

# EHU: OPTIMISING IMPACT ON BELARUS

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## Executive Summary

- This paper looks at the impact of the European Humanities University (EHU), a Belarusian university in exile, on Belarus-related studies, teaching and public discourse.
- With its location away from the restrictive political climate of Belarus, areas where the EHU is well positioned to provide “added value” include political science, Belarusian history, human rights, Belarusian language and literature as well as journalism.
- The EHU with its new concept of internationalisation risks losing its distinction from other regional private universities, which raises the question about why it should continue to be eligible for donor’s support.
- The EHU has the potential to become the main scientific hub for Belarus, both for research and academic studies. In this way it would be ideally placed to obtain further funding (such as through EU university research programmes) or donor support (linked to democratisation in Belarus).
- The EHU could work on meeting the need for high quality research on Belarus, especially linked to developing concrete plans for reforms in Belarus. Currently there is a lack of organisations that are able to perform this role.
- To increase interest among young Belarusians in programmes such as political science, history or Belarusian studies the university should not only offer scholarships but also recruit and retain high calibre academics working in these areas providing them with job security guarantees typical for EU universities.
- The paper suggests establishing a robust disclosure mechanism of research, teaching and policy impact based on measurable indicators. This mechanism could take the form of expanding existing oversight bodies to ensure that relevant donors, implementers, Belarusian civil society, Belarusian diaspora and the Lithuanian government all have a chance to review reports and be consulted on the most important decisions.
- While the aim of a sustainable EHU, less dependent on donors’ funding, is supported, this paper argues that donors should continue to firmly back the EHU as a valuable institution, which could play a unique role in the future of Belarus.
- External support, however, should be targeted at the “added value” areas while other EHU programmes could be pushed to ensure early sustainability.

## Introduction

The current rector of the European Humanities University should step down soon in line with the requirements of Lithuanian law, having served two terms. This paper aims to launch a constructive public discussion on the direction of the EHU under the new leadership, to deal with the challenges facing both the EHU and Belarusian society.

The authors interviewed by e-mail and by telephone over 20 individuals related to the EHU, including its alumni, lecturers, administration, donors and well as representatives of Belarusian civil society who worked with the University in the past. Many agreed that an open discussion would benefit the university.

The EHU is at a crossroads. With no change in Belarus on the horizon, the university needs to prepare itself for continued exile. Ten years after the EHU established itself in Vilnius, many donors continue to support the EHU as they have taken natural sympathy for their struggle. However, they are paying increasing attention to the impact of the funding, and considering in more detail the direction in which the University is going with a view to paving the way for self-funding.

The EHU is an important and valuable institution for the future of Belarus. However, public information and debate about the direction of the university has been limited. Most media coverage has focused on the story of the university going into exile rather than its effectiveness. This paper intends to fill this gap.

In 2014 the Ostrogorski Centre plans to prepare a follow-up paper to track progress of the University in the areas identified below.

## Mission of the EHU

Established in 1992 in Minsk, the EHU was forced into exile in 2004 when the Belarusian authorities withdrew its licence. This followed the EHU's refusal to acquiesce to government pressure to change its leadership. The exiled University found its new home in Vilnius, which is less three-hours by train from Minsk.

The inauguration on 9 June 2004 in Vilnius marked the EHU's re-opening as a regular university, which since then has been operating in Lithuania for Belarusian students<sup>1</sup>. The EHU claims to be the only Belarusian university, which has "succeeded in escaping the heavy hand of the Belarusian state and its ideological control over educational institutions."<sup>2</sup>

However, as this paper demonstrates below, the university has recently shifted its focus from Belarus-related courses, publications, staff and the Belarusian language towards an institution aiming to cater a broader group of students from the countries of the former Soviet Union. The Belarusian component was more prominent during its early years in exile. The vision of the University mentions Belarus primarily as a source of students, among other students from the region rather than as the main target of its activities.<sup>3</sup>

The future vision of the University mentions Belarus primarily as a source of students, among other students from the region, rather than as the main target of its activities.

The internationalisation of the University, which features prominently in the description of the University's vision for the future,<sup>4</sup> is likely to lead to a decrease in Belarus-focused studies, staff and students. The EHU risks losing its distinction from other regional private universities, which raises the question about why it should continue to be eligible for donor's support.

