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INTERNATIONAL

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At the Silichi Republican Ski Centre

## Ski centres await guests

From the very first day this winter turned out to be real and snowy. Many Belarusians did not waste time and, having grabbed skates, tubings and skis, set off to break in the ice and snowy slopes. Ski centres of the country take hundreds of people even on weekdays. We also went to the most popular ice hills in Minsk and the metropolitan area to find out what emotions one can get there and how much money it will take. → 11



# Strategic objectives for the EAEU



The President of Belarus took part in the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting in Bishkek. Aleksandr Lukashenko firmly stated the need to eliminate barriers to mutual trade within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union and announced four strategic tasks for the EAEU.



Bishkek

The Head of State called the meeting in the capital of Kyrgyzstan a logical continuation of the dialogue held at the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and the CIS,

*“We see that the primitive massive issuance of thoughtless packages of economic sanctions by the collective West against Belarus and Russia is beginning to subside. Everything that could be banned and limited, even to their own detriment, has already been banned and limited by our counterparts. Now it’s time for them to fathom the consequences. Everyone is now talking about the energy and food crises. You don’t have to be a visionary to assume that another crisis — a political one — is not long in coming in some countries. The writing is already on the wall.”*

Households and businesses in a number of Western countries are becoming increasingly dissatisfied and critical.”

According to the Belarusian leader, the most important thing is that the EAEU prevented de-

terioration of the living standards of people.

Aleksandr Lukashenko also noted, “The decisions taken within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union allowed significantly mitigating the negative effect of the sanctions and supporting important sectors of the economy. Yet, there is still a lot of work ahead.

*Considering the fundamental changes in the world, we have to pay close attention to strategic areas of the EAEU development along with accomplishing current tasks. In this regard I would like to stress the importance of further deepening of the union integration and the necessity to position our union on the international arena.*

**First.** As for strategic tasks, it is necessary to ensure prompt implementation of joint projects to develop modern industries — the industries of the future. This is an obligatory element of our economic sovereignty. Today we are going to take another step in this direction — we are

considering the issue of vesting the EAEU bodies with the authority to provide financial assistance for industrial co-operation from the EAEU budget. The possibility of subsidising interest rates on loans will help the Eurasian Development Bank to raise the financing of specific industrial projects to a qualitatively new level.

**Second.** We need to improve, at all costs, the blood circulatory system of our union. I’m talking about finances. It is already clear to everyone that the era of dollar dominance is coming to an end. *The future belongs to trade blocs, settlements in which will be made in national currencies.*

The Heads of the EAEU States signed a protocol amending the procedure for levying VAT on the provision of services in electronic form on the territory of the Union, approved the Main Directions for the International Activities of the EAEU for 2023, a list of priority areas for the liberalisation of services, and also decided to expand the single market for services of the Eurasian Economic Union, which will be replenished by 14 service sectors from January 1st, 2023.

In addition, it was decided to create a subsidiary body — the EAEU council of heads of authorised bodies in the energy sector.

## An informal summit of the CIS heads is planned to be held in St. Petersburg before the New Year

The presidency in the EAEU is transferred from Kyrgyzstan to Russia. Therefore, the next summit of the leaders of the countries — members of the union will be held on the territory of the Russian Federation. It is scheduled from May 24th to May 25th, 2023. The meeting point will be determined in due course. And before the end of this year, the Presidents of the CIS countries will meet again. Vladimir Putin invited his colleagues to the pre-New Year informal CIS summit in St. Petersburg.

Belarus and Russia are no longer using the U.S. dollar in their main settlements. It is important that other partners actively join this process.

**Third.** At the meeting of the Supreme Council in May 2022 we agreed to consider the issue of removing barriers in the EAEU domestic market

*I believe that we should not have any barriers to mutual trade in principle. This is the essence of our union.* This will solve two main problems of providing national markets with critical imports and coordinating the export of strategically important goods, especially foodstuffs.

**Fourth.** Priority should be given to improving the international authority and competitiveness of our union. *Recent events have shown that not everyone agrees with the further existence of the unipolar world. As a result, the role of such inte-*

*gration associations as the SCO and BRICS is growing. The EAEU must keep pace with them. These countries share our position on the need to respect different cultures, views and political systems. Perhaps some ASEAN states will want to take part in such a meeting too.*

The core items on the summit agenda could be economic co-operation (for example, the formation of regional trading blocs, the use of national currencies), and also energy and security...

We need to be clear and consistent in declaring its presence on the world map and through further expansion of free trade zones with stakeholders.

Today we decide to start of negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates. It is a landmark political step for our union.

*At a time when they are trying to split and isolate us, we are systematically expanding trade co-operation with our partners.* Negotiations on free trade zones with Iran and Egypt are already on the home stretch. Negotiations with Indonesia and Mongolia are about to begin. In addition to economic bonuses, the conclusion of such agreements demonstrates the futility of the attempts of the collective West to strangle us with sanctions.”

## The President on runaway investors, “Tell them good bye and make a sign of the cross.”

**The President of Belarus considers it necessary to provide IT sectors of enterprises with working conditions, as it was made in the Hi-Tech Park.** Aleksandr Lukashenko stated this on Monday when making personnel decisions. Among those who received new positions were chairmen of district executive committees, deputy ministers and the General Director of Minsk Motor Plant.

**“There is an opinion that the park has played a positive role in the development of information technology in the country. But today, any enterprise, the Academy of Sciences, educational**

**institutions have sufficient competencies in information technology. If God forbid something happens to the park, then our real production sector, the social sector will be able to do without it, developing our own information technologies,”** the Head of State noted.

The President also commented on the withdrawal of certain foreign companies from the market, emphasising that we will develop our own production independently, as well as in co-operation with Russian partners, “Now we see a turning point, and let’s be honest: someone has come, someone has

left... They invested, brought technology, brought equipment. They invested. A purely political thing: they were told to leave, and they left. Good bye. It is a question whether they are welcome back. **President Putin and I have reached a solid agreement. If you are out, you are out. We will develop our own skill sets, our own manufacturing. And we will manage.”**

The Belarusian leader added that the production of Moskvich cars has already been launched in Russia, Lada is being produced, Volga will also appear soon, and Geely is being produced in Belarus,

# On Merkel's statements, the conflict in Ukraine and gas prices

The President of Belarus answered questions from Russian journalists on the sidelines of the summit in Bishkek

One of the questions concerned the recent statements of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The essence of her statements boils down to the fact that she considered the peace talks in Minsk and the agreements concluded in the Belarusian capital to resolve the situation in Ukraine as an opportunity to give Kiev time to build up its power and military resources. However, as analysts note, her current statements have no basis — this is pure bluff. Frau Merkel's behaviour today is simply vile.

Aleksandr Lukashenko commented on these revelations in the following way, "I told Vladimir Putin what I thought about it. If things were really like that, it is disgusting.

**But they were not like that.**

The real situation is not just disgusting, it is abominable... I didn't expect it either. And the President of Russia said the same: he didn't expect such an attack from Angela Merkel.

**She acted in petty, obnoxious way. She wants to be in trend. Back then Merkel, like others, including Poroshenko, was very serious about the Minsk agreements. Indeed, after the Minsk meetings, the whole world was saying that finally this step was made and these agreements were signed. The war stopped, people stopped dying. All this was positively assessed."**

The President of Belarus is sure that it is not as simple as it sounds now in the statements by Angela Merkel and Petro Poroshenko, "Today, at the background of the ongoing developments they are saying that she, Poroshenko, this Hollande [France's former President François Hollande] whom she led by the hand in front of me allegedly carried out a secret operation, deceived everyone, primarily Russia, Putin, and everyone in the world. They got a pause that let the Ukrainian army prepare for this war... If this were so, it would be too easy. They cheated, prepared for the war and are fighting now. Well, if this is so (this is not so), why then rant and rave now about the war going on? You got what you were preparing for."

