



Annual Report 2015

Ostrogorski
Centre

About the Ostrogorski Centre



The Ostrogorski Centre is a think-tank devoted to analysis and policy advocacy on the problems, which Belarus faces in its transition to a market economy and the rule of law.

The Centre is established by Western-educated Belarusians based in Belarus and abroad. Its analysts working in Minsk, London, Warsaw, Washington DC and Berlin understand the challenges of transition in the region because they have lived through it. Educated at the world's leading universities, the Centre's experts have cultivated the culture and technical skills required to deliver Western-style analysis. Our analysts regularly publish in the Belarusian, Russian, English, German, Polish and French languages.

The Centre's deep knowledge of Belarusian realities helps to address complicated analytical and training tasks. And our culture of openness and broad scope of expertise enables us to navigate a complexity of issues, topics and borders with ease.

The mission of the Ostrogorski Centre is to contribute to the better understanding of transition processes in Belarus and to learn from experience of other countries.

The Centre aims to promote reforms and thinking which helps the economy become more competitive, governance more efficient and integrate Belarusian scholars and analysts in pan-European and global media and networks of scholars.

Areas of work of the Ostrogorski Centre

- Analytical articles and papers on Belarus domestic politics, foreign and security affairs, particularly relations with Russia and the EU.
- Searchable database of the most influential individuals in Belarus.
- Searchable database of all public research papers implemented by Belarusian think tanks and analytical centres.
- Regular digests of developments within civil society, the state media, societal, foreign policy, security and the Belarusian economy.
- Journal of Belarusian Studies, which publishes articles on Belarusian literature, linguistics, foreign relations, civil society, history and art, as well as book reviews.

Introduction from the Director



In 2015, the Ostrogorski Centre strengthened its team in Minsk, launched a major research database and organised several major events, in addition to providing daily analysis of events related to Belarus through Belarus Digest.

This year the Ostrogorski Centre also expanded its leadership team, appointing Siarhei Bohdan as its Research Director, Ryhor Astapenia as its Development Director and Vadzim Smok as its Project Coordinator. The team has been strengthened by the arrival of a new analyst Stephen Hall. Stephen is currently at University College London at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies doing his PhD on the concept of authoritarian learning.

Aleś Alachnovič, who is analysing economic issues, has also been a welcome addition to the Belarus Digest team, strengthening an important dimension of its work. Aleś is a PhD candidate at the Warsaw School of Economics, a graduate of the London School of Economics and the Warsaw School of Economics.

In addition, David Marples Professor at the University of Alberta started writing a monthly column on Belarusian politics and Nigel Roberts regularly contributes on travelling to Belarus.

This year the Centre successfully cooperated with several Belarusian and foreign institutions including the European Council of Foreign Relations, the Belarus Research Council, The Guardian, Polish Radio for Abroad, Radio Racyja and Radio Liberty. Our new partnership agreements with media allow us to reach a broader audience in and outside of Belarus.

New and Existing Projects

In addition to our daily analytical pieces published on Belarus Digest, we continue to regularly publish Belarus Foreign Policy, Belarus Security, Belarus State TV, State Press and as well as Civil Society Digests, Belarus Photo Digest and Digest of Belarusian Analytics.



Delivering a public lecture in Minsk, August 2015

We also launched the BelarusPolicy.com research database in cooperation with the Belarus Research Council. This unique platform contains information on policy-related research conducted by major Belarusian analytical institutions. All of the texts are available in a searchable database organised by topic, the associated organisation and chronologically. The database is integrated with Belarus Profile.

Belarus Profile, which launched in 2013, makes accessing information about important individuals from Belarus easier to people inside and outside the country through a searchable online directory of Belarus' most influential people in Belarusian, Russian and English. This year alone we added over 130 new profiles to Belarus Profile.

The 2015 issue of the Journal of Belarusian Studies brought together academics from Belarus, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, United Kingdom and Germany. The 2015 issue includes articles written following a conference on the legacy of Belarusian national hero Kastus Kalinoŭski, which the Ostrogorski Centre co-organised with the University College London and the Anglo-Belarusian Society.

Plans for 2016

In 2016, the Ostrogorski Centre plans to focus more on three key areas: foreign policy, security and education. Being a relatively small country, any change in Belarus depends, to a significant degree, on the external environment, particularly its relations with Russia and the European Union.

Following the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea, the independence and security of Belarus should not be taken for granted. The Belarusian armed forces, their capability and role will be yet another focus of the Centre's work. It will involve not only publishing papers but also organising events that discuss developments in this area.



