

2020 Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century conference – call for papers

UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies and the Ostrogorski Centre invite proposals from established academics and doctoral researchers for individual papers and panels discussing various aspects of contemporary Belarusian studies.

The conference will take place on **21–22 February 2020** at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) in London. The Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will follow the main conference panels.

The Annual Lecture titled '**Litva and Other Lessons of Belarusian History**' will be delivered by **Professor Norman Davies** CMG FBA FRHistS, professor emeritus at University College London, a visiting professor at the Collège d'Europe, and an honorary fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford.

The conference serves as a multidisciplinary forum of Belarusian studies in the West and offers a rare networking opportunity for researchers of Belarus.

The organisers are interested in papers that discuss history, political science, political economy, literature, sociology and religious studies. Interdisciplinary studies and panel proposals are particularly encouraged. Selected papers will be peer-reviewed and published in [the Journal of Belarusian Studies](#) in 2020.

To submit a paper or panel proposal please complete the online form [linked here](#) no later than **15 November 2019**. The working language of the conference is English. Applicants will be notified about selection by **25 November 2019**.

The conference organising committee includes Peter Braga, Dr Stephen Hall, Dr Alena Marková, Prof Yarik Kryvoi (co-chair) and Prof Andrew Wilson (co-chair). The conference is supported by the **British Association for Slavonic & East European Studies**.

Please use hashtag **#BelStudies**.

For any questions relating to the conference, please email belauk2020@gmail.com.

Download this [call for papers \(pdf\)](#).

Previous conferences

- 4th Annual 'Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century' Conference & Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies (2019) Keynote speaker: **Dr Anais Marin**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus ([programme](#); [audio](#))
- 3rd Annual 'Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century' Conference & Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies (2018). Keynote speaker: **Dr Alena Marková**, Assistant Professor at the Department of Historical Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague ([programme](#))
- 2nd Annual 'Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century' Conference & Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies (2017). Keynote speaker: **Dr Alexander Susha**, Deputy Director of the National Library of Belarus, Chairman of the International Association of Belarusian Language and Culture Specialists ([programme](#); [audio](#))
- Conference 'Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century' & Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies (2016). Keynote speaker: **Prof Andrew Wilson**, UCL

SSEES ([programme](#); [audio](#))

- The Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, **Dr Per Anders Rudling**, Visiting Professor, University of Vienna & Associate Professor, Lund University (2015) ([programme](#); [audio](#))
-

2018 Issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies: Pentecostals, Stalin, nation-building, émigrés

2018 saw two important developments for the Journal of Belarusian Studies. We welcomed Alena Marková from Charles University in Prague and Siarhei Bohdan from Free University of Berlin as the Journal's co-editors.

Second, the Journal has been accepted for inclusion in the SCOPUS database, the world's largest citation index of peer-reviewed literature. This will no doubt improve the journal's attraction for both readers and authors. The Journal is already indexed by EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, Google Scholar and other databases.

This issue features contributions from Belarus, the Czech Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom. Our authors look at a variety of topics, although on this occasion the content mostly relates to the Soviet period of Belarusian history – including coverage of protestant communities in Soviet Belarus, the cult of Stalin, nation-formation in Belarus, and Belarusian émigrés in interwar Czechoslovakia.

Thomas Bohn and Rayk Einax from Justus-Liebig-University in Germany draw on extensive sources and analyse how the [Pentecostals of Soviet-era Belarus](#) managed to succeed in preserving their common faith, despite a restrictive environment that brought constant pressure from the militia and KGB. They argue that the Pentecostals' perseverance and 'moral courage' posed one of the biggest challenges for the Soviet state at its periphery and the Soviet rulers failed to force them into submission.

Alena Marková from Charles University in Prague wrote her article on the basis of the Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, which she delivered in March 2018. She argues that [Belarus's processes of nation-building and nation-formation](#) are unique in the context of other European national movements. She contrasts them to post-Soviet neo-Belarusization, which took place from 1990 to 1995. Despite these both being rather brief periods, they had a profound effect on the formation of the Belarusian national and state.

Aliaksandr Huzhalouski from the Belarusian State University analyses [the cult of Stalin in Belarus](#). He discusses its peculiar tools such as everyday political education and various political campaigns, the cult in literature and art, as well as the strengthening of it through place names. He points out that Stalin's cult of personality formed within the confines of a much broader Soviet society-building project which was based on paternalistic, illiberal and authoritarian values. However, Soviet Belarusian society was not monolithic in exhibiting its fawning devotion to the dictator and the author analyses the resistance to the establishment of Stalin's cult of personality.

Daniela Kolenovská from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic examines [the history of Belarusian émigrés in interwar Czechoslovakia](#). These emigres went through different stages in their relations with the Czech authorities. The article concludes that the anti-Soviet nature of the new

Belarusian programme was politically anchored in Germany while the Czechs preferred Stalin's antifascism to Hitler's anticommunism. This split caused a fatal lack of Czech or Slovak willingness to protect Belarusians against Soviet despotism after the Second World War.

Book reviews in this issue cover the [Ballads of Uladzimir Arloŭ](#) written by Arnold McMillin, a review of a new book [Politics and Politicians in Soviet Belarus](#) by Angelika Pobedonostseva Kaya, as well as Adam Coman's review of a book on "[the Jewish Revolution](#)" in Belorussia and its impact on economy, race and the Bolshevik power. The issue also includes a traditional [annual overview](#) of activities of the Anglo-Belarusian Society written by its chairman Brian Bennett.

The Journal of Belarusian Studies continues to [accept submissions](#) on a rolling basis and welcomes contributions from both younger and established academics on all aspects of Belarusian studies.

- [Order a hard copy](#) of the 2018 Issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies.

Yaraslau Kryvoi

Editor-in-chief

Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century: 4th Conference and Annual Lecture in London

The 4th Annual Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century will take place on 29 March 2019 at the School of Slavonic and East

European Studies (SSEES) in London, UK. The Ostrogorski Centre co-organizes the conference in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum. To view a provisional programme for this year's conference, [please click here](#).

