



SUPPLEMENT TO THE DIGEST "GREEN BELARUS"

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№ 3 (42), March, 2017 MINSK, BELARUS

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Green Belarus News & Events in Belarus

BELARUS TO JOIN EARTH HOUR ACTION TODAY

The Earth Hour action is expected to take place worldwide on 25 March, BelTA has learned.

This year's event will be held using the motto "Change yourself, not the planet" and will focus on promoting a responsible attitude to the environment. The Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry encourages Belarusians to take part in the action and turn off lights for one hour from 20:30 till 21:30 on 25 March.



In 2016 the action took place in Minsk, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel, Brest, Baranovichi, Pinsk, Braslav, and Chausy. In addition to turned-off lights the year 2016 action in Belarus featured concerts, lectures, a cycling race, and shadow play shows.

The Earth Hour action is an annual worldwide event organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Illumination along Minsk's key avenues will be turned off from 20:30 till 21:30. External lights will be turned off in Minsk's Nezavisimosti Avenue, Pobeditelei Avenue, Partizansky Avenue, and Prityskogo Avenue. Lights of the National Library of Belarus, external lights of shopping centers, universities and cafes, specimens of architecture will go out for one hour.

The action is arranged on the last Saturday of March. Participants of the action are encouraged to turn off lights and other non-essential electrical appliances (except for lifts) for one hour in order to stimulate interest in the climate change problem and the energy unity of the mankind.

BELTA, 25.03.2017

Belarus is an active participant of the Earth [Belarus to turn off lights for Earth Hour on 25 March](#)

CLIMATE RESEARCH CENTER ESTABLISHED IN BELARUSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

A climate research center has been established as part of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), the Academy's press service told BelTA.

The new agency will take care of researching global and regional climate and its changes in response to natural and man-made factors. The agency will also provide scientific support for Belarus' international commitments in the area of climate science. The agency will develop the physical foundation for extremely long-term weather forecasts and climate change forecasts, including forecasts of extreme climate phenomena such as droughts, floods, extremely cold or warm winters.

The climate research center will tightly cooperate with research institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The agency will develop reference books and regulatory documents in the area of agricultural and construction climatology, recreation,

tourism, and the protection of atmospheric air from pollution in association with central government agencies. The climate research center will team up with the national center for polar studies to study changes in atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere in polar latitudes of Eastern Antarctica for the sake of improving the existing models of global and regional changes.

Academician Vladimir Loginov, Chief Research Officer of the Nature Management Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, has been appointed scientific supervisor of the climate research center.

BELTA, 10.03.2017

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Every year Belarusian farmers suffer considerable losses due to unfavorable weather conditions and climate changes. As a top priority the climate research center will endeavor to evaluate the effect of climate changes on climatically dependent branches of the national economy. Recommendations on adapting to the changes will be worked out.



BELARUSIAN SCHOOL WINS ENO TREELYMPICS 2016 TREE PLANTING COMPETITION

Belarusian students won the tree planting competition ENO Treelympics 2016 among 150 countries, BelTA has learned from the website of the Belarusian Forestry Ministry.

The Finnish organizers of the contest have recently announced the results of the tree planting competition ENO Treelympics 2016: 623 schools from all over the world planted 3.2 million trees, 2.2 million of which were planted

by the Belarusian participants. Turkey took the second place with 840,000 trees.

The organizers scored only the trees registered on the official website of the competition and confirmed with relevant documents, for instance from forestries. According to the rules of the project, only school members were eligible to plant (students, teachers, staff and parents).

Nine Belarusian schools and a Turkish were among ten schools that planted most trees.

Podorossky Teaching and Learning Complex Kindergarten - High School from the Volkovsk District of Grodno Oblast planted 202,358 trees and became the overall winner. This is the highest result on record. It is noteworthy that the winning school has as few as 96 students.

The award ceremony will be held during the Act Now conference in Joensuu, Finland on 14-17 June 2017.

BELTA,
17.03.2017

ITALY EAGER TO INTENSIFY COOPERATION IN GREEN ECONOMY WITH BELARUS

Italy is eager to intensify investment cooperation in the green economy with Belarus, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Belarus Stefano Bianchi told reporters before the 1st Belarusian-Italian Forum on Green Economy on 24 March, BelTA has learned.

