

Who Funds the Opposition, EU Neighbourhood Barometer – Digest of Belarusian Analytics

Belarusian analysts remain sceptical about integration within the post-Soviet space. BISS invites discussion on its new social contracts research results. The Centre for European Transformation presents the results of the "EU-Neighbourhood Barometer" on the attitudes of Belarusians towards their own country and the European Union.

The Eastern European Studies Centre examines the third sector in Belarus. The World Bank approved a new programme for Belarus for the coming years. What does the Partnership Strategy mean for Belarusians?

[Lyabedzka: My Party does not Receive a Penny from the West](#) – one of the most discussed issues of the week was articulated by Anatol Lyabedzka, UCP leader, at the recent EuroNest meeting in Brussels. In particular, Lyabedzka suggested checking the assistance that democratic countries provide for civil society in Belarus.

The politician explained his sudden suggestion that there are in existence some pseudo-democratic organisations which are supported alongside together with truly independent media, human rights activists and political structures. Euroradio spoke to the politician about his statement, which risks causing a new round of arguments in the democratic community.

[EU Neighbourhood Barometer: What Belarusians think about Belarus and the EU?](#) – Alyona Zuikova, from the Centre for European Transformation, prepared a paper analysing the

results of the research component of the Regional Programme for EU communication. EU Neighbourhood Barometer gives a snapshot of the whole region, making it possible to compare the Belarusians public opinion on issues related to democracy, democratisation and Europeanization, with the opinion of the residents of other EaP countries. In particular, Belarusians have expressed a moderate position on most issues, while avoiding radical ones.

Eurasian Economic Union: A new Toy for the Three – The future of the Eurasian Economic Union, which Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan are to create by 2015, analysts say, is rather lacklustre. They believe that by 2015, all the integration documents will be signed and ratified by the three countries, but the real integration will be visible later. This was discussed in a regular issue of the Amplituda TV TUT.by program, attended by experts Alexei Pikulik, BISS Academic Director, and Yuri Shevtsov, director of the Centre for European Integration.

BISS-Timeline #5 (May 2013) – The Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) issued its regular monthly review of the major social, economical, political and cultural events in Belarus. The May issue covers US and EU sanctions' being lifted against Belarusian companies, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the opposition's initiative to hold a 'popular referendum', some signs of liberalisation in the cultural landscape, etc.

The Bell, No.4 (34) – The Eastern Europe Studies Centre (EESC) presents an issue of the electronic newsletter The Bell is devoted to the analysis of the NGO sector in Belarus. In particular, Tatsiana Chulitskaya examines the current situation of the NGO sector in Belarus and stresses upon the main strengths and weaknesses of it; Yury Chavusau gives a brief review of Belarusian NGOs registered abroad and categorises them into four different types.

[Presidential Election 2015: Opposition is Still Off](#) –

Belaruskaya Delovaya Gazeta noted that in 2015 the 5th presidential election will take place in Belarus, and respectively asks a number of experts whether the opponents of Lukashenka have a chance to update the Belarusian political Olympus. The experts – Andrei Egorov, Alexander Shpakovski, Valery Karablevich – were all practically on the same page and do not see strong candidates in the Belarusian opposition. "A crisis of age and cadres affects the fact that elections can go almost unopposed," stated Shpakovski.

[The European Endowment for Democracy HQ opened](#).

On 27 May the headquarters of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) were opened in Brussels. The Endowment is expected to provide assistance to civil society organisations, young pro-democracy leaders, and independent media outlets. The Endowment will be financed by the European Commission funds and EU member states. Over the first three years, the EED budget will reportedly exceed €25 million.

[The organisers of cultural events will have to get concert licences](#).

The presidential decree of 5 June provides for compulsory obtaining of a certificate for an organisation to conduct cultural and entertainment events in Belarus (concert licence) at the Department of ideological work. [Independent artists believed](#) that such a decision could be caused by the desire of the authorities to have additional control over this realm.

[World Bank approves new Partnership Strategy for Belarus](#).

Accepted on 6 June, the new Country Partnership Strategy for Belarus for 2014-2017 is based on consultations at all levels of society, and with development partners. It commits to help reforms in key areas needed for the country to regain competitiveness, but also to maintain macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth.

[The State of the World's Children 2013](#).

On 30 May UNICEF

issued [its annual report](#) on the issues of children with disabilities. The report urges the governments of all countries to sign, ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To the moment, 128 countries, including the EU, have signed the Convention; Belarus is not in the list.

[Poland invites Belarusians to a new scholarship program.](#)

Polish MFA in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education launched the Stefan Banach scholarship program designed for students studying economics, engineering, natural and agricultural sciences, or European studies and living in the EaP countries. Any Belrusian can participate at the new Program, regardless of his/her political views.

[Belarusians earned abroad nearly a billion dollars.](#) In 2012, Belarusian citizens received from abroad 913.1 million dollars of personal transfers, states the Belarus National Bank. Thus, the official earnings of Belarusians abroad have increased by 15.2% in comparison with 2011.

[Belarus becomes world's top country for SPAM.](#) Belarus has eclipsed the US to become the biggest single source of global spam, according to cloud-based email and web security firm AppRiver. After the spike happened on 13 April, AppRiver said it began recording an average of 12.3 million spam messages per day from Belarus – which is now climbing.

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.