This year, the Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will be delivered by Dr [Anaïs Marin \(France\)](#), Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus. Dr Marin will speak about the Belarusian nationalism in the 2010s and the outcomes of the so-called 'Soft Belarusianisation'. Other speakers will include academics from distinguished European universities and practitioners from state and civil society organisations. The topics will include both historical and contemporary Belarus-related issues.

Topics and speakers

The conference will feature a number of distinguished speakers from Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, France, Poland, and the United Kingdom. This year's speakers represent a range of well-reputed education institutions, including Charles University, Central European University, University of Glasgow, and University College London. Moreover, the conference will feature several speakers representing state organisations and civil society initiatives, in particular, Kacper Wanczyk from Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Paul Hansbury from the Minsk dialogue initiative.

The conference will cover both history and contemporary Belarus-related issues. James Robertson-Major from the University of Glasgow will speak about the memory of Chernobyl in post-Soviet Belarus. Alena Marková from Charles University will present her research about the national emancipation and post-soviet Belarusization of the 1990s. Paula Borowska from the University College London will discuss traditional forms of social capital in Belarus.

As for contemporary Belarus-related issues, the conference will focus on foreign policy and social-economic problems. Paul Hansbury from the Minsk Dialogue initiative will speak about the current events in the Belarusian foreign-policy. Hanna Danilovich from Middlesex University will cover multi-age discrimination in personnel management practices in Belarusian manufacturing companies. Kacper Wanczyk from Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will discuss the situation of the Belarusian “patrimonial” economy at the edge of chaos.

2019 Annual London Lecture

The Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will be delivered at 6 pm on 29 March 2019 by [Anaïs Marin \(France\)](#), Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus. The topic of this year’s lecture is *Belarusian nationalism in the 2010s, a case of anti-colonialism? Origins, features and outcomes of ongoing ‘Soft Belarusianisation.’* Dr Marin will speak about the phenomenon of ‘Soft Belarusianisation’ and its potential outcomes. The abstract of Dr Marin’s lecture is available below.



Dr Anaïs Marin. Source:
Spring96

The past decade has seen the emergence of a new type of nationalism in Belarus, aka ‘soft Belarusianisation’. This trend differs from earlier, mostly top-down (elite-led) episodes of nation-building – the Belarusianisation of the 1920s, the nationalists’ movement that followed perestroika, and the “Creole nationalism” incarnated by A. Lukashenka since the mid-1990s. Instead, Soft Belarusianisation appears as a bottom-up process stemming mostly from civil society. It would be wrong to consider it as a traditional revivalist or

genuinely grassroots phenomenon, however.

Whereas signs of a timid national awakening appeared back in the early 2010s, two sets of factors contributed to shaping and accelerating soft Belarusianisation: exogenous factors, notably Russia's efforts at re-establishing its domination over the so-called "Russian World"; and domestic ones, mainly the Belarusian regime's benevolence towards soft Belarusianisation, the rally-around-the-flag potential of which Minsk is obviously seeking to instrumentalise.

Would Soft Belarusianisation, therefore, amount to an anti-colonialist process? Russian opinion-makers, who label it as "anti-Russian", certainly perceive it as such. Against this backdrop, the Annual Lecture will explore the possible outcomes of the current soft Belarusianisation: can it help to consolidate Belarus's sovereignty against Russian appetites, or, conversely, does it carry with it the threat of increased Russian aggressiveness?

Dr Anaïs Marin is a political scientist specialized in international relations, Russian-Eurasian, and border studies. She holds her PhD from Sciences Po Paris, where she studied international public law and comparative politics with a focus on post-communist transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. As a Belarus expert, she has worked with several European think tanks, notably the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA, Helsinki, 2011-2014), the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW, Warsaw) and the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS, Paris) as a non-resident associate fellow (2017). Since November 2018 she also holds the *pro bono* mandate of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2012.

Conference's Programme



Wooden Belarusian Church in
London

Friday, 29 March 2019

- 10.00- 11. 30 Social Movements
- 11.45 – 13.15 National Identity
- 14.45 – 16.00 Foreign Policy
- 16.00 – 17.15 Economy and Society
- 17:15 – 18:00 Presentation of the new Issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies
- 18:00 – 19:15 Annual Lecture on Belarusian Studies by Dr Marin followed by Q&A

Saturday, 30 March 2019

- 11.00 – 13.00 Belarusian Literature Section and tour of the Skaryna Library and the Belarusian Church

All ticket proceeds will support the funding of the conference and lecture. This event is a non-profit. If you are unable to afford the price of the ticket or more information on the Annual London Lecture or the conference, feel free to email belauk2018@gmail.com.

- A provisional conference's programme is available [here](#).
 - The registration is available [here](#).
-

Call for Papers: The Fourth Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies

The UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, the Ostrogorski Centre and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum in London invite proposals from established academics and doctoral researchers for individual papers and panels discussing various aspects of contemporary Belarusian studies. The conference will serve as a multidisciplinary forum of Belarusian studies in the West and offer a rare networking opportunity for researchers of Belarus.

The Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will follow the main conference panels. This year the Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will be delivered by Anaïs Marin (France), Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus.

The organisers are particularly interested in papers that discuss history, political science, political economy, literature, sociology and religious studies. Interdisciplinary studies and panel proposals are particularly encouraged. Selected papers will be peer-reviewed and published in a special issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies in 2019.

To submit a paper proposal or a panel proposal please complete this form <http://tinyurl.com/belconference> no later than on **10 February 2019**. The working language of the conference is English. The organisers are unable to cover the costs of participants but can facilitate obtaining a UK entry visa. Applicants will be notified about selection by 20 February 2019 at the latest.

The conference organising committee is composed Paul Stephen Hall, Paul Hansbury, Peter Braga, Aliaksandr Herasimenka,

Karalina Matskevich. The conference co-chairs are Professor Yarik Kryvoi and Professor Andrew Wilson.

For any questions relating to the conference, please email belauk2018@gmail.com.

