

# The Mova Cup, Embroidery Day, Hotline Green Phone – Belarus Civil Society Digest

Mova Cup took promoted the use of the Belarusian language trying oneself in various sports. The Embroidery Day will celebrate the Belarusian national dress.

All-Belarusian Congress for Independence scheduled for December. The European Humanities University welcomes new students.

A special hotline Green Phone received over 120 complains from Belarusian citizens regarding the urban environment.

## **Interaction between the state and civil society**

Belarus temporarily restricts ways of crossing the border with Lithuania to cars only, citing lack of capacity. This means no more pedestrian crossing. This decision sums up government-and citizens relations: government does not adapt to citizens demand, it makes citizens adapt to its capacity.

Parliament responds the e-appeals of the citizens. In 2015 Belarus will develop the law 'On the treatment of animals'; criminal responsibility for cruelty to animals may be introduced already in the next session of Parliament. Such a response is received by the activists of a public campaign 'NO cruelty to animals' on their electronic appeals to the Parliament on the issue of improving the legislation.

Radio Racyja journalist denied accreditation seven times. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the seventh time denied accreditation to Viktor Parfionenka, journalist of the Radio Racyja. For the last semester, several journalists have been held accountable for contributing to Belsat and Radio Racyja;

penalties include warnings and pretty huge fines.

## **Cultural events**

**Mova Cup**. On 28 September Minsk hosted the National Sports Festival Mova Cup/Language Cup. Everyone was invited to try oneself at various sports, wherein communicate in Belarusian. Front persons of the Festival were stars of Belarusian sports, including the famous swimmer Alexandra Herasimenya.

**Embroidery Day**. On 5 October for the first time the Embroidery Day will be held in Minsk. The festival is intended to show that the Belarusian national dress is stylish and noticeable. At the event, visitors will be able to buy clothes and other items with some features of traditional Belarusian culture, play Belarusian games, listen to the music bands, etc.□

**The second European Intercultural Festival sums up the results**. This year the 2nd European Intercultural Festival in September was held under a slogan 'Getting to know each other better'. During 10 days of exhibitions, movie and photo shows, discussions and lectures, master-classes and presentations in Minsk, Grodno, Mogilev and Brest hundreds of participants united by the Festival had a chance to learn more about the culture of Belarus, Germany, Georgia, France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and other countries.

## **Green events**

**Hotline Green Phone received more than 120 complaints on the urban environment**. On 16-20 September a special hotline *Green Phone* worked as part of the international campaign Mobility Week. According to the results, the Belarusian city residents call the following top 3 most actual urban environmental problems: parking in green areas and playgrounds (about 90% of all calls), the lack of green areas in the courtyards and the absence of a barrier-free environment.□

**Green Forum was held in Grodno on 27 September**. CSOs,

representatives of government agencies and environmental activists were invited. The agenda included discussions on the most pressing environmental issues and presentations of environmental events and campaigns implemented in the Grodno region. The Forum was planned to result in making a map of regional environmental issues as well as meeting organisations and activists for their further cooperation. The organiser was Green Alliance network.

## **Education**

[The annual United Students of Belarus \(USB\) Rally](#) will take place in Lithuania on 1-5 October 2014. Organised by the Eastern Europe Studies Centre, the USB Rally is an opportunity to meet Belarusian youth studying around the world, as well as to join the informal international network of Belarusians. The 8th USB Rally is devoted to the development of multicultural dialogue in attempt to establish a reciprocal conversation with other cultures, develop an open and active society through development of Belarusian identity.

[School of trainer skills](#). In October-November 2014, training Centre of the portal Kariera.by together with partner organisations in Minsk (Business Club IMAGURU), Brest (Brest Regional Development Fund) and Grodno (VIT NGO) opens groups on basic education in 'School of trainer skills'. The aim of the course is to prepare participants for independent work as trainers using the principles, content and methods of non-formal education.

[Pilot Art Leader School will start in October in Minsk](#). A unique international educational project of the Centre for Visual and Performing Arts *ART CORPORATION* aims to attract young leaders to shaping the cultural space of the country, as well as develop their skills for the implementation of art projects at a high international level. Representatives of all art professions under the age of 35 years with their own project ideas in the field of theatre or cinema are invited to

participate.

[\*\*EHU welcomes nearly 400 new students.\*\*](#) Three hundred ninety-two new students will begin their studies at European Humanities University (EHU) this fall. On Tuesday, 30 September an official ceremony opening Academic Year 2014-15 will be held on campus in Vilnius. More than 95% of the new students are from Belarus, with the rest hailing from countries that include Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan.

## **Competitions**

[\*\*Journalistic competition 'Choose Life'.\*\*](#) Belarusian Association of Journalists, Belarusian Helsinki Committee and Penal Reform International announce a call for journalistic materials on the subject of the death penalty. Materials are accepted until 30 September.

[\*\*Contest 'People's journalist – 2014'.\*\*](#) Project *People's journalist* announces a new competition of materials from the citizens of Belarus. The aim of the competition is to include people in the joint activities, so they can see that together can achieve results and solve specific problems. Among the criteria for the best materials are topics that will not be released in the official media, Belarusian language as the main, etc. Materials are accepted until 15 October.

## **Other**

[\*\*All-Belarusian Congress for Independence to be held in December.\*\*](#) Academician Radzim Garetsky, Professor Mikola Savitsky, writer Uladzimir Arlou, director Uladzimir Kolas and prof. Mikhail Pastukhou joined the organising committee headed by Alena Anisim, deputy chairperson of the Belarusian Language Society. According to the organisers, the ground for the congress is related to an agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union that carries a direct threat to the independence of Belarus.

[Alternative CSO report at OSCE HDIM side event.](#) On 26 September representatives of the Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs together with the Legal Transformation Centre held a side event in the frames of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2014 in Warsaw. The side event focused on the presentation of the alternative report on the freedom of association and legal status of CSOs in Belarus, which was prepared by Belarusian CSOs in the frames of the second UN Universal Periodic Review cycle.

*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.*