



The Project is funded
by the European Union

EUROEAST CULTURE

RMCB Unit

**Eastern Partnership Culture Programme
Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit
(RMCBU)**

EuropeAid Contract No 2010/255-219

**ANALYTICAL BASE-LINE REPORT ON THE CULTURE SECTOR
AND CULTURAL POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

**Studies and Diagnostics on Cultural Policies
of the Eastern Partnership Countries**

This Report has been prepared by the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme:

Mr. Terry Sandell, RMCBU Expert

Ms. Olga Klip, RMCBU Expert

Mr. Luciano Gloor, RMCBU Team Leader

Ms. Tetiana Biletska, RMCBU Capacity Building Expert

August 2012

(revised January 2013)

This report has been produced with assistance of the European Union. The content of this report is the sole responsibility of the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme. It reflects the opinion of contributing experts and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

The RMCBU Project is implemented by the Consortium led by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in partnership with HYDEA S.p.A. (Italy) and RWTH Aachen University (Germany).

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Preface.....	5
1. Background to the Cultural Situation in the Eastern Partnership Countries.....	7
2. Some Main Features of Culture and Cultural Development in Belarus.....	10
3. Research Survey.....	12
3.1. Context / Climate.....	12
3.1.1. Legislation, tax, registration and employment issues affecting culture. The degree to which these issues are supporting the development of culture and creativity.....	12
3.1.2. Transparency and Corruption.....	14
3.1.3. Provision and Dissemination of Official and Public Information.....	14
3.1.4. Integration of Cultural Policies in Other Policies and Strategies.....	15
3.1.5. Accountability and Openness in Practice.....	15
3.1.6. Contribution of the Cultural Sector.....	16
3.1.7. Role of Independent and NGO Sectors.....	16
3.1.8. Role of Private and Commercial Sectors.....	17
3.1.9. National Conventional and Electronic Media and Interest of Dedicated Publications in Culture and Cultural Issues.....	18
3.1.10. Urban-Rural Differences Related to Culture, Cultural Provision and Cultural Access.....	19
3.1.11. Language Issues.....	19
3.2. Creation/Production and Preservation/Restoration.....	20
3.2.1. Relative importance given in national cultural policy and practice (e.g. funding) to contemporary cultural creation.....	20
3.2.2. Description of the environment in which the different types of cultural and artistic creation/production take place.....	21
3.2.3. Creativity.....	21
3.2.4. Heritage.....	21
3.2.5. Restoration Resources and Capacities.....	22
3.2.6. UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.....	23
3.3. Cultural Provision/Research/Professional Training and.....	23
Transmission/ Dissemination/Connectivity/Digitalization.....	23
3.3.1. General Environment.....	23
3.3.2. Professional Training.....	24
3.3.3. Internet Use and Connectivity.....	24
3.3.4. Digitalization Projects.....	25
3.4. Access and Education.....	25
3.4.1. Access.....	25
3.4.2. Education.....	26
3.5. Participation and Audience Development.....	26
3.5.1. Participation Statistics.....	26
3.5.2. Audience Development.....	27
4. Main Outcomes of the RMCBU Research Visit to the Country.....	28
Lists of Sources.....	31
Bibliography of printed/web publications on cultural policy and the cultural sector of Belarus.....	31
Web-pages:.....	33
Annex 1. SWOT Assessment by National Stakeholders of Cultural Policy and Priority Needs of the Cultural Domain of Belarus.....	34
Summary.....	34
Quantitative analysis.....	37
Qualitative analysis.....	41
Annex 2. Background – Belarus in an Historical Context.....	43

List of abbreviations

Base-line Reports	Analytical Base-line Reports on the Culture Sector and Cultural Policy of the six Eastern Partnership Countries
Belarus	Republic of Belarus
BYR	Belarusian ruble (national monetary unit)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EaP countries	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
EaP region	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
EC	European Commission
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
EU	European Union
Member States	Member States of the European Union
MoC	Ministry of (responsible for) Culture
Regional Research Report	Regional Research Report on Cultural Policies and Trends of the Eastern Partnership Countries
the Programme	Eastern Partnership Culture Programme
the Project	Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme
RMCBU	Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Program
Seminar	Capacity building/training format based on lectures/presentations
SWOT	Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
Workshop	Capacity building/training format based on interactive and case/project-related group work
Needs Assessment 2008	Report on Support to the ENPI East Regional Cooperation on Culture (Contract number 2007/146264) Needs Assessment submitted to the EC in September 2008

Acknowledgements

The Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme wishes to express its gratitude to the EU Delegation to Belarus and particularly to Mr. Llewellyn Edwards, Head of Operations Section for his active participation in the round-table discussion and Mr. Viacheslav Shelegeiko, Project Manager for his efficient support in preparation of the event and the entire research visit to the country that launched the process of diagnostics and studies. The RMCB Unit would also like to thank the Ministry of Culture of Belarus and personally Mr. Mikhail Kazhuro, Head of International Relations Department for assistance in the setting up of the round-table discussion and support in collecting information for this report.

Finally, the RMCB Unit wishes to extend its appreciation to all representatives of major national stakeholders in the EaP Culture Programme: national public authorities and particularly, the Ministry of Culture; representatives of the private sector, professional associations and the civil society as well as independent cultural actors and donor institutions active in the country for their invaluable contributions in preparation of this report:

Aleksandr Adamyants, Aleksey Andreyev, Olga Arkhipova, Tatiana Artimovich, Igor Avdeev, Frank Baumann, Alexander Bogdanov, Marina Borisova, Anna Chistoserdova, Marina Dashuk, Vladimir Denisov, Olga Dmitriyeva, Kristiane Janeke, Dzmitry Karenka, Andrej Khadanovych, Natalya Khvir, Valentina Kiselyova, Pyotr Kozakievich, Seviaryn Kviatkovski, Igor Logvinov, Yury Matiyun, Daria Matyavina, Olga Mironchuk, Natalia Nagibina, Uladimir Parfianok, Victor Petrov, Tatiana Poshevalova, Roman Romanovich, Svetlana Russanova, Olga Rybchinskaya, Sergey Sakharov, Sergey Shabokhin, Ivan Shchadranok, Alicia Shibitskaya, Alexey Shinkarenko, Marina Shukyurova, Andrej Skurko, Alla Stashkevich, Ehor Sursky, Tatiana Vadalazhska, Alyona Zdobnikova, and many others.

Preface

The content of this report is the sole responsibility of the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme and reflects the opinion of contributing experts. It should not be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

The report is intended for a broad range of audiences including all cultural stakeholders in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and European Union.. The report is a result of the *Studies and Diagnostics on Cultural Policies of the Eastern Partnership Countries* carried out by the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme from October 2011 to March 2012 in the six Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The studies focus on the national cultural policies of these countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and are practically oriented to provide strategic guidance to the entire Eastern Partnership Culture Programme and to all activities of the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit (RMCBU).

The results of the research have been presented in the form of a “comprehensive report” comprising:

- *Analytical Base-line Reports on the Culture Sector and Cultural Policy* for each of the six countries;
- *A Regional Research Report on Cultural Policies and Trends of the Eastern Partnership Countries* covering all six countries and identifying priority areas for development in their cultural domains for the period till March 2015.

The country Base-Line Reports elaborated by the RMCBU are subject to further analysis, debate and exchange. By capturing the current situation in the cultural sectors of each country, the six country Base-line Reports will facilitate the tracking of future developments and of the progress of the EaP Culture Programme in general. These reports are primarily based on analysis of country-specific policies and practices against existing international best standards and practices. We will reuse the same indicators from time to time in the course of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme to assess developments and change in the cultural sector. We hope these indicators and country reports will be of value also for the authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries as a tool to evaluate changes in their respective national cultural sectors.

The six Base-line Reports were shared with the national authorities and other stakeholders of the EaP countries at the draft stage and the main conclusions of the Regional Report were presented in Brussels in September 2012 at the Expert Seminar on the Cultural Policy of the Eastern Partnership (Platform 4) and at the First Regional Conference of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme held in Tbilisi, Georgia in October 2012. National authorities have been invited to comment on or contribute with complementary information. Some of the Base-line Reports have been updated based on the information provided by the national authorities during September – November 2012.

