

# Trying to make the most of good intentions

By Vasily Kharitonov

**Belarus-Russia Union State relations developing successfully, thanks to close ties between regions, notes President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, speaking with Head of Republic of Karelia, of the Russian Federation, Alexander Khudilainen**



Alexander Khudilainen

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that Belarus is always happy to host delegations from Russian regions, saying, "Our interstate alliance is proving a success, thanks

to support from Russian regions. Belarus-Russia relations cannot grow without good, close ties with Russian

regions."

Speaking about the Belarusian diaspora across Russia, and Karelia in particular, the President noted that all those heading Russian regions view Belarusians as good citizens. "They always say that they are the same as Russians: kind, decent and ready to help. I'm glad to hear that Belarusians are creating a good environment, where ever they are living," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko remarked that, despite the slight slowing of pace in mutual trade last year, an increase of about 20 percent

was registered from January to August 2013. He also outlined a number of promising avenues for mutually beneficial co-operation, with Karelia, such as agribusiness and forestry, as well as water provision. Belarusian specialists have the experience necessary to help, as well as modern manufacturing and processing technologies to share. "We are ready to promote collaboration in these areas and invite you to make use of our achievements," the Head of State asserted.

Mr. Khudilainen remarked that, this summer,

the Belarusian Ambassador to Russia visited Karelia for three days, holding productive negotiations regarding mutually beneficial co-operation, including in the spheres of agriculture and wood processing. "We must step up work in the forestry industry, because today's technologies and production levels satisfy no one," he admitted. He feels that great opportunities are opening up for sea transportation, with Karelia planning to develop its ports in coming years. He is also keen to see Karelia borrow Belarusian agricultural practices, noting,

"At present, Karelian agriculture isn't enjoying the best of times, while you've achieved grand successes over the last 10-15 years." Mr. Khudilainen is also eager to allocate land lots for shops to sell Belarusian produce in the region.

Mr. Lukashenko sees this as an interesting proposal and added that Belarus is ready to share its agricultural expertise while delivering agro-machinery. He emphasised that Belarusian experience of animal breeding could work well in the Karelian climate, with particular reference to cattle.

## Presidential election campaign launches in August 2015

By Alexey Alexandrov

Parliamentary lobbies offer an opportunity for communication: official and informal. Sometimes, more important news is launched. Recently, deputies adopted much debated amendments to election legislation (second reading) and, afterwards, the Chair of the Central Election Commission, Lidia Yermoshina, announced that the Presidential election campaign would launch in August, 2015, with

elections no later than November 20th.

Ms. Yermoshina notes that, in line with new legislation, the Presidential elections are to take place no earlier than two months while the election campaign is to be launched no later than five months before the current Presidential term is due to expire. She reminded, "Alexander Lukashenko was inaugurated on January 20th, 2011. Accordingly, the Presidential term of office expires on January 20th, 2016."

Evidently, the dates are precisely calculated. No doubt, the amendments regarding candidates' collection of election funds, territorial election commissions and specified campaigning rules (which now need the Council of the Republic's approval and the President's signing) will come into force in time for the forthcoming campaign.

At their first reading, amendments to the Code of Administrative Violations and the Code of Execution

Procedure were adopted and voting took place on amendments to the Civil Procedural Code. Only professionals can distinguish all the changes but some can be explained here.

Supreme Court Chairman Valentin Sukalo presented changes to administrative legislation, reflecting the Presidential Address and dealing with general courts' development. Priorities include reducing the burden on judges,

reasonable procedural economy, promptness and accessibility of justice. At present, each judge oversees up to a hundred administrative cases monthly, which can be too great a number to allow them to tackle more serious conflicts. The draft law proposes empowering Interior Ministry bodies to deal with cases of drinking in public places and coming to work under the influence of alcohol.

The law may need to be toughened in cases of failure to pay fines imposed by courts; such fines may even become part of criminal law. Deputy Larisa Bogdanovich asked Mr. Sukalo whether judges remember the initiative voiced during the previous National Assembly session, to which he replied that the proposal has been many times discussed with interested state agencies. "We can foresee no criminal sanctions which would inspire quicker payment," he admitted. Of course, imprisonment does not help someone in their ability to pay a fine, so this proposal has been vetoed; clearly, a delicate approach is required.

Deputies have ratified an agreement between the Belarusian and Turkish governments on re-admission, aiming to ensure Belarusian-Turkish visa-free travel.

## Championship souvenirs on sale



**Ahead of World Ice Hockey Championship, being hosted in Minsk in 2014, shops are selling souvenir pucks from cheese, skates from chocolate, cut glass hockey sticks and straw hats — all with 'hockey' logo**

There's no doubt that souvenirs of the Ice Hockey Championship, bearing the official logo, will prove popular. Olga Romanova, Deputy Director of the Tsentralny Universal Department Store (TsUM), tells us that souvenir products are already being snapped up, with sleeveless sports shirts, T-shirts and peaked caps bearing the logo selling best of all. Souvenir magnets and badges are also popular choices, as are linen espadrilles and clay figurines, wooden pucks, cut glass hockey sticks, and china and glassware.

Galanteya Factory has been making original travel bags bearing hockey symbols, believing that these will appeal to hockey fans having made long journeys, while Belsoyuzpechat has printed souvenir post cards, guidebooks and diaries. The domestic confectionery branch has also been making souvenir sweets, with Komunarka making a 'snowman' fluffy toy hockey-player, as well as chocolate in the shape of skates and pucks.



Buses bearing emblem of forthcoming World Ice Hockey Championship seen on Minsk's streets

## Optimum transportation of fans to the matches

The 2014 IIHF World Championship, which is to be hosted by our country, is coming closer. All major issues connected with the acceptance and accommodation of guests have been solved, as have those dealing with border crossing. However, how are things with transportation?

By Anton Kostyukevich

New routes of ground transport vehicles are planned for the Belarusian capital to link major sport sites and facilities accommodating fans, e.g., hotels and the Student

Village will be directly connected with Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena, while also enabling speedy access between the two. Most visitors are to be hosted by the Student Village, which is to offer affordable accommodation for all.

Close attention is being given to enlarging underground metro services, with trains to the arenas departing every 30 seconds and a new bus carrying fans from Avtozavodskaya station to Chizhovka-Arena. With transport links co-ordinated, fans should

be able to traverse the city in record time. Moreover, universal tickets are to be issued, allowing access onto all kinds of public transport citywide. Additional parking is also being created, with 1,200 new parking places marked along the widest roads.