

# Important for prosecutors to follow the law

Presidential Residence hosts mature discussion of law in its most spacious hall



Prosecutors from all regions have gathered to discuss how to improve their work. The President ordered the General Prosecutor, Alexander Konyukov, to set up the meeting in appointing him last September. The Investigative Committee, which has prosecutorial powers of preliminary investigation, must operate within the law, so the President has asked prosecutors to help in establishing its work.

Opening the meeting, the President noted the main issues of the agenda, saying, "The General Prosecutor's Office has taken great interest in theories and legislative investigations, restricting itself to narrow departmental approaches, without taking into account interests and interaction with other entities. I task those involved in law enforcement to seek further improvement, perhaps even reforming some areas. This also applies to the General Prosecutor's Office. Its system cannot remain static. It should evolve and improve with

society, responding promptly and adequately to modern challenges."

He continued, "Unfortunately, it's difficult to react promptly and suitably to every contemporary challenge, since there is no common vision held by prosecutors. Real results can be hampered by too many formal meetings and reams of unnecessary paperwork. Why should we spend time on this, if such work does not bring tangible benefits. We need results."

The President singled out a few important points, noting that prosecutors should guard the rights and interests of business entities while following the law closely. Rights and obligations are in delicate balance — observed by the state and private entrepreneurs alike. He emphasised the dishonesty of bureaucratic lawlessness, restricted competition and unfair preferential treatment and stressed, "The state of law in the economic sphere is far from ideal. Here, your liaison with the Government is vital." The President is keen to see corruption

fought in co-operation with other authorities and hopes that those employed to uphold the law will show dedication and competency. Much is to be done.

The issue of staffing was raised by the heads of the Regional Prosecutor's Offices, with various suggestions made, including unification of regional prosecutorial structures to ensure a cohesive policy. The President listened attentively to all debate and was interested to hear, by the end of the discussion, that enlargements of prosecutorial agencies could prove unreasonable.

It is possible to draw some conclusion from the speeches of the General Prosecutor, the Head of the Investigative Committee, Valery Vakulchik, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Piotr Miklashevich, and the Chairman of the Supreme Court, Valentin Sukało. Foremost, the new law-enforcement agency — the Investigative Committee — fits quite naturally into the overall architecture of the national security system. Business contacts are in evidence between related agencies and real reform has been seen, with deficiencies minimised — as proven statistically. This is quite convincing but we must remember that real lives are affected by the law. Where people are given the responsibility of judging others, the ultimate price can be paid.

Mr. Lukashenko asserted, "In connection with the creation of the Investigative Committee, the focus should be primarily on strengthening the public prosecutor's supervision of the investigation of crimes. Previously, we clearly decided that the main purpose of the committee



is to improve the protection of public rights and interests. Tougher supervision is essential. The Prosecutor's Office should offer a shoulder, assisting the Committee in its effectiveness. This concerns the relationship between the Investigative Committee and other law enforcement agencies; there should be no competition or, worse, interagency disputes or conflicts. Everyone is performing a common duty."

He continued, "Currently, public prosecution by trial is inefficient; we need a real adversarial justice system. Unfortunately, the public prosecutor is not yet a significant figure or active participant in the process, as required by law. The court must gather and examine evidence and call witnesses. The Public Prosecutor's Office should take into account that state prosecution is the final stage in a criminal trial."

The President added, "Supervision of the execution of the law (general supervision) was originally part of your work. Thanks to this, the Prosecutor's Office has always been called the 'public eye'. It should not be a substitute for the competence of other regulatory bodies, but must supervise the performance of their duties, to ensure compliance in their areas of responsibility. Its work should be active, able to remove specific violations promptly. The prosecutor must be ready to go as needed; this is the essence of general supervision."

He emphasised, "The Prosecutor's Office cannot exclude itself from the solution of other problems facing our state — particularly, in the economy. Without interfering in the economic activity of enterprises, we must raise the effectiveness of supervision in the economic sphere."

Finally, he noted, "You must firmly grasp the fact that your immediate task is not simply to fight crime but to ensure the fight is performed legally. This is the function of the Prosecutor's Office: to co-ordinate the fight against crime. This function requires significant strengthening but we have the resources to do so."

Mr. Lukashenko's priorities are general co-ordination at all levels, the counteraction of drug trafficking, the fight against corruption, the control of operational activity, and the improvement of state legal procedures and personnel operations. Of course, the natural political background is also important, as he explained, saying, "We're sure that the forthcoming elections will be conducted with dignity. Your task is to ensure the legitimacy of the electoral campaign: during voting and afterwards. We must co-ordinate work so that, with other law enforcement agencies, the Central Election Commission can identify violations quickly and respond promptly. At the same time, we need to avoid provocation."

## English language teaching for students in rural setting

By Yevgeny Nikonov

**Specialists from Oxford, Stockholm and Turkey teach English to Belarusian schoolchildren**

The Bridge of English Language and Culture project has been launched at the centre of Tourism and Local History for Children and Young People, in the Gomel Region's Starye Dyatlovchi Dis-

trict. It's the first time such an initiative has been implemented in the area.

The Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs Public Organisation and the Gomel District Executive Committee's Education Department have set up the programme, which involves 60 senior pupils countrywide. All are keenly improving their English at a forest camp run by teach-

ers and parents, with students attending for a week of lessons taken by specialists from Oxford, Stockholm and Turkish universities, applying the latest methods.

Only English is spoken during lessons, games and, even, informal chatting, while the second part of the day is spent on lighter activities, such as watching English language films and sport commentary. Dancing, needlework

and table games are all enjoyed through the medium of English.

According to Director Yuri Pavlov, participation in such social events enables youngsters to gain better understanding of the culture of English speaking countries. As experience shows, language retention is more effective when youngsters take a more active role in their own learning.

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