



Newsletter #29 (June 12-27)

Quote of the day

"Not to fear and be free is real happiness".

Natalya Gorbanevskaya, poet and Soviet dissident in an interview with the Charter'97 web-site, June 21, 2006

In Focus

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) **summits** were held in Minsk on June 23 and attended by heads of state of the former Soviet republics of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, chose the occasion to rejoin CSTO, from which Uzbekistan has been absent for 7 years.
<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.html?DocID=685133&IssueId=30129>

17-25 June Belarusian and Russian military forces conducted **weeklong maneuvers**, the biggest-ever joint military exercise.
<http://en.rian.ru/world/20060622/49897916.html>

Hundreds of thousands of people in Belarus and all over the world marked the **Day of Belarusian Solidarity** on June 16 for the 9th time. In Minsk, more than 100 people came to the Russian Embassy to protest against Russia's support for Alyaksandr Lukashenka's regime. The rally was brutally dispersed with 45 participants arrested. (<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/16/50>) Citizens of Brest, Mahilyou, Salihorsk, Maladzechna, Zhodzina, Baranavichy, Vitsebsk, Svetlahorsk and other Belarusian cities took to the streets and lit candles of solidarity. Demonstrations were held in front of Belarusian and Russian Embassies in Ukraine, Poland, Belgium, Russia, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, the USA and other countries.
(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/19/solidarn>)

On June 19, the US government imposed **sanctions against Alyaksandr Lukashenka** and a number of high-ranking officials. All their assets on US territory will be frozen. Americans are also forbidden from doing business with these representatives of the Belarusian leadership.
(<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.html?docId=683950>)

Alyaksandr Lukashenka thinks it's possible to establish **constructive cooperation with the EU** on condition that Europe abandons its "dictatorial" attitude to the Belarusian government.
(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/15/europa>)

On June 16, during a visit to the newly opened National Library, Alyaksandr Lukashenka called Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin "**symbols of our nation**". "We are encouraged to forget everything great done by those people, but they are symbols of our nation," Lukashenka stated.
(http://naviny.by/ru/content/rubriki/1-ya_gruppa/obschestvo/16-06-06-2/)

Civil Society in Action

Dozens of pieces of graffiti and ribbons with the slogan **"No to Russian military in Belarus!"** emerged in Minsk in June.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/20/arms>)

On June 17, activists from youth democratic movements ended **hunger strike** protests started on May 29. Other forms of protest actions will continue.

(<http://www.mfront.net/spynenne.html>)

Peaceful protest actions continue in Belarus. On June 13, activists of the "Otpor" group displayed a banner: "Belarusian TV lies to us!" and a national white-red-white flag on a bridge over a traffic area.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/15/ptoto>) **Flash-mobs** in support of participants of the hunger strike that lasted from May 29 to June 17, were held daily. (<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/15/minsk>);

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/12/bt>)

In June, a Belarusian **"Free Theater"** project took part in a festival called "New European Drama" in Wiesbaden (Germany).

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/culture/2006/6/BE154A4B-775B-498F-A1B8-0523F30D6190.html>)

In June, protests in support of the **arrested former presidential candidate** Alyaksandr Kazulin continued in Minsk. During the rallies more than 30,000 citizens signed an address with a demand to release Alyaksandr Kazulin.

(<http://kozylin.com/node/1736>)

...despite the repressions

On June 18-19, dozens of young activists were **detained in Vitsebsk** for handing out leaflets and making graffiti.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/society/2006/6/DF441700-B6E3-4669-A967-C712B40C6043.html>) On March 19, three of them were fined. A young

activist called Ivan Spirin was sentenced to 15 days in jail.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/20/15>)

On June 19, Krystsina Shatsikava was **beaten up by policemen** and then fined 4,650,000 roubles for putting up a national flag in the center of Vitsebsk.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/19/flag>)

On June 19, political prisoner Mikalay Autukhovich was **charged with new offences**. Now Autukhovich is also charged with business activities without having registration or a licence.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/xml/articles/2006/06/0F60DFDC-B84F-411D-A122-FF902EC26DF1.html>)

