

Audit of Belarus-Ukraine Relations, Obstacles to Higher Education Reform – Digest of Belarusian Analytics

80% of Ukrainians consider Belarus the friendliest country: Belarus-Ukraine foreign policy audit event in Kiev airs on national TV in Belarus. BISS Foreign Policy Index: after the lifting of sanctions EU-Belarus relations have entered a new period.

Libereco analysis: no signs of liberalisation after 100 days since the EU abandoned its sanctions against Belarus. Belarusians become more indifferent to people with disabilities, according to fresh survey of the Disability Rights Office. BOSS presents analytical report on the situation with students' mandatory job placement in 2016. This and more in the new Digest of Belarusian Analytics.

Foreign policy

[Foreign Policy Audit: Ukraine-Belarus](#). On June 8, in Kiev, Institute of World Policy presented its research on the current relations between Ukraine and Belarus. The report shows that more than 80% of Ukrainians consider Belarus the friendliest country. The discussion was attended by Belarusian experts [Jaŭhien Prejherman](#), expert initiative Minsk Dialogue, Andrei Scriba, the Institute for Privatisation and Management, and diplomats.

[To Belarus-Ukraine Strategic Cooperation: Benefits and](#)

[Challenges](#) – Andrei Scriba presents his study that offers opportunities to encourage the development of Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation. In particular, Belarus and Ukraine interaction should be as inclusive; that is, it's necessary to engage other countries, first of all, post-Soviet states and EU countries in Eastern Europe.

[Belarus Foreign Policy Index #31 \(March–April 2016\)](#) – BISS presents its regular issue of Belarus Foreign Policy Index, which explores Belarus's foreign policy in the five key dimensions – Russia, EU, China, “developing world”, and Ukraine. In particular, in relations with the Russia, Belarus has found compromise solutions on a number of areas of cooperation. After the lifting of sanctions, EU relations have entered a new period.

[Belarus Between Elections: Lukashenka Limited](#) – Balázs Jarábik and Alena Kudzko believe that without a finessed approach in the West, Lukashenka, always a deft maneuverer, might not be able to continue to resist falling under the spell of Russia's influence. The EU's policy should not sacrifice democracy for the sake of security, but the former should be viewed as an endgame instead of an ultimatum defining the entire relationship.

Education

[Second Monitoring Report on Implementation of Belarus Roadmap for Higher Education Reform](#) – The report is drawn by the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee and the Ad Hoc Commission of the Belarusian National Platform of the EaP CSF. The report covers the period from January to June 2016. As before, the main obstacle to the Roadmap implementation is the absence of a clear regulatory and legal framework that would serve as a basis for the fulfilment of Belarus' obligations.

[Modernisation of Higher Education in Belarus: Social and](#)

[Humanities Sciences](#) – Centre for European Studies held a study on academic mobility, communication between teachers and students, creation of curricula and programmes. One of the findings of the study is that the standardisation of education seems to be brought to absurdity and does not ensure quality. Students are quite happy as the background of reducing demands allows getting a diploma easily.

Human rights

[Analysis: 100 Days of Belarusian Rule of Law](#) – June 3 marks 100 days since the EU abandoned its sanctions against Belarus, suggesting that a process of liberalisation in the authoritarian state merits such a decision. However, an analysis by human rights organisation *Libereco – Partnership for Human Rights* shows that the country is still far removed from rule of law and respect for human rights. In several respects the pressure on civil society has been heightened.

[Human Rights Situation in Belarus: May 2016](#) – Human Rights Centre *Viasna* released its monthly monitoring on human rights in the country. The issue notes that during the month, there were some negative trends indicating the deterioration of the human rights situation in comparison with the previous months, namely, due to the Critical Mass peaceful cycling event's crackdown and two participants facing criminal charges.

[Mandatory Job Placement of Young Professionals In 2016. Analytical Report](#) – The Brotherhood of Organisers of Student Self-government (BOSS) presents an analytical report on the results of the mandatory job placement's campaign of 2015/2016. The report summarises the facts of legislation violations and pressure on students. The report includes an analysis of the data on-line questionnaire of 141 graduates. Namely, 56% of the respondents are satisfied with the results of their assignment, while 31.9% answered negatively.

[Belarusians Become Indifferent to Persons with Disabilities](#) –

Over the past five years, a higher percentage of Belarusians has come to an opinion that people with disabilities should learn, live and work in special conditions, rather than to have equal opportunities with others. Namely, according to a fresh survey of the [Office for Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), now only 30.7% of Belarusians believe that the inclusive education is “rather helpful” (in 2011 – 46.1%).

Other

[Will the Opposition Gain Seats in the Belarusian Parliament, and Is That Still Relevant?](#)

– Grigory Ioffe notices that in a post-Soviet state still lacking a healthy democratic tradition, unbending external demands that Minsk make room in the parliament for the opposition could well backfire. Not recognising and properly taking into account actual realities risks Western policymakers once again losing Belarus.

[Tax Freedom Day Belarus 2016](#)

– Liberal club releases an annual study that shows how many days the nation is working to get rid of the tax burden of the state, and reminds citizens that they have to share part of their private property for the sake of society. The study's calculations show that the day of freedom from taxes in 2016 begins on May 15, ie Belarusians should work for the state nearly 136 days.

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.