Please use this hashtag #belstudies

London conference, Annual Report, Belarusian language trends, the longevity gap – Ostrogorski Centre digest

In March, the Ostrogorski Centre held its annual London conference on Belarusian studies and published its report covering the centre's activities in 2017.

Analysts from the Ostrogorski Centre wrote about trends in Belarusian language use in public education and civil society, Belarus's massive gender longevity gap and the ongoing quiet reform of the Belarusian army.

We also added five new research papers from the Belarusian think tanks to our BelarusPolicy database.

Recent analysis

Alesia Rudnik discusses [trends in Belarusian language use](#) in the state education system and civil society. At present, the near impossibility of receiving pre-school education in the Belarusian language concerns some parents. Others cling on to

even the slightest possibility of ensuring their children's education in the Belarusian language. Yet others wonder why the question arises at all – thinking that it would be better to teach students English or Chinese.

The rapid disappearance of the Belarusian language from the education sector (from 19% in the 2010-11 academic year to 13% in 2017-18) paradoxically coincided with the increasing popularity of various kinds of Belarusian cultural initiatives and projects.

Ryhor Astapenia analyses Belarus's massive [gender longevity gap](#). The Belarusian gender debate understandably focuses on women's rights, but in reality, men deserve as much attention. Belarusian men have a far lower life expectancy than women; lower even than North Korean men. Both men themselves and state authorities bear responsibility for this. Belarus remains one of the most alcoholic nations in the world and Belarusian men generally treat their health with indifference.

This has painful consequences. Families lose a parent and a money-maker, while the state loses a taxpayer. Even before death, poor health among men leads to low productivity and hence holds significance for the economy. The Belarusian government undertakes some efforts to promote healthy lifestyles but it fails to do so systematically.

✘ Siarhei Bohdan writes about the ongoing [quiet reform of the Belarusian army](#). On 18 February, president Alexander Lukashenka offered to deploy a 10,000-strong Belarusian contingent as peacekeepers to eastern Ukraine. This represents a rather large commitment for the Belarusian army comprising in total 46,000 military personnel.

Minsk pays increasing attention to its military and has even raised spending on its armed forces by a fifth. But the Belarusian army still faces problems, which go beyond the acquisition of expensive weaponry. It also has fewer

conscripts than it would like. Consequently, it employs additional professional soldiers and relies ever more on reservists. In this way, the army adjusts to the needs of the country.

3rd annual “Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century” conference

The 3rd annual conference, Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century, took place on 23 March in London. University College London’s School of Slavonic and East European Studies, the Ostrogorski Centre and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum together organised the event.

✘ The conference featured speakers from the UK, the USA, Canada, Germany, Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. Panels covered history, social and political movements, foreign policy and art. The traditional Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, delivered this year by Dr. Alena Markova, was called “Belarusian State- and Nation-Formation: From Polatsk Principality to Independent Belarus”.

The conference guests included Stanislau Šuškievič, the first head of independent Belarus (in office 1991-1994), and the UK ambassador to Belarus, Fionna Gibb. The conference programme is available [here](#). Podcasts of the conference will be made available online on the Ostrogorski Centre [Soundcloud](#).

2017 Annual Report of the

Ostrogorski Centre

In March, the Ostrogorski Centre published its [annual report for 2017](#). The Centre has strengthened its team as well as the reach and impact of our work, particularly in the field of online education.

It published analytical papers on [distance learning](#), the [challenges of Belarus](#) joining the European Higher Education Area, and the reform of [business education](#).

In June, the [Ostrogorski Academy](#) has been officially launched. Its ambition is to serve as the first entirely online educational platform in Belarus, which features video lectures, transcripts and tests presented in an engaging format.

✘ As in previous years, we held three major annual conferences – the [Ostrogorski Forum](#) in Minsk dedicated to foreign policy and security issues, the [annual London conference on Belarusian studies](#), and a conference on the [reform of higher education](#) in Minsk. The [new 2017 issue](#) of the Journal of Belarusian Studies features articles by researchers from Canada, the United States and Belarus, as well as several book reviews.

In 2017, the Ostrogorski Centre continued to provide daily analysis of events related to Belarus in English through the Belarus Digest website, and in the Russian/Belarusian languages on [Ostro.by](#). We also kept the [Belarus Policy](#) and [Belarus Profile](#) databases up to date.

This year, Belarus Digest welcomed a new analyst on national security and defence – [Dzmitry Mitskevich](#) from the Belarus Security Blog. Peter Braga, a PhD candidate at University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London joined the editorial team of Belarus Digest. [Siarhei Bohdan](#), a regular contributor to Belarus Digest, defended his

PhD thesis at the Free University of Berlin.

Comments in the media

Siarhei Bohdan became the author of the Security Barometer section of the [Minsk Barometer project](#) – a regular monitoring of foreign policy and regional security. In the first issues, Siarhei writes that on the one hand, Belarus avoids being drawn into the confrontation of the current Russian leadership with the West and its eastern European allies. On the other hand, it is increasingly disappointed in the growing reluctance of the Kremlin to strengthen its allies militarily and economically.

The Belarusian leadership understands that the [Russian media strongly influence](#) mass opinion in Belarus and wage information attacks against official Minsk. At the same time, Minsk cannot go too far in countering it, for example by closing Russian channels which broadcast in Belarus, says Alesia Rudnik in a comment to Polish radio.

Belarus Policy

The Ostrogorski Centre continues to update its database of policy papers on [BelarusPolicy.com](#). The papers of partner institutions added this month include:

- Ihar Pielipas', Aliaksandr Chubryk, Iryna Tachytskaya, Hleb Shymanovich, Darya Urban. [Belarusian Business in 2017: State, Trends, Prospects](#). IPM Research Centre, 2018.
- Aleh Mazol'. [Institutes and Economic development](#). BEROC, 2018.
- Yaraslau Kryvoi, Raman Maroz. [Reform of Legal Education in Belarus and the Experience of the UK](#). Ostrogorski Centre, 2018.

