

Everything according to verified plan

By Vladimir Khromov

In his interview to Khabar News Agency's, 24 KZ TV Channel, given prior to his official visit to Kazakhstan, Alexander Lukashenko said that Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia create contemporary forms of integration rather than restoring the USSR

Mr. Lukashenko believes it's absolutely incorrect to view integration within the frames of the Customs Union of the three states as a revival of the USSR. According to him, the leaders of the three states regret the dissolution of the Soviet Union but realise that there is no turning back.

"We are absolutely different now. The global environment is completely different. We need to move forward, creating integration unions, because the entire world is doing it. We are outpaced by other countries

where this integration is proceeding faster. We lag behind them in terms of integration," the President of Belarus said.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, the issue of introducing a single currency in the Single Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia isn't on the agenda nowadays.

"Someone asks about the introduction of the single currency today. We have not come to it yet. We have not felt the burning need for it yet. The issue is not on today's agenda, and there is no need to push it there artificially," the President underlined.

"Some politicians, especially in Russia, plan for something which is irrelevant today. For instance, they are talking about political unification at a time when we have been building an economic union," noted the Head of State. "Some are used to pushing such issues — like shifting

to the single currency tomorrow. We are not discussing it. We have not come to such a necessity, and we are not ready for it."

According to Mr. Lukashenko, there is also talk about the development of a new political structure. The Belarusian Head of State noted that there would be no supra-national structures which go contrary with the interests of any of the troika member states.

"Let us do what we need to do today, what our people need, and what is good for the people and the state. The country's political independence, sovereignty and stability should remain a priority for us," the President of Belarus stressed.

The President also believes that the interests of the participants shouldn't be infringed in any way during the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union.

"Together with Russia and Kaza-

khstan, we should play a very important role in the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union in the future, in forming a union that will benefit everyone. We should not put pressure on each other, rather we should think about what we can do today. The Eurasian Economic Union is an association we can really build today without aiming for some grand goals in the future," underlined the Belarusian Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko doesn't doubt that the Eurasian Economic Union will be profitable for all member states. "It will create a huge market, around 170 million citizens. Thanks to the domestic market it will be possible to avoid certain cataclysms which happen in the global economy. The fact that we will enjoy freedom of travel, capital flow, workforce and commodity flow is a good thing. We will get equal business operations terms, which is very important

for the economy."

The Belarusian Head of State reminded that about 20 basic agreements work to form the Single Economic Space — a new integration stage after the Customs Union. Moreover, dynamic work is in progress to set up the Eurasian Economic Union.

"Yes, there can be some dissatisfaction in the course of the establishment of the Single Economic Space and in the future of the Eurasian Economic Union. But it is very good that we still have a year to prepare major documents concerning the Eurasian Economic Union. Because if we underperformed somewhere, we will disrupt the launch of the Union's operation," Mr. Lukashenko said. "Because everything that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and particularly Russia have promised, and let's be honest, it is the central player in this space, has to be implemented," he added.

Old people need love too

With support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), HelpAge International publishes its ratings for senior citizen's conditions across the world on the eve of Day of Older Persons

By Lyudmila Kirillova

The list includes 91 countries, home to 89 percent of the world's elderly. Sweden tops the list, followed by Norway and Germany. It is interesting to note that Japan, where the annual event of elderly people honouring became a national holiday half a century ago, only just reaches the top ten. Also, Austria, which in a similar, recent survey by Forbes, was at the top of their list, was not included in this survey at all. Our country occupied 60th position, ahead of Poland, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova and Russia. The most uncomfortable countries for the elderly to be living are Pakistan, Tanzania and Afghanistan.

The study shows that the indi-



Day of Older People celebrates on the dance floor in the capital's Chelyuskintsev Park

cator of GDP per capita is a poor one for elderly people. For example, poorer countries like Mauritius and Sri Lanka are high up on the list thanks to their progressive social policies, whilst the USA, with all its riches, is only in eighth place. Experts took into account, not only the income of those who are over 60, but also their state of health, education, employment, favourable environment and their social activity.

The number of people of 'hon-

ourable age' is growing, and by 2050 there will be more than 2 billion of them. According to forecasts, the amount of elderly people in Belarus will reach 28 percent in the next 12 years. Life expectancy is growing: since 2000, there has been an increase of 2 years in life expectancy among both women and men. The United Nations Population Fund also debunked 5 basic myths which sometimes prevent the elderly from remaining in the thick of things: age is not hindrance to

health, labour productivity of old people is not lower than amongst their younger counterparts, elderly people do not take jobs from young people and early retirement, for them, is a reason for despondency. And the most important thing according to experts is to not overdramatise the situation. The aging population is not a catastrophe for the country. There are key points and many positives that should be highlighted, especially if the elderly feel more comfortable.

New level of co-operation

By Andrey Voronov

"Belarus and China are actively working on a programme of strategic partnership for 2020", the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus and Chairman of the Belarusian side of the Belarusian-Chinese Commission for Trade and Economic Co-operation, Anatoly Tozik, said at the solemn meeting in the House of Friendship to mark the 64th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

According to the official, the initial version of the draft programme is currently being finalised by the Belarusian and Chinese sides. It is expected that the document will be signed during the visit of the Belarusian Prime Minister to Beijing later this year.

Mr. Tozik congratulated his Chinese friends on their national holiday, stressing that, "This year will go down in history of our bilateral relations as a year full of important and remarkable events, as well as the most systemic and dynamic collaboration since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two states."

Mr. Tozik stated that the visit of the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, to China in July 2013, had been the most significant event of the year. "The Belarusian Head of State held meetings with the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, the Premier of the State Council of China, Li Keqiang and the Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Yu Zhengsheng in an exclusively friendly atmosphere. The visit resulted in the signing of more than 30 agreements to boost Belarusian-Chinese relations in political, economic and humanitarian areas," added the Deputy Prime Minister.

In his words, the joint declarations signed by the leaders of the two countries provide for a new level of bilateral co-operation — an all-round, strategic partnership. According to Mr. Tozik, it fully meets the present development stage in Belarusian-Chinese relations.

Prices falling while number of flights increasing

By the end of the year, Belavia will have opened two more regular flights to European countries

On 19th September, Belavia is to launch flights between Minsk-Budapest-Belgrade, out and home on Mondays and Thursdays. On 17th December, the Minsk-Geneva-Minsk route will open, flying three times a

week, on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Igor Cherginets, Deputy Director General of Belavia, announced the plans at a recent press conference in Minsk.

More flights are to be launched to Prague, with Mr. Cherginets noting that Belavia already has five flights to Prague each week. Czech Airlines also runs the route but Belavia is to launch

two addition flights, to compensate for changes in the Czech air carrier's schedule: ceasing flights on Mondays and Fridays between Minsk and Prague. From 16th September, Belavia will fly daily to Prague.

Regarding tickets prices, Mr. Cherginets notes that there are no plans to increase tariffs in the near future. "Past years show that

prices actually tend to fall. Over the past five years, minimum tariffs have been cut twice," he asserts, adding that the peak season of summer always sees prices set a little higher. In autumn, they'll fall again. Taking into account the increased frequency of flights to Prague and the change of schedule, return tickets to Prague are being sold at 175 Euros.