For example, Polish universities (especially private ones, like Lazarski University) have neither specific donor support, nor a special focus on Belarus. However, their prices are affordable and Belarusians are ready to pay for the benefits of an EU education. Perhaps ironically it is Lazarski University that has organised a series of conferences on historical and political perspectives on Belarus that observers argue should be the EHU's trademark.

Another concern is that joint programmes with other universities are liable in reality only to amount to subsidising Belarusian students to study at regular regional universities rather than creating a specific Belarus focused environment.

Therefore to fulfil its role as a university in exile and centre of academic development for a new generation of Belarusians, the University should retain its Belarusian character and focus on areas of "added value" for Belarus. Rather than becoming an

<sup>1</sup> Anatoli Mikhailov, *A Future for Belarus's University in Exile*, *European Voice*, 16 June 2006, <<http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/a-future-for-belarus-s-university-in-exile/52579.aspx>>, accessed 13 June 2013. In 2006, Lithuanian authorities confirmed that the EHU activities corresponded with requirements of Lithuanian law and issued its official accreditation.

<sup>2</sup> What Makes EHU Unique?, <<http://www.ehu.lt/en/about/what-makes-ehu-unique>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>3</sup> EHU Governing Board, "European Humanities Vision 2019, A Strategic Plan for Academic Years 2012-2019", 2011, pp. 7, 15, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Ukrainian Free University was a recognised Western European scholarly centre, specializing in the study of Ukraine within the USSR and of Ukrainians in the diaspora. Emphasis was placed on the study of Ukrainian history, literature, culture, law and politics. See more at <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian\\_Free\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Free_University)>.

ordinary “internationalised” university, the EHU should learn from other successful émigré universities, notably the Ukrainian Free University in Munich, which educated generations of Ukrainians.<sup>5</sup>

## Identified Areas of Potential “Added Value”

The following have been identified as areas where the Belarusian state puts students and academics under particular pressure when they are studying at Belarus-based universities. Consequently there is clear merit in these becoming core “added value” areas for the EHU.

*Table 1. Areas where the EHU can create “added value”.*

Academic Areas	Challenges in Belarus
Political science	Multiple politically-motivated expulsions, absence of platforms in Belarus to discuss Belarusian politics. Difficulties with holding public discussions of plans for economic and political reform and the impossibility of writing and defending PhD dissertations that are not in line with the regime’s ideology.
Belarusian history	The current Belarusian authorities promote their own narrative of Belarusian history based on the Soviet legacy, its connection to Russia and the Soviet-era partisans. This is in distinct contrast to pro-democracy forces that tend to stress the European nature and roots of the Belarusian nation linked to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.
Political rights, sociology/polling, democratic transition	Belarus has one of the worst regional records in oppressing individuals active in these areas.
Belarusian language and literature	Belarusian identity, language and cultural heritage is core to the pro-democracy movement, ongoing discrimination against Belarusian speakers, and removal of Belarus-centric authors from curricula.
Journalism	Belarusian independent journalists often face prosecution from authorities and lack opportunities for continuous professional development.

In these areas the EHU can clearly provide “added value”. As illustrated, study and research in these areas is restricted in Belarus, sometimes expressly opposed. Consequently, this paper argues that these “core” areas should become the focus of donor support – while other areas of EHU activity should focus more on ensuring their self-funding through attracting fee-paying students.

## Measuring Impact

As an unusual institution, which has a mission of working for the benefit of Belarus but for good reasons remains located outside of its home country, assessing its impact requires unusual approaches.

This paper focuses on five specific areas regarding the EHU's work: teaching, research, policy, national identity and capacity building.

### Teaching Impact

In addition to the EHU Vision 2019, several other steps suggest that the University is moving away from its focus on Belarus. Notably, the EHU has recently closed or suspended its Belarus-focused and human rights programmes (Political Science and European Studies, Democracy and Civil Society, Comparative History of North-Eastern Europe) or downgraded them to a specialisation (e.g. Belarusian Studies) within larger more generic programmes.

Additionally, the EHU is in the process of merging its unique programmes with other Western universities. For example, what many would see as a key programme – that of political science – is planned to be switch over to English-language content without any particular focus on Belarus, and be run jointly with the Lithuanian Vytautas Magnus University based in Kaunas.

Many public events organised at the EHU seem to have no direct relevance to Belarus. For example, the recently advertised conference “Evaluating Practical Knowledge in the Social Sciences and Humanities: Research Strategies in the Modern University” planned for October 2013 will be held in English only.<sup>6</sup> Since the vast majority of Belarusian academics do not speak English, they are certainly not the main target group. Moreover, neither the proposed conference topics nor the background description make any mention of Belarus.

