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# Green Belarus News & Events in Belarus

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## BELARUS, UKRAINE TO HOLD ECOLOGICAL MONITORING OF KHOTISLAV CHALK PIT

**Belarus and Ukraine have successfully implemented the first pilot project on post-project analysis within the UNECE Espoo Convention, BelTA learnt from the UN Department of Public Information in Belarus.**

A subregional conference in Minsk on 15 April will highlight the results of the first pilot project on post-project analysis within the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo). The UNECE jointly with the UN Development Program provided support to the two countries in conducting monitoring and analysis of environmental transboundary impact from the use of the Khotislav chalk pit in Belarus located in 250m from the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. One of the main achievements of the project is the setting up of the bilateral working group on ecological monitoring of the Khotislav chalk pit (Malority District, Brest Oblast). The countries also agreed to continue an annual exchange of the monitoring data and make this information available on the websites of the environment ministries.

Recommendations for both the countries were elaborated during the implementation of the pilot project regarding further improvement of transboundary environmental impact assessment with an emphasis on the post-project analysis. The project also envisaged the inclusion of additions on the post-project analysis into the bilateral agreement on the implementation of Espoo Convention, which signing is currently negotiated by Belarus and Ukraine.

At today's conference Belarus and Ukraine will

share experience on the application of the post-project analysis with other countries of the subregion (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova) and neighboring countries (Poland in particular). Besides, the results of the project will be presented at the meeting of the Espoo Convention parties which is to take place in Geneva on 2-5 June 2014.

The project was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the

Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine in association with the UNECE, UNDP and UNEP. The project was financed by the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.

The project has also made its contribution to a bigger regional project of the European Commission, Greening economies in the European Union's Eastern Partnership countries EaP Green, implemented by the OECD in cooperation with

UNECE, UNEP, and UNIDO.

The convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context was developed under the aegis of UNECE in the city of Espoo, Finland in 1991. The Convention entered into force on 10 September 1997. The Espoo Convention which has been so far joined by 45 countries stipulates the assessment of environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. The convention also obliges states to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that might have adverse environmental impact across borders.

*belta.by*  
15.04.2014



## EU-FAO PROJECT TO DISPOSE OF OBSOLETE PESTICIDES IN BELARUS

**The project of the European Union and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on the reduction of risk to the environment and public health posed by obsolete pesticides has started in Belarus, BelTA learnt from the press service of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry.**

This is a technical assistance project named "Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union."

The project aims to enhance the development and application of a systematic approach to the problem of the elimination of obsolete pesticides, persistent organic pollutants and hazardous wastes in this country.

The Ministry noted that the measures carried out as part of the project are expected to improve the national system of obsolete pesticides management. The project is designed

to ensure the security and environmentally sound elimination of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides. Plans have also been made to conduct a detailed analysis of the life cycle of pesticides for subsequent actions to minimize their impact on human health, the environment, and the environment, including search for opportunities to reduce dependence on the application of highly hazardous pesticides.

"The project is expected to

result in the reduction of risk of pesticides damaging human health and the environment in the former Soviet Union, in particular through the destruction of obsolete pesticide stocks which are priority for Belarus," stressed the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry.

FAO will implement the project in Belarus. The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry and the Agriculture and Food Ministry will be the national coordinators of the project.

Taking part in the project are Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the environment, including search for opportunities to reduce dependence on the application of highly hazardous pesticides. The total budget is €7 million.

*belta.by*  
9.04.2014



## NOVOGRUDOK TO JOIN BELARUS GREEN CITIES PROJECT

Novogrudok will be one of the three Belarusian towns that will take part in the project Belarus Green Cities: Supporting Green Urban Development in Small and Medium Sized Cities in Belarus. The project is run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Deputy Chairman of the Novogrudok District Executive Committee Sergei Falyk.

One of the cooperation areas will be implementation of the pilot sub-project on energy efficient street lighting. The town will get a \$600,000 grant to implement the project. A feasibility study of using new energy efficient lighting technologies will be conducted and the existing street lighting infrastructure will be replaced. After the project is completed, greenhouse gas emissions are projected to reduce by 1,000 tonnes. The project is going through the approval stage now. A working meeting to discuss the project took place in Novogrudok in April. The town was visited by GEF experts, the project coordinator and manager. The next meeting is scheduled for May.