The Head of State shared that a war on Russia was supposed to begin from the Donbass in 2021-2022,

**"We know for sure (I informed President Putin that we will make these facts public soon) that they were going to advance NATO troops to the border of Smolensk Region after the 2020 coup in Belarus and start a war against Russia from the Donbass."**

According to him, the war was supposed to begin under the pretext of Russia's seizing of foreign territories, "From there, the war was supposed to start in 2021, maybe 2022. Russia foiled their plans and acted preemptively. Therefore,

Russia does not deserve the accusations. We all read the statements by Poroshenko, Merkel [former leaders of Ukraine and Germany]. They are lying that it was Russia who started the war. They — Merkel and Poroshenko — want to show their importance. Furthermore, they want to say that the Ukrainian army is fighting, resisting one of the strongest armies in the world because they had deceived everyone, the whole world and Russia in Minsk. It is petty and deplorable. It doesn't look like Merkel. Likewise, it is not true that they did this in order to cheat. Everything was serious."



The President believes that had the Minsk agreements been implemented, Ukraine would have been integral and there would have been no war,

**"By today, if they had gone the way that Putin proposed, and an agreement had been signed, Ukraine would have retained its integrity except for Crimea. There would have been no war."**

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that at that time he forwarded information, wishes and demands from President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the then leader of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and vice versa, "I once said that the last message that Putin conveyed to Poroshenko was the offer to help restore what was destroyed. And the destruction was minimal. But they did not agree to this. They were preparing for war. But then no one thought so, as Merkel and Poroshenko say today. If they cheated in order to prepare for war, this is disgusting.

**And what Merkel is saying today, echoing Poroshenko is disgusting. This is a kind of trend. And they are trying to follow it. Secondly, Merkel does not want to be blamed for the ongoing developments in Ukraine as people would say that she was there with Hollande, represented Europe, and pushed Ukraine in the wrong direction. She starts making excuses.**

Once again I emphasise that this is

vile and disgraceful. It would be better for her to keep a low profile. By doing it, she cancelled everything that she had done for Germany and the European Union. And we took her seriously. And Russia took her seriously. But, as you can see, we were wrong. She turned out to be as petty as all the leaders of Europe today."

The journalists asked whether the Belarusian leader discussed matters concerning specific territories in a conversation with Vladimir Putin, in particular, Kherson, Lugansk, Donetsk, and Zaporozhye. Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that during meetings with the Russian President, the



focus was always on the need to negotiate to end the conflict in Ukraine, "We've always talked about a treaty, about stopping the war, about ending the war. All in all, we've always talked about it. If you remember my statements and his that Zelenskyy is simply not allowed to do it. We've talked along these lines. But we've never discussed specific territories: Kherson, Lugansk, Donetsk, and so on, who should liberate whom..."

If the President of Ukraine demands that Russia withdraw from the territories of Kherson, Zaporozhye, Lugansk, Donetsk today, this means that there will be no negotiations, Aleksandr Lukashenko is sure, "This is a precondition that is unacceptable for Russia. At this stage, in my opinion, Russia will not accept these conditions at all: leave Zaporozhye, Kherson and so on. It is impossible to put forward such demands to the Russian Federation. For many reasons.

**If you want peace, you need to sit down at the negotiating table and discuss all issues in silence: who should leave what — either Russia or Ukraine. If there are no such steps, then it means they do not want these negotiations and conversations."**

Media representatives also asked about the progress of negotiations on the formation of a single gas market. The President noted that gas and energy issues were also raised at the EAEU summit. All parties expressed their position. Aleksandr Lukashenko re-

called that he and the Russian President had agreed to meet in the near future to discuss economic issues, "We agreed to discuss security issues, but most importantly, economic matters. We are set to discuss the energy issue at our next meeting."

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that in 2025 the EAEU partners should enter these single energy markets, including the gas one, "We have agreed to do it step by step, we are not capable of more. As it turns out, it is not only Russia who is not ready for such drastic moves. Almost all the countries that produce or buy, for example, gas are not ready for that today. That is why we have agreed to address the relevant issues on a bilateral format at this stage. Since the market is to be launched in 2025, let us settle this matter on a bilateral basis. We agreed on this at the one-on-one meeting [of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council]."

In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the main thing is the price of the Russian gas and whether it is comfortable for Belarus,

**"The question is not about the prices in our countries. The question is about equal opportunities that economic entities should have since we have opted for deep co-operation with Russia (because of the global crisis, wars, pandemic and so on)."**

The President cited an example of greenhouse farming, where energy accounts for a large share of production costs, "If the gas price for you is \$60 or \$80, and \$120 for us at the border, what equal conditions can we talk about here? I will not be able to sell my goods on your market. Even if I can, I will have to cut salaries and so on to be able to compete in price. The main thing is a level playing field. Let gas be at \$1,600, like in Europe, God forbid it, of course. But the price should be the same in Russia and in Belarus. This is important for us. Well, we will reach an agreement anyway."

The Head of State was asked why the countries had stopped using U.S. dollars in mutual transactions. The President remarked the decision had been prompted by circumstances, and it had been a forced step. However, Aleksandr Lukashenko said he sees no problems with it, "When we were forced to do it, I said it is okay, we are satisfied with Russian rubles."

Moreover, Belarus was the country to initiate the transition to Russian rubles in trade in energy resources, the President reminded, "If you remember, we had suggested using Russian rubles in Belarus-Russia trade. But Russia had preferred U.S. dollars. And we had to earn these dollars no one knows where and pay for oil and gas with them afterwards.

**We are now satisfied with the state of transactions in Russian rubles."**

"I am talking about the automobiles that the population needs. Not executives. Executive personnel can drive around in Aurus cars. This car will be up to snuff soon. It will be at least as good as Mercedes cars. As for trucks, Belarus and Russia make such truck brands as MAZ and KamAZ. There are also enterprises that make tractors, machines, and mechanisms for agriculture. This is why if someone is leaving, let them go. Don't hold on to anyone. But take control of the enterprise right away. Don't wait for Golovchenko and Sergeyenko to give you some instructions and change the incorporation type. It is your property as of that moment."

Aleksandr Lukashenko gave a clear instruction on how to deal with enterprises left by a foreign in-

vestor in Belarus, "If a foreign investor launched or privatised a company and a foreign investor got a company into ownership and then left (these are mainly investors from unfriendly countries and other states), tell them good bye, make a sign of the cross and thank them for leaving their property behind... I told you this when I spoke about McDonald's. It keeps working. And customers keep coming. And their products are not bad. Yet, this is already our enterprise. If they do not want to work — well, it is up to them. Our people are smart enough, as I said earlier, to be able to cut this bun into two and put lettuce leaves or a piece of sausage into it... Everything was left. They didn't take anything with them. But had they taken something, the people in charge

here would have had their heads off upon my order. No one should take anything away. You should not allow this."

The President gave an example of IKEA, "Ah, IKEA!... Good bye! We will make these chairs and other things on our own. Or components for beds. They mostly produced components for kitchen sets, for beds, furniture. Are we unable to do the same? After all, they did not take anything away and the staff is here. If the owner left, let it be. There is a strong demand on the market, in Russia, Belarus and so on, we can produce these components and supply them as we did before. Go for it!"

Based on materials from sb.by and belta.by

**Novogrudok Gas Equipment Plant is one of the largest manufacturers in its segment in the CIS market. For decades, the vast majority of the products of this enterprise found its customers abroad. At the same time, part of the export was shipped to the EU countries. Recently, for well-known reasons, the import into the EU of the main commodity item produced by the plant — gas cylinders for propane-butane — has been banned. However, having lost a significant part of the sales markets, getting more complicated and more expensive logistics, as well as difficulties associated with long, up to a month, delays in payments from Western partners, literally in a matter of months, the plant's administration managed to take the necessary measures to stabilise the situation and save jobs.**



Aleksey Bibikov



Electric and gas welder Aleksei Korneichik

Increasing deliveries to Russia, import substitution, modernisation of equipment — how the Novogrudok Gas Equipment Plant countered to economic challenges

# Progressive growth line



Project engineer on the new weber robotic gas cylinder welding line Maria Sukhova

shut-off valves for water and gas, gas-balloon equipment for cars, gas metres and much more is underway. Many directions and points of application for new developments of the engineering service of the enterprise have appeared. Due to the cessation of supplies from Western countries of a number of commodity items in Russia and Belarus,

In the future, the specialists of the enterprise are also going to look for new demanded products, the production of which will be mastered.