The six Base-line Reports in English and national languages and the Regional Research Report in English and Russian are published electronically on the Programme’s website (www.euroeastculture.eu) along with contributions from national authorities, where contributions were addressed to the RMCBU. All stakeholders with interest in cultural matters are invited to use the Programme’s website as a platform for dialogue and to contribute with their feedback and comment to the reports.

It was felt that traditional cultural sector categorisation, for example into sub-sectors, would not be the most appropriate approach for the EaP Programme where a practical focus on results and outcomes is needed. These results and outcomes are going to be related to their contribution to areas such as democratisation, modernisation and reform in the EaP countries rather than in relation to culture/art forms, the research has therefore focused on the following five areas:

- The context/climate for culture in each of the countries;
- Creation and production;
- Provision, transmission and dissemination of culture.
- Issues related to access to culture;
- Cultural participation.

Implicit in this categorisation are questions of democratization and modernization; the degree to which a positive climate for culture and cultural production has – or has not been - achieved; the extent of “openness” in the cultural system; countries’ relative ability to capitalize on current revolutionary developments affecting culture, including digitization, the Internet and changes in how culture is ‘consumed’; how the producers and the consumers of culture relate to each other within the system; and finally, what needs with regard to development, capacity-building and training in the light of these elements there might be.

More information on the context of the regional policy of the European Commission and on current trends in the participating countries relevant for the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme as well as on the analytical criteria applied in the studies, the sources of definition of European and international standards of culture-related policies and on the methodology applied to define main elements and working procedures of the research can be found in the Regional Research Report.

The studies were initiated by six research visits of the Regional Capacity Building and Monitoring Unit to the Eastern Partnership countries in November – December 2011. The results of the visit to Belarus have been presented in Section 4 of this report. It is necessary to mention that, while the *Research Survey* (section 3) presents an overview of the situation in the cultural domain at the national level and within the broader regional EaP context and is based on comparison to international standards and criteria, the RMCBU’s analytical summary on *Main Outcomes of the Research Visit to the Country* (section 4) and especially the *SWOT Assessment by National Stakeholders of Cultural Policy and Priority Needs of the Cultural Sector* (Annex 1) reflect the vision of a wide range of national stakeholders in the Programme.

As the number of respondents who contributed to the *National Stakeholders’ SWOT Assessment on Cultural Policy and Priority Needs of the Sector* was not sufficient to serve as a scientifically reliable basis for analytical research, the resulting SWOT assessment has been attached to the report for information purposes only. It should be nevertheless noted that the SWOT assessment results are in line with the analysis conclusions.

Section 3: *The Research Survey* of the country reports is intended to summarise findings based on factual evidence and published sources. Answers to the questions in the survey have not always been comprehensive, nevertheless we have decided to keep related sections of the survey report intact to preserve coherence across the six reports. Where data and evidence were missing, generally the reports mention, “*No data/information found*” while sometimes it has been necessary to resort to estimates. The number of such cases has been kept to a minimum. In some other cases when searches for information could not be gathered within the timetable for the research, the reports mention, “*No data/information collected*”. It is expected and hoped that improved availability of appropriate information will be more easily available in the future.

This research was led by Mr. Luciano Gloor, RMCBU Team Leader and Ms. Tetiana Biletska, RMCBU Capacity Building Expert. Ms. T. Biletska was also responsible for all stages of practical implementation of the studies and diagnostics, including the collection and analysis of the outcomes of the research visits to the partner countries and final consolidation and editing of the seven reports.

Mr. Terry Sandell, RMCBU Expert provided methodological guidance for the studies, including the development of a system for analysis of the status of cultural sectors in the participating countries, its analytical categories and indicators as well as the structuring of the analytical research based on country reports, instructions to other Experts and drafting or editing Sections 1-3 and Annex 2 of the country reports.

Ms. Olga Klip, RMCBU Expert, was responsible for preparing the analytical research survey presented in Section 3, collecting descriptive and statistical data and carrying out a comparative analysis of criteria and standards.

For more information on the report, its methodology and work conducted please contact
Ms. Tetiana Biletska, RMCBU Capacity Building Expert at tetiana.biletska@euroeastculture.eu
Mr. Luciano Gloor, RMCBU Team Leader at luciano.gloor@euroeastculture.eu

1. Background to the Cultural Situation in the Eastern Partnership Countries

A separate regional report, an adjunct to this country report, places the individual countries in context and outlines wider trends and common issues within the Eastern Partnership region. It will be helpful however to give a little context here as to what was trying to be achieved through the research on Belarus and the approach taken.

Since independence the six Eastern Partnership countries have had to face enormous challenges and problems. As in many European countries, while culture is seen as important, political realities often mean that culture is not given priority for funding. For Belarus and the other countries this has more often than not meant in the area of culture a desperate, reactive, short-term struggle for survival rather than visionary, forward-looking plans. Clinging on to the past, preserving what one can, trying to make the systems and processes work because they are the only ones in place (as well as being familiar) and simply compromising in the hope that one day things will be better has been a natural course to take. It has not been a question of the 'better as an alternative of the good' as much as of the 'bad at least being better than the worst'. The status quo has been less dangerous than the unknown.

Culture and cultural development does not develop in a vacuum and the environment in all the Eastern Partnership countries, quite apart from the economic and funding aspect alluded to above, has in general not been conducive to positive development and change. Inherited political problems and challenges which directly impact on culture, such as the legacy of Soviet linguistic, demographic, territorial and ethnic policies, have created enormous distortions and barriers to peaceful, sustainable development in the cultural area. Diversity, to take one example, is an extremely important factor that needs to be taken fully into account in at least five of the six countries when developing cultural policy. Diversity may well be a cultural blessing but in certain circumstances it can unfortunately be a political curse. Conflict, tensions, lack of trust, the tricks and injustices of history all have slowed up and greatly complicated positive change in these countries.

In addition to this, there have been a myriad of other challenges in all the countries including weak institutional infrastructure, corruption that poisons a society and its values, instability, and sometimes even loss of confidence about the future. Against such a background being a Minister of Culture or the Chair of a Parliamentary Culture and Heritage Committee or a Presidential Adviser on Culture has probably been as frustrating as being a struggling artist, museum curator or librarian.

In recent times though, as far as culture, cultural policy and cultural development are concerned some green shoots are beginning to appear in the region while with the benefit of hindsight one can see that in fact progress really has been made, albeit not as much, nor as fast, as everyone wanted particularly in Belarus where the country's inclination to conservatism and political isolation have been additional handicaps.

While Belarus has not chosen to take or not been able to take steps towards international standards appropriate to its new statehood, its young people and professional class, in particular, are beginning to recognize the benefits of modernization: the exciting new opportunities offered by the communications and digital revolutions currently unfolding, internationalism and globalization, exploration of multiple identities and personal self-actualization and the role and contribution of culture and creativity, in a modern definition, to social, economic and humanitarian agendas and to national, regional and individual development.

Involvement in the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme is as important as a learning exercise, and as potentially fulfilling, for the European Union and its member states as it is for Belarus. This engagement is particularly timely as Belarus is going through an important period of cultural debate and slow but real underlying change related to individual identity/identities, national aspirations and the direction in which the country wishes to develop. It could be argued that this process of learning about and understanding its historical and Soviet past, debating and working out its Belarusian present and developing some kind of appropriate European future is best done in a wider context that the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme and other such programmes offer.

Belarus's contemporary cultural scene is quite lively and with positive developments which are often unnoticed outside the country, where the political dimensions of culture, including censorship and other repressive measures, tend to be the only things that reach the western media. The music scene is as interesting as anywhere, while less developed areas such as contemporary visual arts are passing significant milestones. In the case of the latter the successful functioning of the first real independent/private gallery which is becoming a hub for wider artistic interchange and activity and for public engagement with contemporary art should be mentioned. The same applies to areas such as photography, independent publishing and critical cultural journalism. Belarusian literature and theatre, whether because of censorship or in spite of it, still have the important role they had in Soviet times. The division between 'state' art and independent arts is considerable and significant, but it is interesting to note that the problem in the ex-Soviet countries of the old 'artistic unions' in some areas in Belarus is resolving itself through the emergence of new 'unions' with credibility, an independent Union of Writers being one example.

