

# Good mood of May holiday

Belarusians celebrate labour holiday with May Day meetings, work on household plots, fountains opening

By Vladimir Khromov

Over 30,000 people took part in this year's Minsk's May 1st celebrations, including Federation of Trade Unions heads and representatives from the Ministry for Labour and Social Protection. They were joined by National Assembly deputies and members of the Republican Association of Industrial Enterprises, as well as representatives from veteran organisations, the sporting community and students. Various labour group members and representatives of organisations and enterprises also attended, alongside ambassadors from China, Venezuela, Vietnam and Cuba.

"We don't want to see automobiles burnt in the streets of Belarusian cities, as happened in Paris. Moreover, we're against mass strikes, as in Spain. We also oppose the banking sphere crisis, as observed in Cyprus," noted Leo-



May 1st gathers many participants of demonstration in Minsk

nid Kozik, the Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions, speaking at a meeting honouring May 1st. He added that 2012 had seen great achievements for workers across the

Republic, with real incomes rising 21 percent and working conditions improving. In addition, the number of working places has increased. These and other achievements speak

for themselves.

According to the Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions, over the last 18 years, Belarus has produced impressive results. "Due to

work achieved in the agro-industrial complex, the Republic has transformed from an agrarian country into the largest exporter of agricultural produce," he asserted. He stressed that, in his State of the Nation Address to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly, the President of Belarus had named production modernisation as a priority area. "This is very promising and trade union workers are doing everything possible to help manufacturers achieve higher figures," added Mr. Kozik.

Despite the goal of an eight hour day having been long since met, set at a May 1st meeting 140 years ago, trade unions still have much to fight for. "We are working hard to ensure that employment remains buoyant in the Republic. Moreover, we are struggling to see trade unions operating at every enterprise, performing their major function of observing workers'

rights," continued Mr. Kozik. He believes that trade union organisations now need to focus on salary levels, to ensure a certain standard of living, allowing people to raise families, buy cars and enjoy leisure time. "To preserve salary levels, we've refused to pass a particular draft law proposed by the Social Insurance Fund for three years now, which intends to raise deductions from salaries from 1 to 15 percent," noted Mr. Kozik. "Moreover, this year, we've tasked heads of enterprises with improving facilities at production facilities."

City fountains are now operational and residents of Gomei's Novobelitsky District have received a wonderful gift: another fountain — in the form of a 14 x 5m bowl, equipped with cascades, placed in a public garden, near Mir cinema.

As is traditional on May 1st, student brigades began their third working semester.

## President Hotel launched



President Hotel looks pretty outside and inside

By Vasily Kharitonov

Alexander Lukashenko attended the solemn opening of President Hotel and was given a guided tour of the hotel facilities, including its congress hall, swimming pool and restaurants. He was especially interested in the quality of construc-

tion and the payback period.

The 11-storey President Hotel occupies the former site of the Oktyabrskaya Hotel, having been built from January 2011 onwards. Funding came from Hotel Minsk, while a Turkish company was the general contractor; Turkish Eximbank provided 85 percent of the

loan and Belarusbank JSC Savings Bank the remaining 15 percent.

The new hotel can accommodate twice as many guests as the former facility and is an ideal place to relax and hold official and business events, having excellent facilities for hosting foreign delegations at the highest state level, alongside international organisations and businessmen visiting Belarus.

The hotel's congress hall can seat 600 while its five conference rooms have a total of 136 seats and its two VIP rooms can accommodate 105 guests. Each is equipped with multimedia stereo and conference systems, simultaneous interpretation and video conferencing facilities. The hotel's three restaurants can seat 460 people in total, supplemented by five bars and four banqueting halls. It also has a fitness and spa centre, in addition to a nightclub and an underground parking area.

"It's a good, respectable hotel," emphasised Mr. Lukashenko, urging that the finishing touches be completed as soon as possible. His entry in the Distinguished Guests Book reads: 'In the heart of Minsk, there has emerged a unique, five-star hotel combining European comfort with the traditions of Belarusian hospitality and cosiness. It provides the perfect place for guests to enjoy a comfortable stay, holding important business meetings and negotiations. I'm sure that the staff will make every effort to ensure that the President Hotel lives up to its name, becoming a capital landmark and earning international recognition. May the hotel become a relaxed home for guests, who will happily return again and again.'

## Celebrating Victory Day in Pobeda cars



Change of the guard of honour at the Eternal Flame in Minsk

### Automobile rally and festival of kite balloons dedicated to May 9th celebrations in Minsk

Representatives of international automobile rally on Pobeda cars, dedicated to 70th anniversary in the Battle of Stalingrad, joined the participants of *Thank You for Victory* patriotic action. Rarity automobiles were driving along the cities of thirty twin cities of the three countries — Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Moreover, a festival of kite balloons was also organised in Minsk. The action took place under the motto 'Names of Heroes Live in Our Hearts and in Clouds' and the names of the heroes of the Great Victory were specially applied on the kite balloons.

On May 9th, over 50 festive events were organised in the Belarusian capital. As is traditional, the march was held along the Nezavisimosti Avenue which finished with laying of flowers and wreaths to the monument in Pobedy

Square. The action involved war veterans, the military from the Defence Ministry of Belarus and members of public organisations and representatives of labour groups of Minsk.

The *Soldier Was Going* festive programme was organised near the Sports Palace for residents and guests

of the capital, featuring professional artistic bands. The concert involved Kupalinka, Khoroshki and Camerata bands,

as well as Iosif Zhinovich National Academic People's Orchestra and others. The town of craftsmen was also operating and festive thematic concerts were organised in all Minsk's districts.

Celebrations on the festive day were held countrywide and these finished with a salute at 22.00. Salvo fires brightened up the sky over Minsk and regional centres of Belarus. In Minsk the salute was launched from six points which were chosen using the citizens' wishes.

