



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
Civil Society Forum

Report

of the EaP CSF Monitoring Mission

on the civil society, media and human rights situation in Belarus
(April 2017)

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1. Background

The Monitoring Mission of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the civil society, media and human rights situation in Belarus (the Mission) visited the country during the period of 28 March-1 April 2017. The Mission's team was composed of leading experts in the field of human rights and civil society support from Armenia, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine; the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform supported its work.

The Mission's main objectives were to assess the environment for the work of civil society and independent media against the backdrop of the large-scale demonstrations in February-March 2017; to analyse the consequences of the social and political crisis for the civil society and media in Belarus; as well as evaluate the implications for the EU-Belarus relations and country's participation in the Eastern Partnership policies.

During the visit to Belarus, the Mission discussed the situation with the representatives of the EaP CSF National Platform, independent media, leading human rights NGOs and international organisations, as well as policy experts, human rights lawyers, those prosecuted and their family members. Moreover, public statements and reports of the local and international human rights organisations, EU institutions and expert opinions were analysed.

2. Context

On 2 April 2015 the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko issued the [Decree No. 3 “On preventing freeloading practices”](#) which imposes a tax on unemployed people in Belarus. The Decree obliges citizens to be employed at least 183 days per year or pay a special tax to the State under the threat of fine or arrest. The Belarusian President has explained that ‘ideology and morality’ is the basis for introducing the Decree and stated it is aimed at “making people work”¹. The Decree has been assessed by experts and civil society as unconstitutional since it contradicts the Article 41 of the Constitution stipulating that “forced labour shall be prohibited, other than work or service specified in the verdict of a court of law or in accordance with the law on the state of emergency or martial law”².

¹ Decree No.3 to stay in force, tax collection postponed for a year. 09.03.2017, <http://eng.belta.by/president/view/decree-no3-to-stay-in-force-tax-collection-postponed-for-a-year-99321-2017/>

² Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994, <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/by/by016en.pdf>

The Decree is also in contradiction with the international obligations of Belarus within the framework of the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention³ it ratified as a member of the International Labour Organisation. Decree No. 3, effective retroactively, applies to labour relations since the beginning of 2015, which also contravenes the laws and the Constitution of Belarus.

The adoption of the Decree No.3 occurred in parallel with several steps undertaken by the authorities of Belarus that resulted in a certain improvement of the relations with the EU. The release of six political prisoners⁴ among which was the former opposition presidential candidate Mikalai Statkevich on 22 August 2015 resulted in several important developments in EU-Belarus relations.

In 2015 the EU and Belarus resumed their Human Rights Dialogues⁵, the EU has also doubled the package of bilateral assistance to Belarus to support private sector development and help strengthen its institutions (from €14.5 million in 2015 to €29 million in 2016)⁶. In 2015, Belarus joined the Bologna Process with a special Roadmap for Higher Education Reform developed for this purpose.

Despite the fact that a significant progress was recorded in the EU-Belarus relations, the overall process of ‘liberalisation’ in Belarus lacked systemic changes in legislation that would ensure that the authorities are committed to implementing reforms.

The law on NGOs and the procedures for the NGO registration remained unchanged. All foreign assistance to NGOs is required to be registered with the authorities under a strict procedure. Most importantly, the Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code on “illegal organisation of activities of a public association, religious organisation or foundation or participation in those activities”⁷ also remained unchanged, making all civil society activism unauthorised by

³ Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C105

⁴ Belarus leader pardons six jailed opposition figures. 23.08.2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belarus-rights-prisoners-idUSKCN0QS09820150823>

⁵ The EU and Belarus hold a dialogue on human rights. 28.07.2015, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/6079/The%20EU%20and%20Belarus%20hold%20a%20dialogue%20on%20human%20rights

⁶ Belarus and the EU. 11.05.2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/15975/belarus-and-eu_en

⁷ Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus, [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2011\)051-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2011)051-e)

the state a criminal offense. The process of accreditation for foreign journalists remained very problematic and non-transparent.

