



Championship souvenirs

A purchase without tax

By Vladimir Samsonov

The number of retail outlets in the Tax Free system for the Ice Hockey World Championship will increase considerably

Currently, nearly 100 retail outlets work in the Tax Free system. "In advance of the Ice Hockey World Championship and in a Year of Hospitality, special attention is being given to the development of a system of reimbursement of VAT," noted Irina Narkevich, Belarus' Deputy Trade Minister. "Demand for this service is growing."

It is planned that in the near future, large capital shopping centres of Arena-City, Zamok and Stolitsa will join the Tax Free system. Moreover, the network of jewellery stores of Belyuvilirtorg and a number of other retail outlets are also ready to join the service.

It is well to bear in mind that in Belarus, Tax Free doesn't extend to all purchases, but only to particular categories of goods that are subject to value added tax at the rate of 20 percent; this provides a return of 15 percent of the cost of purchase.

In Belarus, buyers have the right of reimbursement of VAT under the Tax Free system when purchasing sums of more than Br800,000. Purchase should be made within one working day in one shop that participates in the VAT reimbursement programme.

The time of championship approaches very rapidly

There is little time left until the Ice Hockey World Championship in May

By Yuri Beketov

At the beginning of the month, the strongest national teams of the world will arrive in Minsk to fight for the name of champions before thousands of fans from dozens of countries. Preparation for the event, which promises to be significant for the whole country, has lasted for more than one year. Its results were discussed recently at a session of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, where intermediate results were discussed, and ways of solving the remaining issues were determined.

run smoothly. "It is clear that the theme of entrance causes certain questions for foreign fans. But in general everything is clear. The Ice Hockey ticket is good enough for entrance. Each ticket has a unique digital code. It will be checked at border and, if everything is all right, there will not be any problems with admission. There should not be any misunderstanding. Firstly, many employees of the State Border Committee know English, and secondly, if there is a need, we have volunteers who will also help. They will work in all the checkpoints, including the airport."

According to the Director of Aviation Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Vladimir Kostin, after refurbishment, the airport will meet all latest international standards. "The World Championship is one of the most important events for our country this year.

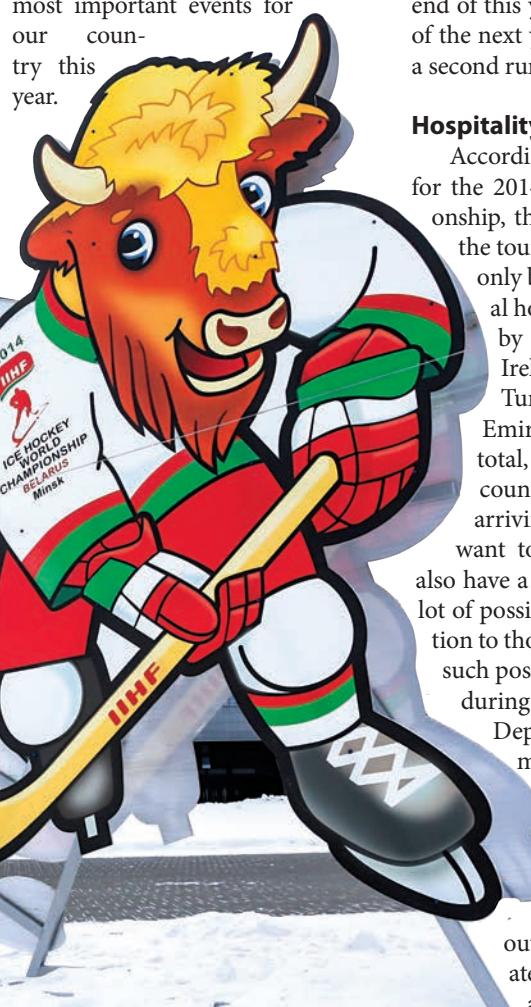
full. After that, the acceptance rate of the airport will increase from 3-3.5 million passengers a year to 5.8 million. When we see that the volume of passenger traffic approaches maximum, we will consider the construction of another terminal. Also, at the end of this year, or at the beginning of the next year, the construction of a second runway will begin."