- [The Belarusian Economic Review, Q4 2017](#). BEROc, 2018.
- Mikita Bialiyau, Yauhen Mardasevich. [Self-Regulation of Business in Belarus on the Example of Advertising: From Declaration to Implementation](#). Liberal Club, 2017.

Think tanks in Belarus are encouraged to submit their research for inclusion in the database by [emailing us](#).

The Ostrogorski Centre is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to analysis and policy advocacy on problems which Belarus faces in its transition to a market economy and the rule of law. Its projects include Belarus Digest, [the Journal of Belarusian Studies](#), [BelarusPolicy.com](#), [BelarusProfile.com](#) and [Ostro.by](#).

Call for Papers: The Third Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies

UPDATE: The conference preliminary programme is available [here](#). Registration is open at [Eventbrite](#).

The Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century Conference Committee, the Ostrogorski Centre and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum invite proposals from established academics and doctoral researchers for individual papers and panel discussions on contemporary Belarusian studies. The conference is a multidisciplinary forum for Belarusian studies in the West.

All proposals will be considered on any subject matter pertaining to Belarus. This year, however, proposals relating

to human rights, social media, education, the history of the Belarusian People's Republic, Belarusian history and culture and sociology are particularly encouraged. A selection of peer-reviewed papers will be published in the Journal of Belarusian Studies in 2018.

As in previous years, in addition to the conference, which will be held **23–24 March 2018 at University College London**, several other Belarus-related events will take place in London. The 2018 conference will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Belarusian People's Republic, the first modern attempt of Belarusian statehood, as well as the 10th anniversary of Belarus Digest.

To submit a paper or panel proposal, please complete an online registration form at <http://tinyurl.com/belauk2018> by ~~15 December 2017~~ **12 January 2018**. Successful candidates will be notified by 25 January 2018. The working language of the conference is English.

There is a £10GBP registration fee associated with the conference to cover related expenses. You may pay the fee at the door or pay online (see the registration form for details). If you are unable to pay the registration fee, the organisers can a waiver. Please email belauk2018@gmail.com to ask for a fee waiver.

The organisers can provide non-UK based applicants with invitation letters for visas.

For any questions, please contact either Stephen Hall or Peter Braga at belauk2018@gmail.com.

Conference co-chairs: Professor Andrew Wilson and Professor Yarik Kryvoi

Please use this hastag **#belstudies**



West 2017 in focus, London Conference on Belarusian Studies, human rights dialogue – Ostrogorski Centre digest

In August and September, Ostrogorski Centre analysts analysed developments around West 2017 military drill, progress in the Belarus-EU dialogue on human rights and increase in poverty in recent years as well as the government's response to it.

The Centre announced call for proposals The Third Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies, which will be held on 23–24 March 2018 at University College London.

We have also added new profiles to belarusprofile.com and new policy papers to Belaruspolicy.com databases.

Analytics

Siarhei Bohdan demonstrates how approaches to West 2017 military drill [varied in Belarus and Russia](#). The Belarusian government struggled to reassure its neighbours, who continued to express concerns about the drills. Lukashenka himself repeatedly visited Ukraine to persuade Kyiv of Belarus's peaceful intentions.

In contrast, the Kremlin craved an intimidating military show. Thus, Minsk and Moscow were jointly holding an exercise which both countries saw in very different ways. It is unsurprising

that their policy regarding West 2017 was vastly different.

Ryhor Astapenia discusses the [growth of poverty in Belarus](#) in recent years and the government's response to it. One of Lukashenka's greatest achievements in Belarusian society has been his fight against poverty. However, poverty is once again on the rise.

The main reason people end up below the poverty line is the loss of employment, as the state fails to provide any meaningful help for the unemployed. It seems that poverty is doomed to continue spreading, as the authorities see no way out of the crisis other than shifting the country's economic woes onto the backs of the poor.

Igar Gubarevich analyses the development of the [Belarus-EU dialogue on human rights](#). Belarus hopes to put human rights issues on the back burner in its relationship with the West. At the same time, the country's authorities understand that avoiding any discussion of this subject could hamper the modest rapprochement between the two parties.

Meanwhile, the West continues to put pressure on Belarus in international human rights bodies, in particular the UN Human Rights Council. Only time will tell which of the two policies – dialogue or critical monitoring – will prove more effective in instigating democratic change in Belarus.

The Third Annual London Conference 'Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century'



The Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies, 25 February 2017. Photo: Yaraslau Kryvoi

The Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century Conference Committee, the Ostrogorski Centre and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum invite proposals from established academics and doctoral researchers for individual papers and panel discussions on contemporary Belarusian studies. The conference is a multidisciplinary forum for Belarusian studies in the West.

Proposals will be considered on any subject matter pertaining to Belarus. This year, however, proposals relating to human rights, social media, education, the history of the Belarusian People's Republic, Belarusian history and culture and sociology are particularly encouraged. A selection of peer-reviewed papers will be published in the Journal of Belarusian Studies in 2018.

As in previous years, in addition to the conference, which will be held 23–24 March 2018 at University College London, several other Belarus-related events will take place in London. The 2018 conference will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Belarusian People's Republic, the first modern attempt of Belarusian statehood, as well as the 10th anniversary of Belarus Digest.

To submit a paper or panel proposal, please complete an [online registration form](#) by 15 December 2017. Successful candidates will be notified by 5 January 2018. The working language of the conference is English.

There is a £10GBP registration fee associated with the conference. You may pay the fee at the door or pay online (see the registration form for details). If a speaker or delegate is unable to pay the registration fee, the organisers can grant them a waiver. Please email belauk2018@gmail.com to ask for a fee waiver.

The organisers can provide non-UK based applicants with invitation letters for visas.

For any questions, please contact either Stephen Hall or Peter Braga at belauk2018@gmail.com.

Conference co-chairs: Professor Andrew Wilson and Professor Yarik Kryvoi

Comments in the media

Ryhor Astapenia on Polish Radio discusses the [hype around the West 2017](#) drills, the future of mass youth political organisations, and the possibility of political and social protests this autumn.

