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Green Belarus News & Events in Belarus



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THIS ISSUE:

- [Belarus to promote cooperation in sustainable development with ... 1](#)
- [World Bank to finance 29 water industry projects in Belarus in 2018 1](#)
- [Book on Belarus' protected areas issued in Russian, English 2](#)
- [Plans to build four biogas cogeneration plants in Belarus using EBRD loan 2](#)
- [Belarus to attend Assembly of International Renewable Energy Agency 2](#)
- [Plans to trial Belarusian electric car in Botanical Garden in Minsk 3](#)
- [Major potential of Covenant of Mayors 3](#)
- [Tentative plans for Belarusian-Chinese car factory BelGee to make electric cars 3](#)
- [International recognition of environmental standards in China-Belarus industrial park 3](#)
- [On the edge of the world 4](#)
- [Tikhon flies to Africa 4](#)

BELARUS TO PROMOTE COOPERATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH GERMANY

Belarus and Germany plan to promote bilateral cooperation in sustainable development, BELTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Economy Ministry.

Belarus' Deputy Economy Minister Dmitry Matusевич met with Jurgen Keinhorst, Director for Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South Caucasus, Middle East and North Africa at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, and German Ambassador to Belarus Peter Dettmar.

The parties discussed cooperation in sustainable development including green economy and out-



lined priority areas. Jurgen Keinhorst informed on projects promising for Belarus and expressed a big interest in cooperation with the Economy Ministry.

The participants of the meeting agreed on possible further cooperation of the Belarusian Economy Ministry with Germany and the European Union during the meetings of national and international coordinators and experts in the sustainable development goals.

BELTA,
24.01.2018

WORLD BANK TO FINANCE 29 WATER INDUSTRY PROJECTS IN BELARUS IN 2018

The World Bank will finance the modernization of 29 water supply and wastewater treatment facilities in Belarus in 2018, BELTA learned from Marina Tolstik, Head of the Utilities and Power Engineering Office of the Belarusian Housing and Utilities Ministry.

Since 2009 Belarus has borrowed \$150 million from the World Bank for the sake of developing the national water supply and wastewater treatment system. About \$100 million has been spent so far, with work finished at 29 facilities. Plans have been made to spend about \$50 million in 2018 to commission another 29 facilities.

The projects include the reconstruction of the sewage systems in Logoisk, Borisov, and Bykhov, the reconstruction of sewage collector No.3 in Bobruisk, and the reconstruction of wastewater treatment systems in Mstislavl. Plans have been made to build a main sewerage pump station in Gantsevichi, water supply pipes in Krichev (the first stage), a subterranean water deferrization station at the central water intake facility in Rechitsa



and 12 water deferrization stations in Vitebsk Oblast.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) also helps implement water supply projects. The EBRD in association with the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) has financed the reconstruction of wastewater treatment facilities in Vitebsk, Brest, and Grodno and the construction of biogas plants at the wastewater treatment facilities in Slonim and Baranovichi. The biogas plant in Baranovichi was commissioned in December 2017. A total of €39.35 million was borrowed for these projects, with €31.88 million granted. These projects will have a long-term effect resulting from a lower environmental impact due to bet-

ter wastewater treatment.

The possibility of using the EBRD funding to finance the construction of deferrization stations is under consideration now.

A total of about €280 million has been invested in the Belarusian utilities industry since 2009 as part of cooperation with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the key credit institution of the World Bank), the EBRD, and the NIB. According to the source, Belarus' experience of cooperation with the international financial organizations in implementing utilities industry projects has been positive. "Borrowing money is now the main way of rehabilitating the utilities industry. International banks offer rather comfortable lending terms. We can also borrow cutting-edge practices," added Marina Tolstik.

Belarusian utilities industry enterprises operate 10,197 artesian wells, 1,300 wastewater treatment facilities, 598 water deferrization stations, 38,200km of water supply pipes, and 18,500km of sewage pipes.

BELTA,
3.01.2018

BOOK ON BELARUS' PROTECTED AREAS ISSUED IN RUSSIAN, ENGLISH

Protected Areas of the Republic of Belarus, a popular science publication of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, has come off the press, BelTA learned from the website of the ministry.

The book is dedicated to 40 protected areas of Belarus, which hold promise for ecotourism development. The book has been prepared at the request of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, edited by Andrei Borodin, and features images by Sergei Plytkovich. The book has been issued in two languages, Russian and English.

Belarus' framework of protected areas comprises one biosphere reserve, four national parks, over 370 wildlife sanctuaries and 880 natural sites of national and local significance. They boast favorable environmental conditions and a wide diversity of natural resources (rare landforms, picturesque lakes and habitats of endangered species of flora and fauna). These sites are viewed as ideal ecotourism destinations.

