

BELARUS

NATIONAL PLATFORM IN FOCUS: 2013-2014



Despite the complicated social and political environment in Belarus and difficulties to establish any productive dialogue with the government, the Belarusian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Platform proceeded with its activities and achieved results in the area of education and dissemination of the European values. In 2013-2014 the platform worked intensively on the integration of the Belarusian higher education system into Bologna process and participated in the implementation of European Dialogue on Modernization.

BOLOGNA COMMITTEE MOVES THE EDUCATION FORWARD

Belarusian national platform had been taking advantage of the advocacy possibilities available. The most promising case of advocacy is the emergence and the activity of Belarusian Public Bologna Committee, which acts on the basis of the National platform and unites more than 10 civil society organizations and experts in higher education. Its aim is to develop a roadmap on integration of the Belarusian higher education in the Bologna process, unites experts and the civil society organizations.

The Committee succeeded to achieve development of Alternative Report on the state of the Belarusian higher education, which was included in the agenda of the Bologna process summit in 2012, along with an official report of the Ministry of Education of Belarus. As a result of it, the accession of Belarus to the Bologna process was postponed for two more years and conditioned by series of reforms and non-use of higher education as a tool of political repression.

In the period of 2012-2013 the Bologna Committee implemented monitoring of academic freedoms violations in Belarus aimed at retrieving the actual information about the situation on academic freedoms in Belarusian higher education institutions. It also held open round tables for specialists and preparation of the White book of reforms in sphere of the higher education.

BELARUS IN A EUROPEAN WAY

The members of the Belarusian national platform have participated in the European Dialogue on Modernization by taking active part in consultations and meetings of the working groups and providing proposals on restructuring the Dialogue with introduction of a stakeholder component. The National Platform discussed the alternatives of the development of the European Dialogue on Modernization with Belarusian society as it is one of the important initiatives which in a combination with the Eastern Partnership can make essential impact on the development of Belarus-European relations.

Following this intention the national platform addressed the letter to EU delegation with expression of interest of the National platform to be involved into activities of the dialogue coordination group as one of key stakeholders. The platform has published the position paper "How to increase the transformational potential of the European Dialogue on Modernization with Belarusian society?", which is a result of numerous discussions among civil society organizations that hope to contribute to the European Dialogue on Modernization.

In 2012-2014 the national platform succeeded to communicate its position on some important social and political developments in Belarus and its cooperation with the EU. It released statements on such issues as series of repressive actions from the side of the Belarusian authorities in relation to Belarusian civil society organizations and issuing of non-grata status to Belarusian anti-nuclear activists by the Republic of Lithuania.

Belarusian National Platform actively reacted to the events in the southern neighbor of Belarus. Among the adopted 14 statements, 6 documents were devoted to the situation in Ukraine. The round table "Ukraine today: what we can and should do in this situation?" was conducted in March 2014.