Human nature being what it is, repression invariably leads to invention and there is no better example of this than use of the Internet in Belarus, particularly in Minsk. The quality and effectiveness of some of the websites related to culture directly or indirectly are striking, while its use as a tool for debate and social interaction and engagement is very sophisticated and advanced.

Against this background the climate for real cultural development is hostile. Cultural and other publications often have an unpredictable sword of Damocles hanging over them, both in terms of censorship interventions and of outright closure. A draconian law relating to right of assembly technically makes it illegal for any artist to perform spontaneously, or an academic to give an informal public lecture to an audience however small. Registration and tax rules are such that responsible people end up operating illegally because they cannot register or because it is simply impossible to function according to the rules. The fact that the important Belarusian European Humanities University, currently celebrating its twentieth anniversary, was expelled and had to move from Minsk to Vilnius in 2004 needs no comment.

The commitment of most Belarusian professionals often overcomes the seriously unhelpful political and administrative environment and produces positive change, even sometimes in the state sector. A recent revamping of the Belarusian Ministry of Culture's website, which is now in Belarusian as well as in Russian, with its attempt to convey much more information than in the past, is perhaps an example of this.

This in fact brings into focus what this research was trying to achieve and the approach taken. Green shoots, cultivation, planting ideas, sowing seeds are more than simply appropriate gardening metaphors when talking about culture and cultural development. In fact, culture and gardening terminology effortlessly and directly translates from the one to the other and back again: 'culture' and 'cultures', diversity (bio/cultural), 'climate', organic growth, 'fertile soil', 'cross-fertilization', even, dare one include it, 'pruning'. The research survey implicitly uses the gardening metaphor to try to examine the environment in which culture is being nurtured and grown in the countries and in the region as a whole. It seeks to identify a general baseline of the factors which might be inhibiting cultural development and which are not simply matters that are related to funding which is always going to be a problem.

Important improvements can always be made, if there is a political environment which allows this, and do not always depend on budgets but more often simply depend on knowledge, leadership, system improvement, experimentation or fresh approaches. Certain aspects of modernization in areas such as museums or libraries are an example - customer-focused services and customer care may be as much to do with updating staff attitudes and perceptions as budgets.

One cannot expect any state young or old, neither the maturing recent 'teenagers' of the Eastern Partnership still in the early period of their independence, nor the mature and sometimes old EU member states now in a time of economic and financial upheaval, to guarantee ever-increasing budgets for culture nor to support every artist and worthwhile cultural initiative, nor even to understand totally the creativity and cultural complexity of their societies. What one can expect of all states that value European standards or identity, however, and this is the thrust of the research and its implicit expectations for the future, is that like a good 19th century gardener - French, German, Belarusian or whatever - they still know how to grow things. That where culture and cultural development are concerned, they know how

to take account of the climate, to take actions in relation to the weather, to nurture but not interfere unnecessarily, to deal with 'weeds' if they really do threaten to strangle generally healthy growth and individual plants. One can reasonably expect that they metaphorically water the garden while making best use of the rain and they make provision for times of drought. Last but not least they should give real attention to the question of access to culture with the state, the independent and the commercial sectors helping everybody to enter and enjoy the 'garden', with the state having already provided the conditions for healthy independent and commercial sectors to emerge.

Rich or poor, big or small, the challenge then is for governments to be the 'grower' and 'facilitator' of culture. Measuring by that yardstick significantly creates a more level 'playing field' where real achievement and comparisons can be made across Europe and not depend solely on GDP or the amount allocated to cultural budgets. In terms of the state sector, this can be neatly summarized in English as having Ministries *for* Culture rather than traditional Ministries *of* Culture.

The research survey and related work aims also to identify needs especially those that may be particularly relevant for the development of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme and the work of the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit.

Certain themes and needs are emerging from the research including:

- (i) Identifying who can produce the 'green shoots' and how these individuals, groups and organizations can be better supported;
- (ii) Defining what kind of leadership is going to be needed at all levels in the cultural sector;
- (iii) Highlighting the key elements required for cultural policy and cultural strategies which will bring modernization and allow culture, cultural policy and cultural activity to contribute dynamically to human development, social and economic policies and agendas;
- (iv) Facilitating access to culture, overcoming divides, such as the urban-rural divide and harnessing culture to modern values and aspirations, especially those of young people;
- (v) Balancing support for the preservation of the past with support for the creativity of the future;
- (vi) Recognizing the potential and revolutionary impact of communications and new technologies in terms of access, cultural consumption, cultural identity and personal self-actualization;
- (vii) Taking into account and maximizing the synergy between cultural players at state, regional, municipal, local, commercial and independent/NGO levels at practical and policy levels so that all the available resources related to culture can be effectively used;
- (viii) Sharing positive experience and knowledge in a diverse and confusing world where the tools have changed in a revolutionary way but people perhaps do not change so quickly in terms of their aspirations, limitations and fears.

Part of the research has been to try comparing experiences in the different countries in a positive and neutral fashion not to engage in a 'beauty competition'. The research survey is intended to produce insights and act as a quick 'health check' of the six countries in their approach to culture, cultural policy and cultural development and what their future needs may be, objectively and subjectively assessed. On the basis of this it is hoped that increasingly meaningful and value-adding cooperation can be developed between the EU, its member states and the Eastern Partnership countries.

2. Some Main Features of Culture and Cultural Development in Belarus

Although Belarus for much of the period since independence has been following priorities which consciously differ from the other Eastern Partnership countries, like them the challenge since independence for the cultural sector has been simply survival, some attention to heritage as part of nation-building and national identity policies and preservation of the infrastructure of national institutions inherited from the Soviet period. In the case of Belarus, particularly during the Lukashenka period, pursuit of stability and preserving inherited Soviet institutions has been an active policy rather than one of default. Notwithstanding that, there has been on-going change.

Political factors have played an important role in all the Eastern Partnership countries in terms of cultural policy and cultural development while in Belarus this has particularly been true with the area of culture sometimes the place where contested political visions concerning the future of the country are played out.

While a main characteristic of Belarus is an environment of political control and censorship which weighs particularly heavily on the cultural sector and is the predominant image outsiders have of the country, it is in fact only part of the picture, albeit a very important part, of cultural development there. Even where political control and censorship have created a major distortion or gap, sometimes it has led to interesting mutation rather than elimination. As experience shows from elsewhere, under repressive governments, arts and culture sometimes paradoxically have a special significance which they do not always enjoy to the same degree in open democracies.

There are several interesting examples of the paradoxes of political control and censorship in Belarus. One is the case of the European Humanities University which was founded in Minsk in 1992 but closed down by the government in 2004. As a result it moved to Vilnius where it is a thriving Belarusian institution with the status of a Lithuanian university and with a student body of about 1,800. Vilnius's proximity to Minsk means that Belarusian faculty staff and students regularly commute between the two cities in addition to those Belarusians who have based themselves in Lithuania in order to attend or work at the university. There is little or no interference in this traffic of people, or of ideas and learning, and because of the specialization of the university it has a particularly important influence on the cultural scene in Belarus, including in terms of development of independent thinking and perceptions related to cultural policy.

In a similar way, the laws related to assembly in Belarus, which are extremely restrictive and can affect all types of public gathering including events such as the holding of concerts or other cultural activities, have driven people, especially young people, to make maximum and particularly effective use of the Internet. Apart from the practical difficulties for governments in controlling the Internet, including attempts at introducing measures related to this in Belarus in the past year, the Internet is a largely uncensored area and particularly lively, with some really outstanding social activism and culturally-oriented local websites. In short, a lot of the barriers that are being put up by the authorities in real day-to-day life are being inventively circumvented by extensive and imaginative use of virtual space.

The area of contemporary music is one where one can see the developments taking place and where government policy has again led to interesting mutation rather than elimination. The government's cultural policy of control and blacklisting has led to certain musicians enjoying, sometimes despite themselves, a political as well as an artistic profile, the one feeding off and boosting the other. While it would be wrong to see all artists and writers as part of a unified opposition - the reality is that they tend to be on a wide spectrum from actively acquiescent regime-tolerators to virulently anti-government, rather than in one group - control, censorship and repressive measures by the authorities are tending to create mutations where many of them, not only those at the extreme end of the spectrum, find themselves in problematic situations which identify them as 'opposition'. In the extreme cases musicians, artists or writers may move to another country but in many cases they continue to work in Belarus simply providing daily evidence of the contradictions and counter-productivity of repressive and obsessively control-focused cultural policy.

