

# Dealing with Alcohol Abuse, Cycling in Minsk, REFORUM – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Movement *For Freedom* invites to a summer school programme entitled 'Belarusian idea and the ways of national consolidation'.

The New Eurasia Establishment held in Minsk a USAID-supported workshop *Financial Management for Non-profits* for directors, finance and program managers from civil society organisations.

A senior government official met with opposition activists to discuss problems of alcohol abuse.

## Interaction between state and civil society

[First deputy prime minister meets with opposition activists campaigning against alcohol abuse](#). First Deputy Prime Minister [Uladzimir Syamashka](#) met with activists of the Belarusian Christian Democrats (BCD) campaigning against alcohol abuse. The government has demonstrated its readiness to take the public's proposals against the 'alcoholisation' of society into account, said the BCD press office.

[Belarusian Language Society asks for Belarusian language to be used again in legal acts](#). The Belarusian Language Society (BLS) has appealed to the House of Representatives with a proposal to return the Belarusian language to national legislation. In fact, at present almost all the laws in the country are adopted only in Russian.

## Events

[REFORUM project completed the preparatory phase](#). The project, implemented by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies

(BISS), over the next two years will offer 16 reform proposals, a dialogue between various stakeholders, including the opposition, authorities, experts and business. For the first six months the project has established relations with stakeholders, created a Council for the project and conducted a study to identify the attitude of Belarusians (society and civil society) to reform.

[Food for Thought – 4](#). On 8 July at the Minsk café, Fond of Ideas held its fourth business breakfast in the series *Food for Ideas*. The theme of the breakfast was the policy of forming a strategy for social marketing. For the first time together with the businessmen representatives of Belarusian NGOs working with social projects attended the breakfast. The event took place as a part of a project to raise awareness about CSR in Belarus.

[Information Day on European opportunities and gender equality](#). On 17-18 July the Office for a Democratic Belarus (Brussels) and the Office for European Expertise and Communication (Minsk) invite interested parties to information sessions in Brest and Hrodna. CSOs' activists will learn step-by-step how to prepare successful projects, get to know about available EU support mechanisms as well as learn about the incorporation of European values and cross-cutting issues (gender) into their project proposals and during the implementation of their projects. The event is being organised under the Clearing House project.

[Round table on public administration](#). The civil campaign *Tell the Truth* conducted a regular round table on the issues of the efficiency of public administration, the prospects for reforming the power vertical and the need for modernisation. According to the invited politicians and experts, the modern system of the state decision making and implementing is closed off from public control and is not in line with Constitution. [BIPART analyst Natalia Ryabova](#) noted that one of the main problems facing public administration is a low level of

training and retraining.

## **Civil society initiatives**

**[Belarusian Christian Democracy party \(BCD\) initiates a Minsk Forum of NGOs and civic initiatives](#)**. The Forum aims to solve the local problems of the Minsk citizens; among priorities are the elaboration of alternative plans for Minsk's development; coordination of Minsk civil and social initiatives; conducting campaigns to address actual local issues; civil control over the city authorities, etc. Journalists, however, doubt in the potential success of the new initiative and have stated that this is merely a way for BCD to try to expand its electorate.

**[CityDog.by launches a joint project with the Institute Strelka](#)**. Every week, the Minsk city online magazine CityDog.by will publish articles created by students and graduates of the Institute for Media, Architecture and Design *Strelka* (Russia). Architects, urbanists, sociologists will share knowledge how to study and improve the urban environment; the articles are designed to teach and motivate the readers of CityDog.by to improve the environment of Belarusian cities.

**[I Bike Minsk](#)**. From 10 July to 24 August a campaign *I Bike Minsk* will be held in Minsk and include about 20 different activities – workshops, street actions, lessons on how to ride a bike, bike tours and trips. Additionally, 60 bikes will be available to rent. According to the [belngo.info](#)

## **Education**

**[New Eurasia held training on financial management](#)**. On 8-9 July the New Eurasia Establishment held a workshop entitled *Financial Management for Non-profits* for directors, finance and program managers from civil society organisations. The event was organised in the framework of the USAID-supported Capacity Building for Civil Society Organisations project. Participants had the unique opportunity to learn about the specifics and professional secrets of financial

management in non-profits.