In addition, the cessation of supplies of a number of imported goods gave the company a chance to prove that the traditional products of the Novogrudok plant are not inferior in quality to foreign counterparts, since they are produced exclusively from the highest quality raw materials on modern equipment, identical to that used by Western European competitors.

## Investment in the future

“The most important thing in our activity is not to rest on our laurels, to follow the trends in the markets, the transformation of the global economy. We are already making plans for 2023. Investments in equipment will



Aleksey Bibikov

By Katerina Charovskaya

## We survived and adapted

“I have to say, at first we were in some confusion, because we did not know how the situation would develop further. However, no time was wasted. We put a lot of effort and even ingenuity in solving the problems that arose. This eventually paid off. I can already say with confidence that we survived and adapted to work in the new conditions,” explains Director of Novogrudok Gas Equipment Plant Igor Kaptilovich.

This is evidenced by the indicators of the plant's economic activity: for nine months, production volumes, exports, profitability and profits increased compared to the same period last year. The company partially restored deliveries to the European Union: we are talking about products whose codes were not subject to restrictions. While difficulties with logistics persist, this affects the cost and entails an increase in the cost of the assortment. Nevertheless, partnerships are gradually being restored.

“However, the most important thing that allowed us to improve last year's figures in the third quarter was deliveries to Russia. Exports to this country increased by 11 percent, and if last year Russia's share in the total export of our enterprise was 61 percent, now it has grown to 81 percent. The fact is that earlier in this market there were many offers from Western manufacturers that competed with us. Now, in many respects, they have lost the opportunity to trade with Russia, and additional niches have been vacated for us, which we are trying to occupy as firmly as possible. In this country, we have a developed dealer network with representative offices in all regions — from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok,” adds Igor Kaptilovich.

their shortage has formed, which opens up new opportunities for domestic producers.

For example, it turned out that previously all fittings for certain types of gas tanks in Russia were of European production.



Electric and gas welder Matvei Valevsky



**Novogrudok mastered the production of two types of such goods. Next in line is the development of three more. And in the future, the plant plans to completely transfer this production line to saturate the markets of Belarus and Russia.**

exceed the sums spent for these purposes in the current year.

In October alone, we visited four specialised exhibitions in Moscow, where our specialists got acquainted with the equipment offered and made

sure that there is no shortage of it. In

the future, we plan to simultaneously increase production and replace obsolete equipment with modern ones,” notes the head of the plant.

On November 1st, the third robotic line for the production of household cylinders was put into operation at the plant, which will increase the volume of their production. Fifth generation robots are more energy efficient and accurate, which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on product quality.

Thanks to the timely adoption of the necessary measures, the plant managed to maintain jobs and all social guarantees for employees, almost a thousand of whom are residents of the regional centre. The factory dormitory is being reconstructed, and the territories adjacent to it are being improved. The enterprise continues to systematically improve the working and living conditions of its personnel.

## Chance to prove themselves

Import substitution has become one of the main directions for the long-term development of the production base of Novogrudok Gas Equipment Plant. Today, the process of replacing Western manufacturers in the market of

# Technology of success

Unique legal regime, co-operation with key IT players, export of services worth billions of dollars: HTP top manager on the development prospects of the Park

The Hi-Tech Park has become one of the key projects of independent Belarus. The HTP was established with the support of the President back in 2005. Key IT giants from all over the world co-operate with the Park residents. During the work of the HTP, IT solutions have appeared in the country, which have become widely known. All this became possible thanks to the unprecedented and constantly improving conditions that all HTP participants receive today. Deputy Director of the Hi-Tech Park Kirill Zalessky said in an interview with *MT* about how the project is developing, overcoming growing competition, and what are its immediate prospects.



The Hi-Tech Park is a vivid example of an effective and economically successful model of interaction between the state and the IT community

By Ilya Kryzhevich

— For many years, news bulletins featuring the Hi-Tech Park have been of particular interest to specialists and the business community both in our country and abroad. In your opinion, what makes the Park unique today?

— HTP today is not just a technology cluster. This is a powerful driver of economic growth, which makes a huge contribution to macroeconomic stability and the development of our state. In numbers: by the end of 2021, the HTP took almost 5 percent of GDP, more than 30 percent of exports of services, and its foreign trade surplus amounted to more than 70 percent of the balance of foreign trade in goods and services of the entire country. At the same time, only 2 percent of those employed in the economy work in the Park's companies. Therefore, HTP today is one of the most effective sectors. In 2022, exports for nine months will make \$2 billion. Due to this, the budget received more than Br595 million (about \$245 million) in taxes, the share in the export of services amounted to about 30 percent.

Objectively, the figure is noticeably different from any other sector of the economy. Indeed, to create software, digital solutions, neither raw materials, nor machine tools, nor components, nor a significant amount of energy resources are required.

The main resource in this 'production process' is intelligence. The main foundation for the success of the HTP is the most powerful educational base that exists in Belarus. It is people who are the main and most valuable resource of our country in terms of digital production.

An important factor for the development of the IT sector of any country is stable access to broadband Internet. It is needed to deliver an IT product to the customer — unlike physical products, this happens instantly and without additional costs for logistics and customs clearance. Belarus has always attached great importance to the communications infrastructure, so there is simply no problem with the issue of high-quality Internet access in our country. And this, in turn, made it possible to develop the HTP on the principle of extraterritoriality, without investing budget funds in buildings, offices and without driving companies into a limited area.

— What real effect do HTP residents have on the economy of Belarus?

— It is difficult to name a sphere of everyday life where the solutions of our residents are not presented, from education and healthcare to industry and agriculture.

There are solutions on the market that allow us to pay for purchases in stores and marketplaces, pay for parking and travel in public transport, and book tickets.

Most of the developments of our residents are designed for use by small and medium-sized businesses,



which simplifies their interaction with customers. Many large Belarusian enterprises order developments that meet their requirements from HTP residents. All Belarusian banks use software developed by our residents.

Therefore, now we can safely say that our IT-sphere is not only an independent branch of the Belarusian economy, but also has a significant impact on other industries and the daily life of our citizens.

— What needs to be done by the state, companies and other players to involve residents more in the digitalisation of economic sectors?

— The Hi-Tech Park is a vivid example of an effective and economically successful model of interaction between the state and the IT community for the introduction of high technologies in the economy and social sphere. In 2021 alone, the volume of sales of IT products and services by HTP residents in the domestic market of Belarus amounted to Br1.3 billion (about \$534 million). This is an impressive amount and far from the limit.

Belarusian IT companies have all the necessary skill sets for the large-scale digitalisation in Belarus. An urgent task for us today is to make this process fast and efficient, to establish a productive dialogue between digitalisation customers represented by enterprises and contractors represented by HTP companies.

— Today we see how competitors in Kazakhstan, Armenia, Poland, Lithuania are actively developing their IT sites, creating favourable conditions for them. How to compete in such a situation?

— This issue evokes a lot of emotions. On the one hand, pride in our country, in our Park. Most of the new IT clusters and technology parks in the post-Soviet space one way or another are guided by the Belarusian experience and copy the HTP model or its individual elements. This is confirmation that we are on the right track.

Pride for our people, for our companies, which have grown in Belarus so much that other states almost change their laws in order to strengthen themselves at the expense of our specialists.

On the other hand, this suggests that in no case should we relax. Representatives of the countries you have listed, like many others, have been studying the

• In its annual Global Skills Report, the educational portal Coursera has ranked Belarus

1st in Europe and 2nd in the world



in terms of skills in technological disciplines for several years in a row.

• According to the International Telecommunication Union, in 2021 Belarus was in

10th place in Europe with an indicator of 87 percent



in terms of Internet availability in every point of the country.

• The World Intellectual Property Organisation ranked Belarus in

16th place among 132 states



in its Global Innovation Index 2021 in terms of 'Access to Information and Communication Technologies'.



HTP and the potential of our residents for years. All countries are striving to rely on digital. It is natural that competition in this area will only increase.

In this situation, it is important for us to maintain the stability of the functioning conditions in the Park. This is the most important factor for any business. If necessary, we will promptly respond to growing competition.

