**The Republic of Belarus**

Belarus is a small, beautiful country with the heroic past and interesting present. It is situated in Eastern Europe. The Republic borders on Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Historically many wars and battles were on the territory of our Motherland because of its convenient position on the map. Belarus has an area of 207 square kilometers and a population of more than 9 million. Two-thirds of Belarus' population live in cities. There are 97 cities in the Republic. Its capital is Minsk, with the population of about two million people. Minsk is also the coordinating center of **the commonwealth of independent States** (СНГ). The largest cities in Belarus are Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, and Mogilev, in which the administrative centers of the Republic are located.

Belarus, like any other country, has its own symbols. There are official and non-official symbols of my country. The National Flag of the Republic of Belarus, the National Emblem of the Republic of Belarus and the National Anthem of the Republic of Belarus are official symbols of Belarus. The most widely known symbols of Belarus are a bison, a stork and a cornflower. Also many other realities of Belarusian culture have turned into symbols of national identity. The Slutsk belts, the multi-coloured “kaflia” (tile), the cross of St. Yefrossinia of Polotsk.

Belarusian`s natural scenery is made up of plains covered with hills, and many lakes and forests. The highest place in Belarus is the mount Dzerzhinskaya (345m) in Minsk region. There are nearly 3.000 rivers with in Belarus. The main rivers are the Dnieper, the Neman, the Zapadnaya Dvina and the Pripyat. In the past they were great trade ways from Europe to Asia and India and many towns appeared on their banks. There are more than 10 thousand lakes in Belarus. Most of them are situated in the northern part of the republic. The largest lake is the Naroch (80 sq km) and the deepest one is the Dolgoye (54 metres). One third of the Republic's territory is covered with forests. The largest of them are called pushchas. The most beautiful is the Byelovezhskaya.

The climate of Belarus is moderately continental and mild.

Today Belarusian industry produces tractors, big lorries, automatic lines, television sets and so on. Agriculture specializes in milk and meat production. The main cultures here are potatoes and flax.

Though Belarus is small it gives us a lot of opportunities to be proud of it. We can be proud of achievements in science and culture, our sportsmen, heroism of our people, our traditions, our hospitality [ˌhɔspɪ'tælətɪ] (гостеприимство) and tolerance.