Siarhei Bohdan on Polish Radio explains [why Belarus refused to transport](#) oil products via Russian ports even at a 50% discount. Russian ports require longer delivery time; Belarus has experience in the Baltic countries and invested in their infrastructure; in addition, it is one of the channels of cooperation with the European Union.



Public discussions on Asmalouka area. Photo: euroradio.fm

Alesia Rudnik on Polish radio discusses the [effectiveness of civil campaigns](#) in Belarus on the example of Asmalouka area protection. This became not the only success story of local activists, but usually victory is possible only if the project

is not essential for the authorities. In most cases, civil campaigns fail.

Siarhei Bohdan on Polish Radio discusses the [role of Russia and China](#) in the development of the Belarusian defense industry. Last year Belarus exported arms worth \$1 billion. This achievement is the result of complicated partnerships with major players. Russian support of Minsk in the defense industry is limited and expensive, therefore Minsk had to seek an alternative and develop cooperation with China.

Belarus Profile

The [BelarusProfile.com](#) database now includes the following people: [Alieh Dvihaliouŭ](#), [Jury Šuliejka](#), [Mikalaj Korbut](#), [Vitaľ Paŭlaŭ](#), [Uladzimir Karpiak](#), [Andrej Dapkiunas](#), [Alieh Dziarnovič](#), [Valieryja Kasciuhova](#), [Piotr Rudkoŭski](#), [Natallia Vasilievič](#).

We have also updated the profiles of [Siarhiej Hurulioŭ](#), [Anatoľ Isačenka](#), [Ivonka Survila](#), [Paviel Uciupin](#), [Anatoľ Kapski](#), [Victor Prokopenia](#), [Aliaksandr Pazniak](#), [Jury Chaščavacki](#), [Siarhiej Čaly](#), [Kanstancin Šabieka](#), [Aliaksandr Šamko](#), [Aliaksandr Šumilin](#), [Uladzimir Šymaŭ](#), [Aliaksiej Jahoraŭ](#), [Aliaksandr Jarašenka](#).

Belarus Policy

The Ostrogorski Centre continues to update its database of policy papers on [BelarusPolicy.com](#). The papers of partner institutions added this month include:

- [Poverty and vulnerable groups in Belarus. Consequences of the recession of 2015-2016.](#) IPM Research Centre,

2017.

- Uladzimir Kavalkin, Andrei Sushko. [Electronic public procurement: evaluation of official electronic trading sites in Belarus](#). BIPART, 2017.
- [Proposal of changes to the Law on Arms](#). Belarus Security Blog, 2017.
- Iryna Tačyckaja. [Indicators of Belarus export activity in the 1998-2016: what are the chances for growth?](#) IPM Research Centre, 2017.
- Hinnerk Gnutzmann, Arevik Gnutzmann-Mkrtchyan. [The trade effect of Generalised Scheme of Preferences removal: evidence from Belarus](#). BEROC, 2017.

Think tanks in Belarus are encouraged to submit their research for inclusion into the database by [emailing us](#).

The Ostrogorski Centre is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to analysis and policy advocacy on problems which Belarus faces in its transition to market economy and the rule of law. Its projects include Belarus Digest, [the Journal of Belarusian Studies](#), [BelarusPolicy.com](#), [BelarusProfile.com](#) and [Ostro.by](#).

**Western response to
crackdowns, distance
education, conference
podcasts – Ostrogorski Centre**

digest

In March, analysts at the Ostrogorski Centre focused on the unfolding protests against the 'social parasite' tax and the Freedom Day celebration, which led to a violent response from the Belarusian security services and the arrest of more than two dozen suspects as a result of alleged planned armed resistance.

The Centre has released an analytical paper entitled 'The state of distance education in Belarus: problems and perspectives', which resulted from the Fourth Annual Dutch-Belarusian-Polish Conference.

We have also published podcasts of the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies.

Analytics

Yaraslau Kryvoi discusses [how the West can respond to the violent crackdowns](#) which occurred on 25 March during protests in Belarus. Because EU presence and leverage in Belarus are very weak, the menu of responses is largely limited to the reintroduction of restrictive measures and reduction of high-level official contacts. On the other hand, visa liberalisation, as well as support for Belarusian civil society, education, media, and entrepreneurs should at least continue to receive support, since progress in these areas primarily benefits the Belarusian population.

Alesia Rudnik analyses the [role of anarchists in the recent protests](#) against the 'social parasites' tax. Anarchists were one of the most noticeable movements at the protests in Brest and Minsk, causing an immediate reaction from the police. Their creativity and integration distinguished them from other groups during the last two weeks of protests. The

regime draws an analogy between anarchists and the football fans in Ukraine who strongly resisted the government during Maidan.

Igar Gubarevich discusses the [problems of Schengen visa facilitation](#) for Belarus. Simplification of the visa regime for Belarusians has been jeopardised by bargaining between Belarus and Europe over who should bear the risk and cost of migration. This bargaining may take years. In the meantime, EU countries are still capable of easing the visa procedure for Belarusians within the framework of existing visa rules. This could mean reducing wait time, simplifying paperwork requirements for frequent travellers, and further increasing the share of multiple-entry visas and their duration of validity.

Analytical paper: The state of distance education in Belarus: problems and perspectives

Extramural education still remains popular, although its  utilisation is less wide-spread than in neighbouring countries. Promoting distance education in Belarus would make education more accessible to broader circles of society, including those who are constrained by physical or economic factors.

The established history of extramural education, good technical equipment at universities, and the wide-spread use of high-speed Internet mean that Belarus already possesses a good basis for the development of a high quality system of distance education.

In order to create a high-quality system of distance education in Belarus, it is necessary to create a corresponding legislative base, to organise additional training for specialists in the sphere of education, and to expand the cooperation between universities and the companies that work in the high tech sector

Read the full paper: [The state of distance education in Belarus: problems and perspectives.](#)

Podcasts of the second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies

On Saturday 25 February, Ostrogorski Centre organised the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum.

