

# Aspiration to do more

On accepting credentials from foreign ambassadors, President Alexander Lukashenko noted that Belarus has chosen the multi-vector course of its foreign policy and tries to form solid relations — based on mutually beneficial co-operation and friendship with foreign partners

By Vasily Kharitonov

Diplomats from Ukraine, Finland, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Egypt, the Republic of Korea, Nepal, Thailand and New Zealand have presented their credentials to the Head of the Belarusian state. "It's very symbolical that your responsible mission starts on the eve of our major state holiday — the Day of Independence. July 3rd is a sacred date for Belarusians marking the liberation of Minsk from Hitler occupation which has become a symbol of independence of the Belarusian state. Historical memory about firmness and heroism of our nation in the struggle against fascism and about countless victims brought to the altar of the Great Victory has united people while determining world outlook principles and moral values of the nation," noted Mr. Lukashenko while addressing the diplomats.

"Respect for the right of each nation to choose its own way of development, peacefulness and solidarity, alongside mutual understanding and collaboration, non-admission of dictation and unfairness are fundamental principles which are the basis of our life. These form Belarus' approaches in international relations while determining the foreign policy course of our young and sovereign state. Therefore, it's not accidentally that Belarus enjoys deserved reputation of a donor of regional and global security," added the President.

Mr. Lukashenko also mentioned activation of business life and the appearance of new spheres of mutual interests. "We're keen to expand contacts in various corners of the planet

and to acquire new friends and partners. However, we especially value those whom we trust and co-operate while boasting good traditions of friendly relationships," underlined the President.

Mr. Lukashenko found words for each of new ambassadors. The tonality of communication towards the Ukrainian diplomat Mikhail Ezhel could be easily guessed taking into account the results of the recent official visit of the Belarusian President to this state.

"First of all, I'd like to emphasise our strong determination to foster ties with Ukraine — our closest neighbour and a very reliable partner. My recent official visit to Ukraine again confirmed our mutual engagement and commitment of our governments to constructively solve burning issues," Mr. Lukashenko stated.

"We agree with each other that we need to promote the political dialogue, boost economic ties and intensify the entire spectrum of the interstate co-operation. We should take into consideration new large-scale integration processes going on in the former Soviet Union republics," the Head of State believes.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus maintains an unwavering focus on collaboration with European countries. In particular, Belarus counts on deeper investment co-operation with Finland and Switzerland.

Finland is a key trade-economic partner for Belarus in North Europe. "We have many common points of coincidence, as well as an objective mutual interest in expanding co-operation across a number of areas. We'd like to raise Finnish investments and technologies in

such promising areas as power engineering, woodworking, machine building, construction and the banking sector," the President said. He also noted that the existing contacts fall short of the real needs of the two countries.

industry, science and innovations, financial ties, culture and tourism," the Belarusian Head of State added.

Belarus views Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as promising partners in the Balkan region.



Alexander Lukashenko accepts credentials from Ambassador of Ukraine Mikhail Ezhel

Mr. Lukashenko confirmed that Belarus is interested in a full-fledged co-operation with Switzerland. "In recent years, business collaboration between our countries received a new impetus. A number of Swiss investment projects are being implemented in Belarus. Let the success of these projects contribute to the intensification of our contacts. We need to move forward. Promising co-operation areas include

"Your countries' commitment to close integration with the European Union should never be an obstacle for the development of mutually beneficial co-operation with our state. We are ready for expansion of relations in the areas of mutual interest and for enhancement of the level of contacts," asserted Mr. Lukashenko.

The Head of State stressed that Belarus and the Republic of Korea have always sought

to engage in a constructive dialogue. Information technology has become this year's new theme of the bilateral dialogue. Belarusian government bodies have started a large-scale work together with South Korean partners on the implementation

enکو said.

According to the President, Belarus is closely watching the events in Egypt and views the country as one of the key partners in North Africa, as well as an active and influential participant in the process of resolving the thorny regional problems. "I hope that by joint efforts we will be able not only to restore the previous level of bilateral ties, but also to go further, extending the scope of our trade and economic interaction," the Head of State stressed.

Mr. Lukashenko said that Belarus has been steadily increasing its presence in South East Asia, Australia and Oceania. "Staying committed to the selected course, we have been consistent in building up a constructive dialogue with every state of the region, among which is New Zealand. We have no disagreements that can hinder the development of trade-economic co-operation. We have issues of shared interest, particularly agriculture.

Mr. Lukashenko also stressed that an important vector of the Belarusian foreign policy in the region is the development of relations with Thailand.

Addressing the diplomats, the President said that at the beginning of their work in Belarus they will be convinced that Belarus is sincerely committed to respectful and constructive dialogue. "On behalf of Belarusian partners you will see commitment to constructive and productive joint work and readiness to resolve any urgent issues. Let relations with the countries that you represent become a good example of friendship and genuine business partnership," Mr. Lukashenko wished.

## President meets Patriarch Kirill

During working visit to the Russian Federation, Alexander Lukashenko meets Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia — Kirill

The Patriarchal and Synodal Spiritual, Administrative and Cultural Centre of the Russian Orthodox Church (Krasnodar Krai) hosted the meeting at which the pair discussed preparations for 1025th anniversary celebrations of the baptism of Rus — which is to be widely celebrated in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. In particular, preparations for the festivities hosted by Minsk in late July were in focus.

## Favourable situation in the country certainly can't go unnoticed

By Valentin Sergeev

Belarus improves Global Peace Index ranking

This year, Belarus is ranked 96th (out of 162 countries) in the Global Peace Index — up from 109th place (out of 158 states) a year ago. Experts note that this improvement is promoted by a fall in crime levels in Belarus. Turkmenistan occupies 103rd place, Ukraine is 111th, Tajikistan is ranked 118th and Russia occupies 155th place.

According to researchers, the least peaceful countries are problematic Afghanistan (ranked 162nd), Somalia

(161st) and Syria (160th), with the last seeing the greatest fall in ranking in the history of the Peace Index.

Europe remains the most peaceful region (as last year), being home to 13 countries among the top twenty. Iceland is recognised as the most peaceful, followed by Denmark and New Zealand. Over the last six years, there has been a 5 percent fall in the overall Global Peace Index, which uses 23 criteria spread across three major groups. Peace loving countries score low, with the presence and scale of conflict, the level of stability and security inside the country and militarisation levels all contributing to the ranking.

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