

Belarus in Focus winners, cycling festival, Europe Week in Minsk – Belarus civil society digest

Belarus in Focus 2016 journalistic contest awards winners. Viva Rovar! cycling carnival takes place in Minsk. BAJ announces Free Word winners on Press Freedom Day.

Europe Week is held in Minsk. First episode of the City urban activism reality show is released. School of Managers will train new managers for CSOs. People detained and convicted during the May Day protests across Belarus.

Integration Forum announced in Viciebsk under the 5th Accessibility Week. This and more in the new edition of Belarus civil society digest.

Journalism and media

[Awards ceremony of the winners of Belarus in Focus 2016 held on 12 May](#). This is an international [competition](#) for journalists writing about Belarus in international media. This year the contest took place for the sixth time and organised by the Belarus in Focus Information Office in partnership with Press Club Belarus and the International Visegrad Fund.

[Free Word winners announced on Press Freedom Day](#). On 3 May, Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) traditionally announced the winners of the BAJ professional contest for journalists *Volnaje Slova* (Free Word – in English). On the same day, the exhibition of the winners of the [World Press Photo](#) was launched at the gallery of CECH.

[Belarus Internet Governance Forum](#) will take place on 17 May in Minsk. It is a unique platform for multistakeholder dialogue aiming at finding the best ideas for the progression of Internet in Belarus. The forum attracts representatives from government, business, civil society, network service providers, etc. One of the forum's organisers is Human Constanta CSO.

[Europe Week in Minsk](#). The *Dzieja* initiative, *Students For Liberty Belarus* and *Belarusian Students Association* organise a series of events to mark the anniversary of the proclamation of the Schuman Declaration (9 May 1950), which is considered the beginning of European integration. The organisers promise an intense program aimed at increasing the values of a united Europe in Belarus.

Regional and grassroots activism

[The online platform Zvarot.by launches the 3rd Advocacy School](#). The School aims to train civic activists to independently plan and conduct advocacy campaigns at the local and national level using proper tools and methods. The organisers pay a particular attention to the practical focus on human rights activities. Deadline for applications is 17 May.

[School of Managers](#). The Association for Life Long Education (ALLE) invites to the School of Managers educational course. The School aims to improve the competencies of 20 managers of regional CSOs in developing and promoting civil and non-formal education programmes, using modern communication and advocacy channels. Deadline for applications is 14 May.

[The first episode of the City show released](#). The City is a [project](#) that teaches the activists to improve the cities and

shoots all the process as popular series. During 8 episodes, 20 participants from 13 Belarusian cities fight for the prize fund and the Grand Prix of a study tour to Brazil. The participants meet various challenges and implement their urban projects. New episodes are scheduled every Thursday.

[Pool of Youth Work educational programme](#). Organised by [Fialta](#) Youth Centre, the programme provides an opportunity for young activists to learn professionally conducting trainings, workshops, international exchanges and coaching youth initiatives. The programme is based on the best international practices of non-formal education. The course will be held from 6 May to 30 July in Minsk.

Rights of the people with special needs

[Integration Forum in Viciebsk](#). On 17-18 May, Viciebsk will host the Republican Integration Forum *Accessible Job and Employment for People with Disabilities*. The forum is organised by CSOs, including the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, under the [Fifth Accessibility Week](#).

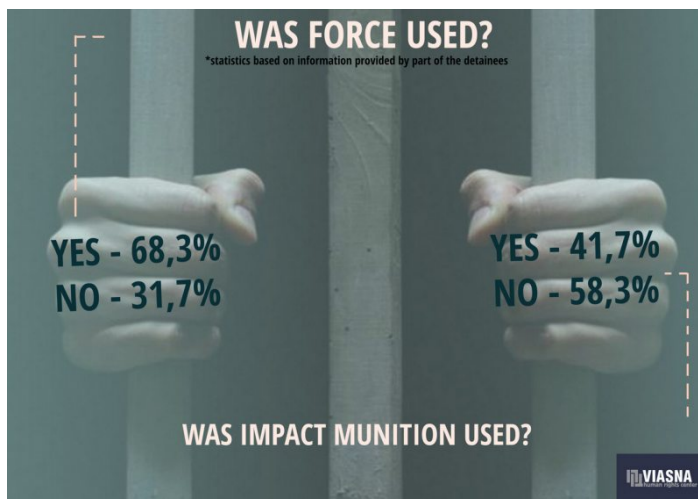
[Belarusian Children's Hospice NGO calls for local initiatives projects](#). The call aims to support the rights and needs of children with serious illnesses and disabilities, as well as their families. Two initiatives will be selected with a maximum budget with EUR 5K per initiative. Deadline is 25 May.

Mass protests

People detained and convicted in May Day protests across Belarus.

At least 15 people were detained by the police before and after May 1's protests held across Belarus, including journalists and opposition leaders Mikalaj Statkievič

and Paviel Sieviaryniec. The demonstration in Minsk was banned by the city authorities but attended by several hundred people.



Analytical review of detentions in Minsk in March 2017

(infographics). In March-April, the Human Rights Centre *Viasna* processed 130 questionnaires from individuals whose rights were violated for exercising freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. In particular, 80 detainees claimed the use of physical force by police officers, 68 – special munitions without a cause on the part of a detainee.

Other

47 contracts were signed with CSOs for the first three months of 2017 to provide services under the state social contracting. Over 1,000 people received the social services from CSOs supported from the state budget. State social contracting is an innovative form of interaction between local authorities and CSOs, developing in Belarus since 2014.

Imena opens a unique art exhibition about Belarusians. From May 11, the Minsk space *Korpus* hosts an exhibition that presents 10 installations made by Belarusian artists together with the characters of the online magazine *Imena*. It writes about Belarusians and social projects that need help. During the year, *Imena* launched 22 social projects and collected

\$150K to support them and its own activity.

Cycling carnival Viva Rovar! takes place in Minsk on 13 May: thousands of bicyclists will drive along the Pieramožcaŭ Avenue, and then enjoy a festival in Victory Park. On 12 May, for the first time Minsk hosts an International [conference](#) on the development of cycling in cities. Coordinators of the event are the Cycling Club Minsk and the Minsk Cycling Society.

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.