— Recently you noted that the global IT industry is now operating in a perfect storm. The largest players are losing capitalisation, laying off employees. Among them are the customers for whom the residents of the Park work. How can this affect the operation of the HTP?

— The Belarusian IT sector is closely intertwined with international co-operation: more than 85 percent of the Park's income comes from work in export markets. Undoubtedly, the global trends in the industry in recent months are not encouraging — the global figure is rapidly moving towards some significant shocks, and, unfortunately, they will not bypass us. But we learned a long time ago: the word 'crisis', written in Chinese, consists of two hieroglyphs — 'danger' and 'opportunity'.

Today, HTP is well positioned in the premium markets. This, by the way, is our mark of quality. In highly competitive markets, we win by quality, that's a fact. In today's conditions, the situation gives us a signal: we need to move on. To new markets, to new countries, to new customers. I am convinced that we are ready for this.

— HTP became the initiator of educational initiatives. Could you tell us more about them?

— Quality education is the key to our success. The Hi-Tech Park is actively involved in the development of a continuous system of personnel training for the IT industry in Belarus: kindergarten — school — university. Together with the Education Ministry, we are conducting a comprehensive work on the development of digital skills, covering all levels of education.

Of course, not everyone should strive to become IT specialists. But one thing is certain — the digital future has already arrived. Here and now. We must be ready for this and use all the possibilities of digital world to strengthen the prosperity of our native Belarus.

# Real genocide



# Routine of total atrocity

In Belarus, the long-term work of historians and archivists concerning the crimes of the Nazis and their henchmen on Belarusian land during 1941-1944 has been completed. We are talking about *No Statute of Limitations. Belarus* fundamental editorial and publishing project that meticulously collected six volumes of documents and other archival materials. Among them are the reports of the German secret services, the reports of the Soviet partisan detachments, as well as the acts of the Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) to establish and investigate the atrocities of the Nazi invaders, the materials of the post-war trials of the Nazi executioners and their accomplices, and written evidence from eyewitnesses. *The vast majority of these documents are being published for the first time.* Also, each volume contains lists of places of forced detention of the civilian population and detailed (regional) lists of settlements destroyed by the occupiers. In 2020-2022, six documentary collections dedicated to the terrible events in the Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev Regions were published and presented. Today we will highlight only some of them included in the volume of the *No Statute of Limitations. Belarus. Grodno Region collection.*

By Roman Rud

## Everyday murder

The first thing that attracts attention in the reports of the Nazi punishers is the obvious routine of the processes of extermination of people. There is an impression that the performers were deliberately driven by the idea that massacres are just work, not very pleasant, actually, but necessary work. Apparently, therefore, instead of executions and shootings, the reports of German officials in the occupied territory often feature such words as 'events', 'operations' or 'actions'. It felt like you read the business correspondence of some peaceful offices, mired in bureaucracy, but not the Einsatzgruppen and their commanders. As usual, there were reprimands and encouragement from the command, memos and denunciations.

This is how the head of the security police and German SD is indignant at the low rate of murders in Grodno and Lida:



German soldiers lead ghetto prisoners to the place of execution in the Lososno area. 1942

From report No. 21 of July 13th, 1941  
Only 96 Jews were exterminated during the first days in Grodno and Lida. I gave the order to intensify the liquidation of Jews in these cities.

And here he also gives an example of 'production successes':

From report No. 32 of July 24th, 1941  
Part of the squad seconded to Slonim, together with the police, carried out a major action, during which about 2,000 people were arrested for communist activities. Of these, 1,075 people were shot on the same day. One squad in Slonim was able to eliminate 84 people.

There are hundreds of such reports, records and messages. They deal with tens of thousands of 'liquidated' civilians. Obviously, the organisers of this colossus of death had the goal of giving mass crimes the character of an everyday task, freeing the executioners, according to Hitler's precepts, from such 'chimeras' as conscience and compassion. Let us remember that



Opening of the grave with the dead Soviet citizens in the vicinity of Slonim. 1944

Now on the territory of the Grodno Region there are more than 200 only certified burial places where civilians of the Grodno Region killed by Nazi executioners are buried.

SS-Unterscharführer of the 2nd platoon of the 1st company of the special SS battalion Arlt reports on duty about another ordinary case, during which he and his comrades routinely cut short the thousands of lives, "[...] On 27.6.42, almost the entire squad left for an operation in Baranovichi. The results, as always, were negative. During this action, we cleared the ghetto in Slonim. On this day, about 4,000 Jews were interred [...]"

Just incidentally. They drove to one city, dropped into another along the way, casually killed four thousand people and briefly reported. They ate well and went to another 'event'.

Moreover, not all murders were committed in such a way as to simply mechanically destroy the doomed people. In some cases, they were delivered and unbearable moral suffering. For example, during the liquidation of the ghetto in the urban-type settlement of Voronovo, they tried to kill women in front of their husbands, and children in front of their mothers. The executioners independently acted in excess of the norm of the cruelty that was required of them.

## On the accuracy of memories

The testimonies of surviving eyewitnesses of those events are replete with a huge amount of detail, which shows how thoroughly Nazi crimes were investigated in the USSR. At the same time, the detail of some of the memories is so shocking that it is not entirely clear how the human psyche could cope, for example, with such a memory of the war,

"One half of the population of our village was taken in one direction, the

other half in the other. I was with my wife Stepanida Petrovna in the first group of 156 people. She carried our three-year-old daughter Nina in her arms, and I carried our seven-year-old son Mikhail. We were led to a pit from which sand was taken during the construction of a bridge across the Shchara River. Then we all realised that they had brought us to be shot, we began to cry and beg the Germans. Women and children kissed the feet of the Germans, but they paid no attention.

Pointing to the pit, the Germans ordered to go down into it and lie on top of each other, when everyone went down and lay down, I ended up with my son at the top, hugging him with my left arm. The first machine-gun burst went over the heads of those lying, my son Mikhail was mortally wounded, a bullet on my left hand tore off my middle finger, and crushed my ring and little fingers. The son only managed to say 'Dad, it hurts' and died... When they finished shooting, the seriously wounded continued to moan. Several Germans descended into the pit and shot the wounded in the head with pistols. I pretended to be dead. From the murdered son, my whole face was covered with blood, so, the Germans thought that I had been killed..."

Pavochka Ivan Iosifovich, a resident of the village of Velikaya Volya of the Ruda Yavorskaya local council.

Incriminating testimonies of eyewitnesses reach us through the thickness of years. Witness Pashkevich: "The Germans brutally tortured the 16-year-old girl Emelyanovich, who was beaten with sticks until they killed her". Witness Ponchelyakh: "In the village of Survilishki, 7 people were killed together with the priest of the local church, who was mutilated all over his face". Witness Zavadsky: "Citizen Kholko was hung up by the Germans by his feet, then thrown into the fire, his face was all distorted..."

There are dozens of such stories in a

## REFERENCE

A large team of historians, archivists and scientists from Belarus and Russia worked on the *No Statute of Limitations. Belarus* series. The group of compilers was headed by the Director of the National Archives of the Republic of Belarus Vyacheslav Selemenev and Alexander Dyukov, the Director of the Russian Historical Memory Foundation. The publication contains materials provided by the Department of Archives and Records Management of Justice Ministry, the National Archives, the Belarusian State Archive of Film and Photo Documents, the Central Archives of the Committee for State Security, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, and the Association of Historians of the Union State. In fact, the multi-volume edition is an allied initiative of memory and consent.

huge collection of documents. As well as the testimony of people who participated in the investigation of these crimes. They must have heard enough of this and seen enough that they are clearly trying to maintain impassivity in their reports so as not to give vent to emotions. Here, for example, is what Deputy Chairman of the Grodno City Executive Committee A. A. Vladykin



Monument to the pupils of the Dyatlovo orphanage, shot by the occupiers during the war

writes to the Grodno Extraordinary State Commission, "The first to be shot in Naumovichi Fort No. 2 were 7 prisoners of war. Then mass shootings began. They brought several cars in the morning and shot them until the evening. Once they brought 25 nuns from Novogrudok. Then somehow they shot 25 hostages from the residents of Grodno: professors, priests and doctors. They shot them like this: they lead them to the pit, shoot them in the back of the head, and the man falls into the pit. One row appears, they sprinkle it with something, put the second, and so on, until the pit is filled. Then they slightly cover it with soil, so that in winter the wolves gnawed at the corpses. Once women from the village of Naumovka heard voices from under the ground..."

