

Lukashenka meets Americans, Belarusians give up on state benefits – Digest of Belarusian Analytics

Belarus's geopolitical importance grows amid the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Alexander Lukashenka meets American analysts in Minsk.

Eurasian Development Bank warns Belarus of risks. Belarusians no longer expect free benefits from the government. Belarus climbs up to the 37th position in Doing Business.

PACE calls on Belarus not to issue Astravets NPP license. The number of women involved in the Belarusian IT sphere has increased by 2.5 times. Belarus ranked 38th in World Ranking of English Proficiency.

This and more in the new digest of Belarusian analytics.

Politics

[The autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Spotlights Belarus's Growing Geopolitical Importance](#) – Grigory Ioffe notes that the latest Belarusian-Russian summit in Mahileu and the issue of Orthodox disunion together ended up spotlighting the further growth of Belarus's geopolitical significance. The crisis and war in Ukraine had started that trend as early as 2014, leading to the promotion of Minsk as a venue for truce talks.

[Partnership priorities between Belarus and EU may be signed before the yearend](#). This became known after the meeting of EaP foreign ministers and the EU in Luxembourg, on October 15.

Belarusian MFA Head Vladimir Makei notes, “unfortunately, our partners have recently added a number of additional provisions we have to study. I think we will elaborate a position on it very soon.”

[Lukashenka Meets American Analysts](#) – Grigory Ioffe analyses the media reaction on November visit to Minsk of a group of US foreign policy analysts. But still, despite the noticeable improvement in relations with the West, Lukashenka decided against travelling to Paris to attend the celebration of the end of WW I. The analyst explains this referring to journalist Alexander Klaskouski: ‘Lukashenka prefers to enter Europe on a white horse, not to get lost in the crowd’.

Economics

[Reforms needed: Eurasian Development Bank warns Belarus of risks](#). The unbalanced growth of salaries and the instability of its payment balance are major threats to Belarus’ economy. The EDB expert group [visited](#) Minsk on October 2-5 with a monitoring mission on amending the government’s reform program, necessary to be fulfilled for the final, seventh EFSD tranche of the credit.

[Belarusians No Longer Expect Free Benefits From Government](#) – Alexander Chubrik, IPM Research Center, talks about the results of a recent [study](#) on the values of the Belarusian society. In particular, Belarusians believe that the main task of the state is ‘to give an opportunity to earn money’. Ten years ago, such a request came only from the business. Now this answer overtakes even the provision of quality medical care, pensions, and protection against crime.



KEF 2018 Conference in Minsk. Source: tut.by

[Belarus climbs up to the 37th position in Doing Business](#), according to the World Bank 2019 [report](#). Compared to last year, Belarus has risen one place to rank 37th out of 190 economies. The country summary contains a brief description of reform: Belarus made starting a business easier by abolishing the requirement to register the book of Registry of Inspections and made dealing with construction permits easier.

[KEF Results: Less Desire to Talk about Reform](#) – In November, the 6th Kastryčnicki Economic Forum ([KEF](#)) *Belarus in a Brave New World* was held in Minsk. This event traditionally gathers the most influential officials, businessmen, experts, and journalists. Economist Sergei Chaly sums up the KEF-2018 results and explains why there is less and less need and desire to talk about reforms.

Security

[PACE calls on Belarus not to issue Ostrovets NPP license](#). The parliamentarians urged the authorities of Belarus not to issue an operating license for the Ostrovets nuclear power plant until it meets certain international safety standards. PACE voted for the resolution in Strasbourg, on October 11.

[The Munich Security Conference](#) (MSC) hosted its 2018 Core Group Meeting in Minsk, on October 31 and November 1. The event brought together senior government officials and representatives from international organisations, including Belarus' president, OSCE Secretary General, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs and more.

[Monitoring of the Situation in the Field of Economic Security of Belarus. October 2018](#) – Belarus Security Blog's monthly monitoring indicates that the deterioration in the currency and deposit markets, caused by the September devaluation of the ruble and faster growth of population incomes, may force

the authorities to adopt a policy of tightening monetary policy. This can create problems to achieve the planned GDP growth in 2019.

[Belarusian army among 25 most powerful in Europe](#), according to the Business Insider's latest [ranking](#). Russia has the most powerful army in Europe, followed by France, Britain, and Turkey. Belarus was ranked 17th: the total number of active-duty and reserve military personnel in Belarus exceeds 400,000.