"The green economy sector is very important and is an innovative branch for Belarus and Italy. Its importance is proved by the fact that the forum will be attended by more than 200 organizations, a half of them are Italian companies. Italian investors have been focused on the sectors of the economy that are traditional for the Italian business so far. The forum aims to expand their horizons and prioritize green economy sectors that are also important for Belarus. The forum has brought together the representatives of the leading Italian enterprises specializing in such industries as alternative energy, efficient use of resources, waste processing and environmental protection. I hope that Belarusian and Italian partners will establish investment cooperation and discuss promising projects during the forum," Stefano Bianchi said.



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Yevgeny Shestakov thanked the organizers of the forum for the attention to the green economy topic. "Belarus is committed to the green economy principles. The national plan of action for the development of the green economy in Belarus designed to run till 2020 was approved

in Belarus in December 2016. Taking into account the national and global challenges, our state views the green economy as a strategic priority. Italy is one of the suppliers of cutting-edge equipment and new technologies for us. Belarusian products also sell well on the Italian market. These include potash fertilizers, products of the light industry, metallurgy, wood processing and petrochemistry. All that convinces us that in the future Italian companies will be able to find reliable partners for the implementation of investment projects in Belarus, including in the green economy. Belarus is open for the Italian business and always takes this position in building the mutually beneficial dialogue," he remarked.

Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vladimir Ulakhovich

reminded that this year Belarus and Italy mark the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations. "We have always maintained rather dynamic interaction with our Italian partners in business and trade. Italy has always been one of Belarus' crucial partners in Europe," he said.

The next Belarusian-Italian forum will take place in Milan (Italy) in May 2017. "The forum in Milan will focus on such topics as industrial, investment, and regional cooperation," Vladimir Ulakhovich said.

The 1st Belarusian-Italian Forum on Green Economy is held in Minsk on 24 March. A group of experts, representatives of government bodies and major organizations involved in this field will discuss the economic situation in the energy sector of the country, pay special attention to the investment opportunities for Italian investors. There will also be B2B and B2G meeting between Italian enterprises and Belarusian organizations and companies. The forum is organized by the Embassy of Italy in Belarus in cooperation with the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the assistance of the Italian Government Agency for the Promotion Abroad and the Internationalization of the Italian Companies, the Italian Export Credit Agency and the Belarus-Italy Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

BELTA,
24.03.2017

WORLD BANK TO HELP RESTORE BELARUSIAN FORESTS AFTER HURRICANES

The World Bank will help Belarus raise funds from international organizations for the sake of restoring Belarusian forests after summer hurricanes of 2016. The matters were discussed as Belarusian Forestry Minister Mikhail Amelyanovich met with World Bank specialists, the press service of the Forestry Ministry told BelTA.

The World Bank specialists were led by World Bank Project Team Leader Andrew Mitchell. The World Bank specialists visited a number of Belarusian forestry enterprises where they saw the operation of the forest fire prevention systems and forest harvesters, which had been acquired as part of the forestry development project. Andrew Mitchell praised the work the Belarusian side had done: "We see that the allocated funds have been wisely spent and all the acquired machines are actively used and perfectly maintained."

The World Bank representatives also visited several windbreak sites. Andrew Mitchell noted the speed of the cleanup effort after the summer hurricanes. "We expected it to take several years," he said.

The World Bank specialists described the quality of the forestry development project's



Andrew Mitchell remarked that the evaluation can be upgraded to satisfactory. The specialist explained that it is one of the highest evaluations in their book, few projects have such a status. The allocation of additional funds for building forest nurseries is under consideration. The work has turned out to cost a lot more than what the Forestry Ministry expected. Another \$14 million is needed to finish the work. Andrew

Mitchell pledged his support for discussing the matter with the World Bank leadership. At the same time the extra funds represent in essence another loan with a lengthy approval process inside the country. Besides, the money can be granted only in 2018 when a new operation period starts. The sides concluded they would work on the matter to accelerate the allocation of the funds.

Belarusian Forestry Minister Mikhail Amelyanovich noted that although Belarusian forestry enterprises spend heavily on restoring Belarusian forests after last year's hurricanes, the country needs assistance of international organizations. Andrew Mitchell assured that the World Bank will attempt to raise funds in the form of grants for restoring Belarusian forests.