As mentioned elsewhere, the status of Belarusian as a language is a major and complicated issue in the contested area of national identity and what it means as an individual to be Belarusian. The language itself has often become identified with the political opposition to President Lukashenka and is an important strand in all cultural debate whether by those who wish to see it more actively promoted or by those who feel comfortable being Russophone Belarusians and even feel threatened by some nationalist linguistic views. As in Ukraine, so in Belarus, there is also an underlying regional dimension to the language issue, and the tendency of a west-east dichotomy.

In the context of the language issue it is important to mention significantly interesting developments in recent times related to the Ministry of Culture. Currently revamping its official website, which seems to be reflecting a more intelligent and open approach to information-sharing, the Ministry is also now using Belarusian as well as Russian as a medium of communication. Similarly Belarusian is also being used for some ministerial statements which perhaps symbolically signal at least the possibility of some pragmatic sensitivity on the part of the Belarusian government. It is not however clear whether it is just to counterbalance many of the crude and insensitive measures taken by the authorities to constrain those wanting to enrich and bring diversity to the cultural life of the country. It would seem evident, based on experience elsewhere, that a cultural policy of control, censorship and repressive measures will ultimately in the longer-term lead to a dead-end and it will be interesting to see to what extent the Ministry of Culture has the capacity to navigate policy in a more intelligent direction than the alienating ways the authorities currently employ.

Because of the generally one-dimensional image of Belarus as 'the last dictatorship in Europe', it is appropriate to draw attention here to three important features of the Belarusian cultural scene.

The first is that the Belarus cultural scene has its own dynamism. For example, in the areas of writing, publishing and performance both in Belarusian and in Russian, and for example in terms of fiction and writing for the theatre, there is an interesting scene. Limited but impressive independent publishing exists and lively cultural journalism can be found. Mention has already been made of some of the high quality and inventive activity going on via the Internet. Even in areas where Belarus has not been traditionally strong, such as the previous absence of a serious centre for contemporary visual arts, serious work and new developments are currently taking place which are worthy of attention beyond Belarus.

The second point is that the 'pariah' status given to Belarus by political policy in Europe is unfairly also creating serious artificial barriers there for people working in the field of arts and culture, and young people in general. There is a real desire for engagement with Europe and the unique experiences and perspectives educated Belarusians have could greatly enrich the cultural and artistic debates going on in other parts of Europe. As mentioned above, the contested search, debate and discovery of a national identity and of identity as a Belarusian individual is currently very intense and should be taking place at least in part in a European context from which Belarus is currently deprived. The shedding of the Soviet identity (which is anyway chronologically distant from the younger generation) and the defining of a Belarusian identity is currently central to cultural development and any future cultural policy in Belarus. An obvious question is where a European dimension fits into this and how significant it might be. It could be argued that the low level of current European political engagement with Belarus needs to be compensated for by particularly active and serious mutually-beneficial arts and cultural contacts.

The third point is that change is taking place in Belarus in the cultural sphere and it is important not to see this just in terms of politics even where there may be a political dimension. The issue of the old Soviet 'artistic unions' is an example and the need for new representative bodies promoting a particular cultural sub-sector. In spite of, and indeed sometime because of, the policy of the authorities new representative bodies are emerging, whether it is the formation of a new 'Writers' Union' or a community of interest coalescing around a website. In other words change, innovation and reform are taking place, often from the bottom upwards, even if there is a lot of authoritarian 'fossilization' in some of the official structures.

3. Research Survey

3.1. Context / Climate

3.1.1. Legislation, tax, registration and employment issues affecting culture. The degree to which these issues are supporting the development of culture and creativity

- a. **The degree to which national legislation (e.g. as perceived by cultural sector actors) directly affects cultural development or 'health' of the cultural sector and the extent to which this a serious issue.**

National legislation inhibits cultural development and the health of the sector not directly but rather indirectly (for an example, please see Section 3.1.1.b below).

- b. **If national legislation affects the development of culture and creativity, whether it is culture-specific or general.**

National legislation, which affects the development of culture and creativity, is both general and culture-specific. Cultural policy and strategies of cultural development have not been set out clearly by the state and the authorities, and the so-called strategy is not transparent. State policy effectively rules out any possibility of either independent criticism or freedom of expression.

A good example of such indirect inhibition of culture is a decree that requires a special permit from the authorities for any public gathering of three or more individuals and which is very difficult to obtain. In the absence of such a permit such a gathering is deemed illegal. This means that a group of street musicians or an artist performing in public may be charged with a civil offence (or criminal one, if politically-related) if the activity has not been registered and authorised in advance.

- c. **Examples of cultural legislation which seem to be working well.**

It is difficult to identify specific examples of this.

- d. **New or revised legislation relating to culture planned to address perceived problems and description of those problems.**

The state programme 'Culture of Belarus 2011-2015' adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2010 describes ways to resolve many of the existing problems. It aims to raise the level of social and economic effectiveness of the culture sphere. The targets of the State programme are:

- Preservation and development of material and non-material cultural heritage
- Preservation of museum collections of the Republic of Belarus and making them available to the public
- Making access to information resources and libraries equally available to all population groups
- Development of professional arts
- Support of domestic producers of film and video art, development of film production
- Support and development of crafts
- Development of the system of aesthetic education, professional arts education, support of talented youth
- Development of research in the culture sphere
- Development of the image of the country within the country and abroad
- Development of national legislation and economic development of the culture sphere

The main problems that have to be resolved are the following:

- Creation of a system of national priorities for culture
- Attraction of private funding for culture through development of sponsorship and donations
- Development of mechanisms for public-private partnership
- Support of cultural initiatives and projects

- Reform of management systems and use of new technologies in cultural management
- Creation of conditions for the effective functioning of a producers institute
- Enhancing quality, appropriateness and value-for-money of professional arts education
- Promotion of research
- Effective use of state funding for development of state cultural policy based on research
- Promotion of Belarusian culture abroad

Certain changes in legislation have been made or are going to be made including changes and amendments to laws on museums and museum funding, cinematography, Internet sales of theatre and concert tickets etc. Efforts are being made to develop library regulations and legislation related to prizes and awards to amend the 2008 Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus 'Concerning Organization of Concerts' and support of performers¹.

In December, 2011 the Council of Ministers adopted a proposal aimed at developing public-private partnerships in planning in the sphere of culture and to create conditions for the promotion of new, original, creative ideas².

In November, 2011 the Ministry of Education decreed that the Belarusian National Academy of Arts should be given higher status becoming the *leading* higher educational establishment in the culture sector³.

e. The degree to which tax regulations or issues are inhibiting cultural development or the health of the cultural sector (e.g. as perceived by cultural sector actors).

Tax regulations are not inhibiting cultural development, but neither are they fostering it. All organizations are obliged to pay income tax. Since 2011 the income of theatres, movie theatres, and the film industry is not subject to value-added tax.

f. Process of cultural NGO or commercial entity registration: duration, no. of phases, costs involved, complexity.

Registration stages:

- Presentation of documentation;
- Statement of the name of the organization;
- Authorisation of the Anti-monopoly Commission;
- Providing a non-residential legal (except in the case of a unitary association).

The difficulty lies in the need to approve the name of the organization. The authorisation principle covers public associations, unions of public associations, funds, and religious organizations.

The decision on registration is taken within one month. A public organization can be denied registration if documents presented are not in line with official requirements. In practice, the registration bodies can deny registration to any public organization they 'dislike', for example, because of a mistake in the phone number of its founder. In most cases the decision depends on the political will of the government. The process of registration has to proceed according to the regulations but the fact is that the regulations are such that it is very easy to find errors that can provide a reason for denying registration.

Private cultural institutions do not exist in Belarus due to legislative requirements related to premises, equipment, etc. that has to be provided by the founder.