Information Technology

[Belarus, Ukraine And Russia: Time To Revisit Their Tech?](#) – Ilya Abugov, Crypto Briefing, notes that the Eastern European region has its share of unique problems, but even so, the blockchain scene in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia has been significantly overlooked. At this point, it is not about finding a diamond in the rough, but rather finding the entrance to the mine.

[Belarusian IT: More females employed](#). New tendencies have appeared in the Belarusian IT sphere over the last 10 years, according to the annual [research](#) of the portal Dev.by. The number of women involved in the IT sphere has increased by 2.5 times. Females make up 1/5 of all IT specialists in the country.



Belarusian IT specialists attending the first Women IT Week. Source: <https://bel.biz/heroes/witw/>

[Belarus industrial park can help boost GDP](#), EBRD-supported reports find. The analytical work has helped the Bank open up more policy dialogue with the Belarusian authorities on their

plans for the development of a market-oriented economy in general and the Great Stone Industrial Park in particular.

Other

[Best In Travel 2019: Belarus in Top 10 countries](#). Lonely Planet team [announced](#) its picks for the hottest travel destinations for 2019. Belarus is tipped to be big next year. The Best in Travel 2019 book credits the country for being open to new travellers on the back of relaxed visa requirements.

[Belarus ranked 38th in World Ranking of English Proficiency](#). This is the first time Belarus appeared on the annual EF English Proficiency Index ([EPI](#)) published for the eighth consecutive year. The 2018 survey took into account 1.3 million non-native English speakers, across 88 countries. Belarusians speak better English than their neighbours in the East and South: Russia occupies the 42nd place and Ukraine – 43rd.

[KEF poll: 85.6% of Belarusians ready to fight for their country in time of war](#). This is data of the survey about the values of the Belarusians conducted within the framework of [KEF](#) in May-June 2018. Thus, 86.1% of respondents call the Belarusian language ‘an important part of the culture, and it should be preserved’; 85.8% say that they are proud of Belarus.

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.

Pro-life vs pro-choice in Belarus

On 3 October 2016, women in neighbouring Poland went on a nation-wide strike protesting a notorious law criminalising abortion. This ongoing controversy has also provoked public debate in Belarus.

Unlike Poland, Belarus does not infringe on women's reproductive rights. Its legislation guarantees the right for every woman to decide on motherhood herself.

However, since late September, the Belarusian media have been actively discussing the pro-life and pro-choice standpoints. These debates reveal that society remains divided on the issue of abortion.

Is Belarus turning pro-life?

In 2013, Belarus revised its [abortion legislation](#), yet it still remains very liberal in comparison to Poland; women can decide for themselves whether they want to become mothers. Current laws allow abortions until up to the 12th week of pregnancy. Under certain conditions, such as rape, it is also possible up until the 22nd week of pregnancy.

Since the 2000s, the number of abortions in Belarus has declined steadily. According to the National Statistical Committee, the current abortion rate in Belarus is about 24.7 abortions per 100 live births. This is a significant improvement compared to 2000, when the rate was 128.7 abortions per 100 live births. Belarus's neighbours display

similar trends of declining abortions.



Since 2014, psychological consultations have been a requirement for all women who wish to terminate their pregnancy. Currently, such counselling leads to around 20 per cent of women changing their minds about having an abortion. Doctors in Belarus can also refuse to perform the procedure, reserving the right to redirect women to a different medical professional.

Concerned about the [negative demographic trends](#) and low birthrate in Belarus, the state also supports other pro-life initiatives. Besides counselling, it has introduced incentives for families with children and sponsors awareness campaigns. For instance, in 2015, the National Programme of the Demographic Safety of Belarus organised events such as “a week without abortions” at selected hospitals across the country.

Facing the choices

In the pro-life camp, Belarusian conservative forces have been teaming up with religious institutions to protest abortions. In recent media debates on abortion, the Belarusian Christian Democrats in particular have reiterated their uncompromising position as the country's major pro-life advocates.

On 23 September 2016, Volha Seviarynec, married to leading Belarusian Christian Democrat [Pavel Seviarynec](#), publicly shared her personal story about deciding against having an abortion under circumstances in which a majority of people would have opted for one.

 During the 12th week of pregnancy, Volha's child was diagnosed with a serious genetic disease known as Patau syndrome. Even though doctors strongly advised them to terminate the pregnancy, the couple refused. After the birth,

their child survived for only eight days. Volha acted in this ordeal according to her faith, and her going public with the story sent a powerful pro-life message.

