

Science can afford no empty structures

Awarding ‘Doctor of Science’ diplomas and ‘Professor’ certificates to scientists and science teachers, Alexander Lukashenko notes that the Belarusian scientific sphere needs to prioritise research with practical application and meet challenges of modern day

According to the President, in recent years, much has been done to preserve and strengthen Belarus’ intellectual potential and to enhance the role of science. “However, we now need to see measurable changes in the organisation and content of scientific-research activity. The task has been set for the Government and the Academy of Sciences. However, the proposals they’ve made do not stand up to criticism and ‘cosmetic repair’ has been attempted rather than drastic modernisation,” Mr. Lukashenko noted. He added that, at present, Belarus retains a Soviet style structure in its scientific sphere. “How far is this justified under modern conditions?” he wonders.

“It would be perhaps more feasible to follow the path of those states where research is concentrated at universities and enterprises, yielding real results. Support is needed for promising research programmes run at higher educational establishments, at production facilities and at the Academy of Sciences — if any exist. It’s of no matter where work is conducted, or where a laboratory is situated. No empty structures should exist; this is the key.”

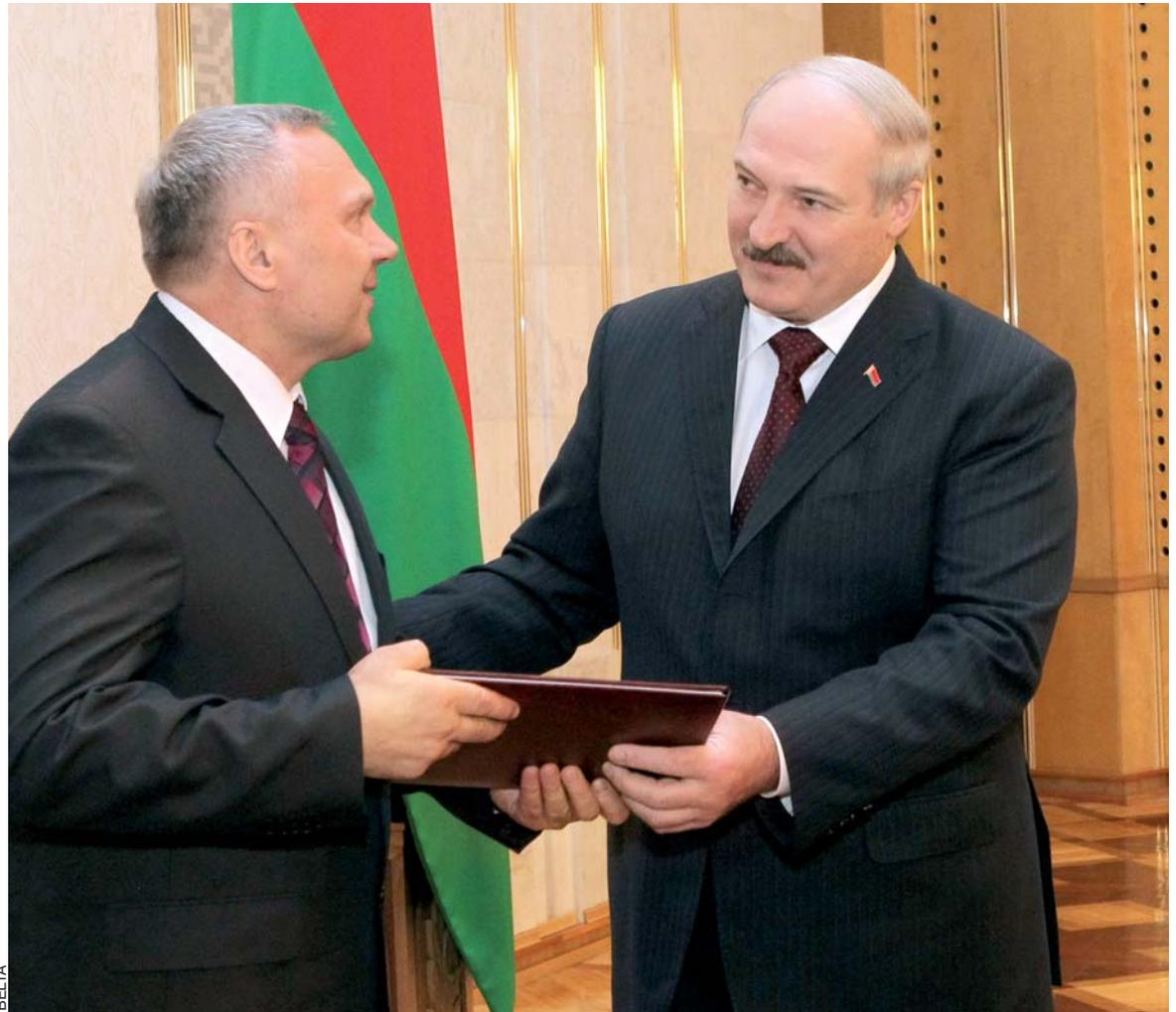
Mr. Lukashenko also tackled other issues — including the need to define which scientific avenues are to be developed independently and which are to be realised with foreign colleagues. Meanwhile, some research works need to be abandoned, as they are no longer innovative or original. The President stressed that many spears have been broken as a result of an approach (implemented at his order) to assess thesis papers. Some even spoke of an imminent crisis in the sphere of science due

