

European Cafe, Citizen Journalism, Green Mahiliou – Belarus Civil Society Digest

European Cafe hosted a public lecture in Minsk. Budzma organised a Day of the Belarusian Language for young people. “For Freedom” invites for the school where the current situation in Belarus and the existing potential of the Belarusian civil society will be discussed.

Ihar Pastnow, a paediatrician and psychiatrist in Vitsyebsk who openly criticized the head of the Regional Executive Committee, will have to attend a mental health hospital for compulsory psychiatric care. Two NGOs were denied registration.

[European Café goes on its meetings](#). On 7 September at the TUT.by gallery the project “European Café: open space in Europe” hosts a public lecture by Timm Beichelt “Germany and the EU: Face to Face with their Eastern Neighbours.” Timm Beichelt is a Professor of European Studies at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt. The meeting is a continuation of a series of meetings with prominent European figures, organised by the Centre for European Studies.

[“Budzma z movay!” for young intellectuals](#). The campaign “Budzma!” conducted a Day of Belarusian language at a camp for young participants who were playing intellectual games. The program included several games in Belarusian including “Media Alphabet” and “What-Where-When?” as well as a literary-musical event and a Belarusian dance.

[Presentation of 2012 Sustainability Index](#). On 29 August a presentation of the results of 2012 Sustainability Index of civil society organisations (USAID methodology) took place in

Minsk. The event was organised by the international NGO "ACT" with informational support from the Office of European Expertise and Communications. The invited experts discussed strategies to improve sustainability in the third sector, taking into account the results of the Index.

Seminars, grants

[School "Belarus Today: Challenges and Prospects for Development"](#). The school was organised by the movement "For Freedom" and will take place on 15-20 October in one of the neighboring European countries. The purpose of the school is to provide fellows with a comprehensive vision of the current situation in Belarus and discuss the existing potential of Belarusian civil society. Participation in the school is available for Belarusians of 18-30 years old who are active in social and political issues.

[Citizen journalist 2013: Let's Make it Better!](#) The contest "Citizen Journalist" continues and invites all to apply with articles, photos, videos, audio or blogs about local issues. Thus, the team supports the wave of local campaigns "Let's Make it Better!" initiated by the Assembly of Democratic NGOs. All works will appear on the website narodny.by, the best will be offered to independent newspapers and TV media. The deadline for submissions is 10 September.

[Eastern Partnership Youth Forum 2013](#). On 22-25 October Eastern Partnership Youth Forum will take place in Kaunas (Lithuania), under the Lithuania's Presidency of the EU Council and the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "Contacts between people". The event will gather about 200 young people and aims to increase sustainable political/civic commitment to further support non-formal learning and recognition of the process of work by young people through cooperation with those working with youth.

[Embassy Funds for Belarus 2013](#). MATRA/HRF for Belarus launched

a new call for proposals focused on the development of civil society in Belarus. The Embassy has two programme funds available for 2013: the Small Embassy Projects Programme (Matra Fund) and the Human Rights Fund. Date of closure for the round is 15 September 2013. The Embassy is empowered to extend grants in principle to a maximum of Euro 25,000.

[First billboard with a picture of the HIV-positive citizen](#) of Belarus opened in Minsk on 21 August. Eugeni Spevak, a member of the Belarusian community of people living with HIV and the face on the billboard, said that 20 similar billboards will be placed throughout the country. The event "Why am I living with HIV for a long time" was organized by the World Health Organisation, with the support of the Ministry of Health of Belarus, UNDP, etc.

Green events

[Agro-Cultural-Festival in Minsk](#). Ecodom NGO and ecological entity "Agro-Eco-Culture" invite those interested to the Eco-Cultural Festival 2013, which is traditionally held at the Minsk Gallery "Ź" during the last days of summer. The Festival program includes presentations, master classes, tastings and concerts that can be attended by both adults and children.

[SILC invites for training on ideology](#). Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC) is inviting interested parties to participate in the training "Political party ideology". Politically and socially active youth of 18-35 years old are welcome to submit applications till September 22. The main objective of the course is to improve the knowledge of young political activists to better understand political ideologies and explore their different aspects.

[Birdrace 2013](#). APB BirdLife Belarus NGO is welcoming participants to take part in the X Open Championship of Ornithology Racing. Competitions will be held on the first Saturday of autumn (on September 7) from 6 am to 6 pm.

According to regulations, the winner is the team that during the day of the tournament registers the largest number of species of wild birds naturally occurring in the territory of Belarus.

[“Green Map” in Mahiliou](#). The Internet project serves as a guide between authorities responsible for waste collection and disposal and those who want to properly get rid of their waste. At the moment, Mahiliou Green Map contains 68 points where one can drop secondary material resources, waste, as well as to give away unnecessary items. The project’s initiator is the Centre for Environmental Solutions.

Interaction between state and civil society

[Monitoring of public councils](#). The Ministry of Economy of Belarus has monitored the activities of public advisory councils and working groups in the state bodies. Monitoring data indicate that 29 advisory councils and working groups which include representatives of the business community continue to act. The Ministry concluded that the councils are a real platform for dialogue between the government and business.

[Two NGOs registration were turned down](#). On 21 August the Supreme Court of Belarus upheld the denial of registration for the United Civic Party’s youth wing “[Young Democrats](#)”. A Department of Justice of Brest Regional Executive Committee refused to register the NGO “[Brest Christian Democrats](#).”

[Doctor in Vitebsk who openly criticized authorities sent to psychiatric hospital](#). On 21 August Ihar Pastnow, a paediatrician and psychiatrist in Vitsyebsk who openly criticized the head of the Regional Executive Committee has been sent to a mental health hospital for compulsory psychiatric care.

[Program director of Radio “Racyja” banned entrance to Belarus](#). The Program Director of the Belarusian Radio “Racyja” Yury

Leszczynski, planning his holiday, wanted to come to Belarus. Having visited the Consulate of Belarus in Bialystok, he received a visa denial a week after applying for a tourist visa.

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.