Chief specialist of the economy department of the Novogrudok District Executive Committee Natalia Matsko noted that in February 2013 Novogrudok joined the international initiative Covenant of Mayors East and signed the Covenant of Mayors. This covenant has a total of 5,400 signatories, including 7 Belarusian cities. In order to fulfill energy-efficient and sustainable



development targets stipulated by the covenant, Novogrudok shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020, increase the share of renewable energy sources, cut down on energy consumption and come up with a plan to promote energy efficiency. One of the first steps to fulfill these obligations will be participation in the Green Cities project. Apart from Novogrudok, another two Belarusian cities are taking part in the project. They are Novopolotsk and Polotsk. The project aims at minimization of inputs of energy, water, and food and waste, output of heat, and air pollution.

According to the economy department, Novogrudok consumes over 56.6 million kWh of energy per annum. It generates 25.6 million kWh of energy using its own energy-generating facilities (cogeneration plants). The first Belarusian wind turbine with the capacity of 1.5MW was constructed near the village of Grabniki in Novogrudok District. Since it was commissioned in May 2011, it has produced 12.3 million kWh of energy. Another six wind-driven power generators with a capacity of 1.5-2MW will be constructed to the south of the site. The wind farm will help replace over 6.5 million cubic meters of gas and generate 22.14 million kWh per annum. Thus, Novogrudok will use only eco-friendly wind power in the future.

belta.by,  
26.04.2014

## EXPERIMENTAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PARK FOR GRODNO OBLAST

Plans have been made to create the agro-industrial park Paradise Valley in Grodno District, BelTA learnt from Vladimir Ushkevich, Director General of the Grodno Oblast Association of Farmers.

The park will be created under the auspices of the Paradise Valley farm to support the private sector of the region's agricultural complex. The creators will draw on the experience of Poland, Netherlands and Austria.

According to the project, plans have been made to build a training center for growing and processing agricultural products. The center will include a pilot mini-factory with modern equipment. In particular, according to Vladimir Ushkevich, this factory will house a shop for the cultivation of mushrooms (oyster and shiitake mushrooms), a shop for deep shock freezing of mushrooms, berries and vegetables, a drying shop, a shop with refrigeration equipment to store products and the one for thermal and vacuum packaging. Other farms of the region will also partake in the implementation of the project.

It is expected that the pilot factory will be a platform for the implementation and testing of innovations in food production and a platform for scientific research of the Grodno State Agrarian University. The center could be also used for the training of specialists in specific food industry sectors. In the future new food products may be created by this educational and industrial complex. Cadres for the agricultural sector will be trained here, too. This complex will be the core of the future agro-industrial park which will include several food processing enterprises. The park will develop new technologies and use environmentally friendly ones in food production. It is expected that the center will provide necessary support for the creation of the Belarusian Product quality mark.

It is planned to get funds for the project through international technical assistance in the form

of a UNIDO grant (the United Nations Industrial Development Organization). The Economy Committee of the Grodno Oblast Executive Committee said that about \$1 million will be utilized for the purposes of the project in 2014, of which over \$860,000 will be allocated by UNIDO. In general, all projects are expected to be completed within 30 months.

Taking part in the project to create the park are the Grodno Oblast Executive Committee, the agency in charge of financial support for private business, the Grodno State Agrarian University, the regional association of farmers and the existing Paradise Valley farm (Grodno Oblast). The National Center for Technology Transfer is the scientific coordinator of the project.



belta.by,  
3.04.2014

## Technical carbon factory in Belarus by 2017

Plans have been made to build a technical carbon factory in Belarus in association with Russia's Omsk Oblast by 2017, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Industry Ministry after a Belarusian delegation led by Industry Minister Dmitry Katerinich visited the city of Omsk.

According to the source, the Belarusian Industry Minister is confident that the construction of the technical carbon factory in Belarus will be implemented in association with Omsk Oblast by 2017. The Minister said Belarus is ready to bring investments to the Russian region. The investments may include investments in the establishment of joint ventures and enterprises to assemble agricultural machines, automobile engineering enterprises, optics and electronics enterprises.

The press service said that the sides are ready to bolster cooperation. The assembly of the latest powerful Belarusian tractors in Omsk is one of the projects, which are earmarked for implementation. The Belarusian delegation visited a transportation mechanical engineering factory on 4 April to examine the premises where the tractors may be assembled. "We are talking about the



work in Siberia.

Apart from that, the Belarusian side is interested in cooperation with the Omsk group of companies Titan. According to Dmitry Katerinich, Belarus has two oil refineries with raw materials for manufacturing artificial rubber. The Belarusian tire manufacturer Belshina uses a lot of artificial rubber. "We are also in the center of Europe and therefore are a good springboard for exporting artificial rubber," the official was quoted as saying.