to a lack of candidates and doctors. “Life has proven us right. The high demands placed by the state on scientists have proven justified. Doctoral theses are steadily shifting towards practical application while works of global level are appearing,” the President noted, while maintaining that problems remain.

Last year, 47 researchers were awarded a ‘Doctor of Science’ degree, while fifty became professors. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that science is ‘an engine’ of progress: a vital factor in the dynamics of economic development and the wellbeing and sovereignty of any state. Modern realities indicate

“Doctoral theses are steadily shifting towards practical application while works of global level are appearing

that scientific studies must focus on innovation and practical application. “Any step in this direction will always meet state support,” Mr. Lukashenko asserted. In this respect, he highlighted the work of some scientists — including that of Gomel State Medical University Professor Dmitry Salivonchik (who has made a true breakthrough in treating heart attacks) and of an Associate Professor of the Grodno State Agrarian University, Genrikh Milosta (who has contributed to import substitution with his development of hop cultivation in Belarus). According to the President, the Doctoral thesis written by Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics Professor Timofey Borbotko is important



Alexander Lukashenko awards Doctor of Veterinary Science Mikhail Kuchinsky with a diploma

in focusing on the problems of information protection.

At the same time, the President admitted certain achievements among humanists — such as the Doctoral thesis of the Departmental Head of Brest’s A.S. Pushkin State University, Alexander Vabishchevich: on Belarusians’ struggle to preserve their cultural identity against Polish pressure in the 1920-30s. The President also praised the work of BSU Associate Professor Yelena Surkova, who devoted her the-

world. We aim to show that Belarus is and always has been influenced by modern cultural trends, while enjoying a beautiful, unique and rich national language and culture.”

Mr. Salivonchik, who was awarded a Doctor of Medical Science diploma, highlighted the successes of the Belarusian healthcare system, which offers top level assistance. “However, all achievements would have been impossible were it not for state support of the medical branch. Clearly, the preservation of the health of our nation is a priority for the state,” he noted.

Mr. Lukashenko recollected the times that he has rejected proposals to close the Gomel State Medical University, stressing that time has proven the wisdom of this choice. “If discoveries are made there which benefit both our country and the global community, we’ll gain a worthy reputation. We’ve done much in recent times and our doctors have proven that they can perform miracles,” the President commented.

Later, Syrian born Mohammad Assad — a leading researcher at the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Heat and Mass Transfer (named after A.V. Lykov) — made a

speech. He currently lives and works in Belarus and has been awarded a Doctor of Technical Science degree for his work on the use of hydrogen and other alternative fuels in internal combustion engines. “Belarus boasts high scientific potential but this requires preservation and development,” he emphasised. The President is keenly interested in Mr. Assad’s work, which could enjoy wide practical application in the future.

“According to forecasts, hydrogen fuels will be more commonplace by 2020-2025, being used in the real sector of the economy,” noted the First Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko, who also attended the ceremony. He explained that, at present, scientific developments and promising research areas with the potential to be implemented at production facilities are being given support.

“Money will be allocated to fields which can generate real results; let’s eradicate redundant ‘hangers on’. It sounds noble to be a doctor of science or a professor. Our prominent countrymen are awarded,” Mr. Lukashenko said. “I’d like to see funding generate a serious return.”

All sides pleased with good job done

On his farewell meeting with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Anatoly Smirnov, Alexander Lukashenko noted: ‘Belarus and Kazakhstan are actively building relations within integration unions’



Anatoly Smirnov is delighted

of Kazakhstan for his significant contribution to the development of Belarusian-Kazakh interaction. Mr. Smirnov commented that, despite the global crisis,

Belarus and Kazakhstan have greatly advanced in all spheres — but especially regarding trade and investment. He emphasised that Kazakhstan will continue to develop mutually beneficial co-operation, while enhancing trade-economic interaction with Belarus.

Ms. Surkova spoke of her work in the field of Slavonic studies, “One of the major achievements of our Slavistics School is its revelation of the intellectual potential of our country to the

Kazakhstan is Belarus’ third most important partner in terms of Belarusian exports. Meanwhile, Belarus views Kazakhstan as a key destination for promoting Belarusian exports to Central Asia.

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