Human Rights Center “Viasna” in its analytical review on human rights situation in Belarus in 2016 particularly states: “the year saw a continuation of the policy of ‘soft practices’, which began in August 2015, as the authorities kept abstaining from violent dispersals of unauthorised protests, detention of protesters and sentencing them to short jail terms. At the same time, the year was marked by a nearly sevenfold boost in the number of cases when citizens were fined under administrative procedures for exercising freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, as compared to the previous year”⁸.

The lack of reforms in economic sector led to the deepening of the economic crisis and deterioration of the economic situation in the country. The situation in Ukraine, the drop in oil and gas prices, and post-Crimea sanctions on some sectors of the Russian economy affecting Belarus also contributed to this process. Many labour migrants working in Russia either had to return to Belarus or started sending less money to their families, which also had a negative impact on the quality of life in the country.

These developments and the failure of the Belarusian authorities to implement real changes in both economic and political spheres resulted in worsening of the economic situation in the country. Even though the official statistics claim only 1% of unemployment in the country, the receipt of the notices in accordance with the Decree No.3 in December 2016 by around 450,000 citizens (potentially under threat of fines)⁹ clearly demonstrates that the actual unemployment figures are much higher. Since the total amount expected to be collected by the Belarusian authorities exceeded 100 million USD the ‘ideological’ reasoning of the decree seems to be quite doubtful.

The absence of any systemic changes created a situation in which any activity of social or political movements inside the country was met with suspicion and reprimands by the government, new human rights violations, disproportionate use of force, politically motivated detentions, etc. The reaction of Belarusian authorities towards the March protests in Minsk and regions of Belarus proved this once again.

⁸ Human Rights Situation in Belarus in 2016. Analytical Review. 23.01.2017, <http://spring96.org/en/news/85817>

⁹ Thousands of Belarussians take to the streets to protest 'parasite law'. 17.02.2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belarus-protests-idUSKBN15W1Y0>

3. Civic Protests against the Decree No.3, Reaction of Belarusian Authorities and International Community

The first and most large-scale demonstration that took place in Minsk on 17 February and gathered around 2500 participants was followed by demonstrations in other cities - Brest, Baranovichi, Bobruisk, Gomel, Grodno, Mogilev, Molodechno, Orsha, Pinsk, Rogachev and Vitebsk on February 19 and 26, March 5, 10-12 and 15¹⁰. Overall, around 15,000 people across the country participated in the protests. For demonstrations uncorrelated with an electoral process, the level of participation was unexpectedly high. Moreover, despite the fact that in Minsk and in some cities the protests were initiated by the Coordination Committee that comprised representatives of the political opposition, independent labour unions and civic activists, overall the protests were not led by the Coordination Committee and were spontaneous by nature.

While the cause and the major slogan of the protest was the demand to repeal the Decree No.3, the protesters also demanded Lukashenko's resignation. It is worth mentioning that local authorities who often did not know how to react clearly did not expect the protests to be that significant.

The reaction of central authorities was however quite predictable: the protests were followed by detentions, and further either by arrests or fines. In total around 900 people were detained out of which 239 were arrested and 155 were fined¹¹.

It is also worth mentioning that the detentions were accompanied by violence and procedural violations. In many cases, the protesters were detained by plainclothes police and brought to police stations in civilian transport. The Mission representatives interviewed two young female activists who were brutally taken into custody using such methods. According to the activists, they were detained next to the bus right before the start of a sanctioned protest in Minsk on 15 March. None of the people who detained them introduced themselves or explained the reason for the detention. The process of detention and the indictment was accompanied by serious violations. Namely, in the protocol of detention it was mentioned that the inspection of the detained activist's personal belongings took place

¹⁰ Протестная весна в Беларуси. Все "Марши нетунеядцев" в одной инфографике. 16.03.2017, <https://news.tut.by/society/535509.html>

¹¹ Кого и как задерживали и наказывали за "Марши нетунеядцев", 17.03.2017, <https://news.tut.by/society/535615.html>

in presence of witnesses; however there were no witnesses during the inspection. The police refused to provide any information on names of the detained to human rights defenders and lawyers. There were also cases when the police confiscated apartment keys of some of the activists and conducted the search of the premises while they were detained.

