

**TODAY'S ACHIEVEMENTS FOR OUR FUTURE SUCCESS***К.С. Малюк, 3 курс**Научный руководитель – Л.А. Изотова, преподаватель  
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Understanding comes through comparison. At the start of each year, we always hope that it will prove better than the past. We wish this for our relatives and ourselves – even when we've seen success. It is human nature to desire new opportunities and new prospects. The same principle can be applied on a national scale. Future success is built on today's achievements.

But what pleased and distressed us most in 2009?

Last year, Belarus joined the Eastern Partnership programme. Meanwhile, there were several high level visits to Minsk, with Belarusian top officials travelling abroad. Relations with Europe have been temperamental for many years, so today's dynamics are a revelation. Additionally, the relations with our closest neighbours – Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia – have been dynamically developing. The signing of the Customs Union agreement in Minsk was perhaps the most important event. Jointly with Ukrainian and Lithuanian partners, Belarus have prepared about 20 regional projects within the partnership, in the fields of energy, energy security, transport, transit, border management, tourism and ecology and regarding the general cultural and historical heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A major aim is to raise the reliability and security of the energy system, constructing a corridor from the former Soviet states to Poland. This landmark agreement will have long-term strategic significance, influencing the geopolitical alignment of world forces. The Customs Union opens good prospects for its members – activating the establishment of joint production, lifting customs and administrative barriers to trade, and facilitating the import of resources and components from third countries. Our country also hopes the Customs Union will stimulate the domestic car building industry.

Privileges for Partnership are dedicated to Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi's first ever official visit to Minsk. During the visit, a range of documents were signed – most tackling the economic sphere. The meeting between Mr. Berlusconi and Mr. Lukashenko in Minsk has proven mutual interest in co-operation. Around 100 companies with Italian capital are currently operating in the republic, while about 30 enterprises with Belarusian investment are working in Italy. In 2009, bilateral turnover rose by almost 50 percent, to reach \$1.2bn. Around 300 Italian charities are involved in humanitarian works, hosting Belarusian children affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe.

In 2009, Belarus and Russia continue active joint work on the formation of a single economic space. This has been announced in the joint declaration issued by the participants of the Belarus-Russian Union.

The Belarusian and Russian presidents signed a declaration on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union State Treaty.

The Belarus -World Bank Co-operation Strategy is raising its funding of the republic. Belarus and the World Bank previously signed a \$200m development loan agreement in Minsk. The WB press services notes that the loan pursues two particular goals. The first is to expand programmes of social assistance to Belarusian residents on low incomes, who have suffered most from the global financial crisis on citizens. The second goal is to support the state programme to liberalise private investments while creating jobs; this envisages measures to liberalise prices, reduce taxes and to prepare legislation to begin the privatisation process. The loan will strengthen the country's state economic programme, which aims to weaken the negative influence of the global financial crisis. The World Bank also believes that it will help restore economic sustainability. At present, Belarus is using WB funds to finance four projects on infrastructure development.

Late 2009 was rich in international events for Minsk. The CIS space summit at the National library has become an important stage in the international telecommunication union's global initiative – connect the world – aimed at building a global information society. The Minsk meeting aimed to mobilize technical, financial and human resources and promote the shift to digital formats. The latest technologies and communication means could become an efficient anti-crisis instrument for the CIS since they can reduce financial, labour and energy expenses.

The success of events such as the Belarus Investment and Economic Forum, held in Minsk, is evident in the number of agreements, contracts and treaties signed. American Navistar and ArvinMeritor, Russian Northern Machine Building Enterprise, Avangard, and Belgian AOI NV are among those who have reached definite investment agreements with Belarus. Two aspects reveal the essence of progress and are likely to determine the development of the economy in the years ahead. Firstly, assessment of business conditions by foreign guests is interesting. Successful projects are the best proof in favour of interesting capital into Belarus.

A large number of documents starting Belarus' position on issues of non-proliferation, counteracting transnational challenges and threats, strengthening the OSCE's economic and ecological dimension, energy security and migration have been adopted at the end of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Athens. The major results of the meeting were agreements to extend OSCE dialogue on a wide range of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region – as part of the Confu Process. OSCE members have approved a declaration to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II – proposed by Belarus, Russia and some other countries.

Belarus' Statistical Committee notes that, in December 2009, the consumer price index for goods and services stood at 1.3 percent. Experts link the trend in Belarus in 2009 not only with economic recovery but on weak consumer demand. Against a background of falling incomes, citizens have cut back on spending and the taking out of loans. Reduced consumer activity could continue this year. Experts predict inflation rising less than 9 percent this year.

In 2010, Belarus will surely focus on leveling of its foreign trade balance. The reasons for losses in 2009 are clear, rooted in the global crisis. Foreign trade is vital to our country, so guides our foreign policy accordingly.

Meanwhile, the country is working on strengthening its international image via Belarus' Strategy for Cultural Presence in the World and Innovative Technologies for its Realisation. This strategy will govern the interaction of various mechanisms of foreign policy, including those within the cultural sphere. But Belarusian culture has far to go before fully revealing its potential.

In October, the largest biosphere reserve in Europe – the Belovezhskaya Pushcha – celebrated its 600th birthday. The cite is enjoying growing popularity among tourists, including those from Europe – who comes to admire its raw, virgin landscape. In fact, 2009 was named the Year of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha by UNESCO.

In March, the Opera and Ballet Theatre re-opened after three years of reconstruction, launching with a grand gala-concert. The building boasts numerous technical novelties while preserving its original appearance, designed by Iosif Langbard.

In 2009, cardio-surgery entered a new level. In February, the first heart transplantation operation was carried out in Belarus; our doctors had been working hard to this aim for eight years. Belarus' cardio-surgeons plan to conduct at least 7000 heart operations annually, bringing waiting lists down to no longer than three months.

Within the next four years, Minsk will host matches between Canada and Sweden, Finland and Russia. No longer a fantastic dream, Belarus is to host the 2014 World Ice Hockey Championship.

There is too much to look forward to in 2010. Every project is assessed for its practicality and real applications, ensured that both scientists and diplomats are satisfied.

### **Список использованных источников**

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