The next visit of World Bank specialists to Belarus is scheduled for September-October 2017.

BELTA,
25.03.2017

MEASURES TO GUIDE ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BELARUS TILL 2025 APPROVED

A set of measures to guide the development and promotion of ecological tourism in nature conservation areas in Belarus till 2025 has been approved, representatives of the National Tourism Agency told BELTA.

The document stipulates the main tasks for all the agencies involved in developing and promoting ecological tourism. In particular, there are plans to create a brand name for every nature conservation area on the list of areas earmarked for ecological tourism development. There are also plans to form tourism infra-



structure, build and operate visitor centers, develop and introduce trans-boundary tourism routes in nature conservation areas.

Plans have been made to develop and introduce a system for voluntary ecological certification of ecological tourism products. There are plans to launch a website dedicated to Belarusian agricultural and ecological tourism and an interactive website that will offer virtual tours across Belarusian nature conservation areas.

Ecotourism clusters will be created using the Berezinsky biosphere reserves, the national parks Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Narochansky, Braslavskiye Ozera, Pripyatsky, and the wildlife sanctuaries Krasny Bor, Osveisky, Sporovsky, Srednyaya Pripyat, Yelnya, Ozery, Naliboksky, and Selyava. Representatives of the private sector and local residents are expected to contribute to the effort. Ecological festivals will be arranged in the regions.

The measures will be financed by the central state budget and municipal budgets via government programs. International technical aid, donations of corporations, and other legal sources will be used as well.

BELTA,
25.03.2017

BELARUS TO CREATE DNA BANK OF ANTARCTIC ANIMALS

Belarus will create a DNA bank of antarctic animals, BELTA learned from Vladislav Myamin, senior research fellow with the Center for Bioresources at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), who participated in the fifth and seventh Belarusian Antarctic expeditions.

"Belarus will create its first genetic data bank of antarctic animals at the Center for Bioresources. This will be the first such bank in the Commonwealth of Independent States," Vladislav Myamin said.

Polar explorers in Antarctica are currently collecting materials for genetic typing. They take a part of an animal's body, for instance, a feather, preserve it in alcohol, cool and store it so that geneticists could later identify the animal's species even without seeing it. Around a hundred samples have already been gathered.

Vladislav Myamin noted that such genetic testing is necessary because in Antarctica there are many animals that have not been recorded yet, they have no names. "Genetic science enables us to identify whether a species is new to scientists or not. We may even discover a new species and pick a name for it," Vladislav Myamin pointed out. Apart from animal body samples, the polar explorers have also collected several plant samples.

The National Academy of Sciences launched the ninth Belarusian Antarctic expedition in late



October 2016. Some 40 tonnes of cargo, including parts and equipment for the second facility of the Belarusian Antarctic station, was loaded on the Russian research vessel Akademik Fyodorov in early November and shipped from Minsk to Saint Petersburg. In the middle of November,

six Belarusian scientists set off for Antarctica. They are expected to return to Belarus on 23 April.

BELTA,
24.03.2017

BELARUSIAN POLAR EXPLORERS TEST NEW DEEP-SEA ROV IN ANTARCTIC

Belarusian polar explorers tested a remotely operated underwater vehicle Gnom designed to study the underwater flora and fauna, BELTA learned from Vladislav Myamin, senior research fellow with the Center for Bioresources at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), who participated in the fifth and seventh Belarusian Antarctic expeditions.

"Belarusian polar explorers tested a remotely operated submersible Gnom. It is relatively small (40x25sm), and controlled by a joystick. It has four engines. The device dives into the ocean, explores the underwater world, and sends the video footage to explorers on the shore. In addition, the ROV has a grabber to take holothurians, starfish, sea urchins, and plants to the surface for further studies, which is actively used by our explorers. There are plans to take some of the samples to the NASB," Vladislav Myamin said.

The polar explorers upgraded the device by attaching GoPro cameras to it, which shoot simultaneously with the device. "The explorers got unique photo and video footage of the underwater world near the shore. Now, it is possible to

study the species, their population and possible usage," Vladislav Myamin noted.

