It is my pleasure to present you with an overview of our activities in 2018. It has been a successful year with the Ostrogorski Centre serving as a hub for producing articles, policy papers and events relevant to the transformation of Belarus.

In 2018, education-related activities moved to the core of the Centre's activities. Following an open call for proposals, we selected several applications to tackle important problems, which Belarusian higher education sector faces – from plagiarism and teaching techniques to improving the quality of scholarly publications of Belarusian authors. In collaboration with leading Belarusian think tanks the Centre arranged a series of meetings with experts from other countries as well as a major conference in Minsk in December.

We already published policy papers on non-formal education in Belarus, reform of legal education, and new forms on practice-oriented business education with more to come in 2019. In addition, we published a major study on Belarus-Lithuania relations. All our papers are normally published in Belarusian or Russian and English.

The Ostrogorski Centre disseminates its work not only using traditional publications, seminars and conferences but also by maintaining a video archive of all conference panels with text summaries of discussions. This approach helps us to multiply the effect of meaningful discussions and the impact on policy makers through the Internet to a much wider audience. All videos are kept in a dedicated archive on Ostro.by.

Belarus Digest, our main English-language media outlet, continues to provide balanced information for both Belarusian and foreign audiences who desire to know more about Belarus, its politics, society and economic development. According to the web site's statistics, our articles on travelling to Belarus have become more popular than political articles, which is a missed blessing. On the one hand, it is good that the country is becoming more open and people want to visit Belarus – the visa-free regime certainly facilitates it. On the other hand, the reduced interest in Belarusian political and economic problems is an indication of less interesting in Belarus in the world, despite the increasingly assertive Russian foreign policy.

BelarusPolicy.com – our database of policy papers now contains around 400 full-text papers with abstracts in Belarusian, Russian and English and download counters. It is interesting to compare its different language versions. While people visiting the Russian-language version are primarily interested in economic issues, the foreign policy section is the most popular with those visiting the Belarusian-language and the English-language versions. Overall, studies of the Belarusian army, public procurement, the Belarusian ruling elite and the possibility of the authoritarian modernization of Belarus generated most interest in 2018.

The Ostrogorski Academy shows a different trend where most popular videos relate to history of Belarus, more precisely with the Belarusian view of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The views of this course in the Belarusian language by far exceed the second most popular course dealing with theory and practice of economic crisis (in the
Russian language). Most people find our videos on YouTube and share them on social networks.

Last year we organised the fourth edition of the London conference on Belarusian Studies and the annual lecture was supported by the British Association for Slavonic & East European Studies. The event was well-attended, and its participants included Stanislaŭ Šuškievič, the first head of independent Belarus (in office 1991-1994), and the UK ambassador to Belarus, Fionna Gibb.

Our Journal of Belarusian Studies was included into the Scopus database in October 2018, confirming its role as not only the oldest surviving but also the most academically rigorous journal on Belarus in the world. The 2018 issue has already been published featuring high quality publications of authors from Germany, Czech Republic, Belarus and other countries.

Most of our activities in the United Kingdom are self-funded and help us to fulfil the two important goals of the Centre - to locate and engage Belarusians working in the West in policy analysis and other activities related to Belarus, and to popularize studies of Belarus in Western Europe and the English-speaking world.

In 2019, we plan to strengthen our work on facilitating the reform of the higher education sector in Belarus as well as our policy analysis in the area of foreign policy and civil society. We will continue to work on reversing the brain drain so that Belarusians, regardless of where they are based, contribute to better governance in Belarus, hopefully in cooperation with policy-makers.

As the same time, we will continue help Belarusian think tanks, experts and scholars to become more integrated into international scholarly networks, databases and events through Belarus Digest, the Journal of Belarusian studies and other successful projects of the Ostrogorski Centre.

I would like to thank all our supporters and collaborators. We remain open to your ideas about new research projects, events and other initiatives. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Professor Yarik Kryvoi
The Ostrogorski Centre is a think-tank devoted to analysis of and policy advocacy for problems facing Belarus in its transition to a market economy and the rule of law.