In June, examination of the case of arrested activists of the civic election monitoring initiative "Partnerstva" -- Tsimafei Dranchuk, Enira Branitskaya, Mikalay Astrejka and Alyaksandr Shalaljka -- was **extended for a month**.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/xml/articles/2006/06/9138480B-8DC1-47ED-A436-2BBDEF31C2E.html>)

On June 15, union activist Mikalay Rozumau was sentenced to **3 years corrective labor**. Rozumau was charged with violation of article 367 of the Criminal Code -- libeling the president of the Republic of Belarus. At a meeting with Alyaksandr Milinkevich Rozumau said that Lukashenka had been involved in the disappearances of opposition leaders.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/xml/articles/2006/06/14592EF7-E669-4074-B521-012BF84D75C3.html>)

Belarus and the International Community

On June 20, the leader of the democratic forces of Belarus Alyksandr Milinkevich **visited Brussels**. He met with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, heads of the two largest factions of the European Parliament – the leader of the European People's Party Hans-Gert Poettering, and the leader of the Party of European Socialists Martin Schulz; vice-presidents of the European Parliament Jacek Saryusz-Wolski and Edward McMillan-Scott; the president of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs Elmar Brok and representatives of the office of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/06/5f0cfed9-6cbd-4eda-b06c-2a51394d448a.html>)

In June, Belarus was visited by the **Sudanese Minister of Defence** Gen. Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein. During the visit Sudan and Belarus inked a military cooperation protocol covering training, exchange of experiences, and military science fields. The Sudanese Minister of Defence expressed the intention to continue cooperation with the Military Forces of Belarus. Belarus has exported weapons and military hardware to Sudan since 1996. (<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/16/sudan>)

On June 15, ten more countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Macedonia, Romania, Norway, Serbia and Croatia) agreed to implement the **financial sanctions** put in place by the EU against 36 high-ranking Belarusian officials.

(<http://grani.ru/Politics/World/Europe/m.107320.html>)

On June 13, **Freedom House published its annual report** on the EU's eastern neighbours. It said the state of democracy and civil society in Belarus has deteriorated in almost all spheres.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/xml/articles/2006/06/0A1E8DE0-FD3C-4D51-9848-59A271D1B563.html>)

On June 14, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Living History Forum gave **awards to two Belarusian human rights activists**, Tatsyana Ravyaka and Ales Bialatski.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/06/13/uvaga>)

The visa department of the general Consulate of Poland in Hrodna **denied an entry visa** to the head of the ideology department of Hrodna regional executive committee Uladzimir Amelka and a journalist of the ONT Channel Mikalay Melyachenka.

(<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2053218,00.html>)

During the **EU-US Summit** on 21 June both sides expressed their support for the democratic aspirations of the people of Belarus and condemned the use of violence.

<http://www.eurunion.org/partner/summit/20060621sum.htm>

Dates



100 years ago, on 27th July 1906, Jerzy Giedroyc was born in Minsk. He was a political writer and journalist, founder and editor of the Paris-based journal "Kultura" (1947) and of the Instytut Literacki (Literary Institute) in Rome. The "Kultura" monthly became an institution, the most important European voice of the Polish emigre community. Its pages carried statements on Polish cultural and political life. Jerzy Giedroyc was a member of the editorial board of the journal of Russian dissidents "The Continent". In July 2005, in a tribute to this distinguished Pole and to the opus of

his life, the Polish Sejm proclaimed 2006 - the centenary of 'Kultura' editor's birth - The Year of Jerzy Giedroyc.

"Our main goal should be normalizing relationships with Russia and Germany, exerted together with defense of the independence of Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, and with close cooperation with them," he wrote in his autobiography.

In June a conference to mark Jerzy Giedroyc's centenary was held in Minsk.

Must read

Bush looking for new partner in East Europe

By Judy Dempsey, International Herald Tribune

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/06/21/news/hungary.php>

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