

Youth Internet TV, Vitali Silicki, Lukashenka on Political Prisoners – Belarus Civil Society Digest

The most notable civil society events in Belarus include Avangard launching the first Youth Internet TV in Belarus. Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Belarus Stefan Eriksson became honorary chairman of the AD.NAK! jury. Tell the Truth and For Freedom joined the National Platform of EaP CS Forum. NGO Assembly are preparing for the VII Congress. A new think tank, the Belarusian Analytical Centre, was presented in Warsaw.

As far as political developments are concerned, Aleksandr Lukashenka warned against granting pardon to convicts during the coming amnesty campaign on politically motivated grounds. US President Obama extended sanctions against Belarusian officials for another year.

Vital Silicki memorial evening held in Minsk. Minsk's Ÿ Gallery hosted a memorial evening for [the first BISS Director Vital Silicki](#) on the day of the obit, June 11. Vital's friends and colleagues shared their memories of the globally renowned political researcher in a very warm atmosphere. The Silicki's intellectual heritage and the memorial event had significant media coverage.

Minsk youth NGO "Avangard" has launched the first youth Internet TV in Belarus. The creative team of [A-TV.by](#) shoots and posts on the website video blogs, reports, coverage of "Avangard" events, as well as live broadcasting of the most interesting events in Minsk.

New think tank. On June 14, [Belarusian Analytical Centre](#) was presented in Warsaw. The initiators of a new think tank are sociologist Andrei Vardamatski, political scientist Pavel Usov, economist Leonid Zlotnikov. The Center presented its report on the geopolitical orientations of the Belarusians. The Centre plans to become self-sustaining through the sale of its products.

NGO "Ponimanie" Endowment. The Endowment of the International [NGO "Ponimanie"](#) made up \$17,000 due to donations of foreign partners. The NGO "Ponimanie"/"Understanding" sees its mission as professional and voluntary participation in the establishment of the humane world, suitable for all children to happily live in.

New members joined the National Platform. The civil campaign ["Tell the Truth" and the movement "For Freedom"](#) made the decision to sign a memorandum on cooperation under the National Platform of EaP Civil Society Forum, as well as to join the National Platform. The new members are going to coordinate their activities with other CSOs more closely.

Oleg Gulak elected again. On June 8, in Minsk, [the Belarusian Helsinki Committee](#) conducted a report-election meeting. Oleg Gulak was again elected the BHC Head.

Stefan Eriksson became the honorary chairman of the jury AD.NAK! [Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Belarus Stefan Eriksson](#) agreed to be jury head of the nomination "Social significant projects in the arts and culture" of the Third Festival of Belarusian-language advertising and communications AD.NAK! The jury also includes well-known experts in the field of advertising and communications, in particular, Andrei Ezerin, communication agency Ezerin'com; Zhanna Grinuk, Centre SATIO; Anna Chistoserdova, Art Gallery "Ź"; Nina Shidlovskaya, cultural campaign "Budzma Belarusians!"; Marina Zolotova, webportal TUT.by, etc.

EHU celebrated 20th anniversary. [The European Humanities University in Vilnius](#) conducted an activities-filled International Week dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the founding of the University. In particular, EHU gathered more than 200 current and former faculty, alumni, students, staff, supporters, and friends of EHU gathered at historic Vilnius Town Hall for celebration.

Training on video journalism. [Online magazine "New Europe"](#) announces a set for the training on video journalism, which will be conducted by qualified Belarusian and foreign experts. The main focus of the training is the preparation of TV reports. The organizers invite to participation representatives of independent media, online media, working with video content.

The Congress of the Assembly. On June 16-17, VII Congress of the Assembly of pro-democratic NGOs will take place in Minsk. The organizers plan to gather the Assembly members to discuss the prospects of the development of [the largest umbrella network](#) which includes of about 300 CSOs.

International

Lukashenka: There should be no amnesty on politically motivated grounds. On June 12, [Alyaksandr Lukashenka](#) warned against granting a pardon to convicts during the coming amnesty campaign on politically motivated grounds. Lukashenka described amnesty campaigns as real manifestations of humanity on the part of the state toward people who have erred. According to the interior ministry's press office, some 2,800 people may be freed from prison under the amnesty law this summer, while more than 7,000 more prisoners are to have their terms shortened by one year.

ILO to discuss situation in Belarus at November meeting. Violations of trade union rights in Belarus will be discussed by the Governing Body of the International Labor Organization

(ILO) at its meeting in November, [Alyaksandr Yarashuk](#), chairman of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BCDTU), told on June 14.

EU delegation meets with opposition politicians. On June 12, [a delegation of the European Union's European External Action Service](#) (EEAS) met with a group of opposition politicians in Minsk. EEAS representatives were interested to study prospects for the development of what the EU calls the European dialogue on modernization and the political situation in the country ahead of September's parliamentary elections. The meeting was attended by former presidential candidate Vital Rymashewski; Syarhey Kalyakin, leader of the "Spravedlivy Mir" (Just World); Andrey Dzmitryyew, a coordinator of the "Tell the Truth!"; Belarusian Popular Front leader Alyaksey Yanukevich, etc.

Obama extends sanctions against Belarusian officials. On June 14, [U.S. President Barack Obama](#) extended the sanctions, which were imposed against Belarusian officials on June 16, 2006, for another year. This was reported in the White House.

Belarus ranks 109th in 2012 Global Peace Index. [Belarus ranked 109th](#) in the 2012 Global Peace Index (GPI), a measure of global peacefulness produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace. The GPI gauges ongoing domestic and international conflict, safety and security in society, and militarization in 158 countries by taking into account 23 separate indicators.

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.