

# Image of Belarus is a multi-colored necklace of the country

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«Small cities of Belarus are a necklace of our country» - said Larissa Nikolaevna Smirnova, deputy director of "Institute for Regional and Urban Planning of Belarus " at the forum «Image of Republic of Belarus: positioning and promotion of cities and regions». From 213 city settlements of the country, 173 (81,2 %) are small cities and settlements of city type. 1,2 million inhabitants live in them (12,2 % of the population of the country). Andrey Stas, the general director of company Stas Marketing Partners, has given a number of examples from Europe where offices of known transnational companies are located in small towns with population of 2-3 thousand inhabitants. Denis Vizgalov, the manager of projects of Fund «City economy Institute», said that image of country very much depends on a policy of the state: government has made something successfully and image of the country has gone upwards, has admitted a lack – and image has gone downwards, thus image of cities remains invariable.



When associating image of the country with a necklace it is possible to tell that various branches of republic and events in the country, such as “Slavianski Bazaar”, «Children's Eurovision 2010», «World championship on hockey 2014», also are beautiful elements of this necklace. As a result, if image of the country is being considered through a necklace prism, it turns out to be multi-colored, very unique and beautiful.

Very interesting associations in relation to Belarus have been stated by participants of a forum. So Andrey Stas has noticed that «Belarus is the most east of all western countries of Europe, and the most western among all east countries». Natalia Leshchenko, the expert of Institute of State ideologies INSTID (Great Britain) has told that Belarus is associated with woman protecting calmness and stability in the house. Denis Vizgalov has noticed that it is better to turn own minuses into pluses, instead of expostulating on lacks of Belarus. For example, if Belarus is said to be too quiet and sluggish country, it is possible to use this fact as advantage: come to Belarus to listen to this silence, after all in the world there is a lot of vanity and noise that it will be the best place for the rest. If Belarus is associated with dictatorship, advantages are also there. After all, it is possible to pick up the registration under such "image" and to involve tourists. Even in Moscow, the most desired place to visit is not Kremlin, but KGB building on Lubjanke.



Фото: Юлія фон Мацкевич

Apogee of a forum was competition of creative works on creating the concept of image of Belarus. Six finalists has presented. all very original and interesting. The work from advertising agency "Prosto" entitled «Travel with light baggage» became the winner of the competition. The main aim of the work was to raise interest to sights and the nature of Belarus. Considering insufficient development of an

infrastructure in the country, one and two-day tourist routes under various subjects have been offered.

At The Forum the special attention has been given to mentality and identity of Belarus nation. Nina Shidlovskaja, the Chairman of board of the International public association Union of Belarusians of the world "Batskavshchyna", has come up with idea that while Belarusians do not realize the identity with the history, pride of the country, creating image of the country will be difficult.

Julia Zelenskaja, National agency of tourism of Belarus have shown possibilities of event marketing and tourism and suggested to have a national holiday of world level «White Russia» and "Kupale". Yaroslav Mihajlovich Zavgorodny, general secretary of Hockey Federation of Republic of Belarus has told about aims and a course to preparation for the World championship on hockey 2014 and Olga Salamaha, Belteleradiocompany has told about carrying out of the Children's Eurovision 2010.

Participants of The Forum have received the necessary information on a course of action, have caught enthusiasm and shown impatience of carrying out the second forum about the image of Republic of Belarus. There was a set of ideas and useful acquaintances for realization of professional problems following the results of action. The Press Secretary of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Belarus Andrey Savinyh has told that it is necessary to create (at the state level) coordination group that consists of representatives of the government, business, public associations and professionals on creation and development the image of Republic of Belarus.



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Organizers of The Forum will continue discussion about image of Republic of Belarus on a site [www.imagebelarus.by](http://www.imagebelarus.by) and will prepare the circular on results and offers of a forum to state bodies. I International Forum «Image of Republic of Belarus: positioning and promotion of cities and regions» is only the first step to the consolidated construction and development of image of the country.

Organizers hope that this initiative will be supported, and participants of The Forum will incur various initiatives in its spheres of activity.