

Researching is good, but inventing and implementing is more vital

Is it really possible to diagnose an illness and select appropriate treatment relying on genetic information? Can we pilot a helicopter or drive a car in complete darkness? How can trains fly over rails and what makes polyethylene film dissolve? What is the best way to protect yourself and your family from the damaging effects of mobile phones? These and many other questions were easily answered by scientists at the Youth Innovation Forum, also attended by Alexander Lukashenko, at the National Library

By Igor Slavinsky

There were 136 exhibits on show at the Forum, with every scientific institution and university bringing something unique. Several hours were needed to even have a short glance at them all. The President changed his schedule to devote enough time to these talented researchers and their work, since innovations are a top priority for the state.

The USA is a global leader not only because of its huge military expenditure and a printing machine for dollars; a third of all global patents are issued there. It has a 'zest' for experimentation and forward thinking — something Belarus also aspires to.

The Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences, Mikhail Myasnikov, spoke for

a while about preparations for the Innovation Forum. He explained, "We had to organise a preliminary selection contest, since two hundred applications were received to participate. Thank God, we had so many to choose from; a decade ago, this was hardly possible. Today, twenty percent of all Academy of Sciences' researchers are under the age of 30."

Our clever young Belarusians are already in demand country-wide and are much respected abroad. They directly participated in the major experiment of the 21st century: the Large Hadron Collider. The Forum included reports on how our young scientists' developments are being used in China and Russia, alongside the USA and Venezuela. The President was keen to learn about the latest breakthrough in cancer treatment.



Engineer-designers of BelAZ ultra-modern machinery – Mikhail Minich, Roman Shakin and Sergey Senkevich

Surgeons can now learn whether they have removed all dangerous cells from a patient's body within seconds; they don't even need to leave the operating room. The device is soon to pass clinical tests and, within a year, could be applied in medicine.

Speaking about nano-technologies, Mr. Myasnikov noted with criticism, "We've achieved so much in this sphere but no boom has been

observed." He does believe that our young people have the ability to do well on the scientific market. Seven of the technologies and materials on show at the Forum were worldwide novelties, while 17 inventions were new to Belarus.

"If these developments are export oriented and import substituting, then they should be implemented into production," noted Mr. Lukashenko. "Here, at the Na-

tional Library, all interested people should be present — to see everything with their own eyes." On addressing the officials, the President said that their role 'is not merely to praise, but to take the developers by hand and establish their contact with manufacturers'.

The President has promised to increase support for science if it brings tangible fruit from the results seen at the Forum.

Relaxing before long trip

'Club SV' lounge at Minsk-Passazhirsky railway station welcomes first passengers

The new VIP lounge is part of a major programme by Belarusian Railways to improve its services for passengers; similar rest zones are planned for every Belarusian railway station.

The Head of Minsk-Passazhirsky Station, Alexander Drozhzha, explains that 30 SV international carriages travel through Minsk station daily, arriving from foreign destinations. Now, those with SV tickets can enter a VIP lounge at Minsk's railway station, staying for up to three hours free of charge. The lounge offers wireless Internet access, computer log

on stations, reference information, a bar, semi-private booths and a musical corner. Staff will be on hand to book hotels, theatre and concert tickets, or tickets

for onward travel through Belarus and the CIS.

The lounge will also be open to other passengers for a fixed fee.



VIP comfort lounge opens at railway station

Ready to take place in Europe

By Vasily Malashenkov

Belarus boasts the second largest economy amongst Eastern Partnership members, noted the Chargé d'affaires a. i. in Minsk, Jean-Eric Holzapfel

Speaking at a round table session entitled *Republic of Belarus — European Union: Co-operation Strategy within a Historical Perspective*, he stressed that Belarus has a developing market. However, he believes the country needs to join the World Trade Organisation to intensively liaise with the EU. He emphasised that the latter is interested in stability in Belarus, is open

to collaboration and is ready for rapprochement.

At the same time, Mr. Holzapfel noted that an adequate legal framework is needed to advance Belarus-EU relations — both politically and otherwise. He emphasised the importance of the *Eastern Partnership* for Belarus-EU relations, reminding those present that the programme is based on multilateral and bilateral co-operation. The latter, in his view, is still underused by Belarus and needs driving forward.

Alexander Baichorov, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the European Directorate of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus, noted that Belarus is pur-

suing a multi-vector policy, which is why it has joined the *Eastern Partnership* programme. The country is interested in developing the spheres of energy and humanitarian work, alongside others. It is especially keen to see the initiative provide a mechanism to implement concrete projects. Moreover, the country is not begging for money for itself; rather, it is offering projects that will benefit the whole region. Mr. Baichorov reminded those present that unfounded discriminatory measures against Belarusian exports to the EU stand against a background of Belarus taking great strides to introduce EU standards across the board.

Promoting ties in various spheres

By Yelena Bondarchik

Vitebsk hosts Information Day on EU Programmes

The event aimed to familiarise the public with EU programmes, promoting their initiatives, explains Oleg Kravchuk, Chairman of the Board of the Vitebsk Alternative Association. During a training seminar, he shared his experience of implementing interesting projects — including those relating to public housing. As a result, several high-rise buildings in the regional centre allow residents to independently solve issues of technical maintenance, repair and site improvement.

Art Without Borders aims to promote international cultural ties in the context of Marc Chagall creative activities. It is being realised as part of a trans-boundary co-operation programme between Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus, overseen by Lyudmila Khmel'nitskaya, Director of the Marc Chagall Museum. Polotsk's City Executive Committee has been working with the EU for some time, notes Igor Zagrekov, from the Physical Culture, Sports and Tourism Department. He reported on the creation of the trans-boundary tourist space, which runs along the Zapadnaya Dvina (Daugava) River — between Daugavpils, Polotsk and Belarus.

On nationwide scale

By Yelena Suponeva

Belarus' population totals 9.5m

The National Statistical Committee has announced that, as of November 1st, 2010 (taking into consideration the preliminary results of the 2009 census), Belarus' population stood at 9,484,300 people (down 15,700 on January 1st, 2010). The fall is due to the fact that 24,000 more people have died than been born. Meanwhile, positive migration growth has accounted for an extra 8,400 (from January-October,

14,034 people arrived in Belarus, while 5,642 left).

This year, increasing population has been registered in Minsk alone — growing from 1,843,700 (January 1st) to 1,858,100 (November 1st). Other regions of the country face a decrease in population. As of November 1st, 2010, the Gomel region had 1,436,000 residents, the Minsk region — 1,413,700, the Brest region — 1,396,000, the Vitebsk region — 1,223,000, the Mogilev region — 1,090,100, and the Grodno region — 1,067,400.