BELTA,
11.01.2018

PLANS TO BUILD FOUR BIOGAS COGENERATION PLANTS IN BELARUS USING EBRD LOAN

Four biogas cogeneration plants will be commissioned in Belarus, the press service of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) told BelTA.

According to the source, the EBRD supports renewable energy industry and foreign investments in Belarus by means of financing the construction of four biogas cogeneration plants across the country. A loan of up to \$15 million will be used in order to build and commission four biogas cogeneration plants with the total installed capacity of 4MW. The loan will be granted to three special design companies owned by Lithuanian UAB Modus Group. The cogeneration plants will be located in Grodno Oblast and Brest Oblast.

This project will be the first direct investment by the EBRD in Belarus' power engineering industry. The cogeneration plants will generate 32 gigawatt hours of electricity every year while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 15,300 tonnes.

Money for the project has been provided by the Japanese government as part of a technical cooperation scheme via the EBRD's division for

preparing and implementing green economy projects.

Head of the EBRD Office in Belarus Alexander Pivovarsky noted that the project matches the EBRD's country strategy for Belarus and the bank's approach to green economy. It will improve the energy budget in the country and will help develop projects in the area of renewable energy sources, he stressed.

Harry Boyd-Carpenter, the EBRD's Director for Power and Energy Utilities, stated: "We are happy to finance this project, which will be implemented by such a dynamic and rapidly growing sponsor like Modus Group. This deal also represents our first direct investment in the power engineering industry in Belarus. We strongly hope it will pave way for our more active contributions to helping the country's energy industry become a more stable and diversified sector."

According to Ruslan Sklepovich, member of the Board of Modus Group, Belarus develops the renewable energy sector very rapidly. "The size

of the market of renewable energy sources and the attention the government pays to the matter make Belarus an attractive country for biogas companies. Modus Energy is one of the largest companies of this kind in the region. We are convinced that our extensive experience in this industry will result in the successful accomplishment of the project," he stated.

Since the start of its operation in Belarus in 1992 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has invested nearly €2 billion in 95 projects in various branches of the national economy.

BELTA,
24.01.2018



ENVIRONMENTAL READINGS AROUND BELARUSIAN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TAKEN IN REAL TIME

Information about the state of the environment around the Belarusian nuclear power plant is collected in real time, BelTA learned from Maria Germenchuk, First Deputy Head of the National Center for Hydrometeorology, Radioactive Pollution Control and Environmental Monitoring of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry.



"Monitoring every aspect of the state of the environment around the construction site of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is an important part of our work. We now monitor a number of parameters — meteorology, climate, hydrology, chemical pollution in the air and surface waters. Radiation monitoring is central to our work. We have already examined the state of the environment before the launch of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. We are now collecting sta-

tistics, which will allow evaluating the nuclear power plant's environmental footprint in the future. An automated system to take radiation measurements near the Belarusian nuclear power plant is in place. Data is fed in real time," said Maria Germenchuk.

The system uses specialized sensors, which can register any changes of the radiation background in real time. "It will enable a proper level of radiation safety of the environment and the population in the Belarusian nuclear power plant area," said the official.

BELTA,
8.01.2018

BELARUS TO ATTEND ASSEMBLY OF INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

Mikhail Malashenko, Deputy Chairman of the State Standardization Committee, Director of the Energy Efficiency Department, will participate in the eighth session of the Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) which will be held in Abu Dhabi on 13-14 January, BelTA learned from the website of the Energy Efficiency Department.

The assembly will examine IRENA'S medium-term strategy, the work program and budget for 2018-2022. The program will feature the ministerial-level roundtables "Promoting global energy transformation: increasing investment in renewable energy" and "Innovation for energy transformation: electric transport".

"The eighth session of the IRENA Assembly will provide a timely and unique opportunity to discuss the steps to accelerate the global energy



transformation to the next level and ways that the IRENA can best support the transition to a sustainable energy future," the message on the website reads.

The IRENA Assembly serves as a strategic global platform to discuss the opportunities to promote renewable energy sources (RES) at the national, regional and international levels. RES are competitive compared with conventional energy sources. The efforts to tackle climate change and active steps to meet the Sustainable Development Goals have given a further impetus to the development of RES.