Speakers from Belarus, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, the United States, and other countries presented and discussed Belarus-related research. The conference panels covered Francis Skaryna's work and legacy, problems of Belarusian national identity, foreign policy of Belarus and comparative politics, social and political movements, and language and literature.

Ostrogorski Centre has published podcasts of the conference, which are available [here](#).

Comments in the media

On Polish radio, Alesia Rudnik discusses [women's rights in Belarus](#). Belarusian women are not aware of existing

discrimination and this mind-set is encouraged by the state. Technically speaking, women are present in Belarusian politics, but they do little more than support the status quo when it comes to gender issues. Women's organisations remain small and fail to cooperate with the state, society, and female politicians.

Ryhor Astapenia comments for Thinktanks.by on [the causes and consequences of the brutal measures](#) of the police during recent protests. This is unwarranted violence, since the protests do not pose a real threat to Lukashenka's regime. Normalisation of relations with the West is likely to at least freeze, if not turn in the opposite direction. However, in the absence of a satisfactory solution to the ongoing oil and gas conflict, Minsk is unlikely to reconcile with Moscow.

✘ Igar Gubarevich discusses [the problems of visa regime facilitation](#) between the EU and Belarus on Polish Radio. Scared by the influx of migrants, the European Union demands that Belarus sign visa facilitation and readmission agreements in one package. However, the threat of migration coming from Belarus seems exaggerated. Meanwhile, the visa issue remains crucial for the citizens of Belarus, who receive the largest number of visas per capita in the world.

Siarhei Bohdan discusses [what Minsk traded](#) for the newest Russian fighter jets on Polish radio. Minsk would like to reduce the scale of the military exercise West 2017 and the tense rhetoric of Russian officials. In return for the drills, Moscow offered something very important to Minsk. Delivery of a few aircraft in the near future seems to be the final argument which won Minsk over.

Belarus policy

The Ostrogorski Centre continues to update its database of policy papers on BelarusPolicy.com. The papers of partner

institutions added this month include:

- Aksana Shelest. [The social base of the transformation programmes in Belarus](#). CET, 2017.
- Yaraslau Kryvoi. [The state of distance education in Belarus: problems and perspectives](#). Ostrogorski Centre, 2017.
- Aliaksei Pikulik. [Reforum: the results](#). BISS, 2017.
- Aliaksei Pikulik, Aliaksandr Autushka-Sikorski, Alena Artsiomenka, Aliaksandr Kazlou. [Monitoring of reforms in the Republic of Belarus](#). BISS, 2017.

Think tanks in Belarus are encouraged to submit their research for inclusion into the database by completing this [form](#).

The Ostrogorski Centre is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to analysis and policy advocacy on problems which Belarus faces in its transition to market economy and the rule of law. Its projects include Belarus Digest, [the Journal of Belarusian Studies](#), [BelarusPolicy.com](#), [BelarusProfile.com](#) and [Ostro.by](#).

Podcasts of the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies (2017)

On Saturday 25 February, Ostrogorski Centre organised the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum.

Speakers from Belarus, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, the

United States, and other countries presented and discussed Belarus-related research. The conference panels covered Francis Skaryna's work and legacy, problems of Belarusian national identity, foreign policy of Belarus and comparative politics, social and political movements, and language and literature.

The main conference was followed by the Annual Lecture on Belarusian Studies, delivered by Dr Ales Susha, Deputy Director of the National Library of Belarus and Chairman of the International Association of Belarusian Language and Culture Specialists.

Selected papers from the conference will be published in the Journal of Belarusian Studies. The conference programme is available [here](#) and pictures from the event are [here](#).

Podcasts from the conference are available below.

Prof. Yarik Kryvoi, Introductory remarks

Dr Iryna Dubianetskaya, Belarusian Bible translations in the European cultural process

Uladzimir Kananovich, The Prague Slavonic Bible by Francis Skaryna (1517-1519): between the market and personal devotion.

Prof Sergejus Temcinas, The Right-Hand Sign on Skaryna's Portrait: A New Interpretation.

Vitali Byl, When a single word matters: the role of Bible translations in the witch-hunt in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Dr Nelly Bekus, Building commonality and politics of re-statisation in the conditions of hegemonic states: case of Belarus.

Dzmitry Suslau, Historical simulacrum: The Minsk upper town reconstruction.

Qiaoyun Peng, Belarusian or Bela-Russian? On language and identity issues in Belarus after 1991.

Dr Simon Lewis, Towards a cosmopolitan history of Belarusian culture: Belarus in the nineteenth century literary imagination.

Stephen Hall, Learning a new normal: did the Euromaidan begin to liberalise the Belarusian regime.

Peter Braga, Belarus–China relations.

Kristiina Silvan, Echo of Komsomol? The development of Belarusian youth organisations in the post-Soviet era.

Aliaksandr Herasimenka, Transformation of the Belarusian political landscape in the era of digital platforms.

Viktorija Rusinaite, Transnational subjectivities of Belarusian political nomads.

Prof Arnold McMillin, The border between Poland and Belarus as depicted in the work of contemporary writers.

Shiori Kiyosawa, Language status planning and national language policy in Belarus: the legal protection of the Belarusian language.

Kristian Roncero, Why West Polesians have the most original anniversaries, or the noun “year” across Slavonic languages.

Dr Alexander Susha, □ Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies □

Second Annual London Conference, growing Belarus- Russia tension, Bologna process – Ostrogorski Centre digest

The Ostrogorski Centre co-organised the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum.

In February, analysts of the Ostrogorski Centre discussed Russia's attempts to destabilise the region around Belarus, the possibility of Moscow toppling Lukashenka, and the outcomes of Belarusian foreign policy in 2016.

The Centre has also released an analytical paper entitled 'Challenges to Belarus joining the European Higher Education Area', which resulted from the Fourth Annual Dutch-Belarusian-Polish Conference.

Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies

On Saturday 25 February, the Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies was organised by the Ostrogorski Centre

in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum.

