

# **BNR centenary, Zombie Ideas, Alexievich crowdfunding – Belarus civil society digest**

BNR centenary marked by an impressive assembly in Minsk and other cities of Belarus and abroad. New Ideas Center launches the Zombie Ideas project to “bury” outdated concepts. Dzeja offers lectures on EU integration.

Largest crowdfunding campaign in Belarus: over \$105K raised from corporate and private contributors to publish Svetlana Alexievich’s 5-volume edition.

School of Inclusive Barista graduates first class. Volunteers translate Civil Law Code into the Belarusian language. Belarus Free Theatre wins Havel Prize.

II March Meetings – largest civic activism forum in Belarus – will take place in Minsk on April 20-21: feel free to register and spread the word.

This and more in the new edition of Belarus civil society digest.

## **Expert events and political leadership**

[New Ideas Centre launches Zombie Ideas project](#). The project consists of a series of meetings where the experts will examine and bury ideas, which Belarus inherited from the Soviet Union or the traditional society. The first debate is devoted to Soviet education and will take place in Minsk, on 24 April.

[New Leadership for Eastern Europe project](#) aims to expand the Belarusian and Ukrainian network of leaders to support democratic changes in these countries. The project will select 30 participants who will take part in a conference and training for trainers. Deadline for applications is 20 April. Belarusian organiser is the Institute for Development and Social Market.

[IPM Research Centre is looking for KEF regional partners](#). The call aims to increase the capacity of Belarusian CSOs in promoting responsible economic policy at the local level. Six CSOs will be selected to conduct researches, conferences, and seminars in the regions within the framework of Kastryčnicki Economic Forum with the budget of \$10K euros. Deadline for applications is 16 April.

## Non-formal education

[Public lectures on EU integration processes and institutions](#) are offered by Dzeja initiative. The lecturer is [Alieś Lahviniec](#). The course is taught since 2006 and aims to provide a detailed picture of the EU integration processes and the basic policies. The programme includes debates and discussion of topical issues of European integration with the participation of Belarusian and foreign experts.

[National University registered in Belarus](#). It is named in honour of the Belarusian national poet Nil Hilievič. Education will be delivered fully in Belarusian. The former head of the Belarusian Language Society [Alieh Trusaŭ](#) is nominated for the rector position. \$7-8 million is required for the university to start a full-fledged activity.

# National and cultural initiatives

[Belarusians donate 5 times more than needed for Alexievich's edition](#). The crowdfunding campaign aimed at publishing Nobel laureate in Literature Svetlana Alexievich's five-volume edition in Belarusian without censorship has raised over \$105K instead of planned \$20K. There are 7 days until the end of the campaign. The [campaign](#) has become the biggest crowdfunding action in Belarus.

[BNR centenary marked by an impressive rally in Minsk](#). The centenary of the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic (BNR) was marked on 25 March by a large-scale rally full of festive spirit in front of the Opera Theater in downtown Minsk. The rally was attended by a crowd estimated from [5,000](#) to [50,000](#). Organised by civil society and political parties and supported via crowdfunding, the festive events also took place in other [cities](#) of Belarus and abroad.

[Belarusian-language Civil Code released](#). This became possible due to the efforts of 70 translators volunteers who for 1,5 months worked on the translation of 600 pages of the Civil Code. So far Belarus has had one of the basic laws only in Russian. Now the text of the Code will be submitted to the Ministry of Justice for approval as an official translation.

[Belarus Free Theatre won Havel Prize](#). The prize celebrates those who, with bravery and ingenuity, unmask the lie of dictatorship by living in truth. "Belarus Free Theatre defies oppression in its proud celebration of free speech and the arts, bravely defending civil liberties in a Soviet-ruled state," said Havel Prize Committee Chairman. The awarding ceremony will be held during the 2018 Oslo Freedom Forum on 30 May.

# Inclusive activism

[First graduates of the School of Inclusive Barista](#). In Lida town, five persons in wheelchairs passed an exam for the barista certificate. School of Inclusive Barista is organised in Belarus for the first time. During 2018, the classes will be held in four other cities of Hrodna region. The project is implemented under the *Learning to Act* program supported by the European Union and DVV International.

[A new stage of the information campaign on de-institutionalisation](#) is announced by the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The new stage aims to influence the opinion and knowledge of Belarusians on a way of a tolerant and positive attitude towards people with mental disabilities. The campaign includes such tools as a thematic video, a mini-grant competition, and a summing up conference in May.

[Camp for active rehabilitation](#) is organised by the Republican Association of Wheelchair Users on 14-26 July, in Minsk. The programme provides for sports, competitions, lectures on legislation, healthy lifestyle, history of the Paralympic movement, as well as intensive networking.

## Other



. Sakavitskiya Sustrechy/ March Meetings. Photo: eurasia.by

**[II March Meetings Civil Society Forum](#)** to take place on 20-21 April, in Minsk. *Sakavitskiya Sustrechy/ March Meetings* is a civic activism fest and the largest platform for sharing experiences and establishing the dialogue between the active citizens. The Forum will be held for the second time and focus on the demonstration and celebration of civic activism diversity in Belarus. [Registration](#) is open until 15 April.

**[EaP Civil Society Hackathon](#)** will take place on 1-3 June, in Minsk and bring together about 60 civil society activists, IT professionals and web-designers from six Eastern Partnership countries. For three days, experts will work together on ICT tools and solutions that would enable CSOs and activists better serve the needs of their communities, and help citizens participate in decision-making. Registration is open.

**[#30 days of biking starts on 1 April](#)** in Minsk. On the same day, the action will start around the world and requires riding a bicycle only during all April. A Belarusian

organiser, Minsk Bicycle Society, believes that the action is an excellent motivation for those who want to quickly get in shape after the cold season. Participation is free. To date, over 800 participants have already registered to participate the action.

*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.*