

Belarus Profile Maps Influential People of Belarus

The Centre for Transition Studies kicks off [Belarus Profile](#) – a searchable online database that contains the biographic information of over 200 people influential in Belarus.

Belarus Profile differs from other who is who projects not only in its scope but also because it is available in three languages: English, Russian and Belarusian. The project has an advanced search option on personal information, details on individuals' education and career that help to detect patterns in the Belarusian political system.

The results of a search of over 200 influential Belarusians reveals that Belarusian officials usually were born in villages and small towns. Civil society activists come primarily from major cities.

A search can also yield other interesting results such as many retirees remain active in Belarusian politics and hold senior state positions or point out that the Belarusian Agricultural Academy is a popular university among Belarusian officials.

Analysing Belarusian Establishment

The Centre for Transition Studies plans to expand the biographies and the whole directory of influential people in Belarus, though will keep its focus only on leaders. The Centre already has expertise in Belarusian elite and plans to continue its research along these lines.

Earlier this year Siarhei Bohdan, analyst of the Centre, published [an analytical paper](#) on the Belarusian political and economic establishment. Belarus Digest also frequently features articles on changes within the Belarusian government

and civil society.

Belarus Profile will help people outside the system to better understand how Belarusian state and society functions. Belarus Profile aims to de-mystify and deepen the public's knowledge about key decision makers in the country. It is also designed to help determine who the most influential people in Belarus are, where they come from, what their age is, as background on their education and careers.

Belarus Profile strives to cover all Belarusian leaders: politicians, opposition activists, civil servants, and notable figures from academia, business, civil society, and other areas. Sections with biographies of state officials and civil society activists are the largest sections to be found in the directory.

Where Belarusian Influential People Come From

Belarusian officials usually come from villages and small towns, while civil society leaders and business people typically come from major cities. In Belarus, influential people present all six regions more or less evenly. Although most influential people originally come from Belarus, a significant minority of them have their roots in other countries.

Many influential Belarusians were born in Russia and play important roles in state institutions such as [Andrei Kabiakou](#), the current Head of the Presidential Administration. Other notable figures include [Kiryl Vakhrameeu](#), Filaret and Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, [Aliaksandr Bialiatski](#), human rights defender and political prisoner, [Anatol Mikhailau](#), who runs the European Humanities University.

Some prominent Belarusians have roots in [Ukraine](#). Individuals like famous writer [Sviatlana Aleksievich](#), [Iuryi Zhadobin](#) who is in charge of the Ministry of Defence and [Uladzimir Peftsieu](#), the richest businessman in Belarus, were all born

there.

It is very popular myth in Belarus that people who were born in Mahiliou region are elevated to high positions in governmental institutions, but as the database shows, this is not entirely true. Many people influential people were not born in that region, but rather worked there for a long time, a fact that holds true for individuals like [Aliaksandr Radzkou](#), Chairman of the Public Association Belaja Rus or even [Aliaksandr Lukashenka](#) himself.

A Country of Experienced Officials

The Belarusian political elite lacks middle aged people. Most of them are part of an older generation, some even retirees. [Mikhail Miasnikovich](#), Prime Minister of Belarus, was born in 1950. [Anatol Rubinau](#), Chairman of the Council of the Republic, remains Belarus' oldest top official having been born in 1939. As Zmicier Pankaviec of the Nasha Niva newspaper noted two years ago, of the 60 main leadership persons 11 were retirees. Today retirees hold 21 high level positions.

[Viktar Lukashenka](#), Assistant to the President on National Security Matters, was born in 1975 and can be considered the most influential young civil servant, though in his particular case age does not really matter. [Andrei Shorats](#), Minister of Housing and Communal Services, who was born in 1973, and [Aleh Slizheuski](#), who born in 1972, remain the youngest ministers in Belarus.

The Business elite is younger than governmental elite. Many entrepreneurs were born in the 60s. Most of them, such as perhaps the most well-known Belarusian business man [Iuryi Chyzh](#), made their fortunes after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The opposition elite's average age falls somewhere between the authorities and business. People who were born in the 40s like [Uladzimir Niakliaeu](#), [Aliaksandr Milinkevich](#), [Zianon Pazniak](#)

still play a significant role in opposition politics.

However, a new generation of politicians has emerged. [Pavel Seviarynets](#) of the Belarusian Christian Democracy Party, [Aliaksandr Lahvinets](#) and [Iury Hubarevich](#) of the Movement for Freedom, [Volha Karach](#) of the association Nash Dom and [Aliaksei Ianukevich](#) of the Belarusian Popular Front Party all appear ready to step up and play a significant role in Belarusian politics in the future.

Alma Maters of Belarus' Leaders

Belarusian State University remains the main incubator for influential people in Belarus. This follows from the fact that BSU is the most authoritative university in the country and holds highest position in international rankings. Many representatives from the economic, social and political elite have studied there, including the ruler's children – [Viktar](#) and [Dzmitry Lukashenka](#).

Belarusian State Economic University and Belarusian National Technical University are second and the third Belarusian universities with regards to their respective influence. Also, a significant segment of officials graduated from the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus. Usually, officials receive a second postgraduate higher education here in order to advance their careers.

The Belarusian Agricultural Academy remains very popular among the government's elite. [Aliaksandr Lukashenka](#) and other government employees, like deputies of the Prime Minister [Anatol Kalinin](#) and [Mikhail Rusy](#), have all studied there.

Few Women

Few women in Belarus can be considered very influential. Among them [Mariana Shchotkina](#), Minister of Labour and Social Protection, [Nadzeia Ermakova](#), who is in charge of the National

Bank and [Lidziia Iarmoshyna](#), Chairperson of the Central Election Commission. [Alena Kudravec](#) of the Belarusian Potash Company appears to be the only woman who has climbed to the top of the Belarusian business world.

[Volha Karach](#) of the association Nash Dom, journalist [Iryna Khalip](#), [Ivonka Survilla](#) of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic and [Agnieszka Romaszewska](#), who runs Belsat TV, all remain active in the public life of Belarus. However, Survilla and Romaszewska respectively hold citizenship from Canada and Poland. It is easy to deduce, then, that Belarusian political life remains dominated by men.

The Centre for Transition Studies, will continue its research on the Belarusian establishment. According to its director, Yarik Kryvoi, Belarus Profile will also regularly prepare infographics on how politics in Belarus works and will publish a guide which will help Western readers to better understand Belarus' political system.

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