Educated at the world's leading universities, the Centre's analysts have cultivated the approaches and technical skills required for Western-style analysis. Our analysts regularly publish in Belarusian, Russian, English, German, Polish, and French.

The Centre's deep knowledge of life in Belarus is crucial for addressing complex analytical tasks and learning from the experience of other countries.

The Centre aims to promote reform and inspire the kind of thinking that will help the economy become more competitive and governance more efficient. The Centre also prioritises integrating Belarusian scholars and analysts into pan-European and global media and scholarly networks.

Areas of work of the Ostrogorski Centre

- Analytical articles and papers on the [Belarus Digest](#) website devoted to Belarusian domestic politics, education and foreign and security affairs, particularly relations with Russia and the EU.

- Translations of Belarus Digest's articles into Belarusian and Russian on [ostro.by](#) website as well as publications on the Ostrogorski Centre's activities.

- Maintenance of [BelarusProfile.com](#) and [BelarusPolicy.com](#) – searchable databases of biographies of the most influential individuals in Belarus and public research papers commissioned by Belarusian think tanks and analytical centres.

- The [Journal of Belarusian Studies](#), which publishes academic articles on Belarusian literature, linguistics, foreign relations, civil society, history and art, as well as book reviews.

- Regular digests of developments in civil society, the state-controlled media, foreign policy, security, and the Belarusian economy.

- The [Ostrogorski Academy](#), a Belarusian ‘online university’, based on a series of lectures on important and engaging topics read by well-known Belarusian academics and experts.

- Conferences and public events dedicated to Belarusian security affairs and reforms of higher education.
Reform of Belarusian Higher Education

On 6 July 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre invited proposals for analytical papers on higher education reform in Belarus from Belarusian individual scholars, academics, research teams, expert groups, think-tanks and NGOs. In August 2018, the Centre announced the four winning projects.

Winners of the Call for Proposals

- “New forms of practice-oriented business education at masters level” by Dr. Natalja Apanasovich, dean of Graduate School of Business at SBMT BSU (School of Business and Management of Technology at Belarusian State University).

- “Reform of the sphere of socio-economic and humanities studies in Belarus” by Dr. Andrei Kazakevich, director of the Institute of Political Sphere and Dr. Kiryl Haroshka, research fellow at the Institute of Political Sphere.

- “Plagiarism in written assignments of Belarusian students. Factors, consequences, and solutions” by Dr. Vazdim Mazeika, board Member of the Liberal Club and Dr. Piotr Rudkouski, director of BISS (Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies).

- “The modernization and development of Belarusian higher education institutions based on the entrepreneurial university framework” by Dr. Radzivon Marozau, research associate at BEROC (Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Center).

The first meeting with the Project’s participants in Minsk
The Belarus Digest website provides non-partisan analysis of Belarus-related events written by Belarusians specifically for an English-language readership. In addition to the daily analytical pieces published on Belarus Digest, we also offer monthly columns such as Belarus State Press Digest, and updates on civil society activities and Belarusian analytics.

In recent years, Belarus Digest has become a reliable and popular source for understanding Belarus-related topics. Since 2008, Belarus Digest has published 2,128 articles, digests, reviews, and papers on Belarusian politics, economy, security, and social issues. In 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre published 97 analytical articles. Its audience on social networks has also been growing steadily.

Belarus Digest’s Facebook followers in 2018-2019
The high-quality analysis provided by Belarus Digest is also evidenced by numerous references to its articles by the world’s leading political institutions, think tanks and media sources.

