

Rebirth of Slutsk belts in our modern style

During his visit to the Slutsk Belts enterprise, the President emphasised, “I’m convinced that we made the right decision in reviving this artefact from the past; it is expensive but worth the cost, as it will remain part of history, forever.”

Mr. Lukashenko was able to observe the technological process of reproducing Slutsk belts and souvenir production at the enterprise, using traditional weaving methods. Belts have been selling well, leading the enterprise to plan an extended range, including a collection for church use.

The Museum of Slutsk Belt History at the enterprise displays belts dating back to the 18th century, as well as modern reproductions. Employees presented Mr. Lukashenko with the first Slutsk belt woven at the enter-

prise: a copy of an original historical belt, woven with gilded threads and natural silk, 350cm long, 33.5cm wide and weighing 500g. On the same day, the belt was delivered for storage at the Palace of Independence.

Addressing the weavers, President Lukashenko noted their talent and hard work, saying, “It’s good that women’s hands make these beautiful belts, since they convey the warmth, beauty and energy of our women. Your salary is, probably, more modest than you deserve, considering your hard work. I think that

the situation with salaries will change by the end of next year, when we’ll be able to start exporting production and raising the prices. The state has invested a huge amount, perhaps not at the best of times. Your belts need to find their market, so that your production is in demand.”

As a small remembrance of his visit to the enterprise, Alexander Lukashenko signed his name in the guest book at the Museum of Slutsk Belt History. He wrote: ‘It is symbolic that the rebirth of belts has occurred here, in Slutsk. It is a tribute to



At the Slutsk Belts enterprise

our respect for masters of the past and a bright acknowledgment of the talent of their de-

scendants — whose skill matches that of their glorified predecessors.’

Paying for knowledge

Belarusian diplomas may soon be recognised beyond country’s borders



Forum participants

By Vladimir Velikhov

Sergey Maskevich, the Minister for Education, recently announced at the *European Quality Education International Forum* in Minsk that standards in Belarus ‘not only correspond with the Bologna process but outstrip it’. He asserted that higher education is a focus across Europe, with improved quality of education to the fore. He admitted that a universal solution is yet to be found but noted, “Each country is improving its education system in its own way but is oriented towards international

standards. We have potential, so exchange of experience with foreign colleagues is vital.”

Vadim Titov, the First Pro-Rector of the Magna Carta Oxford Business School, feels that such forums inspire development in the education system, giving the ‘opportunity to gain access to technologies only found in some places globally’.

Mr. Maskevich recalled that, 15 years ago, annual university fees equalled three average monthly incomes but that the figure has now fallen considerably. Mr. Titov views education as an investment into



Quality of education discussed in Minsk

business potential and notes that foreign postgraduate education is accessible to most Belarusians, despite fees rising for on-campus courses. He notes that ‘distance learning’ courses are cheaper than ever: just \$500-600 per module. He emphasised, “If you want to study with a European university, it is possible.”

The 1st *European Quality Education International Forum* (EQE-Forum) in Minsk featured a report from H.E. Bruce Bucknell, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Belarus. Speaking on the theme of ‘The Integration of the Belarusian Education System into the International Market of Educational Services’, he noted that he had found the forum interesting and a venue for real exchange of opinions and ideas.

Ian Fraser, Director of Marketing and Business Development with the Association of Business Executives of Great Britain (ABE), praised the organisation of the forum, adding that it was a significant event in the educational sphere.

Airlines covering any distance

By Andrey Fiodorov

Belavia to launch new charters from Minsk to UAE, Morocco and Tenerife

Belavia Airline Company is soon to launch charter flights from Minsk to the UAE, Morocco and to Tenerife, thanks to the purchase of three new Boeing-737/800 planes with a long-distance range. Regular flights are also to run between the Belarusian capital and Almaty, Delhi, Abu-Dhabi and Krasnoyarsk. “Importantly, the newly purchased planes will allow us to carry about another 300,000 passengers annually, raising our export of services by \$55m a year,” emphasises Vladimir Kostin, who heads the Aviation Department for the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Belarus.

The company declared its intentions for the year in January, including its purchase of three Boeing-737/800 planes. Three TU-154 planes will be retired as a result.

At the end of January of 2014, Belavia Air Company became an open joint-stock society, with a director general. It is the biggest airline company in Belarus, and is based at Minsk National Airport, offering flights to 43 airports across Europe and Asia.

Subbotnik works bring results

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, took part in the nationwide subbotnik on April 12th, joining officials, students from the Belarusian State Medical University and triple Olympic Champion and Hero of Belarus Darya Domracheva at the construction site for the new obstetric and gynaecological department of Minsk hospital #5

The maternity clinic is becoming one of the largest in Belarus, meeting all modern sanitary requirements and offering comfort to staff and patients. Its quality of services and diagnostics is of the highest level, featuring a 21st century laboratory, physiotherapy and functional diagnostics rooms, and

modern premises for medical university chairs.

The capital’s hospitals and clinics have received much attention recently, with 56 renovated and newly opened sites launching between 2010 and 2013. At present, four polyclinics are under construction. Belarus’ Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Tozik, tells us, “According to preliminary figures, nearly 3.3 million people took part in the republican subbotnik in Belarus, saving more than Br62bn.” Minsk saw the most weighty contribution: over Br19.7bn. Residents of the Gomel Region saved Br9.2bn, while those in the Brest Region donated Br7.2bn of their time and Vitebsk Region citizens saved the state Br7bn. The Mogilev

Region saved Br6.9bn, the Minsk Region Br6.5bn, and the Grodno Region more than Br5.7bn.

Countrywide, industrial manufacturing generated Br180bn of goods that day. In Minsk, 680,000 people were involved, with the Gomel Region

More than Br62bn was saved during the national subbotnik in Belarus

having the second most volunteers: 510,000. The Brest Region saw more than 489,000 take part, followed by the Minsk Region, with 426,000 citizens donating their time. The Vitebsk Region had over 404,000 volunteers, closely followed by the Mogilev Re-

gion, with 403,000. The Grodno Region saw over 373,000 people take part.

Most subbotnik tasks aim to beautify residents’ towns, as well as erecting memorials to historical sites — including those linked to military glory and burial places from the Great Patriotic War and First World War. Some volunteers worked on preparing children’s summer camps.

Money saved from the subbotnik is being directed to the Ministry of Health for the construction of a centre for positron-emission tomography, at the Republican Centre for Oncology and Medical Radiology (named after N.N. Alexandrov). Its technology will allow ultraprecise diagnosis of malig-



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nant tumours at an early stage. Mr. Tozik notes, “The centre is being created at the President’s order, at great cost. Construction began in 2013, and it should come into operation next year, helping save many lives.”