[School to study Belarusian identity](#). Movement *For Freedom* invites individuals to participate to a School 'Belarusian idea and the ways of national consolidation'. The School will be held from 24-29 August with the participation of well-known Belarusian experts, public figures and politicians. The School aims to consider the potential and opportunities for the consolidation of Belarusians in light of the new threats and challenges facing Belarus. Participation is open to Belarusians 18-30 years of age that are active in social and/or political sphere.

[E-Teacher Scholarship Program](#). The U.S. Embassy in Minsk announces a call for applications from teacher trainers, tertiary/secondary teachers of English, and program administrators in Belarus to participate in one of the ten English Teacher Professional Development DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES provided through the University of Oregon. The deadline for submitting applications is 15 July 2014.

## **International**

[EU removes eight Belarusians from its blacklist](#). On 8 July the Council of the European Union lifted entry bans and asset freezes against eight citizens of Belarus and placed one Belarusian on its blacklist. A total of 225 individuals, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka, are currently subject to travel bans and all of them, and 25 economic entities, are subject to asset freezes.

[Belarusian Delegation Visit to Brussels](#). On 8-10 July a delegation from Belarus, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Alena Kupchyna, visited Brussels to take part in a second round of consultations with the European Union on modernisation issues. The delegation included representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Economy.

[Call for Proposals: European Instrument for Democracy and](#)

[Human Rights](#). The Delegation of the European Union to Belarus is seeking proposals for projects to be implemented in Belarus or projects which would directly benefit Belarusian society with financial assistance from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. The deadline for submission of proposals is 2 September 2014.

*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.*

---

# **Fine for Foreign Aid, Ecotourism, Official Blacklist – Civil Society Digest**

Some 300 delegates gathered in Minsk for the Sixth Congress of Belarusians of the World. Fond of Ideas explains why business should be socially responsible.

New opportunities for environmental education await Belarusians. Among them, BEROC invites young Belarusians to participate in a student's school on the economy and economic research.

The state-run newspaper "Respublika" published a list of extremist publications and events that endanger the Belarusian state.

**Civil Society Events**

[Belarusian expatriates holding congress in Minsk](#). Some 300

delegates gathered in Minsk for [the Sixth Congress of Belarusians of the World](#) that held on July 23-24, in Minsk. Organised by the Batskaushchyna World Association of Belarusians, the event was attended by expatriates living in 20 countries. The Congress focused on the state of the Belarusian people amid globalisation. [Elena Makouskaya re-elected](#) head of the organisation.

[New concept paper on transportation](#). Belarusian Union of Transport (BUT) made the first practical steps towards the formation of the modern Belarusian legislation in the area of transportation. The BUT experts have prepared a concept paper on the development of an integrated mobility based on the harmonization of the legislation of Belarus and the European Union. This paper is the result of a cooperation between BUT and the Office for a Democratic Belarus (ODB) and, later on, with the Office of the European Expertise and Communications.

[34mag launches "Bicycle" project](#). An interactive map for cyclists for all of Belarus answers questions such as where it's possible to rent a bike, repair it, etc. The project aims to collect all bicycle related spots in one place and thus to make Belarus a truly bike-friendly country. "Bicycle" is an interactive map, so it provides the ability to add valuable points to all users.

[Infographic from AMPby](#). Alternative Youth Platform has developed an infographic called "Belarusian youth in numbers" dedicated to Youth Day, which is celebrated annually on 30 June. In particular, about 2,300,000 Belarusians are in the age range of 14-31; 2,829 long-distance trains are needed if all the young people want to leave Belarus; 11,455 isolation rooms in the detention facility Akrestino are needed to put all youth to prison.

[Let's Make it Better!](#) On 16 July representatives of 15 NGOs from Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk, and other cities came together in Minsk to discuss ideas they want to implement within the

“Let’s Make it Better!” campaign aimed to increase the role and impact of social activities in Belarus. The campaign’s initiator is the Executive Bureau of the Assembly of NGOs. The majority of the local campaigns of the Let’s “Make it Better!” campaign are to be held in August-September 2013.

[Belarusian poems in trolleybuses](#). Belarusian poems have been placed in 90 trolleys in Mogilev. The project will last until the end of the year, while Mogilev has the status of the cultural capital of Belarus and the CIS. The organisers managed to implement the project which was one of the winners of [the project fair](#), held by the campaign “Budzma!” and Mogilev city executive committee.

