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BELARUS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TILL 2030 APPROVED

The Presidium of the Council of Ministers approved the national strategy for the sustainable social and economic development of Belarus for the period till 2030 at the session on 10 February, BelTA has learned.

Proposals concerning the document's improvement were voiced at the session. Once they are implemented into the document, it will be approved by the Council of Ministers' executive order.

Opening the session, Prime Minister of Belarus Andrei Kobyakov noted that the authors of the strategy had been tasked with taking into account global trends that pose risks for the country's sustainable development. The document also takes into account changing prices for energy resources, slower growth of the global economy, and climate changes. "We should keep in mind that domestic conditions will change considerably. For instance, the construction of the nuclear power plant will affect the balance of the power grid. It is necessary to make provisions for the effective usage of the power-generating capacity to be commissioned. Plans to create industrial enterprises and other facilities that consume and store energy at off-hours have to be made," said the Prime Minister. The important matters include the strategy for the regional deployment of manufacturing forces, the national security in the sphere of economy, demography, ecology, and other spheres, added Andrei Kobyakov.

"Economy development should prioritize the establishment of manufacturing enterprises based on local resources, including as part of the Eurasian Economic Union. Products with a high added value should be made in the EEU using the full manufacturing cycle," said the Belarusian head of government.

Presenting the document, Belarusian Economy

Minister Vladimir Zinovskiy remarked that the document's strategic priorities of long-term development are based on three main components — people, economy, ecology. In his words, it will be necessary to work out effective mechanisms to further increase the birth rate, improve the health of the nation, and reduce the mortality rate. Belarus will have to accomplish the ambitious goal of becoming one of the 40 countries with the best human development index. In 2013 Belarus' HDI was ranked 53rd among 187 countries.

The strategy is divided into two phases. The first phase will take place in 2016-2020. It will see the transition to balanced economy growth via structural transformation of the economy on the basis of environmental friendliness, with high-tech manufacturing prioritized. The second phase will take place in 2021-2030. Its key purpose is to maintain steady development for the sake of raising the quality of human potential, accelerating the development of science-intensive production and services and further development of the green economy.

The accomplishment of the strategy is expected to raise the life expectancy of Belarusians up to 77 years, increase the GDP by 50-100% in 2016-2030, and increase the cost of environmental protection measures up to 2-3% of the GDP by 2030.

The national strategy for the sustainable social and economic development of Belarus for the period till 2030 will be used by central government agencies, the oblast administrations, and the Minsk city administration as the foundation for developing medium-term programs and annual forecasts for Belarus' social and economic development in addition to working out programs for the development of political units.

BELTA
10.02.2015



ELEVEN BELARUSIAN CITIES JOIN COVENANT OF MAYORS

Eleven Belarusian cities have joined the European cooperation movement the Covenant of Mayors, Head of the EU Office in Belarus Maira Mora said during the information meeting on the contribution of the European Union to the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources of energy in Belarus on 26 February, BelTA has learned.

The Covenant of Mayors is a EU initiative the participants of which pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by at least 20% by the year 2020 as against the base year through the implementation of energy conservation projects. "The Covenant of Mayors has been signed by 6,278 cities around the world, including eleven Belarusian cities and towns such as Polotsk, Novogrudok, Oshmyany, Braslav, Rogachev, Molodechno, Chausy, Liozno, Slutsk,

Maryina Gorka, and Ivye. The cities-signatories to the Covenant of Mayors get additional access to the modern energy conservation products and technologies and to the experience of other cities. They can also ask international financial organizations for consultations and financial support with the implementation of their sustainable energy action plans. Any municipalities and local government bodies of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries can join the initiative.

"Unfortunately, the movement has no national coordinators in Belarus who would promote the ideas of the Covenant of Mayors. However, the fact that eleven Belarusian cities have signed the initiative gives reason to think that the central and local government bodies in Belarus are concerned about the problems of energy conservation, use of renewable sources of energy, green econo-

my, and sustainable development. This encourages the EU to focus on these areas in its cooperation with Belarus," Maira Mora noted.

