

# ePramova, Mova Nanova, Local Elections Observation – Belarus Civil Society Digest

A new online platform ePramova invites Belarusians to discuss public issues with politicians and civil society activists. Its users can ask any question and watch videos of politicians answering them on the website.

How do Belarusian experts view the situation in Ukraine? International Consortium EuroBelarus and the Belarusian National Platform organised a roundtable in Minsk ‘Ukraine Today: What We Can and Should Do in the Current Situation?’

A new web site [Nazirannie2014.spring96.org](http://Nazirannie2014.spring96.org) aims to get Belarusians who are interested in election observation involved.

## Campaigns and projects

[New discussion platform ePramova launched](#). The European Humanities University announces its participation in the launch of a new online platform called ePramova. ePramova is designed to encourage Belarusian citizens to become more actively involved in raising and discussing public issues that are important to them. The [ePramova platform allows users](#) to pose questions to political parties, political leaders and civic organisations that will in turn be answered. Filmed responses from respondents can be uploaded online.

[Mova Nanova goes to regions](#). On 10 March free Belarusian language courses *Mova Nanova/ Language in a New Way* were held in Gomel and attended by about 30 people. On 14 March *Mova Nanova* launched its courses in Hrodna. Earlier the civil initiative opened a branch [in Babrujsk](#). The

organisers are extending the concept of non-academic study of the Belarusian language through interactive teaching methods outside of Minsk, where classes are very popular and attended by 200-300 people weekly.

[Human rights defenders launch an interactive web resource for election observers](#). [Nazirannie2014.spring96.org](http://Nazirannie2014.spring96.org) site not only includes detailed instructions on how to become an observer and to behave properly at a polling station, but also includes unusual stories that have happened to observers during previous election observations. The new interactive platform of the campaign "Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections" is aimed at involving Belarusians who are interested in assisting in election observations.

[Interactive platform Electby.org renewed its work](#). The platform of civic monitoring [Electby.org](http://Electby.org) allows anyone to document on an interactive map any violations recorded during the 2014 local election campaigns – campaign oddities, the pressure on democratic candidates and activists, manipulation of ballots, etc. One can submit evidence and add his/her "pinpoint" on the map through the web site or by e-mail, Twitter and SMS.

## **Seminars and discussions**

[Seminar on CSOs' financial stability](#). On 29 March in Minsk, ICNL together with the Centre for Legal Transformation and the Assembly of Democratic NGOs will hold a seminar *Financial Stability of CSOs: International Experience and Perspective for Belarus*. The event seeks to present Belarusian and international legal expertise on how to ensure the financial stability of CSOs, as well as to discuss practical issues of fundraising within the country and abroad. The seminar is open to all interested CSOs.

[Budzma's spring discussions](#). The cultural campaign *Budzma!* invites people to a series of spring offline

talk shows dedicated to the discussion of the interaction of culture and society. Every week the Minsk creative space THEKH will gather experts, researchers and celebrities to discuss the culture of 'being actual' (on 18 March), the culture of philanthropy (on 26 March), the culture of partnerships (on 1 April), etc.

[Research on visa regime intermediaries in Belarus](#). On 13 March Minsk hosted a roundtable *Visa Mediation in Belarus: How to Reduce the Costs of Schengen Visas for Belarusians*. The BISS analyst Andriey Jelisejeu and the independent expert Julija Muryhyna presented the preliminary findings of their research *Some Aspects of Visa Regime Intermediaries in Belarus*. In their presentation the experts raised the issues on the visa mediation regulations of the EU according to its legislation and establishing the practise of mediation in Belarus.

[Social Entrepreneur course from Talaka.by](#). Beginning 18 March, an innovative training course *Social Entrepreneur* has opened its course for registration. The course is being organised by the Talaka.by initiative and is guided at providing a comprehensive course of training for social entrepreneurs who will be able to implement social projects in the future in Belarus. Twenty of the best students will be given an opportunity to present their projects to potential investors. At the moment 190 people have already signed up to participate.

[Euromaidan from Belarusian perspective](#). A roundtable entitled 'Ukraine Today: What We Can and Should Do in the Current Situation?' was held on 14 March in Minsk. The discussion was organised by the International Consortium EuroBelarus and the Belarusian National Platform. The participants suggested creating a position of a special rapporteur within the National Platform to monitor the situation in Ukraine and offer a quick response, should it prove to be necessary.

[BAJ Statement on violence against journalists in Crimea](#). On 12 March the Board of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) adopted a statement which claims that a situation when journalists are prevented from performing professional duties is impermissible. BAJ calls on all people and organisations involved in the conflict to put an end to the violence and to ensure normal conditions for journalists work.

### **'Green' events**

[Protecting nature in an urban environment](#). Is the title of a new project launched by the Brest regional branch of APB BirdLife Belarus. The project aims to preserve bio-diversity in Brest, improving residents' understanding of ecology and environmental protection, the introduction of interactive methods for Brest schools and institutions. The project is creating a unique complex interactive training program of environmental education in an urban environment.

[Online monitoring of biodiversity](#). APB-BirdLife Belarus NGO launched an online database for monitoring areas important to bio-diversity conservation, namely, areas important for birds. Now anyone can view the data collected and use it both for professional purposes and general guidance. Any user can contribute to the map and thus help to collect information on areas important for birds, monitor their condition, as well as join in to help solve any potential threats against them.

[School of Environmental Activism](#) announces a call for fellows for 2014. The mission of the School of Environmental Activism is to develop ecological thinking and expand the "green" movement in Belarus through a series of trainings. Organised by the Green Alliance, an annual school provides practical skills and offers its fellows the chance to design and implement eco-projects or have internships in other Belarusian CSOs. Deadline for applications is 29 March.

*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.*