The court hearings were also accompanied by serious violations, the cases were largely based on the police testimony and in many cases repeated one another word by word with time difference only. The wording of the protocols was also similar and repeated both the description of 'illegal' activities and statements of witnesses. Even though the cases were identical, one of the activist was sentenced to 13 and the other one to 14 days of imprisonment. The activists explained the one-day difference as a 'punishment' for using the right to have a lawyer. It is also worth mentioning that the period of detention was accompanied by violations, such as refusal to provide medical care for activists on hunger strike, refusal to take prisoners for the daily walks, refusal to provide writing materials, etc.

Since several informal student organisations, as well as youth and students in general were involved in protests, the authorities used the sanctions against students as another mechanism to put pressure on activists. Several students were expelled from their universities. This pressure was characterized by Belarusian higher education experts as 'double victimisation' since after the detention, fines and arrests, these young people were also punished by their universities' administrations. These precedents demonstrate violations of the commitments on the provision of university autonomy undertaken within the framework of the Higher Education Roadmap by the Belarusian authorities.

In light of the above mentioned it can be stated that all people who have been put under administrative arrest after detention during protests in Minsk and other cities of the country were prosecuted because of their political position, while their detention was unsubstantiated since their behaviour did not constitute an offence. Multiple procedural violations during both detention and court hearings were aimed at hindering the exercise of the freedom of assembly. Therefore, these people can be considered political prisoners.

Another significant aspect of the protest days was the **violations of the freedom of the press**. The Belarus Association of Journalists has observed 123 cases of violations of rights of journalists, out of which there were 94 detentions, 6 cases of physical violence against

journalists by police, 3 cases of damaging the equipment and 40 cases of administrative prosecution.¹²

Mission members interviewed a representative of Belsat TV - Polish-based satellite television channel, who was detained three times in three days and fined. The authorities used the fact that Belsat TV journalists do not have press accreditation in Belarus. Despite the fact that the news agency registered its development of media content activities the court always ruled in favour of prosecution. According to the representatives of media the most significant violations of the freedom of the press since 2011 were aimed at intimidating the representatives of independent media and excluding any possibility of information dissemination about protests both within the country and worldwide.

In parallel with violent and brutal violations of freedom of assembly, freedom of media and freedom of movement, the authorities of Belarus have initiated a process of 'demonization' of protests via connecting them with "a group of armed people who planned to initiate armed mass riots".

On Tuesday, 21 March Lukashenko announced that the security services had identified and arrested a group of armed people who were planning a mass riot in Belarus. He also said that he suspected some force, "the fifth column" trying to destabilize the country and organise 'a colour revolution'. The announcement of the Belarusian President was followed by arrests. Later the same day the Belarusian KGB announced the arrests of 26 activists of the "White Legion" and "Young front". A criminal case in relation to training and preparation for participation in mass riots (Article 293-3 of the Criminal Code) was launched. Another important aspect of this case is the fact that "White Legion" had announced its dissolution in 2008 and according to all the interviewees ceased its activities even earlier.

On the eve of the 'Freedom Day' planned for 25 March in Minsk the Belarusian President made several other statements that presented the official version of the events in Belarus. The statements on the US and German financial support through Poland and Lithuania, military camps in Lithuania and Ukraine where Belarusian militants are being trained, as well as statements on the impossibility of the Maidan in Belarus were probably addressed towards two possible audiences - the Belarusian society (aimed at preventing participation

¹² Рэпрэсіі супраць журналістаў у Беларусі ў 2017 годзе (Табліца, абнаўляецца). 22.03.2017.
<https://baj.by/be/analytics/represii-suprac-zhurnalistau-u-belarusi-u-2017-godze-tablica-abnauulyaeccca>

of a larger number of people in the Freedom March) and to the Russian authorities (aimed at demonstrating the commitment of Belarus to its partnership with Russia).

Even though Russia was not directly involved in the events in Belarus in March 2017, several experts and opposition representatives who met with the Mission members mentioned that President Lukashenko is currently in a quite problematic situation since the authoritarian government is failing and the incumbent President has less resources for effective preservation of his power. On the other hand, Lukashenko understands that there is a certain red line of sovereignty that he cannot cross, since that would lead him to total dependence on Russia. There were also apprehensions that the next step of Russian presence in Belarus may take the form of a dislocation of a significant number of military units in the country.