### Research Impact

Contemporary academic institutions are primarily judged on the quality and quantity of their research. However, the latest Annual Report on EHU Research Activities does not give a clear picture of its achievements in this area.<sup>7</sup> Instead, it primarily lists events such as seminars and conferences. While most events listed under research activities appear relevant to Belarus, out of 26 listed events only three appear to be relevant to the “added value” areas identified above.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> EHU Academic Conference “Evaluating Practical Knowledge in the Social Sciences and Humanities: Research Strategies in the Modern University”, <<http://www.ehu.it/en/public-events/evaluating-practical-knowledge-in-the-social-sciences-and-humanities-research-strategies-in-the-modern-university>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Annual Report on EHU Research Activities (October 2011 - September 2012), <<http://www.ehu.it/files/Annual%20EHU%20Report%20on%20Research%20Activities%202012.pdf>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Namely seminars “Professional Journalism and Human Rights”, exhibition “Unknown Belarusian People’s Republic”, and “Political Corruption as a Post-Soviet Phenomenon in Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus”.

It is difficult to assess the quality of publications published by EHU full-time staff because the report gives only overall numbers, which presumably also includes part-time academics who only spend a small fraction of their time teaching at the EHU.

The chart below compares research outcomes of the European Humanities University and the European University at Saint Petersburg, a non-state graduate university located in St Petersburg, Russia where teaching is also primarily conducted in Russian.<sup>9</sup> It shows that the EHU is producing six times fewer citations per academic compared to its counterpart in St Petersburg.<sup>10</sup>

*Table 2. Research output: number of citations on scholar.google.com in 2012.<sup>11</sup>*

Research Institution	Full-time academic staff (approx)	In English	In Belarusian	In Russian	Total citations/staff ratio
European Humanities University	99 <sup>12</sup>	37	1	12	0.5
European University at St Petersburg (Russia)	50	90	n/a	62	3.0

Although the University has set up a number of research centres, their output when it comes to sensitive areas appears rather modest. For example, the Center for Constitutionalism and Human Rights was set up in 2012 but its most recent listed publication is dated 2011 (the apparent contradiction in dates suggests that these activities were not commissioned by the centre).<sup>13</sup>

In the newly established Journal on Constitutionalism and Human Rights only one article is authored by a Belarusian author (although his article is not about Belarus).<sup>14</sup> Eight out of nine authors are academics or practitioners working in Russia. 71 pages of the Journal published in Russian language do not mention the word “Belarus” even once. This focus of the Journal is disappointing given that Belarus has very serious problems with human rights and constitutionalism and the EHU is ideally placed to discuss them.

Similarly, the list of initiatives of the Institute for Historical Research on Belarus includes only three.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, one of the three listed activities according to the Belarusian press was organised by other organisations in Belarus.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Read more at <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_University\\_at\\_Saint\\_Petersburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_University_at_Saint_Petersburg)>, accessed 10 June 2013.

<sup>10</sup> See Google Scholar <<http://scholar.google.com>>.

<sup>11</sup> The numbers reflect results when the institution’s name is written in English, Russian and Belarusian. The purpose of this comparison is to put research output and academic visibility of the European Humanities University in context.

<sup>12</sup> In 2012, the overall size of EHU personnel included 244 staff members of which: 88 administrators, 57 academic and research administration staff, and 99 full-time teachers. Temporary teaching staff is not included. “Annual Report of the EHU” 2011-2012”, p. 57, available at <[http://www.ehu.lt/files/EHU\\_annual\\_report\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.ehu.lt/files/EHU_annual_report_2011-2012.pdf)> accessed 10 June 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Activities of the Center for Constitutionalism and Human Rights, <http://www.ehu.lt/en/research/research-centers/center-for-constitutionalism-and-human-rights/activities>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Journal of Constitutionalism and Human Rights, Issue 1 (2013), <<http://www.chr-centre.org/sites/default/files/JournalNo1.pdf>>, accessed 10 June 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Activities of the Institute for Historical Research on Belarus, <<http://www.ehu.lt/en/research/research-centers/institute-for-historical-research-on-belarus/activities>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>16</sup> “Hrodna Palimpsest: People of the Old Hrodna. Fifth International Academic Conference” (Hrodna, 3-4 November 2012), <<http://tinyurl.com/pe232yh>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

Clearly, this underlines the importance of not only establishing research centres but also ensuring that they produce and disseminate quality research relevant to Belarus. Publicly available information suggests that the EHU has few working connections with researchers from Belarus working for think tanks and analytical centres in the “added value” areas. In particular, the EHU could start working on concepts dealing with a period after economic and political changes have taken place, or, for example in a “half-democratic Belarus” – and also what role the EHU could play in such an environment.

