

Europeanization from the Bottom, Bialiatski Gets Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Ales Bialiatski received Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize for human rights defence in Belarus. IPM Research Centre, Belarusian Economic Research and Education Centre BEROC launched a new project "Economics live" on portal TUT.BY. Fond of Ideas together with the Pontis Foundation (Slovakia) will organise a forum in Minsk on corporate social responsibility.

[Law on CSOS adopted without CSOs participation.](#) On 2 October The House of Representatives of Belarus [adopted in the second reading](#) amendments to some laws on political parties and public associations. A suggestion of 25 CSOs to carry out a public hearing before the second reading of the bill remained unsupported by the Parliament.

[Ales Bialiatski receives Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.](#) On 30 September the Council of Europe announced the 2013 laureate of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize which went to Ales Bialiatski, President of Viasna Human Rights Centre and Vice President of FIDH. The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize is awarded each year by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in partnership with the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation to reward outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe and beyond.

Civil Society Events

[Third International Congress of Belarusian Studies took place in Kaunas](#) on 11-13 October. About 400 scientists, experts, analysts and intellectuals from 25 countries attended the event. The overall framework of the Congress is to look at Belarus through comparison with other countries, namely with the Baltic countries and Scandinavia as a special focus of this year. For the first time the current event is to award the best scientists with the Congress professional prize. The Congress is [broadcasting online](#).

[Public hearing on a new law for CSOs](#). On 9 October in Minsk, Centre for Legal Transformation and the Assembly of Democratic NGOs conducted a public hearing "Improving the legal environment for the activities of non-profit organisations". The event addressed a new law regulating the activities of CSOs, which was [passed by Parliament](#) at the second reading in early October. The hearing however was attended only by CSO representatives, government officials did not participate.

[EHU hosts roundtable on active citizenship](#). As part of a two-day Danish Culture Days program, EHU hosted a roundtable discussion on "Freedom of Expression and Freedom to Establish Associations". NGOs working in the Baltic Sea region and Belarus will share their experiences and challenges in strengthening CSOs. The discussion took place on 12 October on EHU's campus.

[Lecture on Europeanization from the bottom](#). On 3 October a public lecture by a famous German political scientist Stefan Garsztecki "Is the Europeanization possible from the bottom?" took place at the Minsk bar "Ÿ". The event organised by the Centre for European Studies (CES) was attended by about 50 people, including students from Germany, which accompany the professor in his trip over Belarus.

Trainings and Seminars

[Capacity Development Fair Diary](#). The Second Fair of Capacity Development of CSOs starts keeping a diary and posting announcements of its master classes, presentations as well as other working materials. The Fair participants will have the opportunity to learn with the tools of project planning, guerrilla strategies of Belarusian PR, basics of time management, etc. The Fair is to be held in Minsk on 1 November and present the market of capacity development services for Belarusian CSOs.

[Economics live](#). IPM Research Centre, Belarusian Economic Research and Education Centre BEROC and IPM Business School launched the column "Economics live" on the web portal TUT.by. This week issue presents the results of a survey of 400 Belarusian companies regarding their attitude and readiness to the possible accession and working in the WTO.

[CSR experts to meet at the Forum](#). On 15 November Minsk will host a large-scale Forum on corporate social responsibility, a key event in the long-term project, implemented by Fond of Ideas in partnership with the Pontis Foundation (Slovakia) and supported by the European Commission. The Forum is organised with the support of the UN initiative "Global Compact" with the aim of establishing an effective interaction of the three sectors – government, business and civil society – to address social and cultural issues.

[EaP CS Forum's resolutions](#). The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in Chisinau, on 4-5 October adopted a number of resolutions. In particular, the EaP Civil Society Forum calls for creation of favourable conditions for unimpeded functioning of civil society organisations [in Azerbaijan and Belarus](#) and views as unacceptable the existence of political prisoners in Eastern Partnership countries

Green Initiatives

Presentation of "Apple at Apple" magazine. On 15 October at the Minsk Gallery "Ÿ", the Centre for Environmental Solutions conducts a party in honour of the presentation of a new family environmental newspaper "Apple at Apple." The monthly newspaper covers environmental and family topics, provides useful and fascinating material for the environmentally friendly lifestyle, nutrition, child development and other relevant topics. The first issue was published in April 2013.

Forum of environmental CSOs 2013. On 18-20 October the Forum of Belarusian non-governmental environmental organisations is to take place in Minsk. The Forum is designed to enhance public environmental movement in Belarus and initiated by APB BirdLife Belarus, Green Alliance, the Centre for Environmental Solutions, EcoDom, and EcoPartnership. The special focus of the Forum is public environmental control.

Belarusian "Energy Club" session in Brussels. On 1-4 October the Office for a Democratic Belarus (ODB) hosted a study visit for a group of six Belarusian experts in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency gathering representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, green energy consultancy companies, universities and non-governmental organisations. The visit took place as part of the Energy Club activities in Minsk.

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.