

# Congress of Belarusian Studies, Wiki-Manual, Belaruspolicy.com, KEF Belarus Civil Society Digest

Belarus Research Council has presented the Belarus Think Tank Rating. New online research database Belaruspolicy.com launched.

The 10<sup>th</sup> project on the Belarusian crowdfunding platform Talakosht has completed successfully – a book on facilitating activity in Wikipedia *Wiki-manual. Manage knowledge!* has collected 4.3 million rubles.

The Belarusian authorities want to know the opinion of the business. Thus Information and Analytical Center at the Presidential Administration is conducting an online survey of entrepreneurs.

## Conferences

[Belarus Research Council \(BRC\) presents first-ever Belarus Think Tank Rating results](#). The top three includes the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS), the Research Center IPM and the analytical community *Nashe Mnenie*. The [results](#) were announced on 1 October in Kaunas, at the sixth BRC meeting that also introduced new think tanks' online resources – [thinktanks.by](#), [belaruspolicy.com](#), [imhoclub.by](#). The rating was initiated by Pact to motivate Belarusian research centres to improve the quality of their work and increase public awareness of the nation's research sector capacity and output.

[\*\*Fifth International Congress of Belarusian Studies kicks off in Kaunas\*\*](#). More than 450 scientists involved in studying Belarus people attend the biggest academic and expert event of the year. The Congress provides a platform for polemics on the entire spectrum of social and political sciences and in the humanities. The [event](#) takes place in the Vytautas Magnus University on 2-4 October in Kaunas. The Congress is traditionally conducted by the Institute for Political Studies *Political Sphere*.

[\*\*Leadership in Local Communities calls for fellows\*\*](#). About 30 community activists will be selected to take part in the long-term leadership course on mobilizing citizens for addressing community issues and needs. This is the 8th Leadership Fellows Program implemented by Pact for Belarusian civil society activists; for two recent years it is organised jointly with the Office for European Expertise and Communications (OEEC). The deadline for applications is 12 October.

[\*\*Registration for KEF opened\*\*](#). On 3-4 November Kastryčnický Ekanamičny Forum, KEF titled as *Economy of Belarus: At a Tipping Point* will take place in Minsk. The [registration and subscription for KEF updates](#) are available. The overall objective of KEF-2105 is contribute to building consensus and trust towards a structural reform agenda, bringing the professionals together for an open discussion of the reform plans of the government of Belarus in the context of global trends and local challenges.

[\*\*International Conference Deinstitutionalization: Global Experience and Way for Belarus\*\*](#) was held in Minsk. The conference brought together leading experts from different countries. Deinstitutionalization approach is supported by Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and aimed at changing the forms of social support of the disabled. The

initiative includes the promotion of qualitative research of the situation in Belarus, educational thematic seminars and pilot transition to independent living.

## Education

[Sixth Golden Age University \(GAU\) kicks off in Grodno.](#) On October 1, GAU conducted an opening ceremony of its 6th academic year. The program offers persons aged 55 to 85 a skills-, values-, and action-based civic education curriculum, and engages in advocacy and policy work towards better conditions for elderly population of Belarus to contribute to the country's development as full-fledged citizens.

[Press Club Belarus kicked off a new season of meetings with international media specialists](#) by holding an open meeting in Minsk with Sam Woodhouse, a managing editor of BBC political programmes and BBC Election Night editor, on 25 October. Mr. Woodhouse talked about British standards of covering elections.

[Belarusian Collegium calls for 2015-2016 academic year.](#) The Belarusian Collegium (BC) provides additional education on contemporary history, philosophy/ literature, the European Union and journalism. Senior students and persons with higher education are invited to participate. BC is an initiative of a number of independent Belarusian institutions and private individuals; it started its activities since 1998. Education in BC is for free.

[First Belarusian University joins Magna Charta Universitatum.](#) In November 2014, ODB Brussels in cooperation with the National Institute for Higher Education organized a [seminar](#) on the opportunities of accession and cooperation with Magna Charta Universitatum Observatory. As a result, on 17-18 September in Bologna, International University *MITSO* has become the first institution of higher education in Belarus that has signed the Magna Charta of the European Universities.

# Civil society initiatives

[10th success at Talakosht](#). One more project on the Belarusian crowdfunding platform Talakosht has completed successfully – a book on facilitating activity in Wikipedia *Wiki-manual. Manage knowledge!* has collected 4.3 million rubles (about \$240). Developed by the youth CSO *Falanster* Wiki-manual is the 10th successful project that raised funds through the platform Talakosht, launched last year.

[Entrepreneurs Forum announced a program of reforms](#). On 28 September the Forum of entrepreneurs was held in Minsk and attended by about 200 delegates, representatives of the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Economy. Organized by the Perspective NGO, the Forum presented a new program of reforms in the regulation of the work of small businesses.

[People's voting for the projects participating in the 6th competition of social projects Social Weekend launched](#) on 24 September. Internet users should choose the best 20 ideas out of more than 150. The organizers and the jury will select another 20 projects. The finalists will receive more than 350 million rubles (about \$20,000) for the implementation of their projects.

## Interaction between state and civil society

[President's Decree on signing UN Disability Rights Convention](#). The Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [welcomes the Decree](#) and believes that the signing of the Convention by Belarus may have unprecedented consequences for the progressivity of the Belarusian society. For several years the Office conducted a campaign calling on the authorities to sign the Convention.

[General plan of Minsk is under discussion](#). Minsk city

executive committee informs about holding a public discussion of urban project – the General plan of Minsk. All interested are invited to a public discussion, which takes place from 12 October to 5 November.

**Government wants to know the opinion of entrepreneurs.**

Information and Analytical Center at the Presidential Administration is conducting a survey of entrepreneurs concerning the decree №666 "On introduction of the state sanitary-hygienic examination on imported goods", which has drawn criticism of independent experts. The survey is anonymous and held in the online format.

*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.*