**Political Institutions and Think Tanks**
- Atlantic Council
- Belarus Economic Research and Outreach Centre
- Carnegie Endowment for International Piece
- Carnegie Moscow Centre
- Centre for European Policy Analysis
- European Council on Foreign Relations
- European Parliament
- Jamestown Foundation
- The Potomac Foundation

**Media**
- Aftenposten
- Belarus in Focus
- belaruspartisan.org
- Centre for European Policy Analysis
- Český rozhlas
- Cooperation and Conflict
- Defence One
- The Diplomat
- Eastbook.eu
- East Journal
- East European Politics
- Egypt Daily News
- Estonian Public Broadcasting
- eurasianet.org
- Foreign Policy
- Gazeta.pl
- The Guardian
- II Post
- International Peace Information Service
- National Geographic
- National Interest
- New Eastern Europe
- ORF eins
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
- Polish Radio External Service
- St Andrews Foreign Affairs Review
- Transitions Online
- udf.by
- vzglyad.az
- Washington Post
- Zeit Online

**Academic Journals**
- Bulletin of Sociological Methodology
- Eastern Journal of European Studies
- East European Politics and Societies
- Europe-Asia Studies
- Energy policy
- Globalizations
- Post-Soviet Affairs
- Przeglad Geopolityczny
- RESI: Revista de estudios en seguridad internacional
- South East European Journal of Economics and Business
- Белорусский ежегодник
OUR PROJECTS

OSTRO.BY

The website Ostro.by publishes translations of Belarus Digest's articles into the Belarusian and Russian languages, as well as announcements of the Ostrogorski Centre's activities. By 2019, the Centre has published 240 articles. It also contains a media archive of the main activities of the Ostrogorski Centre.

OSTROGORSKI ACADEMY

Since 2017, the Ostrogorski Academy serves as a nonprofit educational project disseminating knowledge of the humanities within the Belarusian society. The academy is the first entirely online educational platform, based on a series of lectures on important and engaging topics.

The Academy's courses include:

- **INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
The course offers an introduction to the history of modern international financial institutions. Within the course, students can learn about the basic principles of functioning of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

- **ECONOMIC CRISES**
The course teaches the main types and causes of economic crises, the peculiarities of economic crises in Belarus, as well as common behavior patterns during crises. After completing the course, students will understand the nature of economic growth and crises. They will be able to analyse the consequences of state policies and make efficient economic and financial decisions.

- **MODERN DISTANCE AND BUSINESS EDUCATION**
The course introduces the concepts of contemporary distance education and business education, as well as its trends and prospects for development in Belarus. By the end of the course, students should understand the principles, forms and methods of distance and business education, as well as the role of business education for opening and managing a business.

- **GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA IN THE EUROPEAN AND BELARUSIAN HISTORY**
The course discusses the role of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) in the medieval as well as in modern European and Belarusian history. It covers the genesis of the GDL in comparison with other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, its development in a civilisational borderland and the activities of the GDL as an outpost of European civilisation.
OUR PROJECTS

BELARUS PROFILE

BELARUSPROFILE.COM

The Belarus Profile website provides up-to-date information on 525 influential people from all the major spheres in Belarus.

The Belarus Profile contains biographical listings of people who have an impact on life in Belarus, including politicians, opposition activists, civil servants, and notable figures from academia, business, civil society, and other areas. The ambition of the website is to become the most respected reference source for biographical information.

Each listing in Belarus Profile contains basic personal information, details of education and career, and relevant internet links about each person in three languages – Belarusian, Russian, and English. Currently, Belarus Profile remains the most complete database of influential Belarusians available online.

In 2018, 15 new profiles appeared on Belarus Profile and 25 were updated.

BELARUS POLICY

BELARUSPOLICY.COM

BelarusPolicy.com is a joint project of the Ostrogorski Centre and the Belarusian Research Council.

Belarus Policy contains 392 research papers from 14 leading Belarusian think tanks in the fields of governance, foreign policy, security and social sciences. The database presents a unique online source of policy research on Belarus.