Each volume of the collection contains many similar documents. But even one book allows one to understand how immeasurable was the scale of the Nazi atrocities.

# Focus on biosecurity

What increases the risk of biological emergencies at the national, regional and global levels? An analysis of current trends in the field of ensuring biological safety shows that among risk factors are the intensification of the spread of infectious diseases due to natural processes and human activities, the development of genetic engineering and dual-use biotechnologies, the non-transparent military biological activities of a number of states, the backlog of poor countries in healthcare and pharmacology. The main trends in the field of ensuring biological safety are considered by authoritative Belarusian experts.



By Chairman of the Vitebsk Region Executive Committee Aleksandr Subbotin, Doctor of Biological Sciences, Professor and Deputy State Secretary of the Belarusian Security Council Aleksandr Neverovsky

## Playing with fire continues

In the media space, the situation with COVID-19, combined with the fears of some people, the political and economic goals of others, has given rise to a new 'disease' — an infodemic associated with a huge mass of fake news and pseudoscientific publications. As a result, mistrust and a negative attitude of society towards prevention and vaccination are being formed, inadequate anti-epidemic measures are being introduced, international co-operation in the field of health protection is being endangered, and the multilateral architecture of responding to global biological challenges is being destroyed.

The media continues to debate the artificial nature of the COVID-19 epidemic amid this trend. Moreover, according to Western media, American scientists have developed a new strain of coronavirus with a high probability of death. The researchers paired Omicron with the original Wuhan virus. As a result, the lethality of the new strain was 80 percent. Although Boston University scientists have been condemned for 'playing with fire', the discovery proves that dangerous virus research continues in the United States, despite fears that such a practice could trigger a pandemic. At the same time, it is assumed that it was research in the field of increasing the infectiousness or lethality of viruses that caused the coronavirus epidemic.

Of particular concern at the present stage are the widespread of microorganisms resistant to antiviral drugs, the creation of unsafe genetically modified organisms and products of synthetic biology, changes in the seasonality and geographical distribution of dangerous infections, the emergence of new and the return of known but previously contained diseases, the penetration of alien species of animals and plants.

Pathogens and products of genetic engineering are also considered in the context of potential biological weapons.

## Who puts the world at risk

Additional risks in this area are formed by the implementation of US military biological programmes around the world, primarily in the post-Soviet space. The situation in Ukraine and other CIS countries is a clear confirmation of this.

According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the amount of US funding for biological laboratories in Ukraine amounted to over \$200 million.

Russian specialists have obtained evidence that Kiev requested the opportunity to equip drones with devices for spraying chemicals with a capacity of more than 20 litres from the manufacturers of Turkish Bayraktars in December 2021.

In addition, according to the Russian Defence Ministry, over a thousand containers with anthrax

In February 2022, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus approved the Concept of the National Biosecurity System. Taking into account the nature and target orientation of biological threats, five strategic directions for counteracting dangerous biological factors have been identified:



human biosecurity;

animal biosecurity;



plant biosecurity;

genetic safety;



control of invasive (alien) species of animals and plants.



In addition, a system of indicators has been developed to assess the state of national security in the biological sphere.

and cholera pathogens were taken from Odessa to the United States in February 2022. Infectious strains were transferred to Americans without the control of international organisations, in particular the World Health Organisation, and in violation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC) of 1971.

## Focus on the main thing

The Republic of Belarus is also actively involved in the development of biological safety issues at the national level and within the framework of international co-operation. In particular, the heads of the CIS member states signed a Statement on co-operation in the field of ensuring biological safety, aimed primarily at strengthening control over activities in the biological sphere in the territories of the Commonwealth, including other states in 2021.

Furthermore, a decision was made to create a Co-ordinating Council of authorised bodies of the CSTO states on biological safety issues in 2022.

Given the increase in the level of biological threats, this issue is given the closest attention in the new version of the National Security Concept of the Republic of Belarus. It is proposed to single out a new sphere of national security — biological.

## How to protect oneself from biological threats

The most important areas for neutralising internal sources of threats to biological safety are:

- ◆ improvement of methods, means and technologies for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human and infectious animal diseases, detection of genetically engineered organisms;
- ◆ development of a biological risk monitoring sys-



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"In the context of the growing relevance of biological security problems we suggest organising a session of the relevant coordinating council of authorised bodies of the organisation's member states in Belarus. I am talking about biological security and about the organisation of an appropriate event in Belarus, but we have to honestly say something to each other after all. Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin], we often talk about biological labs. I think only Belarus and Russia don't have them, but they exist in some CSTO countries. This is why it is necessary to discuss it in Minsk and come to an agreement on the matter somehow. Biological security is no joke. We try to persuade each other while American labs or labs of other countries exist in some countries. Just like several labs have been found in Ukraine."

During a plenary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council in Yerevan on November 23rd, 2022

tem based on a network of specialised laboratories and reference centres;

- ◆ regulation of dispensing and sale of medicines intended for the treatment of infectious and parasitic diseases caused by pathogenic and opportunistic microorganisms at the national level in order to exclude their use in the absence of medical indications;

- ◆ replenishment of the data bank based on the results of collection, analysis and systematisation of information on the developed genetically engineered organisms, their movement across the border, release into the environment, use in economic activities, detection in feed, food and raw materials, risk assessment and timely response to potential threats;

- ◆ taking into account potentially dangerous biological objects, determining their list and developing a set of measures to prevent accidents and (or) sabotage at such objects, as well as to localise and eliminate related biological and social emergencies;

- ◆ increasing the personnel, material and technical potential of the state in the field of ensuring biological safety.

In turn, the main areas on which measures are focused to protect against external sources of threats to national security in the biological sphere are determined. Particular attention is paid to the creation and production of domestic vaccines, other drugs, diagnostics and protection tools, as well as genetically modified organisms.

The development of controlled biotechnologies, ensuring the compliance of food and plant products with national and international sanitary-epidemiological, veterinary-sanitary and phytosanitary requirements have a top priority among the main national interests in the biological sphere.

In this regard, the creation of highly efficient biotechnological production facilities on the territory of our country will increase the national potential in the field of biosecurity, including genetic engineering, reduce dependence on imported products, especially in the context of Western sanctions.

EXPERTS ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT A NUMBER OF INDIRECT SIGNS OF THE US CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN CIRCUMVENTION OF BTWC OBLIGATIONS. AMONG THEM ARE THE FOLLOWING:



organisation of military laboratories around geopolitical adversaries;

collection of strains of particularly dangerous micro-organisms endemic to a certain area;



participation of the military department in the financing of research projects;

increase in the number of works on the artificial creation of dangerous microorganisms with desired properties;



collection of biological material of 'mono-ethnic groups';

increase in funding for biological programmes (including in the field of synthetic biology, paleogenomics, etc.);



human trials of toxic drugs.



# Germany coup plot

German authorities carried out the biggest-ever raid targeting right-wing extremists, saying a nationwide operation thwarted a domestic terrorist group planning to violently overthrow the government

In raids across the country, German police have arrested 25 suspected members and supporters of a far-right group who were allegedly seeking to overthrow the state by force to install as national leader a prince who had sought support from Russia, according to the Federal Prosecutor's Office.

About 3,000 officers conducted the raids at 130 sites across 11 German federal states against adherents of the so-called Reich Citizens (Reichsbuerger) movement.

Prosecutors said members of the movement were suspected of 'having made concrete preparations to violently force their way into the German parliament with a small armed group'.

They added that 22 arrested individuals were German citizens and were detained on suspicion of 'membership in a terrorist organisation' while three others allegedly supported the organisation, including a Russian citizen. Other suspects were arrested in the states of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Berlin,

Hesse, Lower Saxony, Saxony, and Thuringia, as well as in neighbouring Austria and Italy.