✘ Speakers from Belarus, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, the United States, and other countries presented and discussed Belarus-related research. The conference panels covered Francis Skaryna's work and legacy, problems of Belarusian national identity, foreign policy of Belarus and comparative politics, social and political movements, and language and literature.

The main conference was followed by the Annual Lecture on Belarusian Studies, delivered by Dr Ales Susha, Deputy Director of the National Library of Belarus and Chairman of the International Association of Belarusian Language and Culture Specialists.

All conference presentations will be uploaded online in podcast form and selected papers from the conference will be published in the Journal of Belarusian Studies.

The conference programme is available [here](#) and pictures from the event are [here](#).

Analytics

Siarhei Bohdan analyses Moscow's actions [to erect a border with Belarus and undermine its links with Ukraine and the Baltics](#). Russia accuses the West and its allies in the region of undermining links between Eastern European countries. However, its own policies pursue exactly the same aim. Minsk must fight hard to resist these efforts by the Kremlin.

Igar Gubarevich provides an [overview of Belarusian diplomacy's achievements and failures in 2016](#). In 2016, Belarusian diplomats succeeded in getting rid of most Western sanctions, improving the international legitimacy of the national parliament, regularising dialogue with Europe, and converting

Poland from a strong critic into a reliable partner. Nevertheless, they failed to make Lukashenka fully presentable to his peers in Europe, alienated Ukraine's political elite, botched export growth and diversification of the export market, and turned Lithuania from a supporter into a foe.

Ryhor Astapenia discusses whether [scenarios in which the Kremlin attempts to topple Lukashenka are possible](#). Recently, rhetoric surrounding Russian-Belarusian relations has become so sharp that some journalists and analysts believe the Kremlin plans to overthrow Aliaksandr Lukashenka or occupy Belarus. However, off and on conflict remain a fixture of Belarusian-Russian relations. Despite belligerent grumbling, Lukashenka mostly upholds the Kremlin's interests, promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Analytical paper: Challenges to Belarus joining the European Higher Education Area

The Ostrogorski Centre releases an analytical paper which resulted from the [Fourth Annual Dutch-Belarusian-Polish Conference](#) 'Education as a Human Right: Modernising Higher Education to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century'.

In 2015, Belarus joined the European Higher Education Area  (EHEA) and committed to putting a Roadmap for higher education reform into effect by 2018. The implementation of the Roadmap is running behind schedule, which poses a threat to the fulfilment of Belarus's obligations by the due date.

The paper released analyses of the main challenges to implementation of the Roadmap in Belarus; it also provides

recommendations which could help to fulfil commitments on time and benefit a wider range of stakeholders.

- Read the full paper: [Challenges to Belarus joining the European Higher Education Area](#)

Comments in the media

On Polish radio, Siarhei Bohdan discusses [the process of destabilisation around Belarus](#) caused by Russian politics. Moscow has erected a border with Belarus where it never existed before, and tries to curtail Belarusian exports via Baltic ports. Russia accuses the EU of destabilising the region, but actively does so itself. Fragmentation of the region will lead to its impoverishment, Siarhei argues.

Alesia Rudnik discusses [the recent political graffiti cases](#) on Polish radio. Political graffiti can be seen as a new form of civic participation which attracts the attention of the public and the media, while the authorities see the phenomenon as a threat.

Ryhor Astapenia comments on the [latest developments in Belarusian-Russian relations](#) for the Polish news portal Wirtualna Polska. Contrary to the disinformation of some Russian media sources, Lukashenka does not intend to leave the Eurasian Economic Union and CSTO. However, this does not mean he wants to pursue further military or political integration. Instead, he focuses mostly on the economic aspect.

The website *The Conflict Comment* quotes Igar Gubarevich in an [article about the Russia-Belarus energy dispute](#). According to Igar, both parties have leverage in this dispute and both are interested in finding an accommodating solution, as was the case on many other occasions. Belarus remains of strategic importance to Russia, both as a trading partner and as a demarcation line for NATO and the EU.

Vadzim Smok discusses [whether Belarus stands a chance in a new oil war with Russia](#) on Polish radio. Oil products remain Belarus's No.1 export commodity, making up a third of Belarus's export revenues. With no alternative options for hydrocarbon supplies and Minsk's decreasing political and security leverage, the country will have to play by Moscow's rules.

The British newspaper *The Independent* quotes Igar Gubarevich in an article about [the legacy of the Chernobyl disaster](#). According to Igar, Belarus avoids drawing public attention to the legacy of Chernobyl for two main reasons. The image of a contaminated country might hamper its efforts to promote exports and attract foreign investment, and it may be at odds with the government's newly adopted policy of pursuing nuclear energy by building the BelNPP.

Belarus profile

The BelarusProfile.com database now includes the following people: [Vitaŭt Rudnik](#), [Alesia Rudnik](#), [Andrej Paŭliučenka](#), [Kaciaryna Siniuk](#), [Anatoł Lappo](#), [Dzmitryj Kaliečyc](#), [Uladzimir Aŭhuscinski](#), [Aliaksandr Center](#), [Andrej Bryščielieŭ](#), and [Siarhiej Savicki](#).

We have also updated the profiles of [Viktar Šynkievič](#), [Siarhiej Pisaryk](#), [Ihar Buzoŭski](#), [Michail Žuraŭkoŭ](#), [Lieanid Małcaŭ](#), [Vasił Žarko](#), [Marat Afanaśjeŭ](#), [Aliaksiej Pikulik](#), [Uladzimir Tracciakoŭ](#), [Ivan Dziemidovič](#), [Ivan Žarski](#), [Ihar Vojtaŭ](#), [Aliaksandr Zabarouški](#), and [Dzmitryj Kruty](#).

Belarus policy

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

Yaraslau Pryhodzich. [The anatomy of Belarusian joint stock companies](#). BEROC, 2017.

Aliaksandr Autushka-Sikorski, Alena Artsiomenka. [Work of the High Technology Park: a threefold increase in exports of IT services and what would happen if the park is closed](#). BISS, 2017.

Vadzim Smok. [Challenges to Belarus joining the European Higher Education Area](#). Ostrogorski Centre, 2017.

