

# Understanding foreigners, or many uniformed students with stars on shoulders

Minsk's police and rescue services take English classes in the evenings, to help guests attending Minsk's 2014 World Ice Hockey Championship

By Sergey Ivanov

The foreign language class I sat in on was unlike any other I've seen, catering for two dozen uniformed policemen in a spacious room at Minsk's gymnasium, at 6pm. Makarov guns were visible on holsters and handcuffs hung on belts but English language teacher Nadezhda Kuruleva remained unconcerned. She doesn't care how many stars her students bear on their shoulders, focusing only on helping them learn to speak and think in the language of coming fans.

The lesson began with checking of homework. Naturally, the lessons include knowledge of specialised vocabulary: 'judge', 'arrest', 'sentence', 'robbery' and 'thief'. "Wonderful, my dears!" Nadezhda smiled, and split her class into two groups: the first were to be witnesses to a bank robbery while the second would be policemen, questioning in order to compile an identikit. It was a successful activity and is sure to prove useful.

The second part of the lesson focused on applied language knowledge, with pupils needing to clearly explain to foreigners how to reach the National Library, Minsk Arena or the National Art Museum. All know the route in Russian but it's a challenge to translate into English. Laughter came easily. After nearly five minutes of trying to receive directions, one 'military-foreigner' sighed



Police prepare to speak to visitors of World Ice Hockey Championship in English

and offered his thanks, before saying goodbye!

Pocket phrasebooks edited by the Interior Ministry's Academy have been handed out to each of the 400 students, featuring phrases to cover greetings and pleasantries, as well as practical information — such as requests for documents and tickets. Each Russian transcription is accompanied by an English translation. The aim is for the students to help guarantee security at the 2014 Ice Hockey Championship, as well as at Minsk's hockey arenas and hotels.

'101' dispatchers from the Emergency Ministry's Centre of Operative Management are in their third year of studying English, being taught to make the right decisions in emergency situations and respond in English. Dispatcher Tatiana Pavlyuchuk tells us, "Twelve of the Centre's 15 dispatchers have received their foreign language certificates, having learnt the right vocabulary to deal with emergencies and disasters. Each of the five dispatches on each shift can now advise on what should be done if a thermometer is broken, or if someone is stuck

in a lift or lost in the city. If something new emerges, we have phrasebooks on our tables to help. During the European Cycling Championship, senior students from the Linguistic University worked alongside us as volunteers; however, we didn't receive any serious calls from foreigners. We had a few calls asking how to switch on Wi-Fi in their hotel room!"

Since July, Minsk's rescuers have been receiving calls from the European number: 112. It's likely that the service will prove popular among guests during the Champion-

ship. To ensure its proper operation, dozens of volunteers will come to the Centre from the Linguistic University (on days when national teams arrive). The Emergency Ministry's Press Secretary, Vitaly Novistky, tells us, "A special phrasebook has been compiled for the World Championship, soon to be distributed to all district and regional departments."

In addition to rescuers and policemen, Minsk National Airport employees are learning English — as are taxi drivers, and public catering and hotel staff.

## Gigantic pumpkin — among champions

By Anatoliy Svetlov

**Velikan na Gryadke-2013 (Bed Giants-2013) Republican contest for farmers and gardeners takes place at Minsk's Press House, alongside pumpkin exhibition**

This year's contest received 500 applications, from all regions. Experienced growers were joined by novices, with good results across the board: among the 29 winners in various nominations, seven received multiple prizes.

Among the most notable winners was a green cabbage weighing almost 17kg, an 11kg melon, a 12kg marrow and an 85cm runner bean. The heaviest pumpkin weighed almost 90kg, grown by Nina Zhdanova from the Rogachev District, in the Gomel Region: a regular participant in the contest and winner in various nominations.

## Experience is the way forward

By Dmitry Svetlov

**International Youth in Science-2013 forum shows tomorrow's path**

The 10th *Youth in Science-2013* scientific and practical conference, organised by the Council of Young Scientists of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, was recently held in Minsk, gathering more than 300 undergraduates and postgraduates, as well as schoolchildren from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic states. The event has certainly been the major scientific youth fair of 2013.

On the agenda were issues of genetics, microbiology and biotechnologies, and the preservation of biodiversity and ecology. Discussions also focused on directions of modern medicine, chemistry, physics, computer science and Earth sciences, as well as the humanities and arts.

Young scientists from the Institute of Genetics and Cytology, at the NAS of Belarus, presented technologies to create tetraploid varieties of rye and showed colleagues how children may be genetically screened for suitability for certain kinds of sport. Young researchers from the Belarusian State University presented a system of non-volatile residential building, while those from Belarus' National Technical University presented new technologies regarding composite materials.

## Ensuring comfort

Over 40 hotels and 10 hostels to welcome guests of World Ice Hockey Championship, hosted by Minsk city next year

By Sergey Svetlov

Athletes and fans of the IIHF World Championship will be accommodated in around 30 existing hotels, as well as at 13 new hotels being built for the event. Among them are the Victoria-2, the Victoria Olymp Hotel, the Victoria Troitskaya, the Victoria Zamkovayaa and the

Narochanskaya Hotel. The Belarus Hotel is also undergoing reconstruction. Most should be ready by January-February 2014.

Fans on a budget will have the option of ten hostels and five dormitories in the Student Village, as well as beds on agro-estates in the Minsk Region.

Over 10 additional bus

routes have been developed, to ensure that fans reach matches in good time. The network will collect guests from hotels and hostels, as well as running between Minsk Arena and Chizhovka Arena, and other sports facilities. Information boards are being installed in the Belarusian capital, alongside automated reference systems



Hotels ready for hockey players and fans

and advertising signs, while around 30,000 maps and information brochures have

been distributed, to help tourists find their way during the hockey tournament.