

True holiday mood will arrive together with the championship

By Vasily Kharitonov

At present, the capital is experiencing a true construction boom, with hotels being built, highways being improved and one of the arenas (which will be hosting the matches) being prepared for commissioning. The city is changing before our eyes and is anticipating the event. However, everything needs to be foreseen and nothing should be missed in order to make the ice hockey tournament stick into the memory of both its participants and all the visitors who will arrive in the Belarusian capital during this time.

Mr. Lukashenko demanded maximum concentration of effort during the final stages of preparation for the championship. According to the Head of State, this won't be merely a sporting event. "This is the moment when we present our country to the whole world. How this country looks will greatly influence the impression people have of our state. Moreover, this is also a serious economic event." The President believes that the championship should bring in serious economic and financial benefits.

"The 2014 World Championship is a serious test for all structures," Mr. Lukashenko is convinced. "We have to show the face of the state, and this is complicated because the problem has acquired a political angle recently. People won't only come to Belarus for the sake of seeing their favourite team playing. At the back of their minds they may wonder what Belarus is. What is this country that some groups are trying to deprive of the World Championships? Therefore, Belarus should prove to everyone that it is a truly civilised Central European country. We want people say that it is a completely normal country, a completely normal city and nothing like what they read in mass media."

It goes without saying that there shouldn't be any failures, or even small 'wrinkles' in the preparation for this important event. According to the President, much still needs to be done. "I want everyone involved to give their best effort during the final period of the preparations. We must demonstrate a high level of organisation of the World



Championship before the entire international community. Our goal is to make the stay of visitors of Belarus comfortable. The services we provide have to be able to satisfy the most sophisticated customers," the Head of State stressed.

According to Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Tozik, Belarus fulfils all

the 2014 World Championship requirements timely and in full, which has been shown by inspections of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

According to Mr Tozik, one of the key organisational points in hosting the Championship is visa-free entry for official participants and foreign tourists. The mechanism is simple, comfortable for the championship participants and requires no additional financial expenses. For visa-free entry, tourists coming for the Championships will only have to present original or electronic match tickets, which can be bought anywhere via the Internet.

The organising committee tasked with the preparations and the hosting the IIHF World Championship has identified and fixed issues related to safety measures at the arenas and other places and border and customs clearance. Work dealing with information and advertising support of the championship has been also organised. The official travel partner of the 2014 IIHF World Championships, TsentrKurtort Company, has developed a number of travel packages,

including game tickets, accommodation, as well as additional services (excursions, transfers, catering, and souvenirs).

The event will also make use of volunteers. So far, more than 3,000 people have requested to help during the championships. The majority of them are students of Belarusian universities, learning foreign languages. Up to 190 students, from the Belarusian State Medical University, will help ambulance crews in first-aid stations at the arenas and the accommodation of the championship participants.

Visitors and participants of the championship will be offered 29 operating hotels and a further 14 hotels, where construction is now nearing its completion, as well as 10 hostels and 5 dormitories in the student village. Moreover, the private sector is also expected to take an active part in offering accommodation to tourists.

According to the Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, Yevgeny Vorsin, all the technical requirements for hosting games of the IIHF World Championship were agreed during an inspection

visit of representatives of the International Ice Hockey Federation in August. The foreign experts agreed that Minsk-Arena meets the highest international standards.

The operation of all departments and technological equipment at the Chizhovka-Arena will be tested during the Christmas Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prize of the President of Belarus, and during the Golden Puck National Youth Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prizes of the Head of State. The tournaments will be held in conditions similar to those of the world ice hockey championship.

"I don't see any problems with the preparations for the World Championship, not even with the accommodation of guests. I think that the private sector will eagerly join in, wishing to earn money," summed up the President. "We are hospitable people. It's necessary to heartily welcome the visitors who will come to us. However, I'd like to stress again that the World Championship is primarily for Belarusian people, they have deserved this event"

The Decree of the President of Belarus No. 477

On some issues concerning coverage of actions during the 2014 IIHF World Championship

In order to provide information support in mass media of the events of the 2014 IIHF World Championship:

1. To ascertain, that on the territory of Belarus, for realisation of professional work on coverage in mass media of the 2014 IIHF World Championship, the representatives of foreign mass media should be accredited by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) in the order established by IIHF.

The document confirming the reception by the representatives of foreign mass media of IIHF accreditation is an accreditation card given by IIHF.

2. For representatives of foreign mass media accredited by IIHF, for realisation from April, 25th till May, 31st of 2014:

for the activity stipulated in the first part of point 1 of the present Decree, receipt of accreditation from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is not required;

for the activity of coverage of other actions (events) in the Republic of Belarus, they need to receive in the established way, by a legislation order, accreditation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3. The present Decree comes into force from the date of its official publication.

President of Belarus
A. Lukashenko

October, 17th, 2013 Minsk

Big family beyond comparison

Belarus displaying a positive demographic trend

By Irina Stasova

Our country has every chance to halt the population decrease earlier than 2015. Since June, the natural decline in the population of Belarus has decreased to six thousand people. According to Anatoly Tozik, Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, the national programme of demographic security will be conducted ahead of time if this trend continues. This announcement was made at the state reception of women in the Council of Ministers devoted to Mother's Day.

"According to the state programme, we have a super-strategic mission, the dwindling population is planned to be halted by 2015. The natural decline in the population was covered this year by a migration gain. Between January and August 2013, 11,639 people came to our country, and 4,808 people left it," the Prime Minister stated. "These facts de-

clare a stable situation in Belarus, and confidence of Belarusians in the future. We managed to create a definite atmosphere which forces society to also participate in solving these demographic issues. The system of social support has played a significant role there."

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, if it were possible to save people whose lives come to an end prematurely, the migration gain would not be so important. According to the statistics, 13,000-15,000 people die each year because of external factors. On the whole these are people of working age, young people, and children. 7,000 were lost because of external factors between January and August of this year.

Now specialists aim to pass another important milestone. Currently, 66 percent of families in Belarus have only one child, and the strategic mission of the government is to improve the



Picture from nature in Vitebsk Region's Glubokoe

wish of parents to have a minimum two children. The *Big Family* project, aimed at supporting families with children, will help the government to manage it.

"Currently, various different new family support programmes are being considered. One option is the *Big Family* project. A new national programme of demographic security of Belarus which will function from 2016, and new ways of support that can

be used in 2014 and 2015 are currently being worked out," stated Marianna Shchetkina, Minister of Labour and Social Protection. "Next year the second *Republican Family of Year* contest will be held. It is worthy of note that, this year, there has been an increase in the population in Belarus. We managed to strengthen the institution of 'family' thanks to the support system which exists in the country."