He said that at the moment, the main difficulty in exploring the ocean is that the ice breaks up too unexpectedly. "If the explorers had a possibility to control the ROV while on ice, they could dip the device to 100m depth and study what is there. But as they have to remain on the shore, it takes a lot of time for the ROV to reach the needed depth. It also has to pass the shallow waters first, and the cable's length is limited to 150m," Vladislav Myamin explained.

The polar explorers also tested Gnom in the Antarctic lakes. "There are no big animals there. A 2mm daphnia is the biggest creature there.

The water in Antarctic lakes is 15-20m transparent," Vladislav Myamin added.

The National Academy of Sciences launched the ninth Belarusian Antarctic expedition in late October 2016. Some 40 tonnes of cargo, including parts and equipment for the second facility of the Belarusian Antarctic station, was loaded on the Russian research vessel Akademik Fyodorov in early November and shipped from Minsk to Saint Petersburg. In the middle of November, six Belarusian scientists set off for Antarctica. They are expected to return to Belarus on 23 April. (Photo courtesy of the ninth Belarusian Antarctic expedition.)



BELTA,
24.03.2017

WMO OFFICE FOR EURASIA TO OPEN IN MINSK

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Office for Eurasia will open in Minsk, Maria Germenchuk, Head of the National Center for Hydrometeorology, Radioactive Pollution Control, and Environmental Monitoring (Gidromet) of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, told reporters on 22 March, BELTA has learned.

"The World Meteorological Congress has decided to set up the WMO Office for Eurasia in Minsk. The office will open after the next WMO Congress that will take place in 2018," Maria Germenchuk said.

She emphasized that the establishment of the office is a rare event in the WMO system. "There is such an office for Asia based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Plans are under consideration to set up such an office in Latin

America. This is a new format of work associated with the reorganization of the World Meteorological Organization and modernization of its management," Maria Germenchuk noted.

The WMO office in Minsk will coordinate the ties between Eastern Europe and Asia. It will work to implement new hydrometeorology and environmental monitoring technologies and facilitate the exchange of information about storms and inclement weather. "We will be a hydrometeorological link connecting the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Mongolia and Israel also show their interest. We facilitate technology transfer and provide climate services. Participation in this process is beneficial for us, as it will help us improve the expertise of our specialists. Besides, all new technologies will pass through our hands, so we will be able to see

which of them are useful for us," Maria Germenchuk stressed.

In April 2017, Belarus will host a large-scale international conference on the use of satellite information in meteorology. "We will welcome representatives of almost all the countries of Europe, guests from Asia, WMO specialists, and Belarusian consumers of satellite data. The fact that the conference will be held in Belarus attests to the recognition of the remarkable role and contribution of Gidromet to international cooperation, the wide use of satellite imagery in Belarus, and the support for the decision to open the WMO Office for Eurasia in Minsk," the official said.

BELTA,
22.03.2017



SUPPLEMENT "NEWS & EVENTS IN BELARUS" TO THE DIGEST "GREEN BELARUS".

http://ecoinfo.bas-net.by/ecology-belarus/ecology_news_in_Belarus.html

The supplement was established in 2013 as an informational and educational resource that can be freely accessed by all users interested in ecology and environmental problems.

It is a digest of the most important news and events.

Published once a month.

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CENTRAL SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY NAS BELARUS
[HTTP://ECOINFO.BAS-NET.BY](http://ecoinfo.bas-net.by)

№ 3 (42),
MARCH, 2017

REPRINT WITH REFERENCE TO GB

LEAVES IN ENGLISH

INTERNET-BULLETIN
[HTTP://ECOINFO.BAS-NET.BY/ECOLOGY-BELARUS/ECOLOGY NEWS IN BELARUS.HTML](http://ecoinfo.bas-net.by/ecology-belarus/ecology_news_in_Belarus.html)

The room contains materials prepared by the news agency correspondents:
BELTA, Belarus-Magazine, The Minsk Times.

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BELARUS' NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO CARRY OUT DNA STRESS RESISTANCE TESTS

The National Center for Genome Biotechnology of the Genetics and Cytology Institute of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences will carry out DNA tests for stress resistance, BelTA has learned from the Chief Academic Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Alexander Kilchevsky.

"We plan to branch out into new fields of research. One of them is DNA stress resistance testing," Alexander Kilchevsky remarked.