Uladzimir Akulich, Yuliya Yafimenka, Uladzislau Ramaniuk, Katsiaryna Aleksiatovich, Viktoriya Smalenskaya, Ales Alachnovič, Sierž Naŭrodski. [8th issue of the Macroeconomic Review of Belarus \(4th quarter 2016\)](#). CASE-Belarus, 2017.

Think tanks in Belarus are encouraged to submit their research for inclusion into the database by completing this [form](#).

The Ostrogorski Centre is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to analysis and policy advocacy on problems which Belarus faces in its transition to market economy and the rule of law. Its projects include Belarus Digest, [the Journal of Belarusian Studies](#), [BelarusPolicy.com](#), [BelarusProfile.com](#) and [Ostro.by](#).

**Grassroots leaders' stories,
London conference, corruption
in public procurement –**

Belarus civil society digest

The Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies will take place on February 25, while the 7th International Congress of Belarusian Studies announces a call for sections.

SYMPA releases a social advertising video on corruption in public procurement. REP independent trade union starts appealing electronic and written signatures to abolish the decree on freeloaders. Media release new grassroots leaders' stories.

Belarus in Focus 2016 opens online voting for best article. Informal education courses for elderly kick off in Homiel.

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

Grassroots and local communities

[Sakavitskiya Sustrechy invite volunteers](#). On 4-5 March, *Sakavitskiya Sustrechy/March Meetings* of Belarusian CSOs will take place in Minsk. The forum will focus on the participation of CSOs and citizens in the local communities' development and gather over 150 practitioners from around the country. The organisers – Office of European Expertise and Communications (OEEC) and New Eurasia – invite volunteers to help during the event.

[Grassroots leaders' stories](#). OEEC together with media CityDog.by, [34mag.net](#), Zautra.by, *Imena* magazine and platform Talaka.by continues a series of publications about active people who change the life of their communities. The recent stories tell about [Falanster](#) youth NGO that motivates IT-

specialists to work for free for non-profit initiatives and a [photographer](#) from Braslaŭ who triggered a wave of activism in his native town.

[The City-2 calls for fellows](#). The City-2 is a continuation of the [City](#) project, implemented by the Centre for Cultural Management last year: the project presents civic activism in an attractive, inspiring manner of a professional reality show and motivates a wider audience to be active in community life. Grand Prix is a thematic study visit to Brazil. Deadline for applications is February 28.

Human rights and good governance

[Corruption in public procurement in Belarus](#). School of Young Managers in Public Administration (SYMPA) released a video that demonstrates how much Belarusians could make out of the money stolen in public procurement in Belarus yearly. The video calls to stop the corruption and join watchdogging public finances at [koshturada.by](#) and public procurement at [opentenders.by](#) websites.

[Human Rights Situation in Belarus in 2016](#). According to Human Rights Centre *Viasna*'s annual review, the year saw a continuation of the policy of 'soft practices', which began in August 2015, as the authorities kept abstaining from detention of protesters. At the same time, the year was marked by a nearly sevenfold boost in the number of cases when citizens were fined for exercising freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, as compared to the previous year.

Conferences and discussions

[The Second Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies](#) will take place on 25 February. It is organised by the UCL School of Slavic and Eastern European Studies, the [Ostrogorski Centre](#) and the [Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum](#). The speakers from Belarus, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, the US and other countries will come to London to present and discuss Belarus-related research.

[Congress calls for sections](#). The 7th International Congress of Belarusian Studies announces a call for sections (panels). The Congress that will take place on 15-17 September 2017 in Warsaw is the most representative annual academic event, which unites all major centres of research on politics, society, and culture of Belarus. Application deadline is 10 March 2017.

[Intellectual club by Svetlana Aleksievich presents its next guest Rūta Vanagaitė](#), a Lithuanian writer. The lecture will be held on 2 March at the Embassy of Lithuania; around 150 people will be invited to attend. Meanwhile, TUT.by [posted](#) the record of the 2nd meeting of the Nobel laureate, [Svetlana Aleksievich Club](#) with the participation of the Russian journalist Stanislav Belkovsky.

Policy initiatives

[For the abolition of the decree on freeloaders](#). On 1 February REP independent trade union started appealing electronic and written signatures to the state bodies for the abolition of the decree "On Freeloaders" that provides unemployed Belarusians to pay an annual tax of \$190. The topic is also actively discussed by other civic and political forces: [Dzeya](#) initiative provides legal consulting, [Havary Praudu](#) campaign holds a freeloaders' meeting in February, [UCPB](#) and [BSDP](#) – street protests.

[Working group on the improvement of the foreign gratuitous aid legislation established.](#) It happened in late January at a meeting of CSO Council at the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The group will develop proposals on improvement of the legislation on foreign gratuitous aid.

Media initiatives

[Imena magazine launches a new crowdfunding campaign.](#) The goal is to collect around \$90K to provide the annual magazine activity. Launched in 2016, *Imena* is the first Belarusian public media that exists only due to the readers' donations. The magazine tells about people in need and helps raise money and attract volunteers to address social problems.

[Belarus in Focus 2016: Online voting for the best article.](#) Belarus in Focus 2016 – a contest for journalists writing about Belarus – announce the start of the online voting for the best article by the readers. The texts of the nominees are available on the contest page. The author that will receive the most votes will be awarded a valuable prize.

Education

[Golden Age University launched in Homiel.](#) From early January, the Regional Resource Centre in Homiel hosts classes for Homiel seniors of 55+ years old. The most demanded skills among the pensioners are computer and mobile literacy, knowledge about non-traditional approaches to health as well as history and art. Such non-formal Universities for seniors are organised in Hrodna, Viciebsk and Minsk.

[TechMinsk International Accelerator invites participants.](#) TechMinsk the first International Entrepreneurship School in Belarus. TechMinsk prepares the next generation of global entrepreneurs and changemakers from Eastern Europe and helps

them build rapid high growth companies and go global. The School is paid. Deadline for applications is 10 February.

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.