

Ukrainians Trust Lukashenka The Most, Luring in US Business – Belarus State TV Digest

Belarusian state TV showed the Belarusian leader directly blamed Americans for plotting the present military conflict in Ukraine. On another occasion, state TV journalists reported on the benefits of bringing more American business to Belarus.

Belarus is faring better than the USA or Russia – or so state-run media journalists report when covering the recent rankings of healthcare systems by Bloomberg. They explained that its accessibility and equality, despite the financial situation of Belarusian patients, make the healthcare system unique when compared to other countries.

This and more in Belarus State TV Digest.

Ukraine

Ukrainians trust Lukashenka the most – according to a survey carried out in August by the Ukrainian research centre “Rating”, Lukashenka is the most beloved of international leaders. Journalists from Belarus state TV noted that 62% of Ukrainian respondents showed a positive attitude towards Alexander Lukashenka. 54% of respondents favoured Barack Obama versus 51% arguing for Angela Merkel.

Americans are behind the Ukrainian crisis? – Lukashenka suggested in an interview to the Russian state-run Channel 1 that the US was responsible for the developments in Ukraine. The journalist noted that the recent activity of Lukashenka managed to improve the image of Belarus and its leader in the

international politics. The Belarusian leader charged Americans and some Ukrainian politicians with causing the Russian-Ukrainian turmoil. The only force interested in “pushing us in to this struggle” is “Uncle Sam”, he stated.

Invalid East-West division of the Ukrainian society.

Lukashenka also added that there is no “aggressive division in the Ukrainian nation between the West and East”. He noted that the Western part of both Belarus and Ukraine are in general more nationalistic and more-Western oriented. “(...) But it does not mean they want to live in Poland or in the West”, Lukashenka explained to the interviewer.

Domestic affairs

[A Youth Chamber in Belarusian parliament?](#) – During a recent youth forum, organised by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM), an idea to have a separate Youth Chamber was proposed. High profile politicians, such as [Lidzija Jermoshyna](#), attended the event. A journalist for the state TV channel commented that such youth chamber could be well be just “one more initiative for the new generation to articulate its ideas, and to be heard”. The leader of the youth association Union also pointed out the necessity of attracting more young people to state bodies and institutions.□

[World Bank delegation comes to Minsk: a "constructive visit"](#).

Alexander Lukashenka met with the World Bank’s vice-president, Laura Tuck. He raised the issue of roads in Belarus. “The World Bank understands that Belarus is a transit country and therefore the efficiency of economies of both the East and West depends on what the roads will be like here”, Lukashenka argued. Reporters noted that Laura Tuck praised the development of Belarus, but also mentioned the necessity of reforms. “We know how to listen and implement recommendations” – a journalist comments at the end of the report.

[Housing for every Belarusian?](#) A story on improving Minsk's

infrastructure and housing was another item to make the national news. The coverage displayed citizens of Minsk who were more than happy to comment on the opening of new schools and swimming pools. However, as the anchor noted, the facilities for the inhabitants are not being built at the same speed throughout the city.

[The Belarusian Supreme Court rules against Belsat TV](#). BTR covered a court ruling that banned the use of the name “Belsat” for a Warsaw-based Belarusian independent TV channel. According to the report, Belsat violated the copyright of a Belarusian businessman who owns a company that employs the name “Belsat Plius”. It also note that similar cases are found elsewhere in the world on a fairly regular basis.

[“Traditional and accessible healthcare system in Belarus”](#). Belteleradio Channel 1 covered Bloomberg's ranking of healthcare systems throughout the world, with Belarus being ranked 43, achieving a higher standing than both America and Russia. “Everyone, regardless of their financial situation or social status, are equal when they come to the doctors' office”, she added.

Foreign relations

[Belarus attractive to American business](#). State TV reported on a recent Belarusian-American Economic Investment Forum that took place in New York. “The meeting can be a good foundation for long-term and potential relations”, according to the report. Americans are interested in doing business in Belarus, according to the opinion of the reporter covering the story, because of Belarus' “success and role in carrying out Eurasian projects, [its] importance in creating a settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, the taxation system in Belarus, and political stability” all help draw Americans towards Belarus.

[“Dielo principa”](#): [Will the peace in Ukraine be long-lasting?](#)— Was a question directed at the audience during a new political

talk show on ONT TV hosted by [Vadzim Hihin](#). During the talk show the audience gathered in a studio also had a chance to react and vote either in favour or against the various positions of the show's guests. Hihin invited politicians from pro-government parties, but also analysts from Ukraine and Russia.

One guest even offered up a conspiracy theory of events explaining that it was the Americans and some forces in the Ukrainian leadership who were interested in "renting out the Black Sea". Their goal of weakening Russia's position, and not the politics of Viktor Yanukovych, were what caused the turbulent events in Ukraine. The Russian and Ukrainian experts agreed that Russia was not interested in making the Donbas a second Transdnistria. "Russia wants to be integrated with Ukraine", Vadzim Karasyev from Ukraine stated.

The European versus Russian model of development. Maira Moira, the head of the EU Delegation to Belarus, was also a guest-speaker on the talk show. She pointed out that the EU cannot be blamed for the situation in Ukraine. She also disagreed with the Russian analyst, according to whom, Ukraine's fate in Russia, not in the EU. Moira noted that what makes the EU model of development more attractive is the "rule of law", rather than the "rule of power". Covering the debate, the state TV reporter noted that while Maira Moira was talking, the audience gave her the least support.

[NATO summit in Newport](#). Belteleradio covered the recent NATO summit that took place in the United Kingdom. The situation in Ukraine dominated the gathering's agenda. Didier Burkhalter, the president of OSCE, noted, however, that the conflict in the country could not be settled without Russia. The report also noted that the very rhetoric of the summit was far from peaceful. "They decided to establish a rapid reaction force for Europe in Poland", the report explained. During the gathering various groups, "who had suffered from NATO activities" protested nearby. The Belteleradio Channel 1

journalist covering the story said that the alliance had either indirectly or directly created a number of flash points in the world.

Belarus and Moldova: mutually beneficial relations. Belarusian state TV noted that both countries have found themselves living in a new reality: Belarus becoming a full-fledged member of the Customs Union, and Moldova having signed the Association Agreement with the EU. Actually, the report notes, the association between Moldova and Brussels will also be profitable for Belarus. “Moldova invites Belarus to utilise its free trade zone with the EU”, according to the story. “We will sell goods together to the EU and share the income”, Lukashenka stated during a press conference.

Belarus Digest prepared this overview on the basis of materials available on the web site of Belarusian State Television 1 (BT1) and ONT TV. Freedom of the press in Belarus remains restricted and state media convey primarily the point of view of the Belarusian authorities. This review attempts to give the English-speaking audience a better understanding of how Belarusian state media shape public opinion in the country.