BELTA,
11.01.2018

PLANS TO TRIAL BELARUSIAN ELECTRIC CAR IN BOTANICAL GARDEN IN MINSK

Belarusian electric car prototypes will be deployed for trials in the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), BelTA learned from Oleg Yelovoi, Deputy Director General for Science and Innovations of the Joint Mechanical Engineering Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Oleg Yelovoi said: "One of the electric cars we are working on will be designed to transport



passengers and garden tools in parks, gardens, sanatorium zones, wildlife reserves, and national parks. Those territories are not public places where traffic lights are installed. Electric cars will be able to go along predetermined routes over there, this is why we intend to test unmanned driving systems on them, too. Prototypes of such electric cars will be deployed in the botanical garden and the technical solutions will be tested over there."

Plans have been made to begin small-scale production of budget electric cars at premises of the Joint Mechanical Engineering Institute. "Later on these cars may be used as electric taxis or for delivering various goods," noted the official.

The production of the second variant of the Belarusian electric car at premises of the Belarusian-Chinese car venture BelGee is under consideration. "If we get a go-ahead, we will be ready to master the production of electric cars and their components within a short time," added Oleg Yelovoi.

A Belarusian electric car prototype was revealed before the general public for the first time in August 2017. A development prototype is supposed to be ready by autumn 2018.

BELTA,
11.01.2018

MAJOR POTENTIAL OF COVENANT OF MAYORS

By Alexey Fedosov

Belarusian cities' joining of benevolent European initiative Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate aims to promote reduced greenhouse gas emissions, by at least 10 percent. The Covenant of Mayors is working to combat climate change, with the effect of greenhouse gas emissions on urban environments as a key focus.

Twenty-six of Belarus' cities and districts have joined the agreement, committing to reduce CO2 emissions by 30 percent (from a base year). More than two million people live on territories taking part and, in 2018, another five or six cities are expected to join.

At an international level, Belarus has promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by almost a third (from 1990 levels).

The Minsk Times,
06.01.2018

TENTATIVE PLANS FOR BELARUSIAN-CHINESE CAR FACTORY BELGEE TO MAKE ELECTRIC CARS

The possibility of making electric cars at SZAO BelGee is under consideration, BelTA learned from Chairman of the State Science and Technology Committee of Belarus Alexander Shumilin.

Twenty enterprises were commissioned in 2017 as part of the government program on innovative development in 2016-2020. "Certainly, the production of cars by BelGee is one of the most important ones. Matters relating to localization and sales are being addressed now. I can say that we are already working on electric transport manufacturing, electric car production, including by BelGee. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus is working on it



and work is in progress with Chinese companies, too," said Alexander Shumilin.

Among last year's most significant projects the official mentioned the biotechnology complex for microclonal propagation of plants in the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and a new yeast plant in Slutsk.

Ten innovative enterprises reached their designed output capacity in 2017, including the production of composite materials based on Belarusian thermoplastic for 3D printing purposes, the production of solid pharmaceutical forms and medications containing beta-lactam antibiotics.

BELTA,
23.01.2018

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS IN CHINA-BELARUS INDUSTRIAL PARK



The eighth governmental meeting on the agreement between the Government of Belarus and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the joint use and protection of transboundary waters and also the meeting of the working group on water quality protection and control will be held in Belarus' Mozyr on 22-24 November, BelTA

learned from the website of the Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

The meeting will consider the need to increase the usable storage capacity of the Beloozersk water-supply system of Dnieper-Bug Canal, and to introduce amendments to the rules for its use. The parties are also expected to consider the issue of changing the status of water management facilities in connection with the demarcation of the state border of Ukraine with Belarus.

The working group will take stock of the progress in monitoring surface and groundwater at transboundary sites, inter-laboratory analyses conducted in 2017, and discuss and approve plans for joint selection and inter-laboratory comparisons for 2018.

BELTA,
19.01.2018

ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

By Vladislav Khoroshilov

Construction of first stage of Belarusian Antarctic station to be completed within two years. In 2019, our specialists will launch year-round work in Antarctica. At the moment, the tenth expedition is on location, comprising a crew of four, with three more soon to join. They'll work at the South Pole until spring, installing four new sections of the future station, to include scientific laboratories and accommodation.

The head of the expedition, Alexey Gaidashov, stresses the importance of their work, saying, "We're now a step closer to the first Belarusian winter. I would compare this with the launch of the first Belarusian satellite into another world, another dimension, in the direct and figurative sense."



The expedition embraces

research into such areas as microbiology, geophysical monitoring, studying the composition of the atmosphere, ultraviolet radiation, and climate and ozone layer monitoring, using Belarus-made equipment.