Besides, three Belarusian cities — Braslav, Polotsk, and Chausy — have been granted over €2,360,000 by the EU for the implementation of their sustainable energy action plans.

"From year to year the EU expands its presence in Belarus via trade, economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation and programs of international technical assistance. We are proud to note that the amount of technical assistance provided to Belarus is gradually increasing," Maira Mora said. She also pointed out that the relations between Belarus and the EU can be further improved.

BELTA
26.02.2015

BELARUS' WEATHER CENTER, ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CENTER MERGED

Roadmap on Belarus' accession to Minamata Convention on Mercury drafted

A draft roadmap on ratifying the Minamata Convention on Mercury has been worked out in Belarus. The information was released by Andrei Pilipchuk, Head of the Office for Atmospheric Air and Ozone Layer Impact Regulation of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, during the closing ceremony of the first regional seminar arranged for countries of Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe. The seminar was arranged in support of the ratification and timely implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, BelTA has learned.

The national roadmap for ratifying and implementing the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Belarus was drafted during the seminar. "It is a draft for now and can still be amended. It is too early to consider ratifying the Convention for now, but according to preliminary evaluations it may happen in summer 2016," explained Andrei Pilipchuk.

Belarus has been working on ratifying the Convention rather vigorously. "One month ago the Ministry prepared a document on the steps required to ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury. It has been sent to all the agencies concerned," said the representative of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry. In his words, the inventorying of mercury is one of the most important tasks in ratifying the Minamata Convention.

The first regional seminar in support of the ratification and timely implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury for countries of Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe took place in Minsk. The seminar gathered representatives of 30 countries and international organizations. Each country prepared its own draft of the national roadmap.

Belarus joined the Minamata Convention on Mercury during the UN Climate Summit in New York in 2014. The accession to the Convention will allow Belarus to become a full member of the international process that regulates the use of mercury. The Minamata Convention on Mercury covers all the possible ways of formation

(accumulation) of mercury, including mercury supplies, mining, trade and the manufacturing of mercury-containing products after 2020, emission and release of mercury into the atmosphere and water, waste treatment. The Minamata Convention on Mercury has been signed by over 100 countries, including the United States, Canada, China, Brazil, the European Union, Armenia, Moldova, and Georgia.

Mercury and mercury compounds are highly toxic substances. One of the key properties of mercury is its ability to accumulate in organisms and move along the food chain. This is particularly true for methylmercury that accumulates in the environment and human bodies. Once released into the environment, mercury keeps circulating in the air, water, subsurface layers, and soil. Mercury can travel far away from the place it was released. If released into the air on one continent, it may precipitate on another continent. Belarus is one of the countries that are most exposed to mercury emissions from other countries. "According to the latest data, Belarus collects about 900kg of mercury, with about 18% coming from Belarusian sources. This is why we are interested in getting the Convention ratified as soon as possible," stressed Andrei Pilipchuk.

*BELTA,
20.02.2015*

[MINSK TO HOST WORKSHOP ON RATIFICATION OF MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY](#)

STAKING A CLAIM ON BIOFIELD

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development-2030 (NSSD-2030), which has recently been published for public discussion, contains one point that stands apart. The authors of the document suggest putting an emphasis on the creation of a hi-tech sector of the economy with mainly V and VI technologies.

The task is quite ambitious. The fact of the matter is that it is very difficult to reach such high levels in the development of science. And without having proper centres, it is almost impossible. At the same time, our scientists state that during recent years the country has seen quite significant breakthroughs in terms of establishment and development of biotechnologies, which are the basis of many innovations of the new VI technological mode.

The word 'biotechnology' sounds obscure to the majority of us and most likely reminds us of scenes from American horror films, when experts in white chemical protection suits grow dangerous things in top secret underground laboratories. This is not the case, the rapid progress, which has occurred in biology over the last few decades, has expanded the boundaries of the application of biological processes in manufacturing. Today they are used in practically all branches of the economy: agriculture, public health services, food, light, the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Biotechnology is used to produce antibiotics, hormones, vaccines, diagnostic systems, bioplastics and for cell production. For the needs of agriculture, new species of plants and animals, forage additives, amino acids, ferments for the production of fodder and probiotic agents are produced. In the food industry, bacterial ferments, food ferments, yeast, spirit and products for functional and dietetic therapy are made.