Consequently, a vision is needed on how the EHU could develop itself as the main scholarly hub for Belarus – specialising in research and studies where restrictions exist in Belarus due to the political environment, and how this could evolve as the situation changes in Minsk. The EHU also needs to hire people with a proven record of research and ability to seek funding from the European Union and other major donors for research projects related to the “added value” areas.

## Policy Impact

The EHU web site offers little evidence of round tables, debates or policy papers or contributing to the public policy discourse in Belarus. Most EHU events feature prominent foreign guests. It is noteworthy that list of speakers invited to the EHU Public Conversations does not include even one person from Belarus.<sup>17</sup>

Although it is difficult to estimate the institution’s policy impact in Belarus, a citation index of Belarusian media provides some evidence of it.

*Table 3. Visibility in Belarus: index of citations on news.tut.by (the most popular Belarusian web portal) in 2012.*

Policy analysis institution	Full-time academic staff (approx)	Number of citations	Citations/academic staff ratio	Context
European Humanities University	99	17	0.2	Primarily about the fact that it exists, its financial difficulties, its teaching programmes
Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies <sup>18</sup>	10	22	2.2	Primarily comments on published policy papers, round tables, interviews with analysts
Discussion and Analytical Society Liberal Club <sup>19</sup>	7	16	2.3	Comments on various publications and events from experts of the organisation

<sup>17</sup> EHU Public Conversations, <<http://www.ehu.lt/en/public-events/ehu-public-conversations>>, accessed 3 June 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies is an independent think tank registered in Lithuania and active in Belarus. More information is at <<http://www.belinstitute.eu/en>>.

<sup>19</sup> Discussion and Analytical Society Liberal Club is an independent Belarusian non-profit organisation engaged in research and education projects. More information is at <[http://liberalclub.biz/?page\\_id=153](http://liberalclub.biz/?page_id=153)>.

As illustrated above, a relatively small discussion and analytical society appears to be having as much impact on the news discourse as a whole university which is uniquely placed to drive academic and policy debate for reform within Belarus. Furthermore, the impact of the EHU on the news agenda is primarily related to its challenges, rather than its outputs.

## Impact on National Identity

Since a Belarusian identity is a core value to the Belarusian pro-democracy movement, and is not allowed to flourish naturally in Belarus many would argue it should also be characterised as the primary basis of the operations for the EHU.

The EHU could promote study and debates demonstrating a clear link between Belarussianness with Europeanness through EU studies. Indeed it is argued that if it was not for the emergence of Lukashenka, other universities in Belarus would have taken on leading roles in promoting the Belarusian language and culture – but this did not happen.

A significant potential value added for the EHU is in the area of promoting a free environment where the Belarusian language and culture could flourish. The EHU is ideally placed to fill this vacuum as well as to lead the debate on analysing the various layers of contemporary and independent Belarusian identity and culture that have developed in Belarus today.



However, the recent evidence from the EHU where the Belarusian Studies programme has been “relegated” to one of five specialities within the Cultural Heritage programme suggests a shifting focus on the part of the university administration to more universal subjects.

Additionally, although the EHU does not publicly provide the precise percentage of programmes taught in Belarusian, the departure of a number of visible figures who lectured in Belarusian (Aleś Smaliančuk, Zachar Šybicka, Valancin Hołubieŭ) suggests that the number is decreasing.

It must be noted that introducing more teaching in Belarusian language could also contradict the University’s ambition to recruit more students from the former Soviet Union republics,<sup>19</sup> as very few people outside Belarus speak this language. Although the role of the Belarusian language should not be the core issue, concrete steps need to be taken to encourage its use and more respect towards this vision of Belarusian identity.

For example, since 2012 the University has not even had a version of its web site in Belarusian.<sup>20</sup> The authors of this report have been repeatedly assured that it is a temporary problem. However, such a long-term absence of any Belarusian version of the web site suggests that supporting the national identity of Belarusians is not high at all on the university’s list of priorities.