Meeting with director of Radio Racyja in Bialystok, July 2015

The Ostrogorski Centre also plans to hold a festival in Minsk featuring intellectuals, researchers, and experts from Eastern European countries who would share their experience on carrying out reforms. By the end of 2016 the Centre is planning a series of workshops devoted to reforming the Belarusian economy and politics.

Education is one of the areas where Belarus requires significant reform and more input from Western-qualified Belarusians. The Centre will work on bringing their own expertise to Belarusian universities as well as the informal education sector.

The Centre is also planning to strengthen its cooperation with European think tanks and universities. In March 2016 the Centre is planning to organise a major conference on Belarus in cooperation with the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

The Ostrogorski Centre will organise more events in Belarus, including roundtables and workshops and launches of analytical papers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yarik Kryvoi'.

Yarik Kryvoi

Our Projects: Belarus Digest



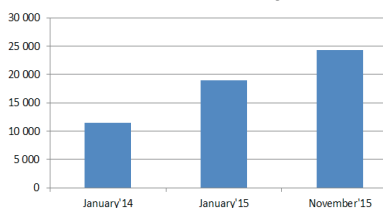
Belarus Digest provides non-partisan analysis of Belarus-related events written by Belarusians specifically for an English-language readership.

Belarus regime's conduct and poor reputation provides a fertile ground for all kinds of myths and speculations. Belarus Digest tries to de-mystify Belarus and write about what is actually going on in the country.

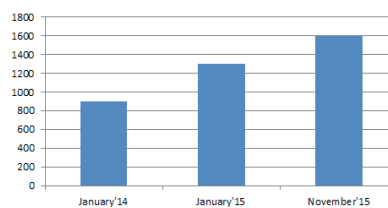
In addition to our daily analytical pieces published on Belarus Digest, we also offer other publications such as Belarus Foreign Policy Digest, Belarus State TV Digest, State Press Digest and updates on civil society activities and Belarusian analytics.

In 2015 Belarus Digest published over 250 articles.

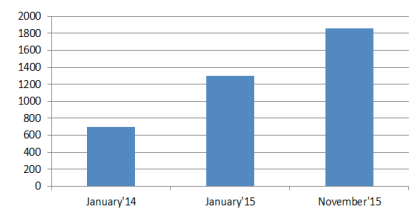
Number of monthly visits



Followers on Facebook



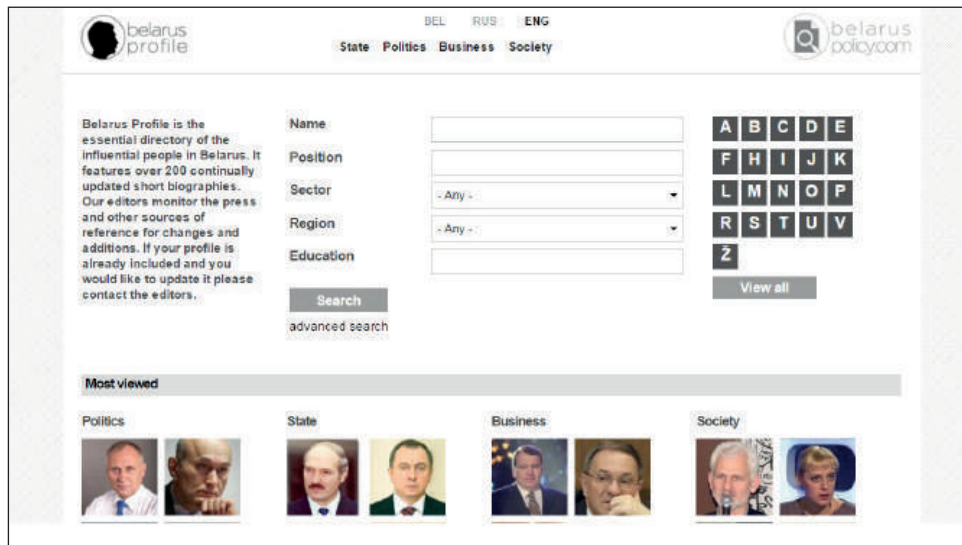
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- foreignpolicy.com
- theguardian.com
- carnegie.ru
- eastbook.eu
- ecfr.eu
- kyivpost.com
- russianinsight.com
- biztonsagpolitika.hu
- carnegieeurope.eu
- elconfidencial.com
- forbes.com
- esglobal.org
- Transitions Online
- European Journal of Higher Education
- Social Movement Studies
- Studies on Russian Economic Development
- East European Politics & Societies
- Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review
- Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review
- Revue internationale de politique comparée
- Post-Soviet Affairs
- European View
- Democratization
- BFM TV

Our Projects: Belarus Profile



Belarus Profile provides up-to-date information on nearly 300 influential people from all walks of life in Belarus.