It is clear that the economy of Belarus depends on importing various kinds of biotechnological products. According to Belstat (the National Statistical Committee of Belarus), in 2011, the volume of imported forage mixes, lactic acid, biopreservatives, bacterial concentrates and ferments cost over \$220 million. Some varieties of biotechnological production

are manufactured here, but it will still be an enormous task to escalate biotechnological manufacturing to satisfy the needs of the republic, without mentioning any exports.

The first attempt to resolve the issue was the state program for Innovative Biotechnologies for 2010-2012 and for the period until 2015. It is already possible to sum up the results. For the last three years, seven new factories were created and nearly 30 new products were developed using Belarusian innovations. The strategy was to replace imports for the huge common market of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The agricultural and pharmaceutical sectors are especially important, as they have the greatest potential for growth. The introduction of cell technologies has an important place in the plan, it covers treatments for burns, ulcers, sclerosis, leukaemia and joints etc. using stem cells. In December of this year, the Academy of Sciences will launch the centre of regenerative medicine, which will be engaged in the treatment of diseases with the use of various cells, and the first one to use stem cells at a moderate cost.

Our technologies are already used for the production of modern generics and pharmaceuticals, including antiviral and antitumor medications. These are 'clever' medicines, preparations that are new not only for Belarus, but also for the post-Soviet countries. By 2015, 10 new manufacturers will be created following the norms of GMP, and this will allow the production of pharmaceuticals with more than 300 names, to increase the volume of its manufacturing at least three-fold.

Igor VOLOTOVSKY, NAS academician of Belarus, Head of the Chair at the Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering, and scientific leader of the Innovation Biotechnologies state programme:

Between 2000 and 2010, our country considerably lagged behind developed western countries in terms of biotechnological research and developments, as well as industrial manu-

facture, although foundations were being laid to develop the biotechnological sector. The 1st Congress of Scientists of Belarus raised difficulties faced by the biotechnology industry, which inspired an instruction from the Head of State, and the 'Innovation Biotechnologies' state program was formed for 2010-2012, until 2015.

This stimulated a new economic sector, meeting contemporary world standards and setting clear objectives. For the first time within the post-Soviet space, we were endeavouring to solve the problem comprehensively, within contemporary biotechnological science, with particular focus on agricultural biotechnology (plant growing and animal breeding), biotechnologies in the food and medical industries, and bioenergetics.

The major aim is to fully satisfy domestic needs by 2015, regarding bacterial concentrates for the milk industry, blood plasma, and probiotic preparations and their adsorbents (previously imported). This should ensure import-substitution of up to 80 percent for the domestic market in biopesticides, up to 85 percent for veterinary preparations and 25 percent for bone marrow transplants. We've worked across these and some other areas from scratch, having previously imported all these.

Plans are afoot to set up production of biodiesel fuel (accounting for 8 percent of the domestic market in diesel) and biopetrol (accounting for 12 percent of the market). By 2015, annual production of innovative biotechnological goods should exceed Br500bln, while import-substitution should reach around \$150m. Meanwhile, exports should exceed \$60m.

To solve these tasks, the 'Innovation Biotechnologies-2' state programme for 2016-2025 is being drafted, taking into account the instructions of the President in March, given at a session of leading national scientists.

By 2020, the biotechnological sector of the economy should have reached the volume of production equivalent to \$500 million, and export deliveries of biotechnological production up to \$100 million. It is planned to continue the development of domestic biotechnologies and the creation of new enterprises using these technologies. Low-tonnage manufacture on the removal of human lactoferrin from genetically modified goat milk is one industry that will appear in the country.

*Belarus-Magazine,
19.02.2015*



BELARUSIAN EMERGENCIES MINISTRY TO GET LONG-RANGE UAV IN 2015

In 2015 the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry will get an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with the operational range of up to 290km. The information was released by Yuri Yatsyna, head of the R&D center for UAV technologies of the Physics Technology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, at the press conference held on 10 February to discuss innovative technologies for unmanned aerial vehicles, BelTA has learned.

