

# Good image promotes high status

According to July 2011 data, the Belarusian State University was ranked 1,208th in the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities. Another survey, published in late January, shows that the BSU has jumped over 365 places, to occupy 843th place. However, what does this really indicate?

By Yulia Senkovets

“The most vital investigations of scientists are usually published in authoritative journals and on the Internet, making them available to everyone. Spanish Webometrics relies on analysis of materials of the World Wide Web, with rankings calculated from the number and quality of scientific publications, the number of site citations on the Internet, the presence of a web page and special files. World recogni-

tion of each university is also taken into account,” explains Victor Samokhval, Director of the BSU’s Education Development Centre.

The Spanish Laboratorio de Internet research laboratory believes that these criteria best determine the efficiency of university work in the 21st century. Taking into account the rankings, many universities clearly need to promote their image and scientific achievements more actively through the Internet.

In fact, the BSU has been



Belarusian State University promotes its image online

working hard to enhance its position as an educational leader, as Mikhail Gusakovskiy, a leading specialist at the BSU’s Education Development Centre, explains. He

tells us, “We’ve changed the design of our website and placed many full-text scientific publications online. Moreover, we’ve developed an analogue of the Webometrics ranking system, so

we can daily monitor the number of hits on our site and ensure that our departments regularly update their content.”

## State order to improve efficiency

Belarusian Christian confessions praise introduction of state social order

Minsk’s information-consultative seminar gathered over 40 representatives of Christian confessions, including Igor Korostelev — a plenipotentiary for social work for the Belarusian Exarchate and priest of the parish to honour the Joy of All Who Sorrow of Mother of God icon. He notes that the state and civil society share interests in the social sphere. Church charities are working to reduce the number of those needing support but he believes that more could be achieved by banding together, and working closely with the state.

Yelena Zenkevich, from the Union of Mercy Sisters of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, notes that the introduction of state order principles in Belarus should bring a move from separate initiatives to systematic work. The Director of Grodno’s Caritas Charity

Catholic Society, priest Vitaly Dobrolovich, added that a state mechanism would improve the efficiency of social work; he stresses that every church is interested in rendering help to those in need.

The House of Representatives’ Standing Committee for Labour, Social Protection, Matters of Veterans and Disabled Persons has already studied a draft project to introduce change to the law relating to social services. This envisages a state mechanism overseeing Belarus’ need for high quality social services: a market which can be served by both state-run and private companies.

Non-commercial organisations — including public associations — are to be encouraged to offer social services in districts lacking state coverage (and where their establishment is economically unfeasible). Funding will be allocated by tender. Similar mechanisms are used in Russia, Norway, Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere.

## New ambassador has seen much to be proud of

Israel keen to develop co-operation in high technologies and medicine



Achievements of Medicine exhibition in Minsk

By Vladimir Molodetsky

The New Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Israel to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Yosef Shagal, has noted at a press conference in Minsk, “We view Belarus as, probably, the most advanced state within the territory of the former Soviet Union regarding engineering, technology and overall

culture. It boasts a high educational level and has a qualified workforce. Moreover, it is relatively large, without having a huge population, creating ideal opportunities to develop high technologies and create a new ‘American Silicon Valley.’

According to the diplomat, good opportunities exist to develop collaboration and share experience in medicine and

disease prevention, including oncological. “Israel is currently working hard to treat cancer in its early stages; we already have a high recovery rate, using surgical methods on previously inoperable patients, by detecting the disease at an early stage. We are happy to share our findings,” asserts the Ambassador.

Mr. Shagal views food production as another interesting area for the development of partnership. “You have perfect food: clean milk and meat products,” he asserts. He is pleased to note that a fish manufacturing factory is now being constructed in Beloozersk, using Israeli technologies.

As far as kosher certification is concerned (for sale on the Israeli market), the Ambassador explains, “If everything is well established, kosher status will be forthcoming; it’s only a matter of technical approval, so shouldn’t be an obstacle.”

## Buying ‘snail rights’

By Dmitry Kiselev

Rights to raise grapevine snails auctioned for first time in Vitebsk Region — organised by Chashniki District Executive Committee

Belarus’ National Academy of Sciences tells us that the region boasts 27 tonnes of grapevine snails (*Helix pomatia*). These are thought to be worth Br1.4m and, according to Chashniki District Executive Committee, several potential investors are showing interest.

According to the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee’s Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Chashniki District is the only one (of at least five) in the region choosing to sell its right to farm snails.

Belarusian grapevine snails are primarily exported to Europe, tasting of greenery. Their meat contains three times more protein than eggs, while lacking cholesterol. They are also used in pharmacology to produce drugs to treat diabetes.

## Ability to master follows study

By Alexander Iskopaemy

Government to offer exploration rights to locations rich in natural resources in Brest Region, including possible shale gas deposits

The site is located across the Brest, Zhabinka and Kamenets districts of the Brest Region. A tender is being organised to choose from domestic and foreign investors, with the winner to receive the right to conduct geological studies for a period of 60 months and then mine for shale gas if it is detected (without further tender).

Deposits are available for exploration: at Golbitsa (Postavy District, Vitebsk Region) and at Kuropolie (Postavy District, Vitebsk Region) for clay; at Ulesie (Dokshitsy District, Vitebsk Region) and at Perenosinskoe (Baranovich District, Brest Region) for sand and sand-and-gravel; and at Dobrushskoe (Dobrush District, Gomel Region) for chalk. Turovskoe shale gas deposits are also available to investors (in the eastern part of the Brest Region’s Stolín District and the southern part of the Gomel Region’s Zhitkovich District).