<sup>19</sup> EHU Governing Board, European Humanities Vision 2019, “A Strategic Plan for Academic Years 2012-2019”, 2011, pp 1-7.

<sup>20</sup> To place in context, the US-sponsored Radio Liberty Belarusian service only has a Belarusian version. Belsat TV, supported by Poland, broadcasts in Belarusian only. This does not suggest that all teaching at the EHU should be conducted in Belarusian, however, a set of measures needs to be implemented to strengthen the role of the language.

## Impact on Capacity Building

A university working in a more liberal environment can potentially serve as a foundation for the development not only of Belarusian students but also of Belarusian academics and higher education administrators.

In this regard, the EHU should consider organising teaching methodology and research trainings for academics based in Belarus. EHU could also play a role in training/retraining teachers in modern teaching methods, especially promoting critical thinking, which will be crucial in implementing any future reforms. Ideally, these trainings should focus on Belarusian case studies and data, which will make them distinct from what is offered at other regional universities.

Also relevant is that donor support, especially subsequent to the 2006 and 2010 post-election clampdowns, has partially been provided through scholarship programmes. The medium-term impact of these scholarships remains open to question and arguably depends on the post-study location of recipients. Most donors perceive the scholarships as an investment in the future of Belarus, however there is a risk that individuals may become too far separated from the reality of Belarus and remain, in effect, in permanent exile. A full and transparent assessment of this information would help evaluate the impact of these programmes. Risk mitigation steps can also be considered, such as encouraging internships and links to organisations and companies operating in Belarus.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the above discussions and evidence, this paper makes the following recommendations.

### Prioritising Activities in “Added Value” Areas

The decision of the EHU to close down Belarusian studies programme and its own political science programmes should be questioned. These should be the core programmes of the University.

If donors will be struggling to find enough funds to continue their support for the EHU at the same level, they should provide targeted support in areas where the EHU environment can create an “added value” as opposed to results, which can be achieved at Belarusian universities or at other regional universities. These areas should be at the core rather than periphery of EHU activities and may include:

- Create concrete incentives for lecturers to conduct high quality research relevant to the “added value” areas.
- Produce quality academic studies on Belarusian history, particularly political and economic history.
- Provide theoretical and practical experience for civil society activists as Belarus has clearly a need for it.
- Conduct studies of civil society in Belarus, especially comparative studies with

other countries in the region.

- Strengthen working links between EHU students and faculty members and Belarusian civil society organisations, think tanks and media to organise joint projects.
- Act as a public discussion forum with prominent figures from Belarus.
- Run a series of consultations/round tables with Belarusian civil society/media representatives with a view to develop special placement programmes (internships, course projects, etc) for EHU students and alumni.

## Transparent and Merit-Based Hiring Procedures Focused on Belarusians

Hiring decisions of academics should be based on research excellence as demonstrated by their publication record, particularly in areas related to the above identified priority areas. As the EHU's goal is to become a platform for educating the next generation of the Belarusian elite, it should demonstrate its ability to train and shape lecturers and

administrators in the area of higher education, which could subsequently contribute to improvement of the Belarusian system of higher education.

One of possible reasons that the EHU is struggling to attract students is that its research and public policy profile is rather low.

Consequently, in all recruitment it should be considered a major advantage to hold Belarusian citizenship, and preference should be given to those who can teach in both official languages of Belarus, Belarusian and Russian, rather than just one language.

This will help ensure the sustainability of the EHU's work through encouraging the development of the Belarusian academic elite.

Although the moral reason to support employees who originally came with the EHU from Minsk should be taken into account, competitive requirements based on research output should play a primary role. One of the possible reasons that the EHU is struggling to attract students<sup>21</sup> is that its research and public policy profile is rather low as shown above.<sup>22</sup>

According to some respondents, most EHU lecturers do not have proper employment contracts providing normal labour rights and instead work on the basis of provision of service contracts. To increase interest among young Belarusians into programmes such as Political Science, History or Belarusian Studies the university should recruit and retain accomplished academics working in these areas providing them with job security guarantees typical for EU universities.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Competition for most EHU programmes is going down, which suggests that the University is struggling to attract good quality students, even though it is offering scholarships.

<sup>22</sup> The top reason why Belarusians chose to study at the EHU remains "Opportunities to participate in student exchange programs in other European universities" (60% of respondents) while "A possibility to get to know and communicate with interesting, creative students and faculty of EHU" occupies the 5th place with 39%. 2012 Survey of Motivational Factors for Applying to Enter EHU (First Year Undergraduate Students).