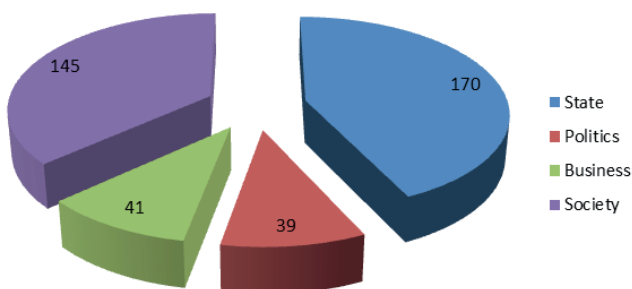
Containing biographical listings of people who have an impact on life in Belarus, including politicians, opposition activists, civil servants, and notable figures from academia, business, civil society, and other areas, its ambition is to become the most respected reference source for biographical information.

Belarus Profile is built for biographical searching which makes it a valuable resource for anyone concerned with Belarusian politics, economy and society.

Each biography appears in Belarusian, Russian and English languages and contains basic personal information, details of education and career as well as relevant internet links.

In 2015 over 130 new profiles appeared on Belarus Profile.

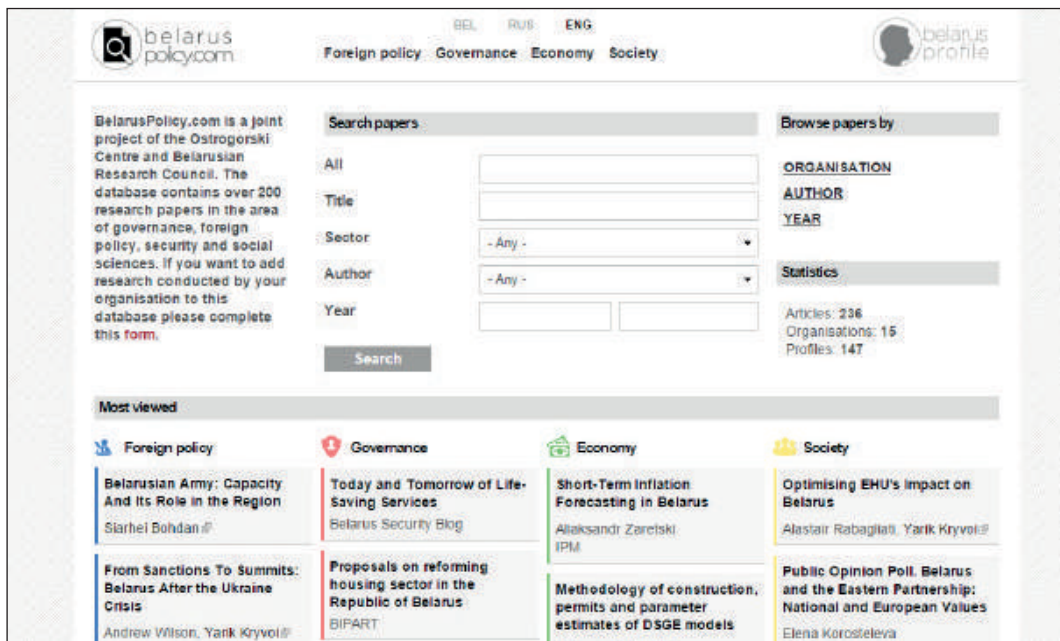
Distribution of Individuals by Sector



Sample Profile



Our Projects: Belarus Policy



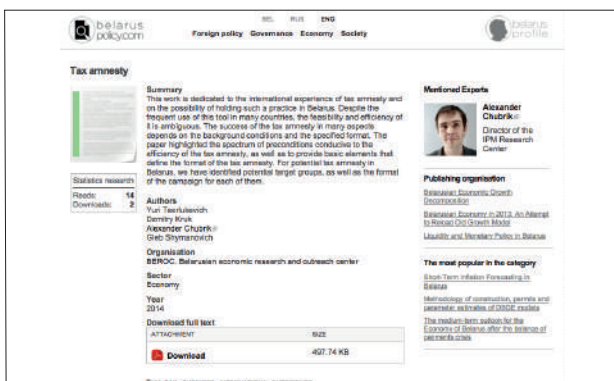
BelarusPolicy.com is a new joint project of the Ostrogorski Centre and the Belarusian Research Council. This platform gathers the information on all public research and Belarusian analytical institutions.