Interestingly, even while dozens of thousands of kilometres away from their native land, polar explorers are aware of events taking place back home, such as the recent 2nd Congress of Scientists hosted by Minsk. In honour of this event, the expedition raised the flags in Antarctica those of Belarus and of the National Academy of Sciences.

The Minsk Times,
06.01.2018

TIKHON FLIES TO AFRICA

By Dmitry Antipov

Migration route of birds from Red Book now available to view online, via APB BirdLife Belarus website, thanks to GPS-transmitters attached to eight greater spotted eagles nesting in Polesie and Belovezhskaya Pushcha

I'm sitting with Valery Dombrovsky, a senior research officer at the molecular zoology laboratory, at the Scientific and Practical Centre for Bioresources, of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, as he shows me the migration route south of the greater spotted eagle.

Eagle Tikhon, who spends part of the year in Stary Zhaden Reserve, recently crossed Syria and reached the Israeli-Egyptian border. Eagle

Blond, who was nesting nearby, is now in Greece. The ornithologist explains, "We're doing all we can to preserve the population of greater spotted eagles, tracking their routes of migration, their wintering places, and where they mate and lay eggs. It helps us anticipate potential threats. We've made some curious observations. Until now, only Poles and Estonians (among our closest neighbours) were monitoring these birds. According to their data, these Red Book birds spend winter primarily in distant Sudan and Turkey, although younger birds may only fly as far as Turkey or Italy."

The Minsk Times,
11.01.2018

EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL WARMING



Grodno residents share photos of full-blown roses and winter harvest of forest chantrelles, via social networks

By Tatiana Kondratieva

Those brave enough to enter the forest this winter may have been rewarded with a crop of mushrooms, thanks to the abnormally warm weather. Even roses have begun to bloom, offering a lovely New Year surprise.

Dmitry Saskevich, the Head of the Grodno Regional Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Centre, isn't greatly surprised, saying, "In recent years, we've seen warm winters and fewer frosty days with clear blue skies above. Several years

ago, I also gathered mushrooms in the forest in December. Last December, the average temperature stood at plus 1.3 degrees (while the climatic norm is minus 2.2 — a full four degrees warmer). Moreover, January began with temperatures seven degrees above the monthly norm! The first day of 2018 was the warmest since 1945, and we're expecting more mild weather this month, with temperatures around 1-2 degrees above average. The average temperature in decade is expected to be six degrees higher, while rain and sleet remain within the usual limits."

Our winters seem to be warm and wet, which can encourage coughs and colds, drowsiness and grumpy moods, while farmers find that plants are losing their frost resistance (due to lack of snow cover and subzero temperatures). Sadly, this leads to poorer crop yield.

The Minsk Times Thursday,
11.01.2018

HOLDING WIND ROSE

Modern wind farm to be built in Oshmyany

The historical centres of Olshany and Zhuprany remain the most significant points of attraction in the Oshmyany District. Proximity to the Lithuanian border mean that a transport and logistics centre is being built at the Kamenny Log checkpoint, launching by May. Another major investment project is the wind park, whose construction might launch this year, since **Oshmyany enjoys good breezes.**

Development path

The backbone of the Oshmyany District's economy is based on nine industrial enterprises, a large construction organisation, eight communal agricultural enterprises and twenty-four farms. These provide jobs, wages and quality of life.

District heads are convinced that the social sphere must be guarded, to ensure well-being.

In this respect, the area has many reasons for pride: in 2017, a new outpatient clinic was built in Golshany. The maternity ward's repairs are almost complete and Golshany school of arts has been updated, as has kindergarten #6 and school #1. In addition, a modern gym has opened for the elderly.

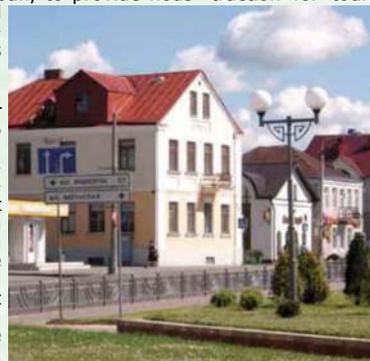
Last year, a sixty-apartment house was built in Oshmyany and forty-five large families will soon move in. In 2018, another significant,



cial housing site is planned for the city, constructed using a Chinese loan, to provide housing for child-orphans and families with disabled children. Some apartments will find use as commercial premises.

Matter for young Over 300 specialists return to the district annually, with the two main cities inhabited mostly by young families — indicating that young people have faith in finding employment in Oshmyany. There are currently two hundred vacancies in the district and only one hundred jobseekers. Jobs range from factory workers and

Golshany Castle remains the centre of attraction for tourists, with the northern tower,



Oshmyany today

which is on the reserve list of the joint Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian programme, being renovated. However, residents of the Oshmyany District try to give each corner of their land special colour. For example, a stone is being unveiled in Zhuprany; according to legend, Napoleon is said to have waved farewell to his army on that spot. The grave of Frantishak Bogushevich and the surrounding grounds have also been improved.