In Omsk Oblast there are 11 Belarusian-Russian joint ventures specializing in agribusiness, retail trade, petrochemical industry, and transportation.

belta.by,  
04.04.2014

## POLISH FORESTERS PLANT TREES IN IVIE DISTRICT



Polish foresters have taken part in the Forest Week campaign in Ivie District, Grodno Oblast.

A Polish delegation arrived in Belarus to

share their expertise and knowledge. The Polish foresters took part in the nationwide campaign timed to the 70th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazi invaders.

The Polish delegation and their Belarusian partners planted trees – larch, pine, linden and birch – on an area of 1.5 hectares and placed a special plaque there.

The nationwide campaign Forest Week was initiated by the Forestry Ministry of Belarus and took place on 5-12 April. Over this time Belarusians planted about 3 million trees, whole allies and green areas. They also put in order military burial grounds and areas around tombs.

belta.by,  
14.04.2013

## SCIENTIST: OBJECTIVE REASONS BEHIND THE NEED TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR POWER ENGINEERING

The development of nuclear power engineering will continue and there are fundamental reasons that will make it happen. The opinion was voiced by Professor Rafael Arutyunyan, Deputy Director for Science and Promising Research Coordination of the Nuclear Safety Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, during the online conference hosted by the BelTA website on 25 April to discuss nuclear energy prospects.

According to the source, organic heat transfer agents cannot be used to provide the mankind with energy in an environmentally friendly manner. "Even with the present number of people living on the Earth the use of heat-based power engineering for other countries to reach electricity consumption levels on par with developed nations would result in an absolutely unacceptable scale of ecological problems," stressed the prominent Russian scientist.

In view of the risks relating to global warming due to the man-caused factor nuclear technology is the only one able to satisfy the basic demand of the mankind for electricity, Rafael Arutyunyan is convinced.



Construction workers started pouring concrete into the foundation of the facilities that will make up the first power-generating unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant at the Ostrovets site in November 2013. The Belarusian

nuclear power plant will boast two power-generating units with the total generating capacity of up to 2,400MW (1,200MW each). The Russian design AES-2006 has been chosen to build the power plant. The design is fully compliant with international standards and IAEA recommendations. The Russian merged company OAO NIAEP – ZAO Atomstroyexport (ASE) is the general designer and the general contractor for building the power plant. The timeline for implementing the project is stipulated by the general contract. The first power-generating unit of the nuclear power plant is scheduled for launch in November 2018

As of early April 2014 as much as 5% of the total work required to build the Belarusian nuclear power plant was completed.

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## LATEST NUCLEAR STATION STARTUP PRACTICES IN SPOTLIGHT AT OSTROVETS SEMINAR

The latest practices used to launch nuclear power plants are discussed at the international seminar of the World Association of Nuclear Operators. The seminar is scheduled to take place at premises of the enterprise Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant in Ostrovets, Grodno Oblast on 14-18 April, the press service of the Belarusian Energy Ministry.

Participants of the seminar are supposed to share the international experience of operating nuclear power plants for the sake of ensuring top safety and reliability.

The seminar will focus on the implementation of the project to build the Belarusian nuclear power plant, the creation and development of the quality management system, the production and installation of reactor parts, technical safeguards, and personnel training for nuclear power plants under construction, other matters. Members of the World Association of Nuclear Oper-

ators delegation are expected to meet with representatives of the Belarus government and the Energy Ministry.

The event will gather experts of the World Association of Nuclear Operators, from Russia, Ukraine, the USA, France, Slovakia, Iran and other countries. The seminar is held upon the initiative of the Moscow center of the World Association of Nuclear Operators with assistance of the Belarusian Energy Ministry and the state enterprise Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant.

The World Association of Nuclear Operators was founded on 15 May 1989 and unites all the nuclear station operators across the globe. Members of the organization are 34 countries, 118 companies, 210 nuclear power plants, and 441 power-generating units. The organization contributes to sharing the best practices at the international level of the sake of reaching the highest safety and reliability standards.



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## NEW CONFINEMENT ABOVE CHERNOBYL SARCOPHAGUS IN 2015

A new safe confinement will be pulled over the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant sarcophagus in 2015, said Alexander Borovoy, Doctor of Physics and Math, counsellor of the president of the Russian research center Kurchatov Institute, during the online conference hosted by the BelTA website on 25 April.