The cost of registration is about EUR 44 for republican organizations⁴, about EUR 88 for foreign organizations, EUR 44 for commercial organizations and under EUR 5 for associations and similar institutions. It should be noted that in practice in Belarus, commercial cultural organisations do not really

¹ <http://kultura.gov.by/temp/Culture2010.doc>

² <http://kultura.gov.by/news/ab-razv-tsts-dzyarzha-na-prywatnaga-partnerstva-sfery-kultury>

³ <http://kultura.gov.by/news/ab-pradasta-lenn-statusu-vyaduchai-stanovy-vysheishai-adukatsy-sfery-kultury>

⁴ There is a system of classification of organizations in Belarus into local, republican and international. Republican organizations are subordinated to ministries and to authorities of national significance.

exist in the sense generally understood elsewhere. More detailed information can be found at: <http://minsk.gov.by/ru/org/8643/attach/cfab087/>.

3.1.2. Transparency and Corruption

a. Country ranking in Transparency International's Index: the current one and compared with the ones for the last two years.

2011: Rank 143, Score 2.4

2010: Rank 127, Score 2.5

2009: Rank 139, Score 2.4

b. Any other reliable source illustrative of the existence of direct corruption or wilful lack of transparency in the cultural sector or of the impact of general corruption on the cultural sector.

There is a common agreement among cultural professionals that the level of corruption in the sector is very high. It is believed that appointments to high positions are being made on the basis of personal connections rather than on purely professional factors.

'Kickbacks' are a widespread practice in all spheres. For example, in the museum/gallery sphere. It is commonly believed that there is lack of transparency and cases where a commission is given to an artist on the understanding that the commissioning money will be 'shared' with the person controlling the commission.

Show-business is shaped not by market relations but by red-tape. Businesses cannot avoid working together with bureaucrats and this leads to very high levels of corruption. While artists depend on state officials, the latter want services from the former. In other words, this type of 'string-pulling' is the most widespread corrupt practice.

3.1.3. Provision and Dissemination of Official and Public Information

a. Does the Ministry of Culture website contain all current cultural legislation or an easy link to it?

The website of the Ministry of Culture contains all current cultural legislation.

b. The degree to which the Ministry of Culture website is helpful in terms of advice and support/ funding for cultural organizations and/or individuals.

The Ministry of Culture's website contains information about consultancy opportunities at the Ministry (including information about working hours and the names of the consultants appointed). It also provides information on two funding possibilities provided by the state and related information about competitions organized by the Ministry of Culture.

c. Availability of information on support /funding provided by the Ministry of Culture in the previous year or period to cultural organizations and/or individuals on the Ministerial web site.

There is general statistical data with the number of individuals and organizations who have received support from the MoC budget. Specifically it says that from 1996 to 2010 the Ministry granted more than 5 billion BYR (approx. EUR 478,687) to more than 1800 individuals, and 269 grants were allocated to various activities within the cultural sector⁵.

d. Availability of reasonably detailed information on the Ministry of Culture's budget, allocations and actual spending on the Ministerial website.

The MoC website does not contain information about its budget. There is however a link to a report produced by the MoC that contains information about its budget and allocations⁶.

⁵ <http://kultura.gov.by/fund/spetsyialny-fond-prez-denta-respubl-k-belarus-pa-padtrymsy-talenav-tai-moladz-1>

⁶ <http://kultura.gov.by/temp/Culture2010.doc>

- e. If any of a. to d. bullets not available on the web site of the Ministry of Culture, are they otherwise readily available in electronic (another known web resource) or printed format.**

The information is available on the Ministry of Culture's website.

- f. Level of use of the Ministry of Culture's website (i.e., web statistics, e.g. hits, visitors).**

The web site of the Ministry of Culture provides these statistics upon request only. MoC hits: 7 days - 2448; 30 days - 9477 hits of which Belarusian visitors represent 7 days - 1902; 30 days - 7303 hits.

- g. Level of cross-referencing on the Ministry of Culture's website to websites of other ministries or central or local government bodies related to education, youth, licensing, etc. relevant to culture, integrated planning and cultural activity.**

There is cross-referencing on the Ministry's website to the National Legal website⁷ and that of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus.

3.1.4. Integration of Cultural Policies in Other Policies and Strategies

- a. Availability of policy documents or other official sources of information.**

Policy documents are available on the Ministry of Culture's website.

- b. Examples of joint inter-ministerial / inter-agency / inter-departmental activities.**

One of the most recent examples of inter-ministerial joint activity is the Agreement between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry for Emergency Situations which "aims at development and popularization of Belarusian culture, promotion of spirituality, patriotism and statehood, involvement of border guards in Belarus' historical past, its traditions and culture." This is going to be achieved through group visits to museums, theatres and exhibitions⁸.

- c. Regular formal or informal planning, consultations or similar meetings.**

There is evidence of regular meetings and collegiums being held in the Ministry of Culture.

3.1.5. Accountability and Openness in Practice

- a. Formal and regular consultations and briefings with: (1) cultural sector representatives; and (2) mass media representatives.**

There were two cases (in January 2011 and January 2012) of consultation meetings held with cultural sector and media representatives, foreign diplomats and representatives of foreign cultural organizations registered in Belarus.

- b. Regularity of general policy, budgetary and activity information provision to interested public.**

Interested individuals can find general policy, budgetary and activity information on the MoC's website. There has even been a case of an online conference with the former Minister of Culture Pavel Latushka where anyone could ask questions. Thirteen questions and answers can be found published on the Ministry of Culture's website⁹.

- c. Public availability of business plans and targets of authorities responsible for culture and the cultural sector.**

MoC regularly announces its targets but detailed business plans are not available to the general public.

⁷ <http://www.pravo.by/>

⁸ <http://kultura.by/news/ab-padp-sann-pagadnennya-ab-uzaemadzeyann-supratso-n-tstve-pam-zh-m-n-sterstvam-kultury-respubl>

⁹ <http://kultura.by/news/natsyynalnaya-kultura-agulny-zdabytak-agulny-klopak>

3.1.6. Contribution of the Cultural Sector

a. Evidence or perception, by cultural sector professionals, of the level of awareness among central and local authorities of the potential role of culture and cultural activity in social and economic development, social cohesion, conflict resolution and inter-cultural dialogue.

Theoretically, central and local authorities are aware of the potential role of culture and cultural activity in contributing to social and economic development, social cohesion, conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue. In practice it happens however that it is the authorities themselves who are responsible for social tensions and conflict. An example of such practices is the blacklist of musicians and artists¹⁰. That said, there has been certain progress in this area of late, two good examples being the exhibition of an independent contemporary Byelorussian artist, Ruslan Vashkevich at the National Art Museum and the Best Music Band Award given to the independent band 'Troitsa' at the National Music Contest. These seem to be attempts to bring different social groups together.

There is common acceptance of the importance of the cultural sphere for economic and social development. The President of the Republic of Belarus puts it, as follows: "There is no country without the development of moral culture. Culture forms the spirit of the nation! That is the reason why moral upbringing, preservation and creation of the cultural ideological bases of the country are the main targets"¹¹.

b. Availability and quality of statistics, research and knowledge related to this area.

No data/information found.

3.1.7. Role of Independent and NGO Sectors

a. Perception of (un)importance and potential of the non-governmental cultural sector by:

- Central authorities
- Local authorities

There have been several official statements made by the Minister of Culture in 2011 and 2012 in favour of the independent culture sector. In December, 2011 the Council of Ministers adopted a proposal aimed at the development of public-private partnership in matters of planning in the sphere of culture and the creation of conditions for the promotion of new, original, creative ideas¹².

b. Perception of (un)importance and potential of the non-governmental cultural sector by cultural sector professionals.

The question of the potential and importance are discussed in section 4.1.8.a. Problems that NGOs and businesses face are more or less the same.

c. Number of registered 'cultural' NGOs.

According to the data of the 'Portal of Belarusian NGOs'¹³, the number of registered 'cultural' NGOs is 349; there are also 41 foundations.

d. Number of active registered 'cultural' NGOs.

No data found.

e. Number of 'cultural' NGOs or independent not-for-profit cultural organizations employing over 15 people.

No data found.