He pointed out that human mental abilities are inherited and the genetic testing can determine it. "This is especially important for the occupations requiring composure, bravery and stress tolerance. Firemen, pilots, security officials, special forces – all these groups of people

should possess psychological resistance," the chief academic secretary said.

The National Center for Genome Biotechnology also plans to carry out DNA tests for salmonid fishes and salmonid products. Another initiative is to upgrade the Genetics and Cytology Institute in order to crank out DNA testing and carry out more than 80,000 tests per year.

The National Center for Genome Biotechnology provides molecular genetics services in the field of agriculture, medical science, sports and environmental protection.

BELTA,
21.03.2017

Union State's new program on hydrometeorology approved

PRICE OF BELARUSIAN ELECTRIC VEHICLES IS KNOWN NOW

Belarusian electric car approximately twice the price of petrol analogue BelGee, notes Director General of Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering at National Academy of Sciences, Sergey Poddubko

Mr. Poddubko notes that electric vehicles worldwide tend to be expensive. In China, the average car costs \$13,000, while its electric analogue costs \$32,000. He comments, "Why is this? The cost of the accumulator, the most expensive element, is added to the cost. The engine is very important, and rare minerals have to be imported for production. Of course, if we compare our electric vehicle with its petrol-powered analogue, from BelGee, it's expensive: approximately double the price. However, the more we create, the lower the

price." Discussing speed of recharging and battery size, he adds, "It can drive at least 100km, at a speed of 90kmh (taking into account city traffic) and takes 3-4 hours to fully recharge, which can be done each evening. For the rest of the time, you can charge for just half an hour, to receive 85 percent recharging."

An experimental model of the Belarusian electric vehicle is being manufactured this year, with mass production launching at BelGee in 2019.

The Minsk Times Thursday, March 16, 2017.

THE MINSK TIMES,

RESETTLEMENT PLANS FOR PUSHCHA AUROCHS

Belovezhskaya Pushcha is home to 512 aurochs of various ages, according to February calculations of territory and surroundings

A senior research officer at the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, Alexey Bunevich, says that aurochs are registered in eleven (out of sixteen) forestries. "Our giant lives in the Kamenets and Pruzhany districts of the Brest Region and in the Grodno Region's Svisloch District. In total, we've counted 512 aurochs of various ages: up by thirty-two animals on 2016. There are 323 adults, but only a third are males. In 2017, we registered the biggest company of adult bulls: nineteen in a single herd, which is a record for us."

Growing numbers do present some problems, as there are more than the Pushcha can 'feed'. In winter, feeding stations are established

but, even so, aurochs seek out fodder in our farming fields. Mr. Bunevich notes that the Pushcha giants love winter rape, grown on neighbouring farms. "During our study, we registered mixed bison herds of up to 150 animals. People living in the villages of Murava, Dmitrovichi and Verkhovichii meet aurochs most days. However, unlike tourists, they aren't delighted, as the animals damage crops."



Fields can be fenced but it's not the best solution. Resettlement may be more practical. Mr. Bunevich notes, "Nobody wishes to buy animals but some would love to receive them free of charge. Scientists from the National Academy of Sciences are now studying the idea of resettlement."

The Minsk Times Thursday, March 23, 2017

The Minsk Times,

Bison much alive

DRIVING WITH RECHARGEABLE VEHICLES

Belarusian electric car to undergo tests by end of this year

One of the Belarusian institutes is currently working on the rechargeable car project. The Belarusian electric car will be based on a BelGee vehicle. "We should have a prototype by autumn and have it trialled in Belarus. I hope that by late 2017 we'll have the results of the testing," noted Alexander Kilchevsky, Chief Scientific secretary of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

The exploration of new scientific prospects, including the development of Belarusian electric vehicles, will become more feasible once the Belarusian nuclear power station is in operation. "This is a landmark event for Belarus. One of the tasks

of the Academy of Sciences is the provision of scientific support. Just imagine that after the Belarusian nuclear power station is launched the country's supply of electricity will increase by 50 percent. This means that we'll be able to use cheaper electric energy. We'll be able to start the development of one of Belarus' first houses that will function almost completely using electricity. On the one hand, this will save gas consumption while, on the other hand, we'll need to build heat pipelines and other infrastructure," explained the scientist.

BELARUS

No. 2 (1001), 2017
BELARUS MAGAZINE,