Hospitality rules

According to the Directorate for the 2014 IIHF World Championship, the tickets for matches of the tournament are bought, not only by residents of traditional hockey countries, but also by fans in Luxembourg, Ireland, Brazil, Colombia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and many more. In total, there are more than 40 countries on the list. The fans arriving here will not only want to watch hockey, but to also have a rest, and there will be a lot of possibilities for that. In addition to those which exist now, new such possibilities will also appear during the tournament.

Deputy Head of the Department of Sports and Tourism of Minsk City Executive Committee, Svetlana Demeshko, says that the question is well thought-out, "Fan-zones will operate near the Minsk-Arena and the Chizhovka-Arena from May 9th-25th.

Hospitality zones will



Minsk-Arena ready to welcome the world tournament

Ticket is also visa

A trip to the theatre begins with visit to the cloakroom, while tourists visiting a country must deal with the checkpoints at the border. Are they ready for the influx of visitors? Will there be any mistakes during the 'visa-free' entrance system that will operate from April 25th till May 31st?

The Press Secretary of the State Border Committee, Alexander Tishchenko, is sure that everything will

Airport overhaul

Let's be honest, for years Minsk National Airport has lagged behind the times. However, now it has changed considerably. Reconstruction, which began last year, is focused on area expansion, change of appearance and the interior of the operating terminal and the creation of a barrier-free environment. Replacement heating systems, air-conditioning and illumination is also being carried out and escalators and lifts are being installed.

Therefore, of course, in respect of preparation, we make a lot, including at the airport. The schedule for reconstruction is made, and Ministers of Transport and Communications, Architecture and Construction and the Government constantly supervise the progress of work. Today more than half of all the work which should be done in the air terminal building has already been finished, and in March it is planned to have finish everything in

be located in the Student Village, on Dzerzhinsky Avenue, near the Sports Palace on Pobediteley Avenue and near the Ice Palace on Pritytsky Street. There will be 'towns of craftsmanship', mass cultural events, as well as souvenirs, beer, ice-cream and confectionery on sale and currency exchange points are planned to be set up. We will make sure that visitors to the city will feel that they've had both a great tournament and a great holiday."

Opportunity to cheer up for one's favourite team

Russian and Latvian citizens are the most active buyers of tourist packages with tickets for the Ice Hockey World Championship matches in Minsk

By Sergey Sokolov

According to information from the official tour operator of the World Championship, Tsentrkurort Company, 75 percent of total sales have been to Russian citizens. In the second place are tourist packages bought by citizens of Latvia. The rest were bought by residents of other countries. Among them are fans from the participating countries of the World Champion-

ship. So far, fans from 50 countries have already purchased their tourist packages.

"The absolute majority of tourist packages for sale are the simplest packages for fans. There also have been about 300 VIP-packages sold, which include the service of meeting of a tourist at the airport and visiting the hospitality zone and VIP-restaurant in the Arena," noted the Director of Tsentrkurort, Oleg Mikhailov. "Family packages for fans that may



Tickets for matches still available for purchase

arrive at the Championship with children are not in demand. Less than 100 of them have been sold."

Oleg Mikhailov also stated that there has been another package created, 'Cheer for ours', for residents from the distant regions of Belarus

and those who do not have the possibility to spend the night in Minsk. This package assumes the possibility to stay in the fan-village, includes tickets for matches that involve the national team of Belarus (with, of course, the possibility of purchasing

tickets for other matches), a souvenir and a map of the fan-village. The packages are not expensive. A package, including accommodation, costs 50-60 Euros.

The Director of the official tour operator of the World Championship also said that they plan to open two points where groups will be collected for excursions. Such points will be opened in the fan-village and by the Yubileinaya Hotel. The schedules of more than 30 routes will be made available, and any interested person will be able to see Minsk and the suburbs. Excursions to more remote corners of Belarus have not been excluded, and some will be organised, in particular, to the Belovzhskaya Pushcha.