In 2018, 36 new research papers appeared on Belarus Policy from the following think-tanks: BISS, BEROC, Belarus Security Blog, CASE Belarus, Centre for European Transformation, Liberal Club, Ostrogorski Centre, Research Center of the Institute for Privatization and Management.
The Journal of Belarusian Studies publishes academic articles on Belarusian literature, foreign relations, civil society, history and art, as well as book reviews. Yarik Kryvoi is the Journal’s editor-in-chief.

The Journal is the oldest English language double-blind peer-reviewed periodical on Belarusian studies. It is the only academic periodical about Belarus indexed by EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, Google Scholar and other databases. The Journal has been accepted to SCOPUS since October 11, 2018.

The 2018 issue mostly features articles related to the Soviet period of the Belarusian history, including coverage of Protestant communities in Soviet Belarus, the cult of Stalin, nation-formation in Belarus, and Belarusian émigrés in interwar Czechoslovakia.

Contributions for the 2018 issue:
- “Pentecostals in the BSSR: An alternative way of life in a hero-city after Stalin” by Thomas M. Bohn and Rayk Einax (Germany)
- “Language, identity, and nation: Special case of Belarusian state- and nation-formation” by Alena Marková (Czech Republic)
- “The rise of Stalin’s personality cult in Soviet Belarus” by Aliaksandr Hužalouški (Belarus)
- “Heros and anti-heros of the Belarusian independence project in Czechoslovakia” by Daniela Kolenovská (Czech Republic)

Book reviews by:
- Adam Coman (United Kingdom)
- Arnold McMillin (United Kingdom)
- Angelika Pobedonostseva Kaya (Russian Federation)
THIRD ANNUAL LONDON CONFERENCE ON BELARUSIAN STUDIES

On 23-24 March 2018, the Third Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies was organised by the Ostrogorski Centre in cooperation with University College London and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum.

The conference featured speakers from the UK, the USA, Canada, Germany, Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. The conference’s panels covered history, social and political movements, foreign policy and art. The traditional Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, delivered this year by Dr. Alena Marková, was called “Belarusian State- and Nation-Formation: From Polatsk Principality to Independent Belarus”.

The conference guests included Stanislau Šuškievič, the first head of independent Belarus (in office 1991-1994), and the UK ambassador to Belarus, Fionna Gibb.

SEMINARS ON THE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In November 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre arranged a series of online seminars with the partners of the research project on the reform of Belarusian higher education. Professor Irina Dezhina, the project’s partner of Dr Andrei Kazakevich and Dr Kiryl Haroshka, spoke about the challenges of the state scientific and technological policy of the Russian Federation.

Professor Janez Prašnikar, the project’s partner of Dr Natalja Apanasovich, spoke about the creation of the Slovenian top business school at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana. According to Professor Prašnikar, in order to obtain the best practical results, a business school must teach both international and local business cases.

On 23 November 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre arranged the third online seminar with the partners of the research project on the reform of Belarusian higher education. Professor Loreta Tauginienė, the project’s partner of Dr Piotr Rudkouski and Dr Vadzim Mazeika, spoke about the global fight against plagiarism and the development of academic ethics standards. According to Professor Tauginienė, plagiarism remains a global problem. The fight against plagiarism in many ways depends on academic institutions, which either ignore this problem or take appropriate steps to address it.
Our events

Conference on the Reform of Belarusian Higher Education

On 27 December 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre conducted a conference on the reform of Belarusian higher education in Minsk.

Dedicated to the issues of higher education and its reforms in Belarus, the conference allowed academics, practitioners and administrators to discuss the existing problems and possible solutions. The main topics concerned new forms of practice-oriented business education at masters level, modernization of higher education at entrepreneurial university framework, reforms of Belarusian scientific research, and the issue of plagiarism at Belarusian universities.

The key speakers included Dr. Natalja Apanasovich from the School of Business of the Belarusian State University, Dr. Radzivon Marozau from Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Centre (BEROC), Dr. Andrei Kazakevich from Institute of Political Studies ‘Political Sphere’, Dr. Piotr Rudkouski from the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS), and Dr. Vadzim Mazeika from the Liberal Club.