Prosecutors said the suspects have been preparing to carry out their plan since the end of November 2021 as they were aware that it could only be achieved with force. The plot envisaged a former member of a German royal family, identified as Heinrich XIII P. R. under Germany's privacy law, as leader in a future state while another suspect, Rüdiger v. P., was the head of the military arm.

## 'Operation Klabaftermann'

This conspiracy uncovered by the German secret services is not the first case in recent years. Back in 2018, a group of neo-Nazis was detained, which included active army and intelligence officers who planned to seize power by force of arms. This spring, a coup d'état in Germany was going to be staged by a group of COVID-dissidents. It is alleged that the conspirators planned to kidnap Health Minister Karl Lauterbach. The kidnapping plan, codenamed 'Operation Klabaftermann', was supposed to be a prerequisite for overthrowing the federal government, Spiegel reports. The possibility of cutting off the electricity supply in the country was discussed in order to stop the dissemination of information in the media. It was planned to use the doubles of President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Chancellor Olaf Scholz and other high-ranking politicians to prepare the people for a change of power. It is reported that the criminals were driven to this adventure by dissatisfaction with the political situation in the country and disagreement with the policy of the authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They are accused of establishing a 'terrorist organisation with the goal of overturning the existing state order in Germany and replace it with their own form of state, which was already in the course of being founded'.

There has been a worrying rise in far-right ideology in Germany during the last few years. The Federal Ministry of the Interior reported that 327 employees of Germany's federal and state security authorities have been found to have links to hardline right-wing ideology.



## UK's first new coalmine for 30 years gets go-ahead in Cumbria

Michael Gove greenlights £165m project that will produce estimated 400,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year

The UK will build its first new coalmine for three decades at Whitehaven in Cumbria, despite objections locally, across the UK and from around the world.

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, gave the green light for the project, paving the way for an estimated investment of £165m that will create about 500 new jobs in the region and produce 2.8m tonnes of coking coal a year, largely for steelmaking.

The mine will also produce an estimated 400,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year, increasing the UK's emissions by the equivalent of putting 200,000 cars on the road.

The vast majority of the coal pro-

duced will be for export, as most UK steel producers have rejected the use of the coal, which is high in sulphur and surplus to their needs.

Where these exports will go is uncertain, as most European steelmakers are turning away from the use of coal and adopting green methods such as electric arc furnaces and renewable energy.

The government said the mine was possible within the UK's climate legislation, which requires the UK to reach net zero emissions by 2050, as operations will shut down by 2049.

A government spokesperson said the coal would be used to make steel that would otherwise have been imported and not to generate power.

## Ukraine has been sold out

Billions in EU financial assistance are not free; they're loans, which Ukraine will default on – as stated by Irish MEP Clare Daly at a meeting of the European Parliament, with a video of her performance being posted on her Twitter page

The MEP said that Ukraine is 'marked for a nightmare round of shock therapy'. This is also confirmed by economists. "The sale of public lands, deregulation of the labour market, the sale of state assets ... The country's future is being sold to finance a proxy war that's tearing it apart," the MEP said.

She noted that preconditions for issuing EU loans is Ukraine's commitment to uphold democracy and the rule of law. However, in reality, the opposite is happening: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has banned most opposition parties, shut-

tered the media, attacked trade unions and workers' rights. The European Court of Auditors has previously accused Ukraine of grand corruption, and this corruption has not gone away. Yet the EU continues to send billions of Euros to the Ukrainian authorities.

Clare Daly noted that the policy of the EU is apparently aimed at preventing the establishment of peace and continuing the conflict at any cost. At the same time, the MEP is sure that when the conflict is over, there will be little left of Ukraine. After all, 'there's going to be hell to pay for this one'.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

# Economic apocalypse

A full-fledged trade war between the EU and the US could break out as early as January 1st

Back in early August, US President Biden signed a high-profile document that provides for the introduction of \$369bn in subsidies and tax breaks from the first day of 2023 to support green business in the country, that is, that meets US environmental standards. It would seem that after so many failures in the economy, 'Sleepy Joe' and his party members were able to create a good bill designed to launch the reorganisation of the Stars and Stripes economy. However, Americans would not be Americans if they did not try to solve their problem at the expense of others. And this time, Europe became the object of pulling resources, trying its best to please its overseas partner. And they, it turns out, considered it exclusively as the second component in the 'wolf-sheep' pair.



By Anton Popov

## Reason to worry

If EU leaders fail to persuade their 'brothers' in North Atlantic unity to cancel or at least introduce some changes beneficial to Europe in the time remaining before the entry into force of the document signed by Biden, then on January 1st they will wake up in an amazing new world. A world in which the once saturated European industrial landscape is rapidly desertifying.

What is written in this scroll of the economic apocalypse? Subsidies from the state budget will be received primarily by US citizens. Payments will go to those who will apply green technologies. This is primarily about solar panels and heat pumps, as well as the purchase of electric vehicles. In addition, there are significant tax incentives for companies investing in renewable energy.

**The concept of the document is clearly protectionist in nature and is aimed at luring promising investors from other parts of the world, primarily from Europe, to the United States. The Europeans are rightfully afraid that the scheme proposed by Washington will become a powerful incentive for the movement of investments from France, Germany and other EU countries across the ocean.**

However, it should be noted that these fears are by no means groundless. It is known that several large German businesses, not particularly advertising this process, are curtailing internal operations and are preparing or have already begun to redirect investment flows from the Old World to the New. The continuing deterioration of the situation with the supply of energy resources is an additional factor. Cheap Russian gas, as it used to be and on which the well-being of the European economy has been built for the last 30 years, is no longer to be

seen. The Nord Streams have been destroyed by saboteurs, whom the police of three states have not been able to find for the second month already, and there is no turning back even if Chancellor Scholz, aptly called a 'boy' by Lukashenko, wanted to compromise with Moscow. And, frankly, Russia itself has lost interest in the Western vector of supplies. China is completely replacing it, Indian and, possibly, Pakistani contracts are on the way, and Turkey is actually going to create a large-scale gas hub.

Indignation at the inclusion of subsidies for the purchase of electric vehicles in the American bill became a separate item in this chapter of the European book of grievances. This puts the auto giants of France and Germany, which are changing their focus on the production of green cars, into the position of poor cousins.

## Into the storm

Back in September, the Swedish newspaper *Nya Dagbladet* (New Daily) published a secret document from the American RAND corporation dated January 2022, describing in detail the strategy of Washington's actions in Europe. Let us remember: the highlight of the programme was just a set of measures to take out Germany — the locomotive of the Eurozone economy. The company's analysts outlined several successive steps to achieve progress — provoking Russia into a military operation in Ukraine, imposing European sanctions and breaking off relations with Moscow, and eliminating all possible ways of supplying Russian gas to Europe. Luring resource-poor and financially stormy businessmen to the States was the icing on the cake.

We are now witnessing the final stage of the American design.

So far, one of the most typical examples is the relocation of the auto giant Volkswagen. Top managers of the 'people's car' plan to close assembly plants in Germany, the Czech Republic and

Slovakia, sending about 300,000 workers in three countries into a tailspin at the same time, and gradually transfer the capacities of enterprises to the United States. The decision is motivated by the fact that the price of gas has risen critically, and energy resources are not enough to ensure the smooth operation of conveyors in European countries.

**In other words, the German car manufacturers were faced with a simple choice: either stay in Vaterland and watch the slow death of the world famous brand, or move to the USA. They have chosen the right path from the point of view of the owners of multi-million dollar businesses living in a global world. It is difficult to judge their decision.**

## Duel with sledgehammers

The impact of the document coming into force on the first day of the new 2023 year in Europe is rightly compared to a backhand blow with a heavy hammer. Of course, EU leaders are not going to sit idly by and have already started preparing their response. The Germans were the first to start, threatening to apply to the WTO, the rules of which contradict the adopted law. However, the effectiveness of such a move tends to zero, since the Americans will either drag out the process indefinitely or refuse to comply with the decision of the organisation. However, there is apparently some understanding of this among the heads of the countries of the Eurozone, and, they are hastily looking for a way to strike back amid attempts at negotiations and threats of lawsuits.