¹⁰ http://gazetaby.com/index.php?sn_nid=34850&sn_cat=33

¹¹ <http://kultura.gov.by/temp/Culture2010.doc>

¹² <http://kultura.gov.by/news/ab-razv-tsts-dzyarzha-na-pryvatnaga-partnerstva-sfery-kultury>

¹³ <http://en.ngo.by/>

3.1.8. Role of Private and Commercial Sectors

a. Perception of importance and potential of the commercial cultural sector by:

- Central authorities
- Local authorities
- Commercial cultural sector professionals
- Non-commercial sector professionals

The views of commercial and non-commercial cultural sector professionals are almost identical. Representatives of both professional communities agree that the national music industry is not integrated into the wider international music community and that the reason for this is the wider problem of the national economy as a whole not being integrated into the world economy. This creates problems both for entrepreneurs and producers as well as for state organizations.

In Belarus, the show business, or business in the sphere of music culture, totally depends on state machinery rather than on market relations. As already mentioned, artists depend on state officials, and state officials in return want 'services' from artists.

The function of producers and sound recording labels is carried out by state TV channels and some state radio stations, i.e. by state mass media. The function of promoters is performed by the culture departments of local authorities. Generally speaking, the promoter is the one who provides a venue for performance. The number of private venues is very small. The number of private clubs that promote national music is even smaller. There are about 5 venues in Minsk, and 10 in Belarus. Domestic/national music is not marketable/commercial. It is more commercially viable to invite foreign musicians. Belarusian music in other words cannot compete, thus the potential of contemporary Belarusian culture, and particularly music, is very limited.

The bulk of the cultural product consumed domestically is produced abroad (in Russia, the US, Europe, etc.). Only traditional musical heritage offered in contemporary forms can be competitive. Examples of such music are the bands 'Troitsa' and 'Palats' (Палац) who perform authentic folklore. DJs play foreign music and there are no DJs who mix Belarusian ethno-music.

It is worth mentioning that there are no musical instruments production facilities in Belarus. Consequently, local musicians have to buy foreign instruments, even to perform national music.

The state of the commercial cultural sector can be best illustrated by the following examples: the well-established leading band 'Palats'¹⁴ (Палац) consists of seven musicians and charges a performance fee of just EUR1,200. The same situation applies to bands like 'Krama'¹⁵, 'N.R.M.'¹⁶ etc. There is no staging of concerts for them to big audiences as it used to be years ago. Now they play only to small audiences because they are on the state 'blacklist'. While unofficial, the 'blacklist' effectively blocks access to every concert hall for these bands. The Belarus Free Theatre, one of the few truly independent ones, is also on the 'state blacklist.'

Visual artists are not part of the international market either. Some of them sell their works abroad, but this is not a regular practice. A medium-sized painting by a known Belarusian artist who has exhibited extensively would cost from EUR 400-800. An etching would be around EUR 40-60. The 'high-end market' would feature certain works by artists such as Ruslan Vashkevich and Vladimir Tsesler with prices as much as EUR8,000.

b. Number of registered businesses classified as being part of the cultural sector or any relevant statistics on commercial cultural activity.

No information found.

¹⁴ <http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%86>

¹⁵ <http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0>

¹⁶ <http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/N.R.M.>

c. Financial turnover of the commercial cultural sector if available from official statistical data or any other reliable sources.

No data found.

d. Number of commercial cultural organizations and companies employing more than 50 people.

No data found.

3.1.9. National Conventional and Electronic Media and Interest of Dedicated Publications in Culture and Cultural Issues

a. The number of specialist cultural publications and their readership or print-runs.

- Newspapers (weekly): "Культура" (print-run 8541), "Літаратура і мастацтва" (print-run 2855)
- Magazines (monthly): "Мастацтва" (print-run 2041), "Партер", "На Экранах", "Дзеяслоу"
- Magazines (quarterly): "Partisan", "Arche", "ПРАСВЕТ", "ТОПОС" (print-run 300)

b. Number of important and useful 'cultural websites' relevant for cultural sector professionals.

There are about 5 to 10.

(i) Public

- www.kultura.gov.by
- <http://www.dziejaslou.by/>

(ii) Private

- www.budzma.org
- <http://n-europe.eu/>
- www.34mag.net
- <http://belintellectuals.eu/about>
- www.artaktivist.org
- <http://www.belaruspartisan.org>
- <http://gender-route.org>

c. Available statistical data to illustrate levels of use of such websites e.g. hits, visitors etc.

Statistics are generally unavailable on websites:

- <http://artaktivist.org/>, 550 visitors every day
- <http://kyky.org/> (1,076 readers on twitter, 2,487 readers on Facebook, 1,707 readers on vkontakte.ru)

d. Level of cultural events and debate coverage in local press and media taken from a typical week (e.g. number of articles and listings in main daily and weekly newspapers/magazines; number of media mentions, interviews or programmes related to cultural events).

Some news on *major* cultural events may appear at the end of news bulletins on TV and the main newspapers have a column devoted to cultural events. Main Internet portals have a page devoted to culture. State mass media covers cultural events initiated by the state. Debates and discussions are usually organized and covered by the non-governmental/civil society sector. They usually appear on the Internet.

There are five national TV programmes related to cultural events.

e. Perceptions among cultural sector professionals or other facts of changes in local printed and electronic media, specialised media outlets' interest in culture and cultural issues in the last two years.

In the last two years, the interest in culture among local printed and electronic media and specialised publications, whether government or independent, has grown. Several new web resources and TV shows have appeared.

3.1.10. Urban-Rural Differences Related to Culture, Cultural Provision and Cultural Access

Proof (e.g. policy statements, ministerial speeches, serious press and media coverage) of importance or priority attributed to this area by national authorities.

Urban-rural differences are very significant in Belarus. The authorities recognize this significant difference and rural development is an important priority for the government. The most important issues in rural cultural development are the revival of certain types of folk arts and crafts and the organization of mobile cultural facilities to bring culture closer to remote, sparsely populated communities .

One of the initiatives for rural cultural development promotion is annual festivals, such as 'Bells of Sofia', 'Slavyanski Bazaar' in Vitebsk, 'Muses of Nesvij', the 'Festival of National Cultures' in Grodno, 'Dajinki', 'Dudarski Fest' and others taking place at various locations. There is a total of 58 such annual festivals in Belarus¹⁷.

A study carried out by the Ministry of Culture indicates some significant cultural development in rural areas. For example, in 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively 18, 3 and 8 new 'Houses of Handicraft' were established and 224, 39 and 38 art classes and art schools for children were opened respectively¹⁸. However, official information is focused on the quantitative rather than qualitative side of these achievements.

3.1.11. Language Issues

The dynamics of changes of the current status compared with the situation two years before (positive/negative)

The official languages in Belarus are Belarusian and Russian but in practice, and politically, priority is given to Russian. Belarusian is often actively marginalized to a point where it is almost a case of suppression. In addition, the Belarusian language is sometimes perceived politically as linked to opposition groups that are against the current political regime. However, it should be noted that under the last Minister of Culture, Pavel Latushka, Belarusian has become the official language of the Ministry of Culture alongside the use of Russian. All new documentation is published in Belarusian and the Minister speaks Belarusian. The Belarusian language is used by some musicians, artists, writers, filmmakers, art historians and critics but nevertheless, most publications and debates are in Russian.

Higher education is mostly in Russian. There are only eight state schools where all subjects are taught in Belarusian and seven state schools with Belarusian speaking classes. In the Russian language schools, only two to three hours per week are devoted to the Belarusian language, with one or two more dedicated to Belarusian literature. According to the 2009 census, only 6% of people confirmed speaking Belarusian in their everyday life¹⁹.

Radio and television are mostly in Russian. There are several programmes broadcast in Belarusian but even the news bulletins on First National TV are in Russian. The President uses Russian.

The language issue is a very important one for Belarus. The domination of the Russian language and promotion of Russian Orthodox Church values create an atmosphere where Belarusian culture is viewed as a vestige of backward 'paganism' and a sub-culture of the Russian empire. This situation is self-evidently wrong the countering it is only at an early stage of development.

There is a general problem that children in Belarus are being brought up using foreign values (Russian, European, and American).

¹⁷http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0_%D0%91%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8

¹⁸ Беларуская культура сёння. Гадавы агляд 2010. Мн.: БДУ культуры і мастацтваў. - 2011.

¹⁹http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%91%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9_%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA#cite_note-3

3.2. Creation/Production and Preservation/Restoration

3.2.1. Relative importance given in national cultural policy and practice (e.g. funding) to contemporary cultural creation

Evidence of official interest in and support to contemporary artists, creators and producers in terms of policy-related documents, budget allocations, policy statements and ministerial references (e.g. mention in speeches).