A few days later, tut.by published a series of interviews with Anna Gerina, coordinator of the charitable organisation Genom. The foundation was established by the families of terminally ill children with rare genetic neuromuscular diseases. Anna's story is also a tragic one, as she turned her life around fighting for her daughter Yana, diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy at the age of eight months.

According to Gerina, there are no statistics available on the number of people suffering from this disease in Belarus. Moreover, the country does not have a single doctor specialising in such cases as her daughter's. The life expectancy of these children remains low and the state does not invest resources into programmes that could help them.

Anna too believes in God, yet she is on the pro-choice side. In her opinion, no mother with prior knowledge of the diagnosis would consciously choose to give birth to a child with this kind of genetic disease: "It is not for the sake of the woman, but for the sake of the child."

Why abortion?

According to Sviatlana Prakapenka, chief of the maternity centre in Polatsk, two of the major reasons for having an abortion in Belarus are social and material insecurity. For many, it still remains one of the main forms of birth control, as about 50 per cent of unplanned pregnancies end with an abortion in Belarus.

Husbands and partners often shy away from responsibility, refusing to take part in the decision to terminate the pregnancy. Thus, the woman alone bears the pressure of family

planning.



The Belarusian media regularly report gruesome cases of discarded and abandoned babies. Just recently, on 19 September, a 28 year old mother dropped her newborn daughter down the garbage chute of a residential building in the Minsk suburb of Machulishchy. The child, who was just three hours old, miraculously survived falling from the seventh floor.

Hospitals still do not offer baby-boxes, which could help save the lives of unwanted newborns and give their mothers a way out. On 21 September, the newly elected Belarusian parliament declared its intention to discuss introducing such an initiative, which already exists in Russia and Ukraine. Civil society activist Nasta Dashkevich pointed out that along with baby boxes, the state could also guarantee the right to anonymous childbirth, ease adoption laws, and foster a more child-friendly mentality.

However, presidential decree Nr. 18, adopted in 2006, might obstruct the baby-box initiative. It imposes certain obligations for women considering leaving their newborn in the care of the state: she must reimburse the costs of the child's upbringing and education. Thus, women with low incomes are more likely to choose abortion over preserving a life.

Offering counselling for women who are considering terminating their pregnancy remains a short-term fix. In the long run, the state should invest resources in promoting a healthy lifestyle and responsible family planning. Demystification of modern hormonal contraceptives could also help women avoid difficult choices. Ideally, these topics should also become a part of the educational system.

#IamNotAfraidToSayIt: Belarusian Women Speak out against Sexual Violence

In July 2016, Belarusian Facebook users showed support for the initiative #IamNotAfraidToSayIt (#янебаюсясказаць in Belarusian). Originally a Facebook post by a Ukrainian journalist against gender-based violence, it quickly grew into a spontaneous online phenomenon which transcended borders.

The campaign addressed the sexual assault, abuse, molestation, and harassment regularly faced by women of all ages in the post-Soviet world.

As well as revealing the extent of gender-based violence, it also highlighted the indifference of Belarusian society to female victims, who are often neglected after traumatising experiences of assault and harassment.

#IamNotAfraidToSayIt

On 5 July 2016, Ukrainian civil society activist Anastasiya Melnychenko wrote a public post on Facebook with the hashtag "IamNotAfraidToSayIt," in which she shared her views on the lenient attitudes in society towards sexual assault and abuse against women.

✘ Many other women also felt the need to draw attention to the hidden problem of gender-based violence. A Facebook post thus sparked a large-scale phenomenon on social networks across borders, as women in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus

joined the initiative.

An unexpected flood of personal stories brought numerous cases of hidden violence against women and children in Belarus to light. These were not usually reflected in official crime statistics.

Almost immediately, this initiative became controversial on social networks. Some criticised women for going public with this topic, arguing that it might re-traumatise victims and open up old wounds among members of its intended audience, who could not always find the strength to speak out publicly about their traumas.

Other reactions revealed that the problems of sexual violence and abuse still remain a taboo in patriarchal post-Soviet societies, which often blame women themselves for the violence. From this angle, appearing in public in a mini-skirt, wearing make-up, or walking alone at night can be interpreted as provocative behaviour.