<sup>23</sup> In 2009 a number of EHU political science lecturers resigned claiming that there was no academic freedom at the European Humanities University. In particular, they were not satisfied that programme leaders were not elected but appointed. See "Politologi EGU Objavili Zabastovku" (Political Science Scholars Announced a Strike), available at <<http://www.belaruspartisan.org/bp-forte/?page=100&news=49114>>, accessed 9 June 2013.

## Tracking the Relevant Impact

A regular monitoring and feedback would benefit the university – monitoring body should consist of representatives of the donor community, Belarusian civil society and diaspora as well as Lithuanian authorities. Decisions to launch or discontinue programmes as well as defining the future strategy of the EHU should be done in consultation with this body.

The disclosure mechanism could take the shape of an expanded version of the current General Assembly of Part Owners<sup>24</sup> or addition of relevant representatives to the EHU Governing Board or the EHU Trust Fund (legally represented by the Nordic Council of Ministers).<sup>25</sup>

The EHU should be encouraged to publish annually on its web site the following information and trends to demonstrate the dynamics of its numbers:

- Statistics on the actual number and titles of publications of full-time staff of the faculty in general and separately focusing on the “added value” areas.
- Statistics on the regions from which the EHU is recruiting and what and where its alumni are working two years after graduation.
- Statistics on the number of Belarusian nationals occupying academic, senior management and administrative positions at the EHU.
- Percentage of courses taught in Belarusian and other languages.
- Detailed impact report on activities of centres working in the “value added” areas (publications, round tables, seminars, quotations in press).



## Towards Greater Sustainability through Focusing on Belarus

Blurring the focus of the EHU will make it less attractive to the donor community and fee-paying Belarusian students who may prefer to study at other regional universities without an emphasis on Belarus.

A strong focus on Belarus, on the other hand, would offer distinct advantages for the EHU. If the EHU was able to put together a solid team of researchers focusing on Belarus, and was able to link up with other European universities it would be in a unique position to attract research funding from the European Union and other major donors.

<sup>24</sup> EHU General Assembly of Part-Owners, <<http://www.ehu.lt/en/about/leadership/general-assembly-of-part-owners>>, accessed 9 June 2013>, accessed 9 June 2013.

<sup>25</sup> EHU Governing Board, <<http://www.ehu.lt/en/about/leadership/governing-board>>, accessed 9 June 2013.

Increasing its focus on providing expertise on policy-making in Belarus would enable the university to seek support for its activities from donors and implementers working in Belarusian civil society. Many of them are also based in Vilnius which would facilitate the development of synergies.

Finally, more attention to the issues of Belarusian national identity, language and history would also help the EHU attract funds from the Belarusian diaspora in Western Europe and North America.

Looking ahead to the medium-long term, these would also be areas that would provide significant comparative advantage of expertise in comparison to other Belarusian higher education institutions. This would stand the EHU in good stead when the opportunity arises for the EHU to return to Minsk.

## About the Authors

Dr Yaraslau Kryvoi is the founder of the Ostrogorski Centre and the general editor of Belarus Digest. A Harvard Law School grad, he has been working for international law firms and taught law in Belarus, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States. He is originally from Minsk, Belarus.

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## Ostrogorski Centre

The Ostrogorski Centre is a private, nonprofit organisation dedicated to analysis and policy advocacy on problems which Belarus faces in its transition to market economy and the rule of law. Its work is nonpartisan and dedicated to achieving practical results.

The last decades have seen rapid transition of Belarus in all kinds of fields -- from business environment to religion, education and security. Its analysts working in Minsk, Kyiv, London and Berlin understand the challenges of transition in the region because they have lived through it. Educated at the world's leading universities, the centre's experts have cultivated the culture and technical skills required to deliver Western-style analysis.

The mission of the Ostrogorski Centre is to contribute to better understanding of transition processes in Belarus and learn from experience of other countries. It conducts research which requires multinational outlook and engage in areas where demand cannot be fully met by the domestically trained specialists. The Centre aims to promote reforms and thinking which helps the economy become more competitive, governance more efficient and integrate Belarusian scholars and analysts in pan-European and global networks.



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This paper is available at  
<http://belarusdigest.com/papers/ehuforbelarus.pdf>.