The events provoked a number of reactions from both Belarusian and international actors. In the [statement issued on 17 March 17th the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform](#) expressed their indignation and condemned the repressive actions by the officials and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Belarus related to the detention and prosecution of participants in numerous peaceful protests in various cities of the country¹³.

Another statement was issued [jointly by the EaP CSF, European Youth Forum and International Partnership for Human Rights \(IPHR\) on the Recent Developments in Belarus](#). The statement strongly condemned the large-scale detentions of peaceful protesters in Minsk and other cities of Belarus during the Freedom Day demonstrations on 25 March. The statement called upon EU institutions, EU member states and international organisations “to make the future cooperation with Belarusian government conditional on the progress in the field of human rights; to support Belarusian civil society in its efforts to document human rights violations and to provide assistance to the victims; as well as to support the extension of the mandate for the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus during the Human Rights Council session in June 2017”¹⁴.

On 25 March the [statement by the EEAS Spokesperson](#) on the events in the run up to and during the Freedom Day in Belarus was issued, stating that “such repression of freedom of expression and assembly is in contradiction with Belarus’ stated policy of democratisation

¹³ Belarusian Civil Society Condemns Arrests, Calls on Authorities to Immediately Release Peaceful Protesters. 17.03.2017. <http://eap-csf.eu/index.php/2017/03/17/belarusian-civil-society-condemns-arrests-calls-on-authorities-to-immediately-release-peaceful-protesters/>

¹⁴ Joint Statement on the Recent Developments in Belarus by the EaP CSF, European Youth Forum and IPHR. 29.03.2017, <http://eap-csf.eu/index.php/2017/03/29/joint-statement-on-the-recent-developments-in-belarus/>

and its international commitments”¹⁵. The US Embassy in Minsk has also issued a [statement](#) reacting to the repressions during the Freedom Day noting the Belarusian authorities had failed allowing peaceful demonstration.¹⁶

On 6 April the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#)¹⁷ condemning the crackdown on peaceful protesters and the repressions in the run-up to and during the demonstrations of 25 March 2017.

4. Post-protest situation in Belarus

Since the Mission visit was organised immediately after the wave of protests, the situation in Belarus was mainly reactive with civil society, human rights activists, and political opposition working on short-term issues aimed at mobilising resources to address consequences of repressions. Namely organisational activities to collect and analyse statistics, provide legal aid for the detained and arrested, collect money for their families were being implemented. It should be mentioned though that the civil society in Belarus often lacked organisational, communication and financial resources to fully address these issues. Considering the situation, the civil society in Belarus had not have enough time to deeply reflect on what had happened and discuss possible strategies for the future. It should be mentioned that the period during and after the protests was accompanied by the demonstration of solidarity within the Belarusian society.

The situation in post-protest Belarus has deteriorated due to the continuous repressions. On 31 March the police entered two offices of Belsat TV and confiscated the equipment, later the same day the prosecutor’s office condemned the detained activists including former representatives of the White Legion and members of the Civic Front.

¹⁵ Events in the run up to and during today’s Freedom Day in Belarus. 25.03.2017.

https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/23471/events-run-and-during-todays-freedom-day-belarus_en

¹⁶ Statement of the United States Embassy in Minsk on the Prevention of Freedom Day Demonstrations. 25.03.2017. <https://by.usembassy.gov/statement-united-states-embassy-minsk-prevention-freedom-day-demonstrations/>

¹⁷ European Parliament resolution of 06 April 2017 on the situation in Belarus (2017/2647(RSP)). <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0126+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

However, several important events stimulated the reflective process among the civil society leaders of Belarus. Prior to the meeting the EU-Belarus Coordination Group, the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform has issued a [statement](#) calling for postponement of the meeting planned for 3-4 April in Minsk. The rejection of this suggestion created the necessity to formulate major points to be addressed to the European Union. The top three priorities were to exclude the possibility of politically motivated imprisonment in Belarus, to formulate conditionality as a key principle of EU-Belarus talks, to prioritise concrete reforms in the sphere of human rights (freedom of assembly, freedom of media and improvement of the legal environment for CSOs and political parties) as an important part of the EU-Belarus agenda.