Yuri Yatsyna explained: "This year our latest product — an unmanned aerial vehicle Burevestnik with the operational range of up to 290km — will be supplied to the Emergencies Ministry. Apart from that, starting this year we will prepare such systems for batch production".

In his words, the drone can stay in the air for up to ten hours as high as 5,000m. It can fly as fast as 120kmph in the deployment area. The UAV can be used for recon missions, for detecting emergencies and assessing their development, for monitoring agricultural crops. It will be possible to use the system later to monitor radiation status in the area of the construction site of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. The data will be fed in real time, noted the head of the Belarusian R&D center for

UAV technologies.

The R&D center for UAV technologies was created in 2011 as part of the program for the innovation-driven development of Belarus. The first phase of the facility to make small-range unmanned aerial vehicles was commissioned in 2012. The second phase of the facility to make UAVs with the operational range of up to 290km will be commissioned this year, said Yuri Yatsyna. The facility can make more than ten small-range UAVs per annum. Once the second phase of the facility is commissioned, it will be able to also make from five to ten long-range UAVs per annum.



The R&D center for UAV technologies of the Physics Technology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus is the CIS only enterprise certified to batch produce unmanned aerial vehicles of its own design. The center can develop and batch produce several kinds of merchandise, including compact unmanned aerial vehicles with the operational range of 25km and 50km, an environmental monitoring UAV based on a dirigible, the Burevestnik UAV as well as photosystems for UAVs and automatic control systems.

BELTA,
10.02.2015

PROJECT TO DEVELOP JOINT GEOPORTAL IMPLEMENTED IN EUROREGION BUG

The first investment project to develop a joint geoinformation portal has been implemented in the Cross-Border Association Euroregion Bug, BelTA learned from project coordinator, chairman of the board of the Brest Oblast Green Tourism Promotion Center Agro-Ecotour Alexander Ivachev.



The geoportal and a new geographical information system are part of the project "Geographical information system across the border - a joint platform for territorial management in the Euroregion Bug" that was implemented in the period from 1 November 2014 to 31 January 2015 in line with the cross-border cooperation program "Poland-Belarus-Ukraine" set to run in 2007-2013. The program's total funding exceeded €330,000. The bulk of the resources was provided in the form of international technical aid, i.e. grants of the European Union. The project is designed to promote cross-border development and improve the investment and tourist appeal of the region.

The geoportal offers a joint database containing data about the bordering territories of the three countries (Brest Oblast of Belarus, Volyn Oblast of Ukraine, and Lublin Voivodship of Poland) in the form of

geospatial maps with multiple scales. The new software product provides information about tourism, culture, entrepreneurship, education, investment advertising and commercial advertising, power engineering, business and science, labor market. The geoportal is meant for a broad range of users, like potential tourists and investors, entrepreneurs, members of local self-government and residents of the Euroregion Bug.

"A huge part of the efforts was channeled into displaying cultural and historical identity of the regions and their tourism potential. This information will be of interest not only to local residents, but also people living far away from the Euroregion Bug. The investments-related information will help businesses get a clear picture of opportunities for implementing investment projects in their home countries and jointly with members of the Euroregion Bug," Alexander Ivachev said. He hailed the creation of the portal as a new innovative approach to successful development of cross-border territories.

According to him, the database of the portal will be regularly updated and fleshed out by relevant information. The portal can be found at the following address: <http://euroregionbug.maps.arcgis.com>.

BELTA,
4.02.2015

HERO FROM RETINUE OF FATHER FROST

Last year, when Belarusian Father Frost celebrated his 10th anniversary, many fairy tale guests gathered at his residence in Belovezhskaya Pushcha, alongside Russian Father Frost, from Veliky Ustyug, and other 'spirits of the cold': Tatar Kysh Babay, Karelian Pakkaine, and, from the most northern part of Belarus, Vitebsk Region, Zyuzya Poozersky (the god of winter) and Bolotnik (the marsh demon). The latter has 'lived' in the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve for the past four years, entertaining tourists and arranging excursions year round, while participating in the New Year performances. On the eve of 2015, Bolotnik will receive dozens of tourist groups from Belarus and abroad.

