

Anti-corruption party, ECLAB enrolment, White Legion released, Social Business Forum – Belarus civil society digest

SYMPA/BIPART invite to an anti-corruption party. ECLAB opens student enrolment for the 2017-2018 academic year. First Social Business Forum takes place in Belarus.

Civil Society Parallel Forum is held in Minsk ahead of the 26 annual OSCE PA session. Human rights defender becomes member of the government's penitentiary system monitoring commission.

New gender project helps Belarusian women tell their stories. All defendants in the White Legion case are released. Ministry of Economy agrees with Perspektyva's proposals.

This and more in the new edition of the Belarus civil society digest.

Education and research

[SYMPA/BIPART invites to an anti-corruption party](#). The thematic event is held on 10 July in Minsk. The agenda includes a presentation of the Transparent Public Procurement Rating and the place of Belarus in it; an open lecture on the monitoring public procurement in Hungary, and a study on electronic public procurement. The entrance to the event is free.

[ECLAB opens accepting students for 2017-2018 academic year](#). European College of Liberal Arts in Belarus (ECLAB) is an

informal educational institution. The college suggests the courses on public history, mass culture and media, contemporary art and theatre, etc. For three years of work, the college has over 200 graduates and held over 30 public events and exhibition projects.

Belarus In the Trap of Slow Growth: Get Out or Settle Down?

seminar will take place on 30 June in Minsk. Organised by the IPM Research Centre and the Ministry of Economy, the seminar will present the results of studies on the situation of vulnerable groups in the recession period, a new concept of regional development, IPM's macroeconomic forecast, etc. The seminar is held under the Kastychnicki Economic Forum, KEF.



Study on the assessment of services for people with intellectual/mental disabilities in local communities

was presented on 28 June in Minsk. The **study** was carried out by the Prospects for Mental Health (Lithuania) in cooperation with the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Belarus). The study analyses the existing community services and resources related to de-institutionalisation at the local level.

Minsk will host a conference on academic freedom in Belarus.

The conference will take place on 26 June and discuss the situation with violations of academic freedom in Belarus, such as the expulsion of from universities for civic activities, the imposition of the state ideology, etc. The organisers are

Human Rights Centre *Viasna*, Association of Belarusian Students (ZBS) and Libereco-Partnership for Human Right.

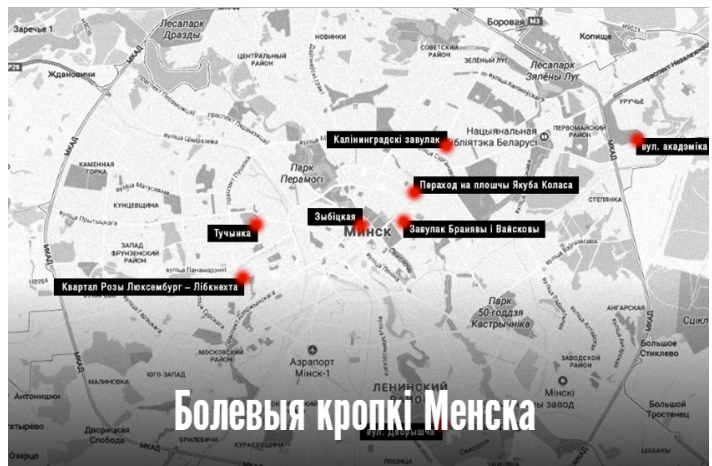
[Summer school Close Power](#) invites participants to Białystok to get acquainted with the system of the local government of Poland and Belarus. Organised by the *For Freedom* movement, the school includes meetings with leadership representatives, sessions about the mechanisms of decision-making at the local level, advocacy campaigns, etc.

Local and green activism

[City Show's Grand Finale](#). This week the City project has released the [last episode](#). In total, 8 video episodes tell how 20 activists from 13 Belarusian cities fight for the prize fund, meeting the urban challenges and implementing their ideas [in communities](#). The Grand Prix, a study trip to Brazil, went to the urban artist Bazinato who implements civic activism through art.

[V Forum of Environmental CSOs](#)

will take place on 21-23 July near Minsk. The key theme of the 2017 Forum is Public engagement. Representatives of eco-friendly organisations and initiatives are invited to participate. The Forum will raise such topics as partnership ethics, climate change, renewable energy, etc. The organisers are Green Network, EcoDom, Bahna CSO and others.



[Pain points of Minsk](#). [34mag.net](#) magazine has released a list of locations in Minsk that are under threat of destruction and need protection from urban activists. The list includes [Asmalouka](#) district and its active locals; [Baraŭliany](#), where

the authorities plan to cut down five hectares of forest and others.

[Susedzi 2017 bike marathon](#). The 7th International Amateur Bike Marathon *Susedzi 2017 / Neighbors* will be held on 15 July, at the Augustów Canal, Hrodna region. Anyone can participate in the bike marathon if he/she has a bicycle and a helmet. Gender, age, and cycling experience do not matter. The organiser is VelaHrodna local CSO.

Human rights

[Human rights defender enters the commission on the penitentiary system](#). This is a Chairperson of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee [Alieh Hulak](#). The Republican Public Monitoring [Commission](#) at the Ministry of Justice monitors compliance with the rights of convicts by institutions that carry out punishment and implement social projects aimed at the re-socialisation and adaptation of convicts.

[All defendants released in White Legion case](#). This week the remaining 14 people were released on recognisance in the so-called White Legion case; they have been charged with forming an illegal armed group, criminal art. 287. It was known about [31 people](#) who were detained on the eve of the 25 March Freedom Day protest rallies. In total, they spent behind bars 1,880 days.

[New gender visual project](#). A group of individuals has launched a visual project in Facebook allowing to Belarusian women to tell about themselves who they are, and not as they are expected to be; hashtag #такаякакесть375 (as I am). A series contains 19 stories of women, who wanted to share their looks, relationships with their breasts and bodies with the world.

Other

[Civil Society Parallel Forum in Minsk](#). On 4 July, ahead of the 26th annual session of the OSCE PA, civil society held the parallel forum in Minsk, for the first time in the recent 13 years. The forum focused on international mechanisms in the sphere of human rights in Post-Soviet countries, the human rights situation and problems of civil society. The forum's [resolution](#) is available.

[First Belarusian Social Business Forum](#). On 28 June, on the International Day of Social Business, Minsk hosted the First Belarusian Social Business Forum. Organised by a number of CSOs, the day was packed with events, including speeches from representatives of Belarusian social businesses, presentations from foreign guests, informal networking, and the Social Business Alley of over 20 Belarusian social companies.

[Ministry of Economy met CSO proposals](#). The officials agreed with a suggestion of the *Perspektiva* CSO that advocates the interests of small vendors. In particular, individual entrepreneurs will pay fees to the Social Protection Fund on a voluntary basis (now it's mandatory). The related draft of the presidential decree is being prepared.

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.