At the end of November, Bruno Le Maire and his German colleague Robert Habeck said at a meeting in Bercy that they 'have a common point of view in the face of the threat posed by the Inflation Reduction Act to the competitiveness of the European economy'. In practice, this should mean creating a range of

joint projects that will benefit both sides of the Rhine. They will concern developments in the field of artificial intelligence, the use of hydrogen as a fuel. In addition, France and Germany intend to solve the problem of excessive bureaucratic delays that inevitably arise when considering new projects by the European Commission.

In addition to interstate projects designed to strengthen the potential of a united Europe that is bursting at the seams, it is planned to develop national programmes as well. Thus, the Fifth Republic intends to bring to mind the France 2030 plan, aimed at supporting industrial innovation and green technologies. Of the €54 billion pledged in it, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne proposes to use €10 billion to support industry until the end of this year. Also, Madame First Minister believes that it would be a good idea for France to increase the number of sponsored promising start-ups from 250 to 500 per year, attract young professionals and increase support for initiatives in the provinces, and not just in Paris and its environs.

**The plans look very promising on paper — if to abstract from reality, one might even think that European politicians have regained their sense again. However, let's take a sober look at the situation.**

Firstly, the union of Paris and Berlin, despite the rhetoric, is situational and depends on external factors. In fact, at any stage, a joint defence plan may crumble from a collision with insurmountable contradictions. Macron's visit to Washington will be the first point of bifurcation for it. Old fox Biden and his team may well be offering the French phone talker some indulgence for Fifth Republic companies and LNG discounts in exchange for stopping building a single European protection belt.

Secondly, the effect of illegal sanctions against Belarus

and Russia has a cumulative rebound effect. In other words, the funds planned for development within the framework of ambitious programmes can burn out in an inflationary fire or be urgently transferred to solve immediate problems.

Thirdly, no one is going to retreat from the injection of billions into Ukraine without the slightest chance of ever receiving a material benefit.

**So, this means that the leaders of the EU themselves do not see a way out of the scheme of the collapse of the European economy imposed by the United States, probably not fully realising the scale of the tragedy into which they are dragging the entire continent.**

Finally, fourthly. Does anything prevent the United States from carrying out a couple more sabotage if the Europeans reach agreements on a joint fight against American protectionism? Therefore, even in the event of an unprecedented bout of consolidation, America has the opportunity to deliver a few more blows to pain points, and the EU elites will humbly put their necks under the Stars and Stripes yoke.

The law, which will come into force on January 1st, clearly shows that the collective West is in fact quite heterogeneous. There is an almost omnipotent overlord within the Atlantic community in the person of the United States, which is free to do whatever it wants, circumventing, if necessary, both international laws and the interests of supposedly allies. There are its vassals — of different levels. Some obediently fulfil their will and do their best to take the initiative to please the master (like Poland or the sham Baltic Tigers), others try to express disobedience and push their line, and they are punished for this, taking away large industrial orders and cutting off from important economic partners. This situation is quite typical for France or Germany.

# Not a day without drive

## Motorcyclist twins Zhivutskys from Orsha and their twin wives travel around Belarus on personally created trikes

**What biker doesn't like to ride fast? Andrei and Valery Zhivutsky are no exception. The brothers are multiple champions of Belarus in sidecar motocross. Moreover, they participated in the World Cup. They have been going, or rather riding, to the cherished goal for more than a dozen years in order to perform well at international competitions in their 50s!**

By Anna Naumova

### Sensation on the way

The Zhivutskys, the natives of Orsha, gained popularity in 2020 after their 'mystical wolf' was first spotted on the roads in February. So the brothers themselves call the exclusive personally created trike. In Belarus, there are no analogues to their burgundy masterpiece. According to the documents, this is a tricycle, notes Valery, "That is a vehicle on three wheels. In this case, the two rear ones are from Mercedes-Benz, and the front one, like the brakes, is from a Japanese motorcycle. Under the hood is a six-cylinder V-engine from a German SUV, which produces 320 horsepower capacity."

When one looks at a tricycle, one will never say that it was created in a garage, but not at a factory. Elegant classics, power and strength — a combination of convertible and motorcycle in one body is impressive. Andrei picks up the conversation,

**"How do people react? Very positive! They smile, take pictures, shake hands. At home, everyone is probably already used to us. But our device makes a sensation at motorcycle rallies in other cities, including Russian ones. It is immediately clear where we are from: the flag of Orsha flutters next to the state flag of Belarus."**

Any routes are available to the Zhivutskys tricycle completely legally: it was allowed to drive on the roads after inspections by the Joint Institute of Mechan-



ical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. By the way, the acoustic system is a special pride of our heroes. The sound is such that the trike attracts attention from afar.

Interesting fact: the Zhivutskys only graduated from the Radio Engineering School. The rest is years of practice.

"We have our own motorcycle shop. It seems that we can 'bring to life' any transport. But seriously, dreams come true —



Anton Stepanishev

we dreamed of our own trike from our youth. At the age of 14, my brother and I began to engage in motorsports. And the design debut happened even earlier, in the third grade. We assembled the first, wooden, trike, 'reviving' it with a moped engine," Andrei explains.

Our heroes have the passion for technology for a reason. Their father — Mikhail, a cool specialist, a sixth-category toolmaker has always been and remains an example for them. The brothers also warmly recall their first motorsport coach, Sergei Ratkevich.

### Creativity of two generations

Zhivutskys do not stop their garage experiments. Now they are on fire with another project. If the previous brainchild took almost a year and a half, then the new trike is expected to be brought to people in the spring.

Andrei opens the jacket with another three-wheeled masterpiece, "We'd like you to meet our new project! We plan to make it more powerful

than the 2020 trike, with an eight-cylinder engine. Of the features, there are a pneumatic duct, an unusual shape, the most open frame and large wheels... For now, we are drawing an image in our head in the spirit of the Mad Max movie. We hope to surprise everyone again."

The sons of Zhivutskys also willingly joined the technical creativity, well, there is no other way to call this process. The elders Slava and Alexander are engineers by profession, their professional knowledge is very useful. The younger Vlad and Seva are also keen on engi-

neering. For sure, no one is forced into the garage in our family, says Valery, "We are sure that we can inspire someone only by our own example. And so it happened: our guys were imbued with motor vehicles and everything related to it from childhood."

Zhivutskys has not only original trikes in their collection. Their unusual bright yellow Harley-Davidson motorcycle, which the residents of Orsha

chines and specific equipment are needed. So this would be — and our domestic bike will one day be on a par with real motorcycle legends. Is it possible to get on stream? Why not! The name is ready: 'Belarus' — with love for the Motherland."

### Feeling the wind at one's back

The crew of Zhivutskys is always in the spotlight on the road, not only thanks to Andrei and Valery, who are like two drops of water, but also to beautiful wives who share their motor passion. Tatyana and Oksana are also twins — what a coincidence!



have adapted for themselves, has recently raced across the roads in Moscow. Rear wheel, to be specified, is 30 centimetres wide and reshaped, "Russian friends called us, they said that our bike with the author's upgrade could not be confused with anything else.

**To be honest, the more we look at a variety of motor vehicles, the more acute the desire to create something of our own, Belarusian, appears. Completely domestic — from the frame and engine to the wheels — a motorcycle."**

The brothers found their soulmates when they were still first-graders. And they decided to get acquainted a year before the army, Valery laughs,

**"Next year we will celebrate a pearl wedding, 30 years together. Wives are our reliable rear, the best support, our backbone. Even our first trike would hardly have taken place without them. When everyone around dissuaded, they say, the idea is empty and complicated, Tanya and Oksana motivated us: 'Everything will definitely work out, we believe in you!'"**

It cannot be otherwise, Oksana says with a smile, "We are proud of our husbands, their talent, incredible capacity for work, if you like, courage. Perhaps, their stroller was the only hundred percent at the World Championships. This applies not only to the ride itself, but also about the total age of the crew members."

Tatyana, like her sister, is not only a car, but also a motorcycle lady. She says they've both had motorcycle licenses for five years, "In fact, we began to enjoy the feeling of the wind behind us a couple of years ago, when we started riding a trike together with our husbands. And not so long ago they presented us with a gift that could only be dreamed of — a snow-white tricycle."