Please note: Despite the fact that sanctions are considered to be one of the major tools that EU can use in relation to the Belarusian authorities none of the interviewees recommended to use any other sanctions than targeted individual sanctions against representatives of police, prosecutor's office, and judges involved in the human rights violations.

Recommendations

of the EaP CSF Monitoring Mission on the civil society, media and human rights situation in Belarus

In light of the above mentioned, the Monitoring Mission has developed recommendations to the major stakeholders of the EU-Belarus dialogue - the EU (including the relevant EU institutions and EU Member States), the civil society of Belarus (including the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform, other CSOs and independent labour unions), the EaP CSF (including EaP CSF Steering Committee, Working Groups (WGs) 1 (Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability), 4 (Contacts between people), and 5 (Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue); National Platforms), as well as Belarusian authorities.

1. Recommendations to the EU institutions and Member states

- It is extremely important to make sure that **no cases of politically motivated imprisonment occur** in Belarus, since this would mean that the situation is “back to square one”.
- In order to improve the internal situation in the country and bridge the gap between the authorities and the society it is recommended to increase the pressure from the EEU side so that the authorities finally **put an end to the criminal prosecution related to riot charges**.
- In the context of the EU-Belarus relations, it is important to ensure that Belarusian authorities adhere to their reform commitments, which means that a number of preliminary steps must be taken as a demonstration of good will by the government. These concrete steps could, for instance, include the **legal registration of Viasna Human Rights Center, accreditation of Belsat TV in Belarus, etc.**
- It is extremely important to have a special rapporteur position within the EU institutions that would have the mandate of following the developments in Belarus and periodically report on the developments. This is important particularly since according to the representatives of the Belarusian civil society the reports by the Council of Europe Rapporteur on Belarus do not fully reflect the situation in the

country. Thus, it is recommended to appoint a **Special Rapporteur on Belarus in the European Parliament** who will have the mandate to follow up on the developments in Belarus. It is also recommended to promote the access to the developments on the ground for the **UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus** and support the extension of his mandate during the Human Rights Council session in June 2017

- The EU-Belarus relations strategy should be built on the **conditionality approach and result oriented reform activities**, i.e. the deliverables should be well defined and clearly articulated. Such approach would mean that the split of one EU-Belarus cooperation agenda into two separate agendas - political and economic - is unacceptable. The EU-Belarus cooperation strategy should comprise a package of interconnected and mutually conditioned economic and political reforms, with a **clear participatory and monitoring mandate for the civil society**, and with the **institutional involvement of the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform**.
- During the meetings of the **EU-Belarus Coordination Group** the EU should permanently raise the set of topics related to providing fundamental freedoms in Belarus (including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of association) and ensure that they are included into the Partnership Priorities.
- The EU support to economic and infrastructure development of Belarus should be conditional on several **key reforms in the sphere of human rights and democratisation**. The key points of the democratisation reforms that cannot be subject to bargaining at any time in negotiations should include the following:
 - a. Revision of the NGO law improving the process of registration for NGOs and foundations;
 - b. Withdrawal of the regulation on foreign assistance registration by NGOs and foundations;
 - c. Revision of the Law on Mass Events in order to improve exercising freedom of assembly;
 - d. Revision of the process for the registration and accreditation of foreign media;

