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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF
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Kyiv, 5 and 6 December 2013

The decisions to declare 2013 the Year of Ecological Culture and Environmental Protection and to award the chairmanship of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to the Republic of Belarus were adopted by the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth in Ashgabat on 5 December 2012.

Thus the year is coming to an end in the CIS under the chairmanship of the Republic of Belarus with its motto “integration for the good of the people, strengthening good-neighbourly relations, developing environmental co-operation, promoting the availability of ‘green’ technologies and expanding the dialogue of cultures”.

Among the priorities were further strengthening good-neighbourly relations and mutual co-operation in the post-Soviet space, improving the standard of living and well-being of the citizens of the CIS Member States and building on the positive experience of co-operative integration.

Meetings of the highest statutory and other bodies of the CIS, including the Councils of Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, were held in Minsk, Tashkent and Saint Petersburg.

One of the fundamental elements of the Belarusian chairmanship of the CIS was the comprehensive fulfilment of the potential of interregional and transborder co-operation by Member States with a view to strengthening good-neighbourly relations. It was possible to strengthen co-operation in defence, combating crime, terrorism, illicit trafficking in narcotics and human beings and preventing and managing emergency situations. Four agreements on developing co-operation were signed in these areas. The measures initiated by Belarus to expand co-operation between the administrative regions of the CIS countries gave new stimulus to interregional and transborder co-operation within the Commonwealth area.

Special attention was devoted within the Commonwealth to economic co-operation. Provisions of the Free Trade Agreement concerning the preparation of draft versions of an agreement on a free market for services, as well as of protocols on the regulation of State procurements and the reduction of export tariffs, were implemented. Measures were taken to flesh out the contents of Inter-State Programme for Innovation Co-operation.

Substantial progress has been achieved in the creation of a common agricultural market in the CIS and enhanced co-operation by business entities within CIS Member States. Advances have also been made in exploiting the innovative potential of the Commonwealth for further technological upgrading and modernization of the economy of the CIS Member States based on “green” economy concepts, as well as the targeted use of renewable energy sources and local raw materials. This was facilitated through the organization in Belarus of the Forum for Business People and the Belarusian Industry Forum, as well as a series of conferences, exhibitions and fairs.

A wealth of large-scale events took place this year concerning ecology and environmental protection. Around 40 environmental events were held. In May this year an agreement was signed on the initiative of Belarus on co-operation in the area of environmental protection. Belarus also proposed a number of projects for prioritizing the use of renewable energy sources.

Considerable attention was paid this year to the provision of assistance to veterans of the Great Patriotic War. At the October meeting of the Council of Heads of State in Minsk, a decision was taken to declare 2015 the Year of the Veterans of the Great Patriotic War and to issue a joint commemorative medal to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War from 1941 to 1945. The meeting of the Heads of Government of the CIS on 20 November approved a plan of basic measures for preparing and celebrating this 70th anniversary. Social and medical assistance for veterans and improving their quality of life were also discussed.

In the field of expanding the dialogue of cultures, work continued on the formation of a common information and educational space within the Commonwealth. The Eighth Forum of Creative and Academic Intellectuals in Minsk provided an opportunity to explore perspectives for developing environmental, cultural, educational and scientific co-operation by the CIS Member States.

At the meeting of the Heads of Government of the CIS, the Strategy for Tourism Co-operation and the timetable of events for implementing the Strategy for International Youth Co-operation by the countries of the CIS were both signed.

As the country holding the chairmanship of the CIS, Belarus represented the Commonwealth at the OSCE 2013 Annual Security Review Conference and at the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly. With the assistance of the Republic of Belarus, the CIS Executive Committee held a regional seminar in Minsk in January in co-operation with the OSCE and the United Nations on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In accordance with the decision of the CIS Council of Heads of State, the chairmanship of the Commonwealth in 2014 will be held by Ukraine.

The CIS Member States are disposed to closer constructive co-operation within the OSCE. The CIS countries support the Helsinki+40 process that has been embarked upon and its aim of strengthening the OSCE and helping to achieve the noble aims that were put before the Organization at its inception.