These stereotypes force victims to feel guilty and suppress their trauma, as a result of which they often choose not to come forward and report offenders. #IamNotAfraidToSayIt targeted precisely these stereotypes, raising awareness and encouraging women to speak up and stop feeling ashamed. Finally, it helped many victims recognise that they are not alone.

Isolation of victims

#IamNotAfraidToSayIt illustrated that violence and abuse of women remain both invisible and omnipresent in post-Soviet societies. The online campaign also succeeded in highlighting the scope of the problem, especially as official statistics fail to reflect gender violence in full.

For instance, in 2015 the Belarusian Ministry of the Interior

reported only 145 criminal cases (or 0.15% of all crimes) of rape or attempted rape. The majority of convicted rapists received prison sentences from 5 to 8 years.



Data on [domestic violence](#) in Belarus appears more comprehensive. According to a 2014 assessment by the UNFPA, over 77% of women experienced various forms of violence: physical, psychological, and economic. Over 18% became victims of sexual assault. Yet these numbers reflect only those cases where victims chose to seek help outside.

Current Belarusian legislation lacks clear definitions for sexual harassment and abuse, along with procedures for prosecuting crimes. In 2015, The Belarusian Ministry of the Interior started drafting a law on prevention of domestic violence, yet it still remains in development. At the same time, current Belarusian legislation does not provide full protection of victims of less serious cases of molestation and harassment.

Besides the inadequate legislation, complicated procedures in reporting and proving sexual crimes to the police discourage many women from coming forward and speaking out against offenders. These women are mostly left alone with their traumas.

This is especially common for cases of groping on public transit or sexual assault in the workplace. So far, only one article of the Belarusian Criminal Code addresses sexual harassment, [failing to provide clear definitions](#) and guidelines for prosecuting such crimes.

Why does “no” not mean “no”?

Data gathered from a UNFPA sociological survey indicate that in over 86% of cases, men are the ones perpetuating acts of

gender violence. This is on par with the level of aggression against women in Russia and Ukraine. The findings also revealed that [consumption of alcohol](#) was the leading cause of violence.

Currently, a number of campaigns are attempting to raise public awareness and sensitivity to various forms of violence, similarly to #IamNotAfraidToSayIt. For instance, in 2016 the Belarusian web portal Tut.by put out a series of publications entitled "Home and Violence." UN agencies also assist Belarusian authorities in implementing initiatives on preventing violence and transforming public views about masculinity. In 2015, they launched the so-called "orange campaign," focused on prevention of gender-based violence.

As of 2016, 109 crisis rooms for victims of domestic violence operate throughout Belarus. However, this initiative [lacks true commitment](#) to protecting victims. For instance, to use these crisis rooms, a woman must report an assault to the police, which prevents many from seeking help there.

Last but not least, the success of these campaigns rests on the readiness of Belarusian society to abandon its condescending attitude towards feminism. Currently, the public perceives it as a movement of militant male-haters, rather than a struggle for basic human rights. In other words, society refuses to rid itself of the gender stereotypes which are the root of the violence .

For instance, in June 2015, the leader of the party Belarusian Christian Democracy [Paviel Seviaryniec](#) rashly commented that feminism was a pastime for unhappy people. Even though in practise Belarusian conservatives do not object to female leadership in their ranks, such public statements clearly attest to the longevity of gender stereotypes.

This summer, Belarusian women showed that they will not remain silent about crime, no matter how traumatic and

psychologically difficult it is for them. It is up to the state to respond to them with the same level of trust and support.

Besides amending the legislation, Belarus needs an effective long-term strategy to guarantee greater protection against all forms of violent behaviour. In particular, it should introduce comprehensive education strategies to promote a change in the people's mentality.

The Milking Contest: The Remnants of the Soviet Past – Belarus Photo Digest

The Belarusian authorities have strived to maintain what they view as the best features of the Soviet past. Twenty years after collapse of the Soviet Union, well-decorated bulletin boards celebrate the accomplishments of overachieving workers in state enterprises, voluntary neighbourhood clean-up days (Subotniki) remain obligatory for all state employees, and a lavish festival (Daszynki) marks the end of every harvesting season.

In the nation's towns and villages competitions are held to determine who the best collective farm, the best carpenter, the best tractor operator, or the best nurse is. Belarus Digest has documented one such contest: a competition for the best dairy product producers in the Maladзецzna region at the local House of Culture.

