

Election 2011 Persona: Ales Mikhalevich



Opposition leaders were unable to adopt a procedure for selecting a single presidential contender at their meeting in Minsk at the beginning of July, BelaPAN reported*. According to Uladzimir Kolas, chairman of the Rada (Council) of the Belarusian Intelligentsia (RBI), the process of selecting a single presidential contender had taken too long and might soon be of no use, as there would not be enough time for preparations to ensure an efficient and successful campaign. If the selection of a single candidate continues to be delayed, the RBI may withdraw from this process, Mr. Kolas noted.

Two presidential candidates Alyaksandr Milinkevich and Ales Mikhalevich have refused to be involved in the process.

Ales Mikhalevich was the first opposition candidate to launch his presidential campaign bid at a presentation on January 27, 2010 in Minsk*. The politician said he would rely only on Belarusian resources in his campaign. According to Mikhalevich, his team will comprise representatives of a new generation of the Belarusian society. He regards urban youth as his main support base. Mikhalevich is also the youngest candidate. He just turned 35 this May.

Biography

Ales Mikhalevich was born in Minsk in 1975 to a family of research associates of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. He attended the Belarusian State University,

graduating in 1997 with a degree in Political Science and Law. While at university, Ales headed the Belarusian Students' Association, a non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Belarusian students. He also undertook periods of study at the University of Warsaw, Poland and University of Oxford, UK.

After graduation Mikhalevich worked in tourist business as well as a crisis manager accredited at the Ministry of Economy, a legal consultant at the Association of Disabled Veterans of the War in Afghanistan, and a lawyer at the Belarusian Independent Trade Union.

In 2004-2008, Mikhalevich served as a deputy chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF). Following his nomination to the position of the party chairman in 2008 and proposed program of party reforms, he was expelled from the party for publicly criticizing BPF leaders.

In 2003-2007, Mikhalevich was a member of the Pukhavichy district council, Minsk region and coordinator of the Assembly of Members of the Local Councils.

Ales is married and has two daughters.

Program

On May 27, Ales Mikhalevich presented his electoral program*. Its name is "Belarus: a strategy for evolution" and it consists of three pillars: economic growth, effective state, and active society. "For me and my team the most important thing is make people vote for us," said the politician.

The aspirant to participate in the presidential elections is in favor to support the private business, local government, constitutional reform, return to the separation of powers, and privatization of state-run mass media.

Another point of the politician's election program is a

territorial-administrative reform, which stipulates the abolition of regions and the republic's division at 17 povets (districts) with centers in Brest, Pinsk, Mozyr, Gomel, Grodno, Baranovichy, Slutsk, Bobrujsk, Molodechno, Borisov, Mogilev, Krichev, Glubokoe, Polotsk, Vitebsk, Orsha. Moreover, in his opinion, it's necessary to create a separate administrative and territorial unit of Minsk and Minsk region.

"Belarus needs an active self-management, which provides the decentralization of political, economic and financial power in favor of regions and local authorities," stressed Ales Mikhalevich.

Opposition politicians stated that after the election's victory he was going to expand the use of Belarusian language in the country, however, the presentation of his electoral program was made in Russian.

"My campaign will be mostly carried out in Russian. Russian is the language used by most part of our country citizens," said the politician.

In addition, among his priorities Ales Mikhalevich named the private ownership of land, moratorium on the death penalty, neutrality of Belarus on the international scene, withdrawal from the Union State with Russia, cancellation of nuclear power plant construction, ban on the production of fruit wines.

Being an advocate of Belarus' neutrality, Mikhalevich does not have plans to bring the country closer to NATO. As for the European Union, the country's admission might become a priority. But it is not included into the current program*.

The politician's team consists of philosopher Ihar Drako, economists Ales Lukashevich and Viktor Yawmenenka, scholar Kanstantsin Lukashow, and pharmacist Danuta Chyhyr.

