

Deputies offer draft bill on humanising criminal procedural legislation

By Vasily Kharitonov

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, believes it is important to take state measures to emancipate business initiative in Belarus, under conditions of objective business risk. The Head of State made the announcement at a recent session to discuss further improvements to criminal law and criminal procedural law.

With this aim a draft law has been prepared 'On Introducing Amendments and Additions to the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Administrative Offences Code, and the Execution Procedures Code of the Republic of Belarus'.

Prepared upon the instruction of the President, the document is the most important bill developed in recent years, aiming to liberalise and humanise criminal law and criminal procedural legislation.

The bill contains serious innovations, including the legalisation of certain conditions of business risk, a pre-trial collaboration



Meeting with the President looks at introducing alternatives to Criminal Code punishments

agreement and the introduction of criminal law repress. Moreover, the draft law decriminalises definite individual actions posing no threat to the public and contains other essential changes in this sphere. There are plans to adjust several articles of the Criminal Code in favour of softer punishments and to optimise punishment periods, while introducing alterna-

tive kinds of answerability.

The President stressed, "Undoubtedly, the decision to go through with these norms should be thoroughly discussed." He pointed out that it is necessary to look carefully at the consequences of the suggested measures and to clearly envisage the mechanism for their practical implementation, saying, "We should be absolutely confident that the optimisa-

tion of criminal law instruments, as envisaged by the draft, will not lead to impunity for those who have committed actions posing danger to the state, society or our citizens."

The President remarked that criminal prosecution bodies should have a set of instruments to fight corruption and other crimes, sufficient to make punishment inevitable. He added,

"On the other hand, measures should truly emancipate business initiatives, under conditions of objective entrepreneurial risk. Criminal law should not intimidate economic entities acting strictly within the law and in no way related to criminals."

Mr. Lukashenko underlined, "It's vital for us to make a precise decision meeting the interests of so-

ciety and our country. Any amendments to the law, legal acts and legislation as a whole should be purposeful. We cannot do without these measures but should base our decisions exclusively on real life situations. We must not act too hastily, as we must consider the society in which we live and in which the state is developing. The interests of the state and our people should be at the heart of any change, reform or innovation."

During the session, juridical circles were divided on several issues: in particular, the pre-trial collaboration agreement. The developers of the document suggest introducing the notions of economic and business risk but it's important to achieve a balance here, to rule out official crimes and corruption. Several articles within the bill envisage fines instead of imprisonment and specify conditions for pledges. The innovations should allow courts to take a more flexible approach to punishment, judging suitable consequences for each case individually.

The draft law will be submitted to Parliament for discussion with representatives of juridical circles.

Earnings linked to results

At session tackling problems faced by sportsmen, Alexander Lukashenko promises high wages only where top results are achieved

By Veniamin Mikheev

Alexander Lukashenko noted that much is being done to develop sport in Belarus, especially concerning infrastructure. He explained, "Residents of all regions are now able to train for almost any sport." He underlined that the state's investment is in the expectation of seeing real results and sporting victories.

"Poor performance by our leading clubs and athletes at international competitions shows that there are still too many problems in this sector," noted the Belarusian leader. In his words, the first steps have been taken to address these failures, including at the Belarusian Dynamo Physical and Sports Society (BFSO). "We've replaced its top executives and have put in place a troika — comprising the Sports and Tourism Minister, the President's Aide in Physical Education, Sports and Tourism and the First Vice Presi-

dent of the National Olympic Committee. They are in charge of the situation in sports and answerable to the President," he added.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, BFSO Dinamo has a special role in the country's sports structure, responsible for removing obstacles to high sporting achievements. Its remit covers not only training but security and the work of law enforcement bodies. The meeting tackled in detail the specific steps being taken to accomplish these tasks and the nature of the obstacles.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised, "Some time has passed since major decisions were taken to regulate financial issues and athletes' salaries in the sports industry. The number of those unhappy with the decision has increased but what are they unhappy about? They resent that the state doesn't give them enough money, wanting to be paid \$10,000 a month,

rather than \$2,000. We'll pay money to athletes to train for international meetings and championships but they'll only earn their main income by showing a solid performance: not for 21st and 41st places at championships but for 1st, 2nd and 3rd."

Mr. Lukashenko stresses that the time of easy money in sport is over, saying, "If you show a good result, you'll receive good money; no result, no money." He noted problems with sports clubs also.

Mr. Lukashenko believes clubs should act like enterprises, earning their own money. "If you earn money, you can spend it. You can spend as much as you earn." He added that 'the state should pay subsidies only to athletes, coaches, doctors and a few specialist-servicemen'. The President also stressed the importance of children's sports development countrywide, without which there can be no elite sport.

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