

# UN Train, Living Library, Anti-Corruption Portal – Belarus Civil Society Digest

An NGO in Belarus launches a website to help the citizens to analyse information on public procurement and identify possible corruption schemes. 700 projects submitted for contest of local initiatives implemented by EU/UNDP.

Living Library celebrates one year of existence. During this time, the team of "librarians" visited different Belarusian cities and gathered 200 people at a time. The UN in Belarus travelled around Belarus by a special train UN70 Belarus Express. Green Network invited Minskians to exchange wastepaper for seedlings.

## Civil Society Activities

[Website will look for corruption](#). SYMPA launches a website Opentenders.by, which will help the citizens to analyse information on public procurement and identify possible corruption schemes. The platform collects information on public procurement on all public sources. It allows to use filters to search what company wins in a tender, what tenders are carried out by a specific contractor and so on. After the introduction of more complex algorithms it will be possible to detect the specific corruption schemes.

[Action PahoniaPobach starts in social networks](#). Civil activists want to support the cadets of Yastrabelsk College who photographed in Pahonia T-Shirts. The [cadets have been expelled from college](#), unofficial sources report. A published photograph became viral on social networks and appeared on the

media – people post their own photos with the Pahonia symbol and describe their attitude to it. Pahonia is a Belarusian historical coat of arms; in 1995, Alexander Lukashenka scrapped the Pahonia's status as the official coat of arms and replaced it with a modified Soviet emblem.

[Living Library celebrates one year of existence](#). During this time, the team of "librarians" visited different Belarusian cities and gathered 200 people at a time. The idea, which comes from Denmark, is simple – to bring people in the same space where "books" (people that represent some stereotypes) tell their stories to "readers" who want to get rid of stereotypes. The "books" include representatives of different religions, nationalities, professions, LGBT community, etc.

[700 projects submitted for contest of local initiatives](#). Belarus is currently implementing the UNDP/EU joint project Support to Local Development through 2017 aimed at developing a strategy for regional development and involving the public in the process. The project financing is estimated at €5 million from the EU budget. The recent contest of local initiatives received applications from more than 700 organisations, executive committees, and residents.

**Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) is to take place in Belarus on 16-22 November.** Topic of 2015 is *Unleashing Opportunities In Times of Change*. All GEW activities and events are aimed at enabling people to investigate their innovative potential, and to turn ideas into reality. Since 2011 Belarus has become one of 137 countries participating in the largest entrepreneurial initiative around the world. GEW activities in Belarus are coordinated by Bel.Biz company and attended by more than 2,000 people.

# Education

[Online course on public administration](#). School of Young Managers in Public Administration (SYMPA) together with the Department of Social and Political Sciences, EHU, announces a call for participants for online course *Public Administration and Public Policy: Current Practise and Transformation*. Classes are held in the system of distance learning Moodle. Course duration is 12 weeks. Deadline for applications is 9 November.

[Flying University continues open lectures in November](#). Weekly, on Wednesdays, Flying University organises meetings with Belarusian intellectuals, scientists, and cultural figures to reflect on a variety of humanitarian, social and cultural issues. Among the speakers are Uladzimir Matskevich, Ales Smalenchuk, Ihar Babkou, Tatiana Vadalazhskaya, Ales Razanau, Vyachaslav Babrovich, etc.

[Platform Talaka.by announces a call for Project Consultant course](#). The program is open for participants who want to improve their skills in project management and help others to effectively plan projects. Project Consultant is a unique course, developed by Talaka.by team. It is based on the experience of 190 projects posted on the platform, 40 of which have been successfully implemented. Education is free. Applications are accepted until 16 November.

[Student Week](#). On 9-17 November Minsk will host the festival *Student Week* dedicated to the International Day of Solidarity of Students. The festival is held in Belarus for the second time, and includes discussions, seminars, city game, movie night, concert, etc. Among the organisers are several youth CSOs – Studentskaya Rada/Student Council, ZBS/Association of Belarusian Students, Brotherhood of Organisers of Student Self-Government (BOSS), etc.

# Other Developments

[70 Express Model United Nations](#). From 23-30 October on the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations, the UN in Belarus travelled around Belarus by a special train [UN70 Belarus Express](#). The train brought more than 250 events to promote Sustainable Development Goals. The events were attended by representatives of the government, regional authorities, the private sector, more than 100 civil organisations, more than 40 embassies, religious leaders of all faiths, and representatives of vulnerable groups of the society. The initiative became possible due to partnership of the Belarus' MFA and the UN system in Belarus.□

[Green Network invited Minskians to exchange wastepaper for seedlings](#). In October the World Paper Free Day, the residents of Minsk in exchange for waste paper could get saplings of maple, oak, nuts, and learn about different ways of economical use of paper. On this day people all over the world came together to share experiences of reducing wasteful consumption of paper and carry out actions in support.

[Centre for Urban Initiatives announces the launch of a School of Urban Initiatives Greenhouse](#). Greenhouse is a series of meetings and lectures in Mogilev that are to help citizens become more initiative and active participants to improve life in the city. During the course, fellows will develop their projects to improve urban life; the most interesting of them will be supported.

*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.*