Its database contains around 250 research papers in the area of governance, foreign policy, security and social sciences. Each

paper has a title and abstract in Belarusian, Russian and English. Although most papers are written in either Russian or Belarusian, the database also contains a number of English-language research papers on Belarus.

Researchers from participating organisations can submit research conducted by their organisations to the database using an online form.

Sample Policy Paper



Participating Organisations

- Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Center (BEROC)
- Belarusian Institute for Public Administration Reform and Transformation (BIPART)
- Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS)
- Belarus Security Blog
- CASE Belarus
- Centre for European Transformation
- SATIO
- Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies
- Liberal Club
- Office for European Expertise and Communication
- Ostrogorski Centre
- Research Center of the Institute for Privatization and Management

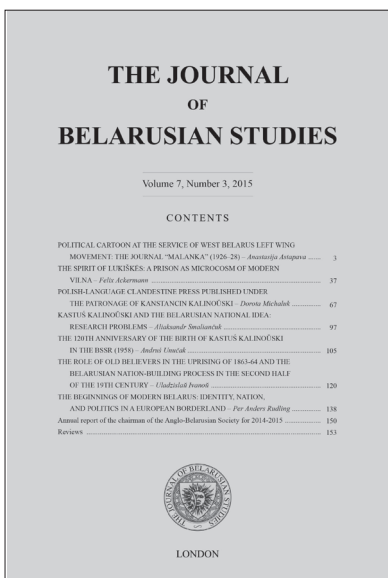
Our Projects: The Journal of Belarusian Studies



The Journal of Belarusian Studies published in cooperation with the Anglo-Belarusian Society is distributed annually to universities, libraries and private subscribers in the UK, the US, Belarus and other countries throughout the world.

The Journal publishes articles on Belarusian literature, linguistics, foreign relations, civil society, history and art, as well as book reviews.

Recent Issue



Yarik Kryvoi serves as the Journal's editor. The Journal's Advisory Board consists of Arnold McMillin (UK), Jim Dingley (UK), Andrej Kotljarchuk (Sweden), Curt Woolheiser (USA), David Marples (Canada), Iryna Dubianetskaya (Belarus), Alastair Rabagliati (Belgium) and Andrew Wilson (UK).

Contributors for the 2015 Issue

- Felix Ackerman (Lithuania/Germany)
- Anastasiya Astapava (Estonia/Belarus)
- Ales Smaliančuk (Belarus)
- Dorota Michaluk (Poland)
- Uladzislaŭ Ivanoŭ (Belarus)
- Andrus Unučak (Belarus)
- Brian Benett (United Kingdom)
- Jim Dingley (United Kingdom)
- Siarhiei Bohdan (Germany/Belarus)
- Per Rudling (Sweden)

Selected Activities in 2015



Belarusian Research Council meeting in Vilnius, February 2015



Minsk Dialogue conference in Minsk, March 2015



The inaugural Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, London, March 2015



Discussion with IMF Senior Representative James Roaf in Minsk, April 2015

February 2015: The Journal of Belarusian Studies was indexed by Google Scholar and was included in the EBSCO combined catalogue, which connects scientific journals with libraries and research centres around the world and includes 375 databases with more than 600 thousands of electronic publications.

February 2015: The Ostrogorski Centre was recognised as one of the top three think tanks in Belarus in the first pilot study of Belarusian analytical centres conducted by the Belarusian Research Council.

March 2015: The Ostrogorski Centre and the Liberal Club organised a major regional expert conference *The EU, Russia and the Shared Neighbourhood: Bridging the Divide* as a part of the new Minsk Dialogue initiative, which gathered dozens of high profile Belarusian and European experts in Belarus.

March 2015: The Centre organised the inaugural Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies *The Beginnings of Modern Belarus: Identity, Nation, and Politics in a European Borderland* delivered by Professor Anders Rudling, which took place at the School of Slavonic & East European Studies of the University College London with the support of the Association of Belarusians in Great Britain.

April 2015: Yarik Kryvoi spoke at the discussion panel *Blueprint for Revolution: Laugh your Way to Victory?* organised by the European Council on Foreign Relations in London.