- e. Withdrawal of the unconstitutional by nature Decree No.3, as well as Decrees No.5 and No.29 violating labour rights and establishing political control over employees;
 - f. Withdrawal of Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code on illegal organisation of activities of a public association, religious organisation or foundation or participation in those activities;
 - g. Improvement of the procedure for political parties' registration, as well as improvement of legislation on elections in line with international standards;
 - h. Decriminalisation of the illegal entrepreneurial activity, since this article is often used as a tool to control and put pressure on SMEs and NGOs.
- It is of high importance to ensure that Belarus is genuinely implementing commitments it has undertaken, in particular within the framework of the **Belarus Roadmap for Higher Education Reform**. The recent events have shown that the lack of university autonomy is used as a means of putting pressure on those students who participated in the protests. The restrictive legislation effectively rendering NGOs registration impossible, as well as Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code create serious threats for **unregistered student organisations**.
 - In order to ensure that all the activities are fully implemented and result oriented, the principle of conditionality, as well as all the deliverables and their conditions should be formulated in a **Roadmap to serve as a formal basis for the future negotiations on the Framework Agreement between the EU and Belarus**. The same approach should be applied during the negotiations on **Partnership Priorities between the EU and Belarus**, so that the Roadmap could be used as the implementation plan for Partnership Priorities.
 - In order to ensure effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the above-mentioned recommendations, it is crucial that the **civil society becomes the partner integrated in this process starting from the stage of planning**. This will allow for a more transparent process of the Roadmap development and implementation, as well as raising public trust in the process and commitments.
 - It is crucial to continue supporting the Belarusian civil society both from the side of the EU institutions and EU Member States. This support should specifically target CSO

networks, platforms, as well as regional organisations. **This support should be addressed to genuine civil society actors**, not GONGOs directly affiliated with authorities, and in its implementation should take into account existing unfavourable sociopolitical environment for civil society in Belarus. The support should be oriented towards capacity building, communication, monitoring activities, as well as civil society involvement in policy dialogue between the EU and Belarus.

2. Recommendations to the Belarusian government authorities

(**Please note:** due to the fact that the Mission did not meet with any representatives of the Belarusian authorities, this set of recommendations is of a declarative nature)

- Immediately **release all detained activists**;
- **Repeal** the Decree No.3;
- **Withdraw** the article 193-1 from the Criminal Code, due to its unconstitutional nature and stifling impact on civil society;
- **Improve the process** of accreditation for journalists;
- **Amend** the Law on Mass Events; **improve the legislation** on registration and financing NGOs and foundations;
- **Decriminalise** the illegal entrepreneurial activity, which is often used as a means to control and put pressure on SMEs and NGOs;
- **Implement the commitments** within the framework of the Higher Education Roadmap, as well as other international commitments (Aarhus Convention, Convention on the Rights of people with Disabilities etc.) in an effective, timely and transparent manner;
- **Involve genuine civil society** in the EU-Belarus dialogue on an institutional level, as well as in process of planning, implementation and monitoring of the reforms in the country;
- **Establish closer and more regular bilateral consultations** between the MFA and the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform on the entire spectrum of the EU-Belarus relations that are of mutual interest;
- **Develop mechanisms** of citizen's participation in decision-making process (public-advisory councils, public hearings etc.); **improve transparency and accountability** for the activity of ministries, other state institutions and decision-making bodies.

3. Recommendations to the EaP CSF (including CSF Steering Committee, WGs 1 (Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability) and 4 (Contacts between people), and 5 (Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue); EaP CSF National Platforms)

- Implement activities aimed at **demonstrating solidarity** with the Belarusian civil society (National Platforms and Working Groups), such as statements by National Platforms on the situation with human rights and civil liberties in Belarus;
- **Address the demands and recommendations** of the Belarusian National Platform (BY NP) on the situation with human rights and civil society in Belarus to the decision-makers in the EU (Steering Committee and Secretariat);
- Follow up on the developments in Belarus with the key EU stakeholders, and **promote the BY NP priorities for the EU-Belarus agenda** (Steering Committee and Secretariat);
- Develop effective mechanisms of **disseminating information within the CSF** (Steering Committee and Secretariat);
- **Involve Belarusian partners in projects** reflecting key priorities of the EU-Belarus agenda (CSF members);
- Use all possible networks to **disseminate information about the situation in Belarus** (CSF Members);
- Support, whenever possible, **capacity building activities for Belarusian civil society**, particularly related to institutional capacity, strategy development, advocacy and watchdogging;
- Institutionalise within the CSF **the mechanism of monitoring missions as a regular working tool**, including the development of the CSF monitoring methodology and creation of a pool of trained experts for future missions.

About the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, visit www.eap-csf.eu