Bolotnik is known for his terrible pranks, rather like Leshy (the wood goblin). According to folk tales, he likes to lead unwary travellers astray, together with their horse, taking them into the marshes, where they might drown. Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve guide Victor Rovdo tells us that the character at the reserve is far more good-natured. "I'm engaged in developing ecological tourism here, arranging cycle trips through the dense forest and kayaking along the River Berezina. For 100km, you can wander without seeing a village. I used to run an amateur theatre in the city of Vileika, working as a producer, which taught me that people (and children especially) find it hard to concentrate on monotonous lecturing. It's far better to replace a traditional guide with a recognizable



folklore character."

More than half of the territory is covered by marshland, so it's logical that Bolotnik has come to live at Berezinsky Reserve. Victor assures us that he never practices malicious mischief in his role, only entertaining guests and presenting gifts, while telling interesting stories about nature. If anyone throws litter, he may throw water over them or clap next to their ear to surprise them.

Bolotnik lives in a timbered izba but also has a modern mobile phone, to ensure he stays in touch with all those who wish to come and visit. Around 50 groups from Belarus and Russia wish to visit this New Year, and all of them will see Bolotnik as they tour the Reserve. In winter, he often begins snowball fights, makes snowmen, or skies and sleighs with guests.

Guests can also hire quadbikes fitted with skis and a caterpillar chain at the rear. Everyone admires the beautifully decorated fir tree and the dramatized performance of the abduction of Father Frost, in which friendly Bolotnik releases Father Frost from the wicked Baba-Yaga (from Russian folk tales) and Kikimora (a hobgoblin in female form). New Year performances are held in Berezinsky Reserve from December 15th, while Belovezhskaya Pushcha will host a whole range of festivities to delight visitors.

Victor tells us, "Last year, we launched the Fairytale Verst, while 2014 sees us present sculptures of folk characters, including Zyuzya and Bolotnik." Unsurprisingly, most people like to purchase a souvenir of

the visit, especially children, and many offer their gifts to Bolotnik, or like to have their photo taken with him, for display on social networks. The management of the Reserve is determined to promote such folk characters and is considering adding a Fairy Tale Glade, with a maze, magic sculptures and various bridges.

UNESCO experts recently visiting the Reserve were impressed by the fantastic guide, who lives in his log izba and tells guests how to care for nature. Occupying 85,000 hectares, the park is utterly breathtaking, while its marshes are truly the 'lungs of Europe'. The more people who see its beauty and learn about environmental problems, while breathing the pure air, the better. Regardless of the season, warm or cold, it is an unforgettable destination.

Zyuzya is Belarusian Father Frost's deputy: the lord of cold and god of winter is still called Zyuzya Poozersky, because he lives in Belarusian Poozerie (a place known for its lakes) in Postavy District. Long ago, he was imagined as an old man with a long beard, living in the forest, going barefoot and causing snowstorms and severe cold. When there is a strong frost, it's said that he has been beating trees with his mace, making them crackle. From time to time, Zyuzya goes into villages to warn farmworkers of approaching cold weather, so that families remember to eat kutiya (boiled rice with raisins and honey). People say: 'When Zyuzya is in the courtyard, then kutiya is on the table' or 'He has frozen, like Zyuzya!'

Experts at the Postavy Tourist Centre have revived this folklore character, at whose residence herbal tea and draniki are offered, alongside spiced cake in the shape of a snowman. You can make a penny whistle from clay or join in a cheerful New Year performance. Sadly, for the two last seasons, he has been without a home, as a new residence is sought.

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BELARUSIAN UNIVERSITIES SEEK DIRECT CONTACTS WITH UAE INSTITUTIONS

Belarusian universities are interested in establishing direct ties with educational institutions of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), First Deputy Education Minister of Belarus Vadim Bogush told BelTA as he commented on the meeting with the delegation of the UAE official and business circles that paid a visit to the Education Ministry of Belarus.