April 2015: Yarik Kryvoi spoke at the panel *The Moment of Truth for Belarus?* at the 8th Lennart Meri Conference in Tallinn, Estonia.

May 2015: The Ostrogorski Centre, in cooperation with the European Council on Foreign Relations, released *From Sanctions To Summits: Belarus After The Ukraine Crisis*, a paper co-authored by Yarik Kryvoi and Andrew Wilson.

May 2015: Devin Ackles participated in the 5th Belarus Reality Check and moderated a panel on the state of the Belarusian economy and also presented in a separate panel.

May 2015: The Ostrogorski Centre and the Liberal Club published the non-paper *Another Yalta is Impossible* that coincided with the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga. The non-paper presented the results of the inaugural Minsk Dialogue conference, initiated to address the most challenging international problems in the EU-Russia shared borderland.



Summer school for Belarusian students in Trakai region, August 2015



Presentation of paper at Batory Foundation in Warsaw, September 2015



Conference organised in Warsaw, November 2015

June 2015: Devin Ackles participated in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum's International Security Experts Conference in Kyiv, speaking on a panel on economic security.

July 2015: Yarik Kryvoi conducted a workshop on *How to Stay Engaged in Belarusian Life While Living Abroad* for recipients of a major EU scholarship programme for Belarusian students (OESS / ESSYB) in London.

August 2015: Yarik Kryvoi delivered a public lecture in Minsk on the role of the rule of law in attracting foreign investment at an event organised by *Idea* journal.

September 2015: Ryhor Astapenia, analyst of the Ostrogorski Centre, taught at a summer school for Belarusian students organised by the *Movement for Freedom* in Lithuania.

September 2015: On 7 September Yarik Kryvoi spoke at a discussion organised by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and Eastbook.eu in Warsaw, hosted by the Batory Foundation.

September 2015: Ryhor Astapenia presented BelarusPolicy.com, a new joint project of the Ostrogorski Centre and the Belarus Research Council in Vilnius, Lithuania.

October 2015: Delegation of the Ostrogorski Centre, including Yarik Kryvoi, Ryhor Astapenia, Paula Borowska and Vadzim Smok chaired several panels and spoke at the Fifth International Congress of Belarusian Studies in Kaunas, Lithuania.

October 2015: Ryhor Astapenia spoke about the political and economic situation in Belarus before the upcoming elections at the conference *Belarus: Without Any Changes?* which took place at the Batory Foundation in Warsaw.

November 2015: Siarhei Bohdan, senior analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre, spoke at the high level conference *25 Years of the Charter of Paris. How to Renew Commitment, Fulfill Expectations, and Revive the OSCE* in Warsaw.

Our Partners and Contributors

Supporters and Partners

- The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Pact
- The Guardian
- The European Council on Foreign Relations
- Online Magazine *Idea*
- Polish Radio for Abroad
- Belarusian Research and Outreach Centre BEROC
- Belarus Research Council
- Radio Racyja
- Anglo-Belarusian Society
- Belarus Security Blog
- School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



Belarus
Research
Council



Contributors and Collaborators

- David Marples
- Nigel Roberts
- Dzmitry Kruk
- Yauheni Preiherman
- Andrei Parotnikau
- Michael Murphy
- Juljan Jachovic
- Artsiom Shraibman
- Tatsiana Kulakevich
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- Kateryna Bornukova
- Vadzim Bylina
- Gregory Prince
- Aliaksandr Čajčyc
- Serge Kharytonau
- Aleh Mazol
- Eimear O'Casey
- Maryja Kavalčuk
- Sasha Belavokaya

Our Team



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



Siarhei Bohdan is a research director at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: security, Middle East, Central Asia, Belarus foreign policy.



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



Ryhor Astapenia is development director at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: Belarusian foreign policy, security, Belarus' political system.



Volha Charnysh is an analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: identity politics, migration, historical legacies, ethnic conflict.



Paula Borowska is an analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: national minorities, religious studies, Belarus-Poland relations.



Vadzim Smok is an analyst and Project Coordinator at the Ostrogorski Centre in Minsk. Areas of expertise: public policy, society, local government, national identity.



Stephen Hall is an analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: authoritarianism, democratisation, comparative political systems.



Devin Ackles is an associate analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: energy, education, EU integration.



Aleś Alachnovič is an associate analyst at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: macroeconomic analysis, economic transition, monetary policy.



Aaron Ostrovsky is an intern at the Ostrogorski Centre. Areas of expertise: Central and Eastern European history, healthcare, information technology, Russia.

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