Highly valued and remunerated during the Soviet era, the work

of a milkmaid has lost its appeal in contemporary Belarus. A dairy worker starts their day at 4 am. The job is stressful: officials are tasked with monitoring the fat content of the milk, which all too often falls below the norm due to the poor quality of animal feed. A milkmaid is paid around 3 million Belarusian rubles a month (approximately \$200).

The competition for the best milkmaid in Maladzeczna seeks to honour the hard work of agricultural workers as well as introduce a note of levity into their daily routines. These types of contests occur every year, each time in a different village.



The fourteen participants of the Maladzeczna Milking Contest, all of them women, compete by performing a series of tasks.



First, contestants have to prepare a meal or bake a cake and provide a sample to all the event's participants.



Next, contestants perform on stage, dancing and singing humorous songs about everyday life in the village. Many wear traditional Belarusian costumes.



Milkmaids came dressed up for the event.



One attendee dotes a traditional floral wreath.



Contestants also took a written test on their theoretical knowledge of milking and had to assemble milking equipment in

front of a jury.



Assembling the equipment is not an easy task.



The women cheer to the crowd as they take a bus to the farm where the next round of the contest – milking – takes place.



The final round of the competition includes milking cows at a local farm.



Women listening to instructions from the organiser of the contest.



Contestant number 3 gets ready to start milking.



A typical Belarusian farm.



The winner of the competition was Vera Babei, a mother of eight, seen in the photograph below. Babei has five children of her own and adopted three more. Her prize was a hand-painted tea set.



About the author: Siarhei Leskiec is a freelance photographer whose work focuses on everyday life, folk traditions, and rituals in the Belarusian countryside. Originally from Maladzeczna region, he received a history degree from

A Young Family's Life in Communal Housing – Belarus Photo Digest

This issue of Belarus Photo Digest is about communal housing in Belarus.

Nearly 800,000 Belarusians were registered as being in need of better housing conditions at the end of 2013, according to Belstat. Sixteen percent of them are living in communal housing, and nearly half are young families.

Nasta and her four-year-old son Matvei live in dormitory-style housing in Maladechna, a city of 95 thousand – a one-hour drive from Minsk.

“I had to do everything myself. In the seventh month of pregnancy, I was putting up wallpaper, painting the ceiling and the floors,” Nasta remembers her first year in the dorm. “It is funny to think that in some places the old wallpaper was nailed to the wall.”

Government-owned corporation “Kommunalnik,” provides and operates communal housing in Maladechna. It offers two types of communal housing arrangements. One consists of small one-bedroom apartments, each with a private bathroom. The other is a dormitory, in which single rooms open into long hallways with shared bathrooms and kitchens.

Dwelling space in communal houses ranges between 14 and 20

square metres and costs \$40-60 per month. For the sake of comparison, renting a room in a private apartment in Maladzechna costs \$150-200 per month. For some, communal housing is a temporary solution. Others simply cannot afford to build or to buy an apartment and wind up living in communal housing for decades.



About the photographer: Siarhei Leskiec is a freelance photographer whose work focuses on everyday life, folk traditions, and rituals in the Belarusian countryside.

Originally from Maladzeczna region, he received a history degree from Belarusian State Pedagogical University.

Speed-Dating In Belarusian, Borsch Or Career – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Belarusian women discussed gender-related issues during the talk show “Borsch or career”. A new interesting way to promote Belarusian language – Art Siadziba organises speed-dating when people can communicate in the language.

A new portal ngo.by is launched. Anyone who searches partners for joint projects in Belarus and abroad, wishes to be a volunteer or seeks volunteers services volunteers, as well as interested in scholarships, training, educational events can register on the web site.

Civil society campaigns

Civic cultural campaign Budzma runs a gender talk-show under the provocative brand “[Borshch or career?](#)”. Topic of female activity remains a traditionally polemic one in Belarusian society and Budzma campaign known mostly for promotion of national language looks to change the accents of its activity. Series of journalistic materials “[Let’s be Belarusian women!](#)” (Budzma belarusKami!) is now followed by an offline talk-show and [promotional video at Youtube](#) which has less then one hundred views in contradiction to “traditional” [cultural mediaproducts](#) of Budzma.

[Speed-dating in Belarusian language starts in Minsk.](#) Art

Siadziba, known for its creative promotional steps to [national clothes](#) and [symbols](#) starts a new language-oriented initiative.