Aleksandr Kulevsky



# Both snow and laughter

What Belarusian ski centres offer this season

**From the very first day this winter turned out to be real and snowy. Many Belarusians did not waste time and, having grabbed skates, tubings and skis, set off to break in the ice and snowy slopes. Ski centres of the country take hundreds of people even on weekdays. We also went to the most popular ice hills in Minsk and the metropolitan area to find out what emotions one can get there and how much money it will take.**

By Inna Gorbatenko

## Solnechnaya Dolina

In the ski centre, which is located in the Kurasovshchina microdistrict, there are two slopes — training and main. So far, only the training slope is working, but very soon, after snowmaking, the main one will be launched.

The length of the training slope is 120 metres with a height difference of up to 30 metres. The main one is slightly larger: its length is 215 metres, the height difference is 40. In the centre, one can take lessons from an instructor who will train both adults and children to ski.

Equipment rental on weekdays is open from 12:00 to 22:00, on weekends it opens two hours earlier. Not only skis and snowboards are offered, but also tubing, which one can ride in the city park, which is literally 80 metres away. The cost of renting a ski or snowboard kit for adults is Br12 per hour on weekdays and Br15 on weekends and holidays. Lift services for adults cost from Br7, for children — from Br4 per hour. The instructor's lesson will cost Br50.

## Logoisk

The training slope has already been covered with snow and two tracks have been built on the site of this ski sports and recreation complex.

In the near future, they plan to open another track and use a drag lift, set up a snowpark and an airbag.

“Extreme lovers will appreciate interesting figures for performing tricks of dif-



Aleksandr Kulevsky

ferent complexity levels. Here, throughout the winter season, one can hone his or her skills,” notes head of the sales service Yegor Yatskevich.

A special track equipped with a lift is equipped for snow tubing. The track turned out to be very fast, says Yegor Yatskevich, “We even specially rounded the descent in order to slow down the speed of movement on it a little for the safety of vacationers. People can ride tubing with us from the age of six. However, I would advise parents to watch the children before letting them go up the hill. High speed on a rolled slope can scare the baby.”

About 400 people visit Logoisk on weekdays, and on weekends the number of visitors can reach 2,000. Security issues are given special attention. On the lifts, operators monitor the boarding and disembarking of guests and, if necessary, adjust the speed until the lift comes to a complete stop so that beginners can get off it.

Prices in the ski centre remained at the



Aleksandr Kushiner

level of last year. It offers rental of snowboard and ski equipment. It, by the way, has been significantly upgraded this season, especially children's models. One set for two hours will cost Br15 on weekdays and Br18 on weekends. An electronic pass for the ski lifts on a weekday costs Br22 for two hours, on weekends — Br33.

In the upcoming season, Logoisk will continue to organise night skiing on Fridays and Saturdays from 22:00 to 02:00. Renting one set of equipment for night skiing will cost Br20, a ski pass for two hours — Br30.

## Silichi

Preparation for skiing in the republican ski centre began at the end of November. It takes an average of 5 days to make the tracks snow, and then the slopes are levelled by snow groomers — special snow compactors. There are five tracks, including one training track.

“The visitors highly appreciated the

quality of the slope preparation. At the same time, our slopes are designed for different skill levels of vacationers: both for beginners and for experienced skiers or snowboarders,” says chief marketing specialist of the Silichi Republican Ski Centre Diana Pavlovich.

Prices for services at Silichi remain quite affordable: a two-hour ski pass costs Br25 on a weekday and Br35 on weekends. The equipment fund has been upgraded for the current season. Renting a ski or snowboard kit for two hours on a weekday and weekend will cost Br18 and Br22, respectively.

There are other leisure options as well. For example, an ice skating rink has already opened, and a tubing track has been launched. Of the free entertainment — the trail of health. It's over 400 steps down the hill surrounded by incredible winter scenery.

Diana Pavlovich emphasises, “On weekends, the centre is visited by 7-10 thousand people. Guests come from all over Belarus, there are especially many visitors from Minsk and nearby regions. Residents of more remote geographical areas choose to stay in our hotel and perfectly combine it with skiing. There are also a lot of guests from Russia. New Year and Christmas holidays in our centre have long been sold-out, every room. The centre has completely renovated guest cottages, reconstructed baths. The Wellness Centre has prepared unique programmes aimed at losing weight, including profile procedures and the development of individual nutrition. It's a perfect opportunity after the holidays!”

Indeed, we don't have our own Alps, but the relatively mild climate, the absence of the risk of avalanches and the modern infrastructure of our ski centres with traditional Belarusian hospitality attract tens of thousands of tourists here. It is no coincidence that last season Silichi and Logoisk entered the top 10 best ski resorts among the CIS-countries.

## REFERENCE

This winter, 14 ski slopes with a total length of more than 24 kilometres, 27 ice rinks and 31 hockey rinks will be organised in Minsk.





Anton Stepanishchev

## Photo of the week

Machine milking operator of Novye Goryany company from Polotsk District Oksana Valevko has recently been awarded the Medal for Labor Merits

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**December 16th** is International Summit Day — a holiday not only for alpinists and climbers, but for conquerors of heights in the literal sense of the word. This is a holiday for everyone who strives for new heights of personal and career growth, does not give up on the way to the goal.

**On December 17th, 1992**, the Museum of Warriors-Internationalists was founded in Vitebsk on the initiative of the city and regional associations of veterans of the war in Afghanistan. The museum funds include collections of: documents, photographic documents, manuscripts, printed publications, clothing, weapons, faleristics, household items, numismatics and bonistics, etc.



**December 17th** is Day of Belarusian Cinema in the Republic of Belarus. This professional holiday of republican cinematographers was established by a presidential decree in 1994. It was on December 17th, 1924, that the State Administration for Cinematography and Photography — 'Belgoskino' was created. In 1926, Belarusian viewers saw



the first domestic 'action movie' — *Forest Story* by Yuri Tarich, based on the *Swineherd* story by Mikhas Charot.



**December 18th, 1990**, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted.

**On December 18th, 1882**, the first telephone lines were installed in Belarus (between the Gomel estate of Prince Paskevich, his castle, factories and estates).



**On December 18th, 1994**, the Chauvet cave gallery [grotte Chauvet in French] with unique prehistoric rock art was discovered in France. The age of some drawings reaches 30,000-33,000 years. In 2014, the cave was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Currently, it is closed to public access in order to preserve the wall paintings.



**On December 20th, 1699**, Decree of Peter the Great was issued on the transition of Russia to a new chronology and New Year from September 1st to January 1st. By his decree, Peter the Great ordered to decorate houses with pine, spruce and juniper branches, as a sign of fun, to congratulate each other on the New Year and the centenary on January 1st, 1700. These fresh New Year's customs took root in Russia quite quickly, because earlier at that time in Rus' one of the most beloved periods of the year was celebrated — Big winter Christmas time. And many old rituals — funny carnivals, tricks of mummers, sleigh rides, midnight divination and round dances around the Christmas tree — fit well into the New Year's ritual.

**On December 20th, 2000**, The British Parliament approved cloning, but only for medical purposes. The first cloned mammalian animal, Dolly the sheep, became a genetic copy of the cell donor sheep. This experiment gave rise to a whole series of cloning from the somatic cells of various animals.



**December 21st** is Winter solstice. This astronomical event, which was considered one of the most important in the annual cycle in ancient times, along with three other equally significant astronomical phenomena: the days of the summer solstice, spring and autumn equinoxes. On this day, the Sun is at its lowest point on the ecliptic, and the daylight hours are the shortest of the year.



**On December 21st, 1891**, Basketball's birthday is celebrated — it was then that the first basketball game in history took place. The game was invented by physical education teacher James Naismith (Massachusetts, USA). The rules of the game, which Naismith wrote, consisted of 13 points. Most of them operate to this day.

**On December 21st, 1957**, the Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas literary awards were established for the best works of poetry, dramaturgy, prose and literary criticism (since 1965 they have been given the status of the State Prizes of Belarus in the field of literature).