In July 2017, a boulder in the Bride's Stone Park joined the State List of Intangible Historical and Cultural Heritage. It's a tradition to touch the stone before marriage, to ensure a long and happy family life.

Miroslav Sarosek, Chairman of the Oshmyany District Executive Committee:

How should the district develop? Of course, we see our transit potential, with the launch of a transport and logistics centre. This project will bring other opportunities, with land available to purchase, and roadside facilities being updated. A number of our enterprises are looking for strategic partners, including some projects in agriculture seeking investors. We're now negotiating with Polish, Lithuanian and, even, Arab businessmen.

The Minsk Times,
18.01.2018



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

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A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION, OR FIVE REASONS TO VISIT MYADEL

Town near famous Lake Naroch known since 14th century. In 1324, its fortress was attacked by Teutonic knights, but the siege was broken, protected by unknown forces.

Finding idol's gold

The castle was destroyed only four centuries later by the Swedes, during the North War. Mystery surrounds the ruins, where archaeologists have found the foundations of the fortress, with a palace and three towers. According to legend, a huge golden idol was kept there, with precious stones for its eyes almost as big as fists. It protected the citadel from enemies and many believe that the precious statue remains in the castle's tunnels. Some even come to search for it. The Myadel District is an embodiment of ancient and contemporary history.

Another tourist attraction is NanosyNovoselie agro-estate, where an ancient windmill still operates. There's also a unique museum of samovars, many of which have appeared as props in films and have toured Russia and further abroad.

Learning the Nara legend

Belarus is 'blue-eyed', being blessed with lakes. The largest 'diamond' is located in the Myadel District — Lake Naroch, created during the ice age.

It's said that, long ago, a forester lived there with his beautiful daughter, Nara, who was in love with a bold young man. He gave her a small mirror and told her to take care of it, explaining that it was magical, made from spring grains and able to show the future.

On looking into it, she saw only a lake and a gull above the waves, and had no idea what to make of the image. Soon after, a local duke, having seen her beauty, ordered his servant to seize the girl. Nara's young man helped her to escape, hiding her out of sight. He led the chase to follow him, and was killed. Learning of his death, Nara dropped the mirror in despair and a lake appeared where the largest of the silver fragments fell. Meanwhile, the young girl turned into a gull, flying over the water of Lake Naroch, calling ever for her beloved.

Tasting smoke-dried eel

The banks of Lake Naroch are perfect for relaxing. Before the Great Patriotic War, it was a resort for the nobility from Warsaw and Vilnius.



View of Lake Naroch in winter

After the war, sanatoriums and health resorts began to appear. Now, dozens operate year-round, offering the most contemporary treatments, helping people to rest and recuperate. The most famous sanatoriums are Belaya Rus, Naroch, Sosny, Priozerny and Sputnik.

The area is a paradise for fishing, hunting and for those wishing to sample local delicacies; mouth-watering smoked and dried eel is a true delight, although it's forbidden to fish for it on Lake Naroch.

Guessing the mystery of the dead lake

Israel has the Dead Sea, and Golubye Ozero, inside Narochansky National Park, not far from Myadel, has something similar. It's the most mysterious of Belarus' lakes, thought to be home to malevolent water spirits, mermaids, witches and wood sprites, who inhabit its deep waters and its banks. It doesn't have any fish and no plants flourish on the surface, so it's called dead. However, scientists have discovered that a huge cloud of hydrogen sulphide lies on the bottom, preventing life from developing. This natural complex has several unique lakes, each with its own colour of water, from bright blue to black. With few settlements nearby, its natural beauty remains untouched, surrounded by high hills, virgin forests and plentiful rivers and forest springs!

Investigating WWI pillboxes

The banks of the legendary Myadel lakes have seen many battles, with the Mongol-



Many enjoy sailing along the lake

Tatars, Swedes, French and Germans. One of the bloodiest fights took place during WWI, when the Myadel area was occupied by Germany. In March 1916, Russian troops began an attack, known as 'Operation Narochanskaya', to help Frenchmen bleeding to death near Verdun. However, the Germans released toxic gases and the attack stalled. Within ten days, around 80,000 Russian soldiers and around 40,000 Germans had been killed. Military history experts are still investigating the concrete pillboxes which remain from that time.