The conference was broadcast live on YouTube and Facebook, and videos of each panel are now available on the Ostrogorski Centre’s YouTube channel. In 2019, the Centre will publish four analytical papers on the reform of Belarusian higher education featuring original research and summarising the views and reform proposals from the conference.
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN BELARUS: EXPANDING THE LEARNING SPACE

On 22 February 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre presented a study ‘Non-formal Education in Belarus: Expanding the Learning Space’, conducted by Yaroslau Kryvoi and Vadzim Smok.

Unlike state-subsidised higher education, the non-formal education sector in Belarus has to survive in an unfavourable political environment, dependent on Western donors, and its reach remains very limited. This makes the situation in Belarus different from other European countries, where civil society is viewed as a partner of the state in delivering public goods and sustaining communities.

REFORM OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN BELARUS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UK

On 11 April 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre presented a study ‘Reform of legal education in Belarus and the experience of the UK’, conducted by Yarik Kryvoi and Raman Maroz.

The paper primarily based on suggestions made during a conference on legal education reform held on 28 December 2017 in Minsk. The Ostrogorski Centre and the Faculty of Law of the Belarusian State University arranged the conference with the support of the British Embassy.

The analytical paper suggests that the government plays a more significant role in the regulation of the economy in Belarus compared to most other European countries. That is why further development of the legal system in Belarus and training of legal professionals should be at the top of the agenda.
BELARUS–LITHUANIA RELATIONS: COMMON INTERESTS AND THE NUCLEAR DISPUTE

On 27 April 2018, the Ostrogorski Centre presented a study ‘Belarus–Lithuania relations: common interests and the nuclear dispute’, conducted by Ryhor Astapenia.

The paper aims to improve mutual understanding between Belarus and Lithuania. The relations between two countries deteriorated when Belarus officially started the construction of a nuclear power plant (NPP) on the border with Lithuania in 2013.

The issue may dominate dealings between the two countries for a long time to come. Both countries rely on separate facts to support their position while ignoring arguments presented by the other side.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

In 2018, Yarik Kryvoi led a World-Bank funded legal project on the comparative analysis of Kazakhstan’s national legislation and international good practices in the areas of activities of the justice authorities, rulemaking/legislative drafting, and development of entrepreneurship. The project aimed to assist the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan in order to adapt certain international good practices into the national legislation.
Selected activities in 2018

January 2018: Siarhei Bohdan and Vadzim Smok give commentary to the Polish radio on the changes in the Belarusian government; Igar Gubarevich discusses cuts at Belarusian MFA on Belsat; Yarik Kryvoi explains the growth of Donald Trump’s popularity in Belarus to The Atlantic.

February 2018: Siarhei Bohdan comments on Belarus's phasing out of expanding access to the sea through other countries as well as losses for Minsk to the Polish Radio. Furthermore, Bohdan speaks about military cooperation between Belarus and Azerbaijan to Azerbaijani military online media armiya.az. Ryhor Astapenia provides his insights on Belarusian-Lithuanian rivalry about the common historic heritage to the Polish Radio.

March 2018: The Ostrogorski Centre holds the Third Annual London Conference on Belarusian Studies in cooperation with University College London and the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum. Ryhor Astapenia discusses Belarus’s longevity gap with the Polish Radio.

July 2018: The Ostrogorski Centre announces call for research proposals on higher education reform in Belarus.

August 2018: The Ostrogorski Centre announces the results of the research proposals’ contest on the reform of Belarusian higher education and selects four winners.

October 2018: A leading international scholarly database Scopus includes the Journal of Belarusian Studies into its database. Olga Hryniuk comments the development of IT in Belarus at the Austrian radio ORF Ö1.