As in most areas, the official interest in contemporary culture is intense and shows up in the authorities' intervention in the sphere. One example has been the opening of the MoC-financed Contemporary Art Centre in Minsk at the end of 2011. The last Minister of Culture recently started showing official interest in contemporary art by attending exhibition openings both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors.

In 2011, Belarus had an official pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Such promotion of Belarus is complex because of the tension between artistic integrity and freedom and the state's use of art internationally for its own purposes, especially given the political context of culture in Belarus.

In fact there is legislation that indirectly hinders the development of contemporary art as such - a 2002 Decree sets rules for fees in relation to visual and decorative art production²⁰. The highest fees are for those works of a big size, with historical themes, portraits of actual persons, - works made in bronze, if sculpture, or oil on canvas if paintings etc. Non-figurative art of small size is accorded the lowest fee rate. The functionaries who evaluate and value works really do not value, for example, abstract art and, as can be seen, give preference to traditional art forms.

In December 2011, BYR370 million (approximately EUR37,000) were allocated to support talented young people. This money was to go towards 22 scholarships, 40 grants for development of talent and prizes, and to two active participants of artistic events.

In 2011, the Special Presidential Fund for Talented Youth Support allocated BYR1,1 billion (approximately EUR100,000) to financial incentives for talented young people, organization of international and national contests, exhibitions, and other events devoted to discovering talented young people, purchase of musical instruments, purchase of theatrical costumes, equipment and so on.

An additional BYR154,92 million (EUR15,000) was earmarked for awards, prizes and scholarships, to purchase theatrical costumes, music instruments and for stipends for study in Russia²¹.

Though some individuals do receive financial support from the government, there are other examples where the authorities do not appear to live up to their words in terms of funding contemporary cultural creation. This would seem to be the case in the sphere of international cooperation. Diplomatic missions and foreign cultural organizations regularly propose various projects for cooperation, most of them with just some token co-financing needed from the Ministry of Culture to make the project possible. Usually, however, it is the practice of the Ministry is to respond that there is no money available to participate.

²⁰ <http://pravoby.info/docum09/part23/akt23498.htm>

²¹ http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/president/Na-podderzhku-talantlivoj-molodezhi-Belarusi-v-2011-godu-vydeleno-Br11-mlrd-i-555782.html

3.2.2. Description of the environment in which the different types of cultural and artistic creation/production take place

Concrete illustrative positive and negative examples of official support or the lack of it

- (i) Using a scale of:
- Very Supportive
 - Supportive
 - Neither Supportive Nor Negative
 - Difficult
 - Hostile

To receive official support creators have to reproduce values promoted by the state. Thus, the general environment for creation can be described as difficult as there are not the conditions for freedom and expression of thought.

- (ii) Perception of representative practitioners of their creative and working environment.

Most respondents consider the creative and working environment to be difficult.

3.2.3. Creativity

a. Policy documents, statements or official pronouncements on the subject of creativity or the concept of 'creative economy'.

There are no policy statements on the subject of creativity or the concept of "creative economy". Neither is "creativity" a subject of discussion in the media, press or specialist journals or forums.

b. Perception among cultural sector professionals of levels of creativity coverage in general and specialised printed and electronic media (i.e. High Interest/Some Serious Interest/Little Interest/No Interest).

"No interest" would be the most appropriate response as there is no evidence of such a subject being present in media headlines.

3.2.4. Heritage

a. Current main issues related to heritage identified:

- By the official authorities e.g. Ministry of Culture or municipal authorities
- From the point of view of working-level specialists
- From the point of view of civil society/community group and communities, including minorities

According to the Law 'On Heritage Preservation in the Republic of Belarus', the main principles of national policy in the sphere of heritage are the following:

- recognition of heritage as a factor of state development
- state responsibility for heritage preservation
- civil society participation in heritage preservation

The main issues of the national policy on heritage preservation are the following:

- Finding material and non-material objects that have historical-cultural value
- Assigning of 'historic-cultural heritage monument' status to material and non-material objects of value; keeping inventories of historical-cultural heritage monuments
- Preserving and renovating historical-cultural heritage monuments
- Financially supporting historical-cultural heritage monuments through diverse sources which are not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus

The main issues seen from the point of view of working-level specialists are absence of authentic original materials (architecture, applied art) and an absence of a clear conception of development in the sphere²².

Working-level specialists seem to be split into two 'camps'. There are specialists interested in research and development and they contribute to the sphere each one according to his/her specialization. They are open to innovations and creativity. At the same time they are not free to use their initiative, but are obliged to fulfil tasks set by the 'managers'. The second 'camp', perhaps this is an exaggeration, consists mainly of the managers who are less committed and whose main interest is not always professional and, in some cases, they may also engage in 'kickback' practices. As a result, this second 'camp' does a lot of harm to the sphere, as they may, for example, use low-quality specialists instead of using and paying real specialists.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that there is no connection between specialists from the first camp and the authorities, so the authorities see only the position of the 'managers' and are not aware of the day-to-day problems the specialists have to overcome. As a result there is little cooperation between the different levels.

From the point of view of civil society, some activity has been carried out lately in the sphere of cultural heritage restoration and renovation. Castles in Mir, Nesvij and Gomel were restored. They are attractive as tourist destinations. At the same time many old buildings in the centre of Minsk dating back to the 18th century were demolished on the pretext of their being dangerous structures. They are going to be rebuilt in the same place according to the old plans, but using new materials, or making "copies of Saint Rus in half an hour" as in the Grebenshchikov²³ song.

In the historic centre of Nesvij two buildings dating back to the end of the 19th century were illegally demolished for the same reason. There is evidence of such demolition in other locations.

In Minsk several buildings destroyed in the course of past centuries were reconstructed afresh (e.g. Town Hall²⁴, Hotel Europe²⁵, and Church of the Holy Spirit²⁶).

b. Level of civil society and/or community group involvement in any heritage activity officially or unofficially using any available relevant evidence (number of registered or known groups/societies, number of projects/sites, existence of relevant newsletters, websites etc).

There is evidence of civil society and community groups being involved in heritage activity mostly in rural areas. They are mostly involved unofficially, but their contribution is of significant importance for regional cultural development. All people involved have a great interest in the sphere and do it voluntarily. A good example is activity connected with the P.V. Maslennikov Mogilev Regional Art Museum.

3.2.5. Restoration Resources and Capacities

a. Number, type, and output of training or professional educational institutions and provision for museum and heritage restorers.

The leading institution is the Belarusian State Academy of Arts and the training consists last six years.

b. The degree to which supply of trained restorers meets the demand for them as perceived by a small but representative sample of relevant people (ministry officials, museum directors, heritage planners).

There are high quality museum and heritage restorers in Belarus, though there are not so many of them. They are trained well enough to use the technologies used internationally. Many of them are trained

²² <http://nesvizh.by/219-problemy-restavracii-zamka-teper-budut-obsuzhdatsya-sistematicheski.html>

²³ Boris Grebenshchikov is one of the most prominent members of the generation which is widely considered to be the 'founding fathers' of Russian rock music: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Grebenshchikov
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjTJWRYRJJ&feature=related>

²⁴ [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%88%D0%B0_\(%D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%88%D0%B0_(%D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA))

²⁵ http://www.hoteleurope.by/about_hotel/history/

²⁶ http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Detskaja-filarmonija-otkrylas-v-Minske_i_571932.html

abroad, mostly in Russia. The supply meets the demand for them. Funding is the problem, for example sometimes restorers are forced to use very sparingly the materials needed for their restoration work.

- c. The degree to which the training of restorers (e.g. quality of training, availability of training) is an area of interest or concern to any of the interested parties (i.e. the MoC, museum directors, heritage planners).**

Training of restorers is not an area of interest or concern to the MoC or museum directors and heritage planners.

3.2.6. UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

- a. Level of awareness (assessed by limited questionnaire/interview method of a small representative sample of relevant cultural planners and senior cultural practitioners) in your country.**

The level of awareness is very low.

