

# 2015 Annual Report, Russian Airbase, Economic Reforms – Ostrogorski Centre Digest

The economy of Belarus shows a long-term negative trend. The need for structural reforms looks obvious even within the elite, and this need for structural reforms is desired especially by international creditors. In the political and military realm, Minsk struggles with Russia's attempts to influence it.

As Alieś Aliachnovič [shows](#) in his piece, the authorities are not ready for large-scale market reforms, but rather slow and partial structural reforms appear inevitable. This is because creditors will monitor the progress of reforms before agreeing to pay the next tranche of funds.

Igar Gubarevich [analyses](#) the acceleration of Belarus-US contacts and concludes that the United States no longer regards Lukashenka as a Russian puppet. In order to contain Russia's growing assertiveness in the region and beyond, the United States may help Lukashenka reduce economic dependence on Russia by assisting with securing an IMF loan and facilitating more trade and investment.

Siarhei Bohdan [argues](#) that the Kremlin is pushing for an airbase in Belarus for political, not military reasons. It seeks to eliminate any vestiges of Belarusian neutrality, which Minsk had built up in the past decade, by distancing itself from numerous Russian policies and looking for alternative partners.

# Ostrogorski Centre Annual Report



The Ostrogorski Centre has published its [annual report](#) highlighting the main achievements in 2015 and its plans for the future. In 2015, the centre expanded its leadership team and established new partnerships.

The Centre launched BelarusPolicy.com, a research database in cooperation with the Belarus Research Council and expanded BelarusProfile.com. It is about to release the 2015 issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies.

Analysts at the Centre organised and participated in several Belarus related events in Minsk, Vilnius, London, Berlin and other place. This helped the centre increase its presence in Belarusian and foreign media. The report describes this in detail, with pictures and charts.

Over the next two weeks, the Centre plans to launch a [fundraising campaign](#) to support Belarus Digest and its other projects.

## Comments for the Media

Yarik Kryvoi in an interview for the [Belarusian service of Radio Liberty](#) comments on the recent warming in Belarus–EU relations and the EU’s apparent shift of focus from democracy to the security agenda. He also touched upon the redlines which Minsk does not want to cross in its relations with Russia.

[Polish Radio](#) talks to Igar Gubarevich about the Belarusian authorities latest steps in expanding the countries’ exports

to traditional and new markets. Minsk tries to boost trade with a wide range of countries, but its efforts may not prove effective because of administrative methods and the kinds of produce that Minsk tries to sell.

Siarhei Bohdan comments to [Polish Radio](#) about recent trends in Belarus' security situation. After the change in the wider-region's security situation Minsk has started to distance itself from Moscow and seek partners in other parts of the world. Besides, Belarus gives more attention to its army and develops its own weapons instead of buying Russian ones.

Igar Gubarevich talks to Belarusian [Radio Racja](#) about Belarus' chances of profiting from the suspension of air traffic between Ukraine and Russia and possible Russian pressure. Belarus has enough capacity to connect Russia and Ukraine, and will not stop benefiting even if Russia were to desire such an outcome.

Siarhei Bohdan discusses in [RFE/RL's Belarusian Service](#) programme the recent developments in Syria's civil war and Minsk's policy in the region. Belarus has for a long time taken the approach of its US allies in the Syrian conflict, and reacted very cautiously to Russian-Turkey tensions over a downed jet. Importantly, the Russian South Stream pipeline project involving Turkey now seems unrealistic, and Belarus may become the host for another pipeline to Europe.

## Belarus Profile

The BelarusProfile.com database now includes the following personalities: [Dzmitryj Kruty](#), [Aliaksandr Zabarouški](#), [Dzmitry Babicki](#), [Elena Korosteleva](#), [Andrej Jelisiejeŭ](#), [Lieanid Zaika](#), [Andrej Laŭruchin](#), [Anatol Michajlaŭ](#), [Mikita Bialiajeŭ](#), [Vadzim Smok](#).

We have also updated the profiles of [Taras Nadoŭny](#),

[Aliaksandr Łukashenka](#), [Michail Orda](#), [Aliena Kupčyna](#), [Juryj Čyž](#), [Aliaksiej Vahanaŭ](#), [Ina Miadzviedzieva](#), [Piotr Mamanovič](#), [Stanislaŭ Zaś](#), [Andrej Raŭkoŭ](#), [Siarhiej Kaliakin](#), [Iryna Kanhro](#), [Anatoł Kapski](#), [Viktar Karankievič](#), [Dzmitry Kaciarynič](#), [Tadevuš Kandrusievič](#), [Uladzimir Kanapliouŭ](#), [Natalia Kačanava](#), [Aliaksandr Kaškievič](#), [Vitał Voŭk](#).

## Belarus Policy

The Ostrogorski Centre continues to update the database of policy papers on BelarusPolicy.com. The papers of partner institutions added this month include:

- Strategic Thought team. [Recommendations to the program of the socio-economic development of Homiel region in 2016-2020](#). Strategic Thought, 2015.
- Uladzimir Akulich, Uladzimir Valetka, Sierž Naŭrodski, Anastasija Charnushevich, Darya Sushkevich. [The second issue of Macroeconomic Review of Belarus in graphs \(January-June 2015\)](#). CASE Belarus, 2015.
- Uladzimir Akulich, Uladzimir Valetka, Sierž Naŭrodski, Anastasija Charnushevich, Julija Trus. [The third issue of Macroeconomic Review of Belarus in graphs \(January-September 2015\)](#). CASE Belarus, 2015.
- Aleksander Avtushko-Sikorskiy, Vladimir Artyugin, Aliaksei Lashuk, Dzianis Melyantsou, Jury Chavusau. [Semi-annual monitoring of the main trends BISS-Trends \(January – June 2014\)](#). BISS. Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014.
- Aleksander Avtushko-Sikorskiy, Vladimir Artyugin, Aliaksei Lashuk, Dzianis Melyantsou, Jury Chavusau. [Semi-annual monitoring of the main trends BISS-Trends \(July – December 2014\)](#). BISS. Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015.

Any partner organisation of BelarusPolicy.com can submit its research for inclusion onto the database by completing [this](#)

[form.](#)

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