First meeting of Speed-dating in Belarusian took place on 30 October. 10 ladies and 10 gents have 2 minutes to know each other better and to communicate in Belarusian language. As a result of speed dating they fill a form giving marks to their partners. If the marks feat each other successfully the participants are informed by the organisers. People love [dating apps free](#) because they can feel safe behind the phone, you don't get as anxious and you meet amazing people.

[Representatives of Local Leader courses run by Oeec.by](#) win at Social Weekend. Marina Alexeenko, Bashni agrotown, got a prize from the construction company [realt.by](#). Also, the Union of Entrepreneurs will assist to engage local business to the project. [Project](#) aims to equip a school with sports equipment and conduct sports events for children and their families.

Elena Budnik, Brest Regional Development Fund, got prizes from [mamochki.by](#) and a people's judge. [Project](#) aims to create a positive atmosphere in Brest children hospital through visits of clowns-doctors and equipment of a game room with cheerful drawings and toys. One can watch [a video on results](#) and see [the full list of winners](#).

[Belarus in Focus Information Office launches 'Belarus in Focus 2014'](#) – the fourth edition of an annual competition for journalists who write about Belarus for international media. Winners will receive up to 500 euros, and have the chance to network with [jury members](#), fellow journalists and experts at a two-day workshop in Warsaw in spring 2015. Articles can be submitted in English, Danish, French, German, Russian, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish.

[United Way Belarus NGO launches a new service for ngo.by portal users](#). Anyone who searches partners for joint projects

in Belarus and abroad, wishes to be a volunteer or seeks volunteers services volunteers, as well as interested in scholarships, training, educational events – is welcome to register at the Universal Platform.

[Commemoration of Victims of Stalinism took place on 29th of October](#). Activists hold memory actions at Kurapaty and other places of repressions. 29 October is known as Black Day for Belarusian literature. In 1937 the night from 29 October took lives of more than hundred representatives of Belarusian intelligence.

Analytics

□□[The results of sociologic research on Belarusian literature show that the situation with reading in Belarusian has become a catastrophe](#). Only 5 per cent of readers prefer literature in Belarusian and 40 per cent of the respondents say that they don't know Belarusian well enough to read. The survey was conveyed by the "Novak" laboratory for the Belarusian Writers' Union and campaign "Budzma!". The state representatives in the person of the National Institute of Education, "Belkniga" JSC, Institute for Journalism (BSU) joined the event, which was followed by [BWU open letter to several ministries](#).□

[Presentation of monitoring network on academic freedoms violations](#) is to take place on 18 October in Minsk. Organised by the [Public Bologna Committee](#), the event will present the project on network, the results for the 1st half of 2014 and conduct a short training for observers. The monitoring of academic freedoms violations is aimed at retrieving the actual information about the situation on academic freedoms in Belarusian Higher Education Institutions and implemented by the students and teachers all over Belarus.

[Monitoring Freedom of Association and the Status of Non-Profit Organizations in Belarus for the second quarter 2014](#) – The survey was prepared by the Assembly of NGOs and Legal

Transformation Centre and covers the period of July 1 – September 30, 2014. Its aim is to reveal short-term tendencies in the sphere of human rights, social, political and economic situation in Belarus. The survey authors note that no important legal changes concerning NGO status were introduced during the monitoring period.

[New Practices in Raising Domestic Funds by CSOs in Europe](#) –

This paper was prepared by European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) on demand of the Legal Transformation Centre and Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus. The paper focuses on opportunities to enhance CSOs' financial sustainability by raising funds from private domestic sources and through indirect state support mechanisms. The paper pays particular focus on new fundraising methods and shares specific case examples, such as crowd-funding, sms and donor message service.

Interaction between state and civil society

[Platform CSO has gained access to Belarusian prisons](#). This is the only human rights organisation that now has the opportunity to visit the prisons of Belarus. The corresponding permission was obtained from Department of Execution of Penalties of the Ministry of the Interior. The Platform Innovation CSO for three years works in the field of protecting the rights of inmates in the penitentiary system of Belarus.

[The Human Rights Centre 'Viasna' calls to join the campaign for the liberation of Pavel Vinahradau](#).

The activist of the youth organisation 'Zmena' is now serving a 15-day-arrest at the detention centre in Aksrestsina Minsk Centre. 'Viasna' recorded 16 cases of detention of Pavel Vinahradau, which make a total of 165 days of arrest. Human rights defenders believe the example of Pavel Vinahradau as evidence of harassment of opposition-minded citizens and injustice in the Belarusian state.

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