The meeting discussed education opportunities for UAE citizens in Belarus, terms for the implementation of joint education and research projects in environmental protection and water resources, information systems and technologies, renewable energy sources, materials science and engineering, machinery manufacturing, microsystem technology. Vadim Bogush stressed that "the Belarusian side is interested in expanding international cooperation in education and establishment of direct ties between universities."

Undersecretary of the Education Minister of the UAE Marwan Ahmed Al Sawaleh confirmed mutual interest. "We would like to intensify our cooperation. We believe that your country makes the right emphasis on education and science. The UAE runs many programs related to higher education. We plan to use higher education as a basis for the establishment of high achievements in the scientific area. The Emirates are also a center of attraction in the economic sector. We are very much interested in cooperation with the economic and technical uni-

versities of Belarus," he said.

Bilateral cooperation in education is developed under the memorandum of understanding the governments of Belarus and the UAE signed to develop cooperation in higher education and research in 2013. Two citizens of the UAE receive education in Belarus this year.

Attending the discussion of the interuniversity cooperation were representatives of universities. Thus, the representatives of Pavel Suhoi State Technical University of Gomel showed interest in establishing contacts with Masdar Institute of Science and Technology. Joint training was suggested in computation and information sciences, electrical energy industry, engineering systems, materials science and engineering, machinery manufacturing and microsystem technology. International Sakharov Environmental University is interested in training personnel for the UAE in environmental protection and water resources, information systems and technology, renewable energy sources. Pushkin State University of Brest shows interest in training staff for the calculations systems and environmental protection.

The Education Ministries of the two countries consider linguistic training of UAE citizens in Belarusian universities as a promising area of cooperation. They also believe as promising to organize training of UAE nationals in the Belarusian universities for the most popular majors, exchange students and postgraduates, establish cooperation in training, retraining and enhancement of qualifications.

BELTA,
24.02.2015

ECOLOGICAL SITUATION AROUND BELARUSIAN NUCLEAR STATION NORMAL

The ecological situation around the Belarusian nuclear power plant meets requirements of Belarus and the European Union. The information was released by Belarusian First Deputy Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Minister Iya Malkina during the online conference hosted by the BelTA website on 26 February.



"If we talk about the area of expertise of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, we should mention the measures taken with

regard to the nuclear power plant construction. "Respectively, in September 2014 Belarus sent an application to invite an IAEA mission. In February 2015 we received a number of follow-up questions. Once we are ready to answer them – and we are working on that – the IAEA will decide on and coordinate the time of the visit with us," noted the First Deputy Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Minister.

"I think that in the near future we will answer the procedural questions that the IAEA is interested in and the mission will happen," said the official.

In her words, in September 2014 Belarus was advised to invite an IAEA mission to evaluate the measures taken with

BELTA,
26.02.2015

ADEQUATE RADIATION MONITORING TO BE IN PLACE BY BELNPP'S LAUNCH

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus will ensure the adequate radiation monitoring by the time the Belarusian nuclear power plant (BelNPP) is commissioned, First Deputy Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Minister Iya Malkina told reporters on 5 February, BelTA has learned.

"Now we are working on the radiation monitoring system for the area surrounding the nuclear power plant. By the time the NPP becomes operational, we will be able to ensure the adequate level of radiation control at the NPP in accordance with all the safety requirements," she noted.

According to her, a number of facilities needed to ensure the adequate radiation monitor-

ing, have already been partially installed. "We are collaborating successfully with research centers.

Besides, we constantly keep in touch with other nuclear safety watchdogs working at the BelNPP," Iya Malkina noted.

The Belarusian nuclear power plant is being built 18km away from the town of Ostrovets, Grodno Oblast. The BelNPP will have two power-generating units with the total output capacity of up to 2,400MW (2x1,200MW). The Russian merged company OAO NIAEP – ZAO ASE is the general designer and the general contractor of the project. The first power-generating unit of the nuclear power plant is scheduled for launch in 2018, the second one in 2020.

BELTA,
5.02.2015