

Investments in education are the most beneficial

What is the cost of knowledge and why is it beneficial to invest money in education?

By Andrey Osipov

Corridor of opportunities
According to the Head of the Department of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education, Sergei Romanyuk, the Government has decided to raise tuition fees at Higher Education Institutions by no more than 20 percent. Fees will vary depending on the form of education and course specialisation.

Mr. Romanyuk notes that, in 2012/2013, tuition fees remained steady, although first rank wages tripled.

At the beginning of the last academic year, the number of students at higher education institutions reached over 337,000, while those in private institutions numbered more than 51,000. About 35 percent were state-funded.

Marat Zhilinsky, the Deputy Chair of the Permanent Commission for Education, Culture and Science, of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, tells us, "The Ministry of Education is keen not to raise tuition fees at educational institutions this academic year." No unpleasant surprises should be forthcoming on September 1st.

Fees

Last year, the State Belarusian University, which leads countrywide, was charging from Br12,000,000 to Br14,900,000 for annual full-time fees in such courses as economics, foreign af-



Professor Vladislav Bekish with Vitebsk State Medical University students

fairs and jurisprudence.

Fees at the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics are yet to be finalised but varied from Br10,400,000 to Br14,700,000 last year. As a rule, the first year is the most expensive. Full-time fees at the Belarusian State Economic University vary from Br6,500,000 to Br15,200,000 this year (according to its official website).

Regional higher institutions are hardly cheaper,

with Gomel State Medical University wishing to charge Br13,260,000 (up from 11,000,000 last year). The Ministry of Education is yet to give its permission however.

Veronika Gorskaya, who heads the Contract Department at Polotsk State University, tells us that its fees are to rise by 20 percent, with those for humanitarian, financial, economic and some technical specialities reaching Br10,740,000 (up from Br8,950,000 last year).

Golden diploma

Despite rising fees at our universities, they remain far more reasonable than those abroad: one year at Moscow's State University of Foreign Affairs cost \$5,000 in 2000, having risen to \$12,000 this year. Meanwhile, Harvard charges \$15,000 annually. The last time Belarusian institutions raised their fees was a year ago, by 29 percent.

As to whether the fees paid by our students cover the expenses incurred by universities, the rector of the

Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics, Mikhail Batura, tells us, "Figures vary greatly depending on branches of learning but average fee-paying students cover just 60 to 80 percent of costs. Of course, prices for utilities and electricity have increased over the past year while specialist staff have had their salaries tripled, so costs have risen significantly. Our September 1st fee-hikes reflect the need to cover expenses in today's world."

Virtual realities in mobile segment

Internet advertising to take second place after TV advertising by end of year

By Victor Fiodorov

Our world is moving ever closer to virtuality, with advertising a major part of the Internet. Of course, online editions of newspapers and magazines already rival printed versions and even television programmes are available for online viewing. Belarus is no exception.

Heads and experts of the largest Belarusian Internet trading platforms and Internet-salehouses recently met, estimating the volume and dynamics of media Internet advertising in our country. According to their estimations, in the first half of 2013, Internet advertising grew

by more than 60 percent (against the same period of 2012). If this trend continues, by the end of this year, Internet advertising will confidently take second place after television in terms of revenue.

During the first half of 2013, the volume of Belarusian Internet advertising grew by 65 percent against last year's early months and rivalled that of the second half of 2012. Internet advertising generated \$4.5 million in the first half of 2013, including banner and text advertising and special projects, but excluding contextual and catalogue advertising. The market volume of Internet advertising in Belarus is clearly even bigger.



Internet and advertising often interconnected

In 2011, domestic Internet advertising platforms collected \$4.77 million. In the first half of 2012 alone, about \$2.7 million was generated, followed by \$4.5 million in the later months. According to forecasts for 2013, Internet advertising in Belarus will continue to grow, exceeding \$11 million by the end of this year. Adding on contextual advertising, we can see clearly that the Internet advertising segment will soon only be surpassed by TV.

Our nearest neighbours are already ahead of us in this sphere, although the trend is clearly now hitting Belarus. In some countries,

it seems that saturation point may have been reached for traditional advertising, largely thanks to mobile devices. Analysts had predicted that mobile devices would not surpass the use of personal computers until 2015, with spending on regular Internet advertising peaking in 2014, before being gradually inched out by mobile advertising. Of course, as more people use tablets and smart phones, the less time they dedicate to 'stationary' computers. People are spending more time than ever online, but few do so at home. Internet advertising is growing rapidly, but with growth occurring in the mobile segment.

Gilded threads of modern treasures

By Andrey Novikov

Slutskie Poyasa enterprise soon to start making reproductions, using German equipment

"We'll have a whole production line of reproduction Slutsk belts," notes Larisa Tarasova, the director of the enterprise. "The algorithm controlling the weaving technology was created by Vitebsk State Technological University, incorporating metallic threads."

The Council of Ministers of Belarus resolved in the second quarter of this year to give the enterprise a budgetary loan of Br3 billion to buy the necessary materials and machinery to make the reproduction belts. This forms part of the Government's programme to revive Slutsk technologies and traditions, with the belts being used as VIP national souvenirs.

Motorised water dwellings

Floating houses to appear on Lake Plavno in Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve

The vessels will be made of timber, with thatched roofs, moored to special pontoons, and decorated inside with environmentally-friendly materials. The floating homes will also feature onboard motors, to allow tourists to cruise the lake, and go ashore as they wish.

The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve is expecting the idea to be popular not only among Belarusians but foreign tourists, being able to accommodate romantic couples or larger groups of 5-6 people. The project should launch in 2014.

History, underfoot

Brest offers view of roads from pre-asphalt days

Building work near the entrance to Brest's Railway Station has discovered ancient cobbles under the modern asphalt.

Although lacking true historical value, the find is interesting so the stones will be moved to the Railway Museum for public display. Construction work on the new platform continues uninterrupted.