

# Mens Club, Strikes, Illegal Polls – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Strikes of entrepreneurs in Belarus dominated the public opinion over the last days. How the authorities reacted to the protests? Budzma's ADNAK attracted a large crowd with its innovative award ceremony.

The Council of Europe together with Belarusian authorities organised a round table on death penalty. Treci Sektor, a Belarusian NGO, decided to do something for Belarusian men and launched the Mens Club as a platform for public discussion.

## Interaction between State and Civil Society

[Entrepreneurs strike in Belarus](#). About 70% of entrepreneurs in markets and shopping centres of Belarus did not come to work in Minsk and regions in the day of the strike on 27 June informed the analytical centre of the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs held a one-day strike against the introduction of the technical regulations of the Customs Union "On the safety of products of light industry." The entrepreneurs' protest got wide coverage in both [independent](#) and [state media](#). On the same day one of the strike organisers, the leader of "Perspektiva" NGO [Anatoly Shumchanka](#) was detained and sentenced for 5 days of administrative arrest.

[Liability for illegal polls affirmed in law](#). The House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus adopted the amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences and Procedural Code of Administrative Offences. Among others, the new law provides liability for illegally conducting polls

([Article 9.28](#)). Lawyer Yuri Chausov believes that the law may enter into force as early as this summer.

[Against the death penalty in Belarus](#). On 21 June the House of Charity in Minsk hosted a roundtable "Religion and the death penalty". Most participants, including the Metropolitan Filaret, spoke out against retaining the death penalty in Belarus. The event was organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Belarusian authorities. The round table was attended by representatives of the churches, Belarusian officials, delegates of the Council of Europe, diplomats and human rights activists.

[Eco Forum cancelled](#). Scheduled on 28-30 in Polotsk, Eco Forum of CSOs was cancelled in two days before the opening and postponed till the fall. The reason is that authorities denied providing a venue for the event, as well as the hotel referred to technical problems. About 100 participants among them representatives of Belarusian environmental CSOs, foreign experts and the media were registered to participate in the Forum.

[Public Council without public organisations](#). 21 people have become members of the recently established Public Council under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, whose first meeting takes place on 28 June. All members are representatives of arts, culture, religion, law, industry, sports, the media, and parliamentarians. The Council, however, does not include any representative of CSOs.

[Attorney returned her license](#). Minsk attorney Tamara Garayeva, whose license was revoked after she refused to defend Irina Khalip, reportedly was reinstated as a licensed advocate. According to the Belarus Ministry of Justice, she followed the procedure and applied for reinstatement of her license after 3 years of its revocation. According to the Ministry representative, none of the other eight disbarred lawyers applied for a reinstatement of their license, "because they

found better-paying jobs”.

[State-run radio provides space for CSO leader](#). On 29 June the First National Channel of Belarusian Radio holds an online conference with the Chairman of the Presidium of the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurship, Vladimir Karyagin. The topic of the online event is "Business development in Belarus."

## **Social Initiatives**

[Social Weekend competition](#). On June 20, online charity platform "MaeSens" launched a competition for social projects Social Weekend. The organizers invite others to take part in the competition of projects which propose a solution to social problems. Participants will have an opportunity to get an expert opinion from a competent jury, find an investor for the project, as well as to win grants in the amount of \$ 1,000, \$ 700 and \$ 500 dollars and create their own fundraising page on the platform MaeSens.by.

[34mag launches "Bicycle" project](#). An interactive map for cyclists that covers all of Belarus and answers where it is possible to rent a bike, repair it, etc. The project aims to collect all bicycle 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.

[AIESEC established in Belarus](#). The Committee of the largest student organization in the world after several attempts has finally been registered in Minsk. AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales) has 82,000 members from 131 countries. The main activity is organization of training and youth exchanges abroad, organized by the students themselves.

[Children's Help Line celebrates its 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary](#). On July 7,

Nationwide Children's Help Line 8-801-100-1611 celebrates two years of its activity. For 2 years the line operators have received more than a thousand calls totaling 8,592 minutes. International NGO "Ponimanie" with the support of the Minsk City Executive Committee invites to join the celebration which will be held at the Gorki Children's Park in Minsk.

[AD.NAK! ceremony in Minsk](#). On 27 June the award ceremony of the IV Festival of Belarusian-language advertising took place in Minsk. The event was organised by the campaign "Budzma!" together with online portal Marketing.by and other promotional companies. Among the goals of the Festival is to collect the best marketing and advertising products and pay attention of the professional community to Belarusian language. This year, 314 works by 105 participants were submitted to participate in the Festival's contest.

[Men Club in Grodno](#). The first public discussion and educational club for middle-aged men (30-45 years) launched in Grodno. Members of the Club will have an opportunity to analyze their own life experience, discover their capacity, to expand the circle of friends, and to obtain useful life skills. Club meetings will be held once a week on Saturdays.

[Sport event for wheelchair users](#). On 22 June in Minsk, Republican Association of Wheelchair Users conducted a sport event in memory of the legendary Belarusian wheelchair user Nikolai Kolbasko. The agenda included sports, workshops, exhibitions, and individual program for children. The event was aimed to attract wheelchair users to an active lifestyle and physical education, as well as exchange of experience in the integration and rehabilitation of wheelchairs.

[The Night of Culture with Belarusians](#). On 5-6 July one of the most important events in Vilnius "The Night of Culture" will be held for the seventh time. This year Belarusian artists and CSOs will take an active part in the open-air event and present seven Belarusian projects in the Old Town of Vilnius.

Entrance to all events is free. Coordination of Belarusian projects is implemented by the youth association "StudAlliance".

*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.*