

Guardian Training in Minsk, Kastrychnitski Economic Forum, Open Data Community – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Over 50 companies offer discounts for students participating in the free language course Mova Nanova.

KEF conference 'The Global Context, Local decisions: the potential of the private sector in Belarus' will take place in Minsk. Belarusian state officials, independent economists and experts expected at the event.

All Minsk grassroots are being collected in a single google document. Open data community helps Belarusians benefit from publicly available data.

Education

[Students of Mova Nanova courses get discounts of 50 companies.](#)

Discounts from 5 to 25% are available upon presentation of a student card, which is delivered to all 600 students of *Mova Nanova* (Language in a New Way) free Belarusian language lessons in Minsk and other cities. Among the companies that joined the discount program are bookstores, cafes, photography, mobile accessories, trips, clothing and even visits of basketball games.

[Guardian's New East network journalist workshop in Minsk.](#)

On 29 October The Guardian's New East network, Belarus in Focus, and the Belarusian Association of Journalists will hold a half-day workshop for English-speaking journalists based in Belarus who write, or want to write, for international audiences. This workshop will look at how news and current

affairs from Belarus are covered by English-language media organisations, and focus on ways that journalists in Belarus can expand and diversify this coverage for international audiences.

[Mova ci kava in Warsaw](#). *Mova ci kava*/Language or Coffee, free Belarusian language lessons expand its activity till Warsaw, Poland. The first class, led by Siarhiej Pieliasa, editor at independent TV channel Belsat and Taciana Niadbaj, a poet, took place on 13 October at cafe OSIR. Topic for the first lesson is 'Let's get to know each other'.

New initiatives

[All Minsk grassroots are being collected in a single table](#). It's an open, free, collaborative google-doc that could be supplemented by anyone who has information about Minsk civil society initiatives or organised communities. The idea to create such a document belongs to a well-known Russian urbanist, [Sviat Murunov](#) who attended Minsk with a workshop on urban communities about a year ago.

[The Open Data community in Minsk](#). Community Open Data collects numerous data from open sources and makes them visible and clear to take decisions on specific city issues – to control budget costs, improve infrastructure, monitor public security, etc. At the technical level, open data is a huge Excel- or CSV-files, that contain useful information but it must be extracted and analysed in order to be clear/accessible for ordinary citizens.

[Film Festival on problems of human trafficking](#). To the European Anti-Trafficking Day, Gender Perspective NGO together with the Minsk cinema 'Victory' present a Film Festival of La Strada program, devoted to the problem of human trafficking. The movie screenings are held on 16-18 October; admission is free.

[Capacity Development Fair to help meeting CSOs and providers](#)

[at the market](#). On 31 October the Third Fair of CSO Capacity Development that is to take place in Minsk. This year an annual popular event will become a true market where customers (CSOs) will have real money to buy services of the consultants. To provide CSOs of purchasing capacity, the Marketplace announces a Fair call for CSOs to get pre-approved vouchers and make deals with providers directly at the Fair. The the [registration for the Fair to participate](#) is open until 20 October.

Conferences

[Public voting at the Social Weekend 4](#). Social Weekend 4 is a public contest of social ideas that are posted at the web site for public and expert voting and the best ones get support from local business. Among 160 ideas submitted this year, part of them are linked to local community development and designed by the fellows of the current round of [the Fellowship program](#) organised the Office of European Expertise and Communications (OEEC) and Pact.□

[KEF conference 'The Global Context, Local decisions: the potential of the private sector in Belarus'](#) will be held 5 November in Minsk. The Belarus' Minister of Economy, head of the World Bank in Belarus, and others are expected to attend the conference conducted under Kastychnitski Economic Forum (KEF). The KEF is a platform for open professional dialogue on sustainable development in Belarus in the context of the global economy. The conference is organised by IPM Research Centre in cooperation with BEROC and CASE Belarus with support of USAID/Pact and the Association of European Businesses.

[Sector Analysis of Regional and Local Development study](#) is to be presented on 24 October in Minsk. The study was commissioned by the Office of European Expertise and Communications (OEEC). One of the study's conclusions concerns the CSOs that are not significant actors in the sector,

however, their potential, the work implemented and the funds attracted allow to classify them as important agents of change at the territorial level. The presentation will start at 2:30 pm, at the *Viktoria* hotel.

Cultural events

[**Festival of the Independent Belarusian Culture**](#) took place on 6-10 October in Wroclaw, Poland. The festival was held for the sixth time and includes not only concerts and exhibitions, but also discussions on Belarusian politics and economy. Organiser of the festival is the fund 'For Your and Our Freedom'.

[**Lyntupy invites for Festival**](#). On 11 October at the border between Belarus and Lithuania, Lyntupy village hosted a Festival 'Dream of Blue Lakes'. The festival suggests its visitors an exhibition of homemade textiles, embroideries, works of arts and crafts, fair of local services, tasting of local food, master-class on contemporary street art, etc. The event is organised by Lyntupy's residents and vacationers with the support of the local administration.

Analytics

[**Belarusian NGOs: Plenty of Leaders, but Who are the Authority?**](#)

– The research of solidarity potential in the Belarusian civil society, conducted by the Centre for European Transformation (CET) and the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) at the beginning of the year, aimed at assessing and giving intentional interpretation of the social and political solidarity in the Belarusian civil society. All in all 150 organisations were selected as respondents. The research shows that Belarusian third sector is a crowd of leaders no one of which has enough authority to set reference points and program of solidarity actions.

[**Watchdog Function in the Perception of Belarusian NGOs. Needs Assessment of NGOs in Civil Monitoring**](#)

– The study was performed by the Centre for European Transformation (CET) and

commissioned by Belarus Watch NGO in the summer of 2014. The research shows that the watchdog function is not typical of Belarusian NGOs. Not all organisations see a specific effect or do not really understand why they need civil monitoring, and respectively they do not plan to include this function in their activities.

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.