

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE BELARUSIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The Council of Europe supports **Belarusian democratic forces and civil society** through targeted technical co-operation aimed at preserving democratic capacity, promoting European human rights standards, and preparing the ground for a future democratic transition.

Following the suspension of co-operation with the authorities in Minsk in 2022, assistance was refocused on democratic actors in exile and is structured through the **Council of Europe Contact Group on co-operation with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society**, established by the Committee of Ministers the same year.

Under the action plan 2024-2025, **2 million euros** were secured in funding, representing **49% of the financing needs** (4.1 million euros). **18 Council of Europe member states and the European Union supported financially the co-operation programme**. Donors (in descending order according to the volume of their financial contributions) are the European Union, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Lithuania, France, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Denmark, Czech Republic, Latvia, Norway, Estonia, and Cyprus.

A new **action plan for 2026–2027** was approved by the Contact Group on 12 December 2025, with 20 priority activities to be implemented. Continued engagement from Council of Europe member states will be key to consolidating results and enabling this next phase of technical co-operation with Belarusian democratic forces.

WHY YOUR INVOLVEMENT MATTERS

Your support enables the Council of Europe to remain **a reliable partner for Belarusian democratic forces and civil society**, delivering concrete results despite difficult political and security conditions. This co-operation:

- preserves and strengthens knowledge of European standards;
- builds resilient networks in exile;
- prepares the ground for a future democratic Belarus rooted in human rights, democracy and the rule of law.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONTACT GROUP ON BELARUS SCAN THE QR CODE**



IMPACT OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE WORK WITH BELARUSIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES AND CIVIL SOCIETY



DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE AND INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

First-ever participation in Council of Europe bodies. For the first time in the Organisation's history, delegations of Belarusian democratic forces participated in 2025 in sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, enabling direct engagement with parliamentarians and local elected representatives from across Europe.



PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

A concrete step towards abolition. Council of Europe-supported expert dialogue and capacity building contributed to the adoption of a Memorandum on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Belarus by the Belarusian Coordination Council in June 2025, committing to constitutional and legislative change in line with European standards.

Strengthening legal expertise in exile. Belarusian lawyers enhanced their knowledge of the European Convention on Human Rights, ensuring continuity of legal expertise despite exile.

BUILDING DEMOCRATIC CAPACITY IN EXILE

Professional placement programme – a first-of-its-kind initiative. Four Belarusian legal professionals were hosted within different Council of Europe entities in 2025, contributing their expertise while gaining hands-on experience with European democratic standards.

PROMOTING EQUALITY AND FREE MEDIA

Advancing equality and gender-responsive leadership. Belarusian activists and democratic actors strengthened their capacities in anti-discrimination and gender equality policymaking, supported by Belarusian-language materials and peer exchanges aligned with Council of Europe standards.

Supporting independent media in exile. Belarusian journalists received targeted support to strengthen ethical reporting, safety and outreach. Journalists participated in Council of Europe events and produced documentaries, podcasts and reports amplifying human rights and democracy-related content for Belarusian audiences.