

Minsk Proposes A New World Order, Dazhynki Festival – Belarus State TV Digest

A visit by Lukashenka to Kazakhstan and economic integration within the Eurasian Union dominated the state television news last week. Belarusians could watch the head of state discussing the modernisation of Belarus and its plans for further optimistic co-operation with Astana.

Uladzimir Makei, Belarusian Minister for Foreign Affairs, called to remove sanctions against Belarus at the recent UN General Assembly in New York. The statesman also argued for a new world order, where countries with medium-sized economies would have a say.

The state media did not miss the release of Vaclav Klaus' latest book. The former president of the Czech Republic contested the European Union and called for the Czech Republic to leave the organisation.

Domestic Affairs

[Lukashenka softens on the exit fee at the Dazhynki harvest festival](#). Belarusians shopping abroad concerned Lukashenka and he was upset by the nearly \$2bn which the country's budget lost over the past year due to Belarusians shopping abroad.

However, at the Dazhynki press conference he spoke in a more soothing tone and explained the grounds for a system of taxation of the Belarusian shoppers who make purchases abroad. Lukashenka believed that if Belarusians would purchase more Belarusian goods rather than those in Poland and Lithuania, the economic situation would be far different today. Thus the authorities will introduce some measures, but only on a

temporary basis.

Lukashenka could not understand why Belarusians wanted to support the economy of the European Union by buying their clothes and other goods. "You have strong connections with German clothes... They are neither Polish nor Lithuanian clothes. but the whole European Union trades with us through them," he pointed out.

Belarusian economy is in the hands of Belarusians. The head of state discussed the possibility of the future devaluation of the Belarusian ruble, stating that it would depend upon the market's demand and supply mechanisms. Lukashenka explained: "the instruments [to avoid devaluation] are in your hands. If you will run out in the morning to various currency exchange kiosks and buy foreign currency, it will weaken our economy."

Belarus-Kazakhstan: do they want to change the geopolitical map of the world? Belarusian state television widely covered the "very warm meeting" of Lukashenka with the head of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. According to journalists a more open or congenial partnership is inconceivable as both sides are very close to one another.

Maintaining positive relations with Astana are not an accident, as Kazakhstan remains an attractive partner as "one of the most powerfully developing economies" in the region. Belarusian state TV evaluated the current joint projects of both countries and drew attention to the exceptionally positive trade turnover with Astana. Both countries are seriously considering selling their goods on the Asian and EU markets. Lukashenka even pointed out a readiness to build logistic centres on the border with the EU.

New electoral code to the local elections. The state TV noted that the next local elections will be held already in accordance with the amended electoral law. Journalists noted that the parliament had already approved them. The new law

states that all candidates will need to disclose any criminal record that they may have and declare their source(s) of income. Journalists also pointed out the changes in the regulations on campaign funding. Now candidates will need to use private sources and will not receive state support.

Foreign Affairs

[Lukashenka on economic integration: it is necessary today](#). During his visit to Astana, Lukashenka gave an official interview to the Kazakh state television KZ24.

The head of the state discussed at length Belarus' remarkably good relations with Astana. Neither of them are competing with each other and this co-operation has its advantages. Lukashenka underscored the importance of integration in general and integration within the Eurasian Union in particular. In his words, economic integration based on the free movement of people, goods, services and capital can help to avoid future potential economic problems that can occur worldwide.

However, the head of state disapproved of introducing a common currency at that stage. In his words, the member-states have not yet established any supra-national structures. "We should remain independent and sovereign states", he emphasized.

[What is wrong with the EU](#). State TV journalists also reported on a book by former president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus, which will come out soon. They noted that the Czech politician was calling for his country to leave the European Union as Brussels interferes too much in the politics of their member-states and thus it undermined the principles of freedom and sovereignty of each nation. Journalists also noted that during his tenure as a prime minister, Klaus argued that the entry of the Czech Republic into the EU was like a marriage of convenience.

[Minsk is calling for a new world order and removal](#)

of sanctions. In his speech at the UN General Assembly, Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makei, called for the establishment of a new world order. In his diagnosis, humankind has not kept pace with civilisation, and thus new mechanisms were needed.

He also lobbied for the removal of the sanctions from countries such as Belarus and Cuba, who “strive to form strong nations”. At the same time, the international forum should consider more seriously countries with medium sized economies. These countries de facto guarantee a multi-polar world order which may bring about stability and justice.

Makei argued that today states should focus more on issues such as migration, energy and employment, all carried out through global partnerships. Journalists noted that Belarus had already initiated a successful project against slavery and human trafficking.

Belarus Digest prepared this overview on the basis of materials available on the web site of Belarusian State Television 1 (BT1). Freedom of the press in Belarus remains restricted and state media convey primarily the point of view of the Belarusian authorities. This review attempts to give the English-speaking audience a better understanding of how Belarusian state media shape public opinion in the country.