November 2018: Alesia Rudnik speaks at the panel ‘Political violence and shrinking civic space in the Eastern Partnership region’ at the annual Human Rights days in Stockholm. The Ostrogorski Centre arranges the first online seminars with the partners of the research project on the reform of Belarusian higher education. Siarhei Bohdan gives an interview to the Azerbaijani news outlet www.vzglyad.az on joint development of complex missile systems by Azerbaijan, Belarus and Turkey.

December 2018: The Ostrogorski Centre holds a conference in Minsk on the reform of Belarusian higher education.
Greetings from organizers and guests, 27 December 2018

Viktor Shadurski, the dean of BSU’s Faculty of International Relations, and Yaroslau Kryvoi, the director of Ostrogorski Centre, spoke about the upcoming challenges to the Belarusian education system. Shadurski argued Belarusian educational institutions should be wary of new approaches in the learning process. Kryvoi reminded that education remained the best investment into people.

Panel 1. University 3.0, business education, and IT, 27 December 2018

Dr Natalja Apanasovich, the dean of faculty «Higher school of business» from IBMT BSU, and Radzivon Marozau, BEROC’s senior researcher, presented their papers on the reform of Belarusian higher education. Natalja Apanasovich focused on the lack of soft skills by Belarusian graduates, whilst Radzivon Marozau discussed the reasons of why the University 3.0 framework failed in Belarusian universities.

Panel 2. Reform of social and humanitarian research in Belarus, 27 December 2018

Dr Andrei Kazakevich, the director of the Institute “Political Sphere” presented his joint research with Dr Kiryl Haroshka on the reform of social and humanitarian research in Belarus. According to Kazakevich, the Belarusian scientific sector had to increase transparency and distribute public finance fairly. Dr Artsiom Nazaranka from BSU who spoke about BSU’s international project activities later joined him.

Panel 3. Plagiarism in the works of Belarusian students, 27 December 2018

Dr Piotr Rudkouski, the director of BISS, and Dr Vadzim Mazeika, the board member of Liberal Club, presented their joint research on the problem of plagiarism in the works of Belarusian students. Both Rudkouski and Mazeika agreed that plagiarism in Belarusian higher institutions remained the collective fault of teachers, students, and education authorities.
Supporters and Partners

- Anglo-Belarusian Society
- Belarusian Research and Outreach Centre
- British Association for Slavonic & East European Studies
- Embassy of the United Kingdom
- Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum
- Faculty of International Relations, BSU
- Law Faculty of the Belarusian State University
- The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Open Society Foundations
- Online Magazine Idea
- Polish Radio External Service
- School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL

Contributors and Collaborators

- Irina Dezhina
- Michael Dorman
- Maribel Guerrero
- Lizaveta Kasmach
- Andrei Liakhovich
- Aleh Mazol
- Raman Maroz
- Dzmitry Mitskevich
- Vasili Navumau
- Janez Prašnikar
- Loreta Tauginiene
**Our Team**

**Yarik Kryvoi** is the director of the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: education, international public law, commercial dispute resolution, business climate.

**Olga Hryniuk** is the project coordinator of the Ostrogorski Centre in Minsk. Areas of expertise: public policy, society, foreign policy, Belarusian media.

**Ryhor Astapenia** is an associate analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: Belarusian foreign policy, security, Belarus's political system.

**Siarhei Bohdan** is an associate analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: Belarusian foreign policy and national security.

**Igar Gubarevich** is a senior analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre based in Minsk. Areas of expertise: Belarus foreign policy, business climate in Belarus, international organisations.

**Alesia Rudnik** is an analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: civil society of Belarus and Eastern European countries, advocacy in non-democratic states, political system of Belarus.

**Vadzim Smok** is a former project coordinator of the Ostrogorski Centre in Minsk (until May 2018). Areas of expertise: public policy, local government, national identity, IT.

**Paul Hansbury** is a copy editor of Belarus Digest and the Journal of Belarusian Studies. Areas of expertise: foreign policy, international security.

**Ilya Shyla** is an IT specialist of the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: information technologies, IT in Belarus.