

# Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century: 4th Conference and Annual Lecture in London

The 4th Annual Belarusian Studies in the 21st Century will take place on 29 March 2019 at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) in London, UK. The Ostrogorski Centre co-organizes the conference in cooperation with University College London and the Belarusian Francis Skaryna Library and Museum. To view a provisional programme for this year's conference, [please click here](#).

This year, the Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will be delivered by Dr [Anaïs Marin \(France\)](#), Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus. Dr Marin will speak about the Belarusian nationalism in the 2010s and the outcomes of the so-called 'Soft Belarusianisation'. Other speakers will include academics from distinguished European universities and practitioners from state and civil society organisations. The topics will include both historical and contemporary Belarus-related issues.

## Topics and speakers

The conference will feature a number of distinguished speakers from Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, France, Poland, and the United Kingdom. This year's speakers represent a range of well-reputed education institutions, including Charles University, Central European University, University of Glasgow, and University College London. Moreover, the conference will feature several speakers representing state organisations and civil society initiatives, in particular, Kacper Wanczyk from Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Paul Hansbury from the Minsk dialogue initiative.

The conference will cover both history and contemporary Belarus-related issues. James Robertson-Major from the University of Glasgow will speak about the memory of Chernobyl in post-Soviet Belarus. Alena Marková from Charles University will present her research about the national emancipation and post-soviet Belarusization of the 1990s. Paula Borowska from the University College London will discuss traditional forms of social capital in Belarus.

As for contemporary Belarus-related issues, the conference will focus on foreign policy and social-economic problems. Paul Hansbury from the Minsk Dialogue initiative will speak about the current events in the Belarusian foreign-policy. Hanna Danilovich from Middlesex University will cover multi-age discrimination in personnel management practices in Belarusian manufacturing companies. Kacper Wanczyk from Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will discuss the situation of the Belarusian “patrimonial” economy at the edge of chaos.

## 2019 Annual London Lecture

The Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies will be delivered at 6 pm on 29 March 2019 by [Anaïs Marin \(France\)](#), Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus. The topic of this year's lecture is *Belarusian nationalism in the 2010s, a case of anti-colonialism? Origins, features and outcomes of ongoing 'Soft Belarusianisation.'* Dr Marin will speak about the phenomenon of 'Soft Belarusianisation' and its potential outcomes. The abstract of Dr Marin's lecture is available below.



Dr Anaïs Marin. Source:  
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The past decade has seen the emergence of a new type of nationalism in Belarus, aka 'soft Belarusianisation'. This trend differs from earlier, mostly top-down (elite-led) episodes of nation-building – the Belarusisation of the 1920s, the nationalists' movement that followed perestroika, and the "Creole nationalism" incarnated by A. Lukashenka since the mid-1990s. Instead, Soft Belarusianisation appears as a bottom-up process stemming mostly from civil society. It would be wrong to consider it as a traditional revivalist or genuinely grassroots phenomenon, however.

Whereas signs of a timid national awakening appeared back in the early 2010s, two sets of factors contributed to shaping and accelerating soft Belarusianisation: exogenous factors, notably Russia's efforts at re-establishing its domination over the so-called "Russian World"; and domestic ones, mainly the Belarusian regime's benevolence towards soft Belarusianisation, the rally-around-the-flag potential of which Minsk is obviously seeking to instrumentalise.

Would Soft Belarusianisation, therefore, amount to an anti-colonialist process? Russian opinion-makers, who label it as "anti-Russian", certainly perceive it as such. Against this backdrop, the Annual Lecture will explore the possible outcomes of the current soft Belarusianisation: can it help to consolidate Belarus's sovereignty against Russian appetites, or, conversely, does it carry with it the threat of increased

Russian aggressiveness?

Dr Anaïs Marin is a political scientist specialized in international relations, Russian-Eurasian, and border studies. She holds her PhD from Sciences Po Paris, where she studied international public law and comparative politics with a focus on post-communist transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. As a Belarus expert, she has worked with several European think tanks, notably the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA, Helsinki, 2011-2014), the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW, Warsaw) and the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS, Paris) as a non-resident associate fellow (2017). Since November 2018 she also holds the *pro bono* mandate of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2012.

## Conference's Programme



Wooden Belarusian Church in London

Friday, 29 March 2019

- 10.00- 11. 30 Social Movements
- 11.45 – 13.15 National Identity
- 14.45 – 16.00 Foreign Policy
- 16.00 – 17.15 Economy and Society
- 17:15 – 18:00 Presentation of the new Issue of the

Journal of Belarusian Studies

- 18:00 – 19:15 Annual Lecture on Belarusian Studies by Dr Marin followed by Q&A

Saturday, 30 March 2019

- 11.00 – 13.00 Belarusian Literature Section and tour of the Skaryna Library and the Belarusian Church

All ticket proceeds will support the funding of the conference and lecture. This event is a non-profit. If you are unable to afford the price of the ticket or more information on the Annual London Lecture or the conference, feel free to email [belauk2018@gmail.com](mailto:belauk2018@gmail.com).

- A provisional conference's programme is available [here](#).
- The registration is available [here](#).