#### Education, seminars

[“Educational Breakfast” launched a series of business breakfasts](#). On 16 July Fond of Ideas held its first business breakfast within a series «Food for ideas». The general theme of the breakfasts is the development of the culture of internal and external corporate responsibility among Belarusian business circles. The first business breakfasts covered the issues of training a company’s own employees. Participants of the business breakfasts were managers and top managers of large Belarusian companies.

[BEROC Student School](#). Belarusian Economic Research and Education Center (BEROC) in co-operation with the British Embassy in Belarus calls for students to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Student School on a modern economy and economic research. The School will be held in Minsk on Saturdays, from 14 September 14 to 21 December 2013. The working language is English; participation is free.

[Roundtable on certification in non-formal education](#). [BEL.BIZ](#) held a roundtable “Non-formal education: certificates and certification,” which covered the issues of certification for non-formal trainings. The event was attended by experts of commercial and

non-profit service providers, including IPM, Marketing.by, MTBank, the Association for Life Long Education, etc. The round-table became the first event to precede the Global Entrepreneurship Week in Belarus, which will take place from 18-24 November.

[Roadmap for joining the Bologna Process](#). On 17 July in Minsk, a group of Belarusian experts and civil society activists called the Public Bologna Committee unveiled a roadmap for joining the Bologna Process, which is aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area. [The White Book](#) contains a series of amendments to Belarus' Education Code that would supposedly bring Belarus closer to the principles and values of the Bologna Process.

#### Green Events

[Trainings on eco-tourism strategic planning](#). On 23-31 July the USAID LEED Project implemented by UNDP conducts four training sessions to improve the skills of local partners. These partners are located in the seventeen tourism destinations within Hrodna and Brest regions (representatives of community-based organizations, local authorities, and business) and will focus on the development of ecotourism strategies.

[School of Environmental Activism](#). On 8-14 July the second stage of the School of Environmental Activism took place in the Astravets district of the Hrodna region. The participants learned about environmental initiatives in Belarus, listened to foreign experts, took part in workshops. The School is being implemented by the Green Alliance and designed to prepare people ready for action and self-organisation, able to fight for the preservation of wetlands and parks, and to promote environmentally friendly lifestyle.

[GEF Small Grants Programme](#) invites civil society organisations to take part in the project "Strengthening environmental governance through the development of non-governmental organisations." The project is aimed at promoting sustainable development and



improving the environment on the basis of more effective CSO participation in environmental governance. The maximum project amount shall not exceed 50,000 USD. Application deadline is 11 August 2013.

[Consultations with civil society](#). The UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Belarus, Miklos Haraszti, held a number of consultations with representatives of Belarusian civil society. The consultations took place on 11-14 July in Vilnius, as Haraszti did not get an invitation from official Minsk that would allow him to visit Belarus.

#### **Interaction between State and Civil Society**

[Official blacklist](#). Belarusian state-run newspaper "Respublika" published an updated "National list of extremist materials" which contains "Belarus Press Photo 2011" album and a number of CDs, books and publications, for example, the documentary "A Lesson in the Belarusian language" and the concert "Solidarity with Belarus" in Warsaw (2006).

[Cancelled sealing house in Uruchcha to be built](#). Minsk City Council reversed its previous decision that it made last year to cancel the construction of one of the houses on Shugaeva street in the Minsk district of Uruchcha. The initiative "European Perspective" is trying to look into the situation and help citizens to protect their rights. Meanwhile the locals [recorded a video appeal](#) to Lukashenka.

[Fine for getting foreign aid](#). On 12 June Tatjana Zialko, chairman of the initiative of Belarusian pensioners "Our Generation" was fined for getting foreign aid with the aim of "regime change". In March 2013, she was detained with about 1,500 euro while leaving the Slovak Embassy in Minsk.

[Iryna Halip vacated](#). On 19 July Minsk Partizan District Court has vacated the journalist's sentence for taking part in 19 December 2010 'mass riots' in Minsk. Iryna Halip, journalist of Novaya Gazeta, ex-presidential candidate Andrei Sannikau's

wife, had lived under constant police supervision since 3 May 2011.

*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.*