

Be a Man, not a Sheep! – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Thanks to recently launched applications Belarusians can now complain to the authorities in a less formalised way. One of them, Comfortable City, helps creating appeals and petitions to the state bodies.

Be a Man, not a Sheep! – a new project Studwatch.org encourages students to protect their rights.

Pact launches a series of memos based on community polls in Belarus. It can help to better understand the needs and challenges of local communities.

Initiatives and campaigns

[New online platforms for appeals to state bodies](#). Minsk web programmer Valery Koldachev launched the web site [One-Window-Online](#), which allows to send information about problems in Minsk to the state body that can fix it. This week one more online platform has been launched – [Comfortable City](#) that helps creating appeals/petitions to the state bodies and collect signatures under them. In both cases appeals have a legal force so officials should respond them. The similar online projects already work in Belarus for some years –e-appeals to state bodies [Zvarot.by](#) and complaints on roads [Belyama.by](#).

[Pact releases first in series of Belarus community polls](#). This week, Pact begins to release a series of memos based on community polls in Belarus. The first memo is dedicated to the village of Komarovo, and will be followed by five additional memos released before the end of 2015. Pact's goal for the community polls is to provide easy-to-use feedback directly

from a local community in order to better understand community development (supply) needs and challenges. A local research company, SATIO, carried out the first community polls. The Russian-language version of the analysis [is available](#) at the web site of Pact's Community Development Fund.

[Charitable auction of meetings MajeSens celebrated 4 years of its activity in October](#). To the moment, the platform has collected about 320 thousand dollars for charity issues. MajeSens allows everybody to put up a meeting with him/her or to win meeting with other person. The money obtained is transferred to a charitable project, available at the web site.

[New manual on capacity building for Civil Society Organisations](#). New Eurasia Establishment presents the first edition of its manual "Diagnosis and Planning of CSO Capacity Building", developed in the framework of Strengthening the Capacity of Joint Initiatives project. The manual is designed specifically for Belarusian CSOs and intended for managers and leaders of organisations and consultants.

[New project Studwatch.by encourages students not to be afraid to protect their rights](#). Among the tools the organisers suggest to become election observers, report on violations to human rights defenders in the elections, disseminate information, etc. The slogan of the new project: Be a man, not a Sheep.

[Week against the Death Penalty in Belarus](#). On 5-10 October the Week against the Death Penalty to place in Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. On 7 October the discussion [Murder on Verdict](#) was held in Vilnius with the participation of the Belarusian human rights defenders, journalists and representatives of the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania. The event presented the film [Six Arguments against the Death Penalty](#) telling about the disproportionate character and cruelty of the death penalty.

Presidential elections

[European Parliament held a discussion on relations between the EU and Belarus after the presidential elections.](#) On 14 October discussion was organised by the EaP Civil Society Forum and the European Parliament delegation for relations with Belarus. The Belarusian side was represented by Anna Herasimova (the Belarusian Human Rights House), Vladimir Dunayev (Public Bologna Committee) and Andrei Yegorov (Centre for European Transformation).

[Independent observers developed a mobile device for easy collection of information from voters through smartphones.](#) Application named as Vochy/Eyes informs on voting rights and creates a mobile platform for the transmission of information on violations of the election independent observers. The collected information is published on the web site of the national monitoring of the election campaign electby.org, known in Belarus since 2010.

Interaction between state and civil society

[Minsk development plan draws attention.](#) On 14 October Minsk municipality presented to media a new General Plan of Minsk 2030. The presentation also sparked the interest of more than a hundred citizens that joined the meeting. And as a follow-up, several civic initiatives [join forces to protect](#) their communities from Minsk City Council.

[Supreme Court denies BCD's complaint.](#) The Supreme Court has denied the complaint about the Ministry of Justice lodged by the steering committee for the creation of the Belarusian Christian Democracy party. The BCD steering committee wanted to appeal the refusal to register the party. It is the fifth

time the BCD has been refused registration as a party. The BCD has also tried registering as a civil organisation 19 times.

[Blogger Anton Matolka wrote a letter to Minister of Internal Affairs Ihar Shunevich](#). He is asking to explain the legal grounds of arresting citizens with national symbols (the white-red-white flag and the emblem Pahonia). 5 people were [detained in Barysau Arena](#) on 12 October and a man who had a white-red-white flag in his car was stopped by driving inspectors the day before.

[Beltelecom proposes the independent websites an additional protection from DDoS-attack on the Election Day](#). Namely, the state-run telecommunications operator has made the relevant oral proposition to Nasha Niva, Onliner.by and TUT.by. The service is free. Thus Beltelecom wants to be saved on charges of blocking and DDoS-attack.

[Russian air base protesters summoned to court](#). The participants of the unauthorised action [For Peaceful, Neutral Belarus](#) gathered about 400 people in the centre of Minsk on October 4 stand trial in Minsk's Central District Court on 9 October. Leader of the UCP Anatol Liabedzka, ex-presidential candidate Uladzimir Niakliayeu, former political prisoner Mikola Statkevich and several more activists have been summoned to court.

Belarus Digest prepared this overview on the basis of materials provided by Pact. This digest attempts to give a richer picture of the recent political and civil society events in Belarus. It often goes beyond the hot stories already available in English-language media.