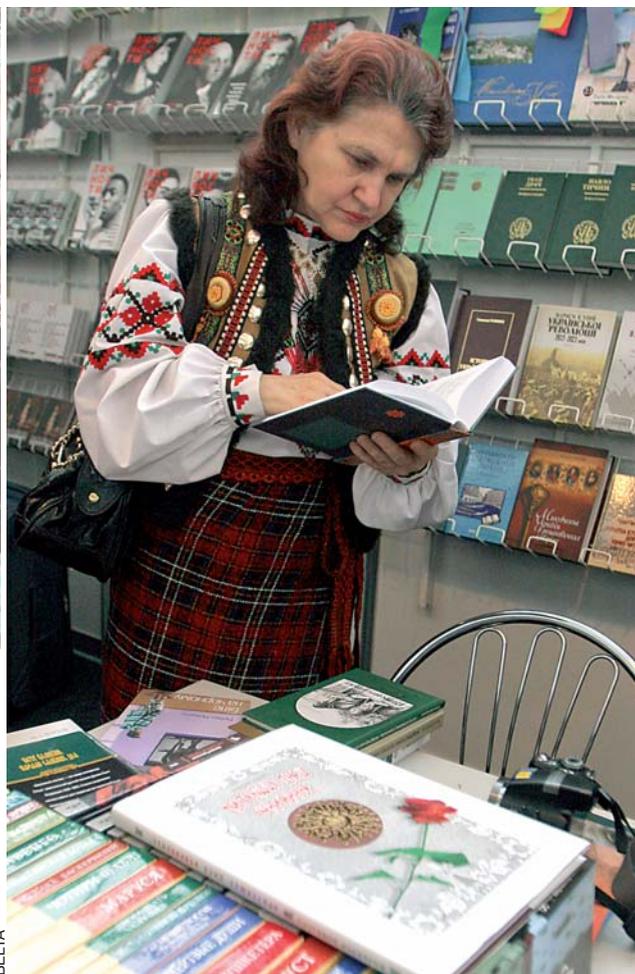
series enjoys great popularity with libraries and schools."

"We're now working on *Grodno* edition," notes Mr. Galperovich. "We'd like to launch it on the eve of the Festival of National Cultures, which is held in the city. We also plan to describe other important places in Belarus."

Central status was given to Armenia, which is celebrating its 500th anniversary of national book printing. Meanwhile, this year, Yerevan is the world book capital. Visitors marvelled at paper making — using a tray and special glue — upon which reprints were made. "I create hand-made books," explains Ararat Sarkisyan, an Hon-

recipe and print ancient texts and maps upon it."

Every country had something of interest to offer of course. Germany, France, Russia, Israel and Ukraine took part (all past honoured guests). This year, the Ukrainian stand featured 130 editions printed in 2011 via the *Ukrainian Book* state



By the stand of Ukraine

The Day of Spiritual Book was organised on the second floor of the trade fair, as part of the *Family — Unity — Fatherland* Republican programme. Moreover, presentations, meetings with writers and round table discussions were planned for each day of the book forum.

Large reference book has 400 pages

By Yekaterina Minakova

Unique Large Belarusian Encyclopaedic Reference Book presented at 19th Minsk International Book Fair

The Editor-in-Chief of the Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, Larisa Yazykovich, notes that this modest edition unites all possible information on Belarus. "We've already released the *Belarusian Encyclopaedia* 18-volume book, and the *Republic of Belarus* 7-volume encyclopaedia but this one volume comprises 12,000 facts," she explains.

The new reference book provides information on Belarusian history, its borders, industry, economy, culture and education, in addition to data on the country's outstanding personalities — such as Soviet Union heroes, state figures and those awarded with high governmental awards.

It features about 120,000 articles — reviewed by Doctor of Philosophy Lev Krishtapovich. During the presentation, he said, "During this Year of Book, it's truly topical to publish editions which reveal the historical truth. Some attempts are made to interpret our history in a manner which has nothing in common with the truth. It seems to me that this reference book comprises facts which adequately represent our Belarusian history and those who created it."

It took over three years to prepare the book and, according to Ms. Yazykovich, even until the last minute, debates were common. She paid special attention to the illustrations, saying, "Importantly, the edition is compact, fitting inside a bag, but the 400-page book shows Belarus in the same way as a 6-volume universal encyclopaedia."