Alexander Borovoy has worked at the Shelter object in Chernobyl for many years. According to the scientist, work is in progress to create a new safe confinement for the damaged nuclear power plant. The confinement represents a metal arc weighing about 30,000 tonnes. It is being assembled to the west of the well-known sarcophagus (aka the Shelter) and will be pulled over the sarcophagus in 2015.

In his words, the Arc will be the largest pulled-over structure in the history of the mankind. The height of the arc will be even slightly bigger than the central span of the Golden Gate bridge in



San Francisco.

Asked why the Shelter object, which was built in 1986 to cover the damaged fourth power-generating unit of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, needs yet another cover, Alexander Borovoy said that the data collected by examining the inside and the construction components of the Shelter object by 1989 revealed that the Shelter represents a hazard to the environment (for instance, due to a strong earthquake) and the hazard will grow stronger with time.

Back then the Kurchatov Institute came up with the concept for an extra-long-term and environmentally safe way to safely store fuel. Plans were made to create yet another hermetically sealed solid shell that would completely isolate the outside environment from the radioactive materials still inside the destroyed power-generating unit. At the same time the shell would offer reliable protection for dismantling the unit.

"It has taken 25 years to overcome tech-

nical, organizational, and astronomical financial difficulties in order to see the huge structure now rising at the construction site. The arc costs about €1 billion at present. The project is financed by the Chernobyl Shelter Foundation arranged by donor states," said Alexander Borovoy.

In his words, the Arc boasts not only a large scale but also a complicated internal structure. Mechanisms for dismantling structures and radioactive materials in the Shelter make up a large part of the Arc.

The expert added that in autumn 2013 the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and the Russian nuclear power engineering institute NIKIET signed a protocol on prospective research and development initiatives. The initiatives include the preparation of concepts to decommission the first, second, and third power-generating units of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, concepts to handle radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, and the monitoring and reinforcement of barriers that prevent the propagation of radioactive substances.

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## ECOLOGIST: HUMAN FACTOR BEHIND CHERNOBYL TRAGEDY

Not a technological malfunction but the human factor is the reason behind the Chernobyl tragedy, said Yuri Solovyev, Chairman of the Council of the Belarusian public association Ecological Initiative, during the online conference.

"It has been proven that the human factor was the main reason behind the tragedy in Chernobyl. The considerations that were discarded 20-30 years ago have very vividly demonstrated that fooling around safety matters can have a terrible end. The impact of such errors on the nature and the mankind can last for centuries instead of decades," he remarked.

The ecologist is convinced that paying close attention to safety matters during the construction and operation of nuclear installations is the main lesson that the mankind has to learn.

In the near future the mankind will not be able to do without nuclear power engineering. It is confirmed by the recent

statement made by the Japanese authorities, who intend to continue operating nuclear power plants despite the Fukushima tragedy. Yuri Solovyev underlined that safety must be the overriding concern in the operation of any nuclear installation.

"Very modern designs are worked out these days. They focus on automatic control systems that combine active and passive safeguards. Thanks to them the possibility of emergencies at installations built using the AES-2006 design — the design is used to build the Belarusian nuclear power plant — will be virtually zero," noted the expert.

However, he went on saying, the situation must be controlled all the time, including safeguards and the personnel employed to operate nuclear installations.

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## Belarus diplomats commemorate Chernobyl at Triumphal Arch in Paris

The Embassy of Belarus in France took part in the events to mark the 28th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident.

On 26 April Belarusian diplomats laid a wreath to the Triumphal Arch in Paris to mark the anniversary of the tragedy at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Partaking in the ceremony were also Russian diplomats. The participants honored the memory of all those who were killed and injured in the accident.

According to the Belarusian embassy, commemoration days are annually held by the French organization "Association of Liquidators and Victims of the Chernobyl Accident".



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## FRANCE, FINLAND AGREE TO JOIN BELARUS NPP MONITORING



French and Finnish ecologists are ready to join the public environmental impact monitoring of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (NPP), Chairman of the Council of the Belarusian public association

Ecological Initiative Yuri Solovyov told a press conference hosted on 25 April.

"Our French and Finnish counterparts confirmed their readiness to take part in the program to monitor the construction of the nuclear power plant in Belarus," he said.

In his words, the matter pertains to the study of the NPP impact on the flora and fauna of the Viliya river basin not far from the NPP construction site and the impact of the plant on other environmental components in the vicinity. It is expected that this stage of the monitoring program will be launched this year.

Belarusian ecologists are working on the budget necessary for the implementation of these programs and reimbursement of the costs of transfer, catering and staying for foreign colleagues who are expected to partake in the monitoring, Yuri Solovyov said.

