



## BELARUS 2015

Over the years of independence, the Republic of Belarus has established itself as a sovereign state with effectively functioning institutions of power, stable social and political system. The country has no territorial disputes and conflicts with its neighbours, interethnic and interfaith peace and harmony are preserved.

Time proves the correctness of the chosen course for evolutionary transformations: Belarus has not only maintained, but also increased its potential relying primarily on its own intellectual and production resources with maximum use of all possible external sources for the development.

The Republic of Belarus is a reliable and predictable partner, a donor of security in the region. The country demonstrates the ability to respond adequately to new challenges and effectively adapt to changing external conditions.

### **Economic stability in the conditions of crisis**

Against the deterioration of the world economy and manifestation of crisis in the economy of our traditional trading partners, Belarus has managed to preserve macroeconomic stability and improve the balance of the economy:

- positive balance of trade in goods and services is ensured;
- balance of payment is improved;
- our country managed to prevent the rise in inflation and sharp decline in real incomes of population;
- all external state obligations are repaid completely and in due time;
- stable situation in the currency and deposit markets is maintained.

Qualitative parameters of economic development are improving: labour productivity is growing, GDP energy intensity has declined by 8.7%, industry ROS (return on sales) totaled 8.6%.

Belarus maintains trade relations with 205 countries of the world. A balance of foreign trade is ensured. As a result of export growth of goods and services in the first half of 2015 a surplus totaled \$1.2 billion. The growth of the positive balance in comparison to the same period in 2014 was valued at \$567.2 million or 92.9%.

Anti-crisis measures taken by the Government helped to stabilize the industry. Agriculture sector also demonstrates good results: in the first half of 2015 the growth rates of the agricultural enterprises accounted for 103.6%.

Proactive measures taken by the Government and the National Bank to optimise domestic demand, to saturate domestic market with goods and to restrict money supply helped to curb rising prices and to maintain macroeconomic stability. Decline in price rising, in turn, provided the implementation of stepwise strategy to remove price caps.

The policy to balance the growth of real income of the population with the growth of GDP is being successfully applied. A sharp decline in real wages was avoided.

The efforts to liberalise the economy and to improve the business environment make our country more attractive for investors.

Belarus has improved its indices on indicators of world rating and occupies 57<sup>th</sup> position among 189 countries according to the report of the World Bank Group "**Doing Business-2015**". Experts highly appreciated the fact that the country has simplified taxation procedure for companies. Besides, Belarus enhanced the quality of regulating the activity of small and medium-sized enterprises in such areas as dealing with construction permits and trading across borders.

Minsk took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the ranking of the former USSR cities comfortable for doing business. The rating was calculated by **Forbes** on the basis of a wide range of criteria including infrastructure, human resources, financial systems, security.

In the annual ranking **Global Creativity Index-2015** Belarus entered the top 40 of the most creative countries leaving behind all the CIS countries and taking 37<sup>th</sup> position out of 139.

## **Prosperity and Social Security**

According to the **Report on human development** carried out by UNDP, Belarus took 53<sup>rd</sup> place in the annual ranking of the world and remained in the group of countries with the high level of human development.

**The 2014 Legatum Prosperity Index** also ranks Belarus 53<sup>rd</sup> according to the composite index of indicators in economy, education, health, personal freedom, security, opportunity, business, management and social capital.

According to the **World Bank**, Belarus holds the leading position among the countries of Europe and Central Asia and in general among the middle-income countries by such indicators as the share of the middle class in the total population. The World Bank calculated that in Belarus 80% of the population belong to the middle class, approximately 18% of people belong to socially vulnerable categories, about 2% are considered the poor. Extreme poverty is non-existent in the country.

Belarus occupies 59<sup>th</sup> place in the **World Happiness Report 2015** released by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global initiative for the United Nations. The report includes 158 countries. The ranking is based on key figures such as wellbeing of the population, GDP per capita, life expectancy, corruption level, the number of people out of work and social freedoms.

According to the data of **UNESCO** on the quantity of people receiving professional, higher and postgraduate education per 10 000 inhabitants, the Republic of Belarus is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and is in advance of such developed countries as Finland, Sweden, Norway, Austria and France.

In the **annual rating of national health care efficiency** published by Bloomberg Belarus ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> and is ahead of the United States of America. Every year our country spends on the development of the national health care system not less than 4% of GDP. This helps to upgrade and re-equip hospitals and introduce modern technologies into practice. In recent years our medicine has reached a qualitatively new level confirmed by experts from the **World Health Organisation**. Moreover, Belarus enters the top 3 on the availability of medical services.

In the rating **Save the Children** Belarus occupies the leading position among the CIS countries and takes 25<sup>th</sup> place out of 179 countries according to the conditions for maternity. The report "Committing to child survival: a promise renewed. Progress report 2014" published by the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** shows that Belarus has the best rating in the CIS region in terms of child mortality (under 5 years old) with coefficient 5 (on 1000 children born alive). Belarus is on a level with Great Britain, Canada and Poland. At the same time Belarus is the country with the lowest risk of maternal mortality in the world.

In accordance with the information and communication technologies development index released by the **International Telecommunication Union** Belarus occupies 38<sup>th</sup> position. For the first time, Belarus is the CIS leader and is ahead of Russia and Kazakhstan.

**United Nations e-Government Survey 2014** estimates the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for delivery of state service to citizens in 193 countries. Belarus takes 55<sup>th</sup> place and belongs to the group with the high level of development of e-Government.