[belta.by](http://belta.by),  
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## SCIENTIST: NUCLEAR POWER SAFETY SHOULD BE FREE FROM POLITICS

Nuclear power safety should not depend on political, economic or any other factors, Deputy Director of the Nuclear Safety Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences Rafael Arutyunyan told a press conference hosted by BelTA on 25 April.



The Russian scientist pointed to one more important aspect: public perception of radiation accidents regardless their radiological impact is always sharp and leads to serious social and economic consequences. "It is not only the Chernobyl lesson but also the Fukushima accident. The very factor, given the insignificant radiological impact of the Fukushima accident on the personnel and the population, has led to considerable social and economic consequences," Rafael Arutyunyan stressed.

According to the media reports, the Japanese government has approved an energy plan that backs the use of nuclear power. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's new plan envisages idle reactors to be switched back on after they are checked by the Japanese Nuclear Safety Commission. The government's plan also promises to increase the country's reliance on renewable energy.

[belta.by](http://belta.by),  
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## Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan to discuss state support for agribusiness

State support for the farming sector will be considered at a meeting of the Prime Ministers of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in Moscow on 15 April, Belarusian Premier Mikhail Myasnikov told media at the ceremony to unveil a new technological line at OAO Korelichy Len on 11 April, BelTA has learnt.



According to the PM, the issue concerning state support for agricultural companies will be included into the agenda of the meeting with the participation of the heads of government of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.

"The Premiers will talk over the agenda of the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council which is due in Minsk on 29 April," he said. State support for agribusiness will be considered at the Troika summit in Minsk as well.

Belarus believes that state support for the farming sector should not exceed 10% of the cost of

the agricultural produce. "We understand that for a big number of companies it will be a difficult task - to produce products competitive both in quality and cost. However, this measure is objective in the open economy," the Prime Minister said. It has been earlier informed that Belarus should reach this level of support for the farming sector by 2016 in line with the agreement on the unified rules of state support for agriculture within the Single Economic Space. The document contains the norms of the WTO agreement on agriculture. In 2011 the state support stood at the level 16%, in 2013 it was lowered to 14%.

The heads of government of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan plan to discuss the main issues related to the development of the Eurasian integration and the preparation of the draft Eurasian Economic Union Treaty.

[belta.by](http://belta.by),  
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## Bright future for Belarus-Russia nuclear energy cooperation



After the commissioning of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, nuclear energy will account for about 40% of energy generated in Belarus. This will allow enhancing the energy security of the country, OAO NIAEP Vice President for Northwestern Russia and the CIS, head of the Belarusian Office of the company Oleg Spherle told reporters.

Oleg Spherle is convinced that Belarus-Russia cooperation, including cooperation in the nuclear energy sector, has a bright future. "We expect a considerable payback from the joint projects in this field. The Belarusian nuclear power plant is the biggest joint project in the history of Belarus-Russia relations," he underlined.

According to Oleg Spherle, the fact that Belarus and Russia have a common historical, cultural and ethnic background plays an important role in the development of the nuclear energy industry in Belarus. "Standards used in Belarus and Russia are similar; there is no language barrier. This all makes it easier for us to construct the Belarusian NPP, train specialists for Belarus' nuclear industry, draft the necessary legal framework and produce equipment for the Belarusian nuclear power plant," he noted.

"As we know, hydrocarbon resources are depleting and some of Europe's oldest deposits are

shutting down. Therefore, nuclear energy comes to play an increasingly big role worldwide. It will help address the issues associated with global warming. Alternative sources of energy, of course, well also be involved, however, all sensible people understand that neither bio-fuel nor wind, nor solar energy on their own will be able to meet the energy needs of the population," Oleg Spherle noted.

In his words, the major task facing the nuclear energy industry worldwide is to train and select professionals for the nuclear industry and regulating agencies. Majors in nuclear energy have been encouraged and promoted around the world; a number of benefits and bonuses are offered to encourage students to study nuclear energy. Regional information exchange networks are established; interaction between operating organizations is improved. Therefore, forums like AtomExpo Belarus are very important.

The 6th international nuclear industry expo and conference AtomExpo Belarus 2014 is taking place in Minsk on 1-3 April. The forum is organized upon the initiative of the Energy Ministry of Belarus and with the support of the Russian state corporation Rosatom. The forum showcases the latest technologies in engineering, construction, maintenance and security of nuclear power plants. The Belarusian Telegraph Agency is an information partner of AtomExpo Belarus 2014.

[belta.by](http://belta.by),  
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