- b. Examples given by the MoC of where their signing of the Convention has led to them taking action in a way which they otherwise would not have done.**

While Belarus is a signatory to the Convention and the Ministry of Culture say "a lot of work is being done", it did not provide any precise information and no concrete examples of any action could be found.

- c. Number/level of mentions of the Convention in official policy documents or statements.**

See 3.2.6.b above

3.3. Cultural Provision/Research/Professional Training and Transmission/ Dissemination/Connectivity/Digitalization

3.3.1. General Environment

- a. Number, type, size and listing of any institutions, organizations, etc. involved in arts research.**

The following are active in this area:

1. National Academy of Sciences
2. Belarusian State Academy of Arts
3. Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts
4. Belarusian State Academy of Music
5. National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus
6. European Humanities University (former Belarusian university relocated to Vilnius, Lithuania)
7. Goethe-Institute in Minsk
8. Gallery NOVA
9. Contemporary Art Gallery Ÿ

The last three are mostly involved in debate on problems of contemporary culture.

Most state museums carry out research concerning primarily their collections and topics related to them.

- b. Perception of the level of cultural and arts criticism and debate by younger cultural professionals (under 35) through limited but representative interview method.**

None of the Belarusian state universities provide education in arts criticism. There are philosophers and journalists who write about art. There is a project 'On the Way to A Contemporary Art Museum' that attempts to make some improvements in this sphere through organizing public lectures. A new project, 'Arts Criticism' (a series of master classes in arts criticism, cultural analytics, etc.) will start soon at the European Humanities University in Vilnius (this is a de facto Belarusian university which relocated to

Lithuania from Minsk). This course of master classes is aimed at teaching critical writing in the sphere of arts.

3.3.2. Professional Training

a. Level of provision and quality of professional arts and cultural education through information given by the MoC and Ministry of Education.

State education in the sphere of culture and arts has an established tradition. The primary, secondary and higher education sectors function successfully in providing access to art and cultural education.

The main role in the system of cultural education is given to three higher educational establishments. These are: Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, Belarusian State Academy of Music, and Belarusian State Academy of Arts. They have gained the status of important cultural and research centres. Such capacity provides the training of high level professionals for all regions of the country²⁷.

b. Number of known international links in this area e.g. through Erasmus-type links.

It is planned to train teachers of performing arts in Moscow and mandolin in Cologne; students in film and TV direction, filming, theatrical direction and violin in Moscow, also "restoration" in Prague²⁸.

3.3.3. Internet Use and Connectivity

a. Any available statistics related to Internet connectivity and use.

According to recent research of the *Gemius Belarus* company, there were 4.29 million Internet users in Belarus in March 2012²⁹. Most Internet users are between 25 and 34 years old (30,27%). Those between 19 and 24 years form 20.67% of all users. There is no significant gender difference among Internet users. Working specialists represent 25% of users and students 16%.

According to another source, the Internet is most used in Minsk (33.6%). 73.51% of Belarusian Internet users use the Internet every day, 16.51% use it 3-5 times a week, 7.71% - 1-2 times a week, 2.27% - 1-3 times a month. 91.7% of respondents have Internet access at home, 25.9% - at work, 4.8% - at educational establishments³⁰.

The National Committee on Statistics states there are 6.8 million Internet users in the country³¹.

b. The costs in relation to local income levels of being connected

- At home
- By using an Internet café

Internet connection at home (24 h/d) costs about BYR60,000 (before March, 2011 it was EUR15, today it is EUR6).

Internet café: 1 hour BYR5,000-6,000 (EUR0.5-0.6), 10 hours BYR35,000 (EUR3.4), 10 hours night time (from 24.00 to 7.00) BYR16,000 (EUR1.6).

The average salary in the country in November 2011 was BYR2,439.70 million (250 EUR).

c. Any available statistics or information showing the rate of growth in connectivity.

According to the statistics provided by *Gemius Belarus* (see section 4.3.3.a above), the number of Internet users in Belarus in March 2012 was 4.29 million people, which is 17% more than one year ago.

²⁷ <http://kultura.gov.by/temp/Culture2010.doc>

²⁹ <http://providers.by/2012/05/news/gemius-v-belarusi-okolo-43-millionov-polzovatelej-interneta/>

³⁰ <http://telegraf.by/2011/08/kolichestvo-internet-polzovatelei-v-belarusi-priblijaetsya-k-chetirem-millionam>

³¹ <http://providers.by/2012/05/news/internet-auditoriya-belarusi-priblizhaetsya-k-otmetke-7-millionov-polzovatelej/>

d. Any statistics, information or anecdotal evidence related to any 'digital divide' (e.g. rich-poor or urban-rural difference).

In the years 2008, 2009 and 2010, some 708, 162, and 181 rural libraries were connected to the Internet³².

e. Any available statistics, estimates or research on the use of the Internet in the cultural sphere and trends.

Non applicable

3.3.4. Digitalization Projects

a. Number and illustrative listing of significant digitalization projects taking place with official support (e.g. the creation of a national electronic library, digitalization of collections of national museums, virtual exhibitions using national collections or archives and so on).

The national television and radio company's materials (video and music archives) are being digitalized. Work on digitalization at the National Library is complete. Books published after 2000 are available in digital form. This sphere is financed by the state.

A group of enthusiasts is working on conversion of music records related to folklore into digital format.

3.4. Access and Education

3.4.1. Access

a. Any illustrative evidence of any policy provision or discussion at an official level related to any aspect of access to culture (e.g. about cultural rights, about ticket and entry costs to cultural and arts events, etc).

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, the state must make 'cultural values' generally accessible.

b. List of the main issues related to access to cultural and arts provision as perceived by a small representative sample of cultural professionals to cultural and arts provision. Such issues might include lack of provision, cost, lack of interest, poor marketing, urban-rural divide issues, inappropriate programming at the main venues, unhelpful opening hours, etc).

National cultural product is not being promoted amongst the public and not known internationally and as a result, not disseminated. For example, Russian literature is more popular in Belarus than Belarusian literature. Foreign artists and writers are better known in Belarus than Belarusian ones. The amount of information coming from abroad is so large that it crowds out Belarusian culture. Cultural and arts events that are not censored are easily available to the general public.

There is not a lack of provision. The Opera and Ballet Theatre and drama theatres have performances all the time and they are always full. Since the restoration of its building, the Opera and Ballet Theatre has become very popular - it has already hosted several big international events. There are 2-3 new exhibitions each month at the National Art Museum and 1-2 every two months at the Museum of Modern Art. Gallery Y has a wide range of exhibitions and events changing regularly.

Costs differ depending on the event, yet they are affordable. Tickets for important events are sold out several months prior the event. Entrance fees to museums are reasonably low (1 EUR to National Art Museum, 5 EUR is the cost of a guided tour, for example). There are also free-admission days. Visits to art galleries are usually free of charge.

³² Беларуская культура сёння. Гадавы агляд 2010. Мн.: БДУ культуры і мастацтваў. - 2011.

Even though in the capital interest in culture is rather high, nationwide the number of people interested in culture is small. Statistics on cultural participation to illustrate this were not available.

Marketing is better developed in the theatrical and concert sphere than in the visual arts but it does not go much further than normal publicity.

There of course exists an urban-rural divide with the highest concentration of cultural events in the capital.

Opening hours seem to be normal and satisfactory.

3.4.2. Education

a. Evidence of some form of arts education as part of the core school curriculum.

Until several years ago there was a course on world cultural heritage but it was removed from the syllabus. There are two literature classes: world literature and Belarusian literature. The syllabus of the literature course has not changed since Soviet times.

b. Examples of any types of arts activity provided within a typical school context.

Singing and drawing classes are in the school curriculum up to the 6th year.

3.5. Participation and Audience Development

3.5.1. Participation Statistics

a. Available statistics related to participation in arts and culture of any type ranging from theatre or cinema attendance to the number of cultural clubs, etc.

Theatres and museums (end of year)

	2008	2009	2010
Total number of theatres (professional)	28	27	27
Of which:			
Opera and ballet	1	1	1
Drama and music	19	18	18
Children and youth	8	8	8
Annual attendance, millions	1,907	1,931	1,981
Number of museums	152	155	158
Annual attendance, millions	4,270	4,586	4,990
Of them in Minsk			
	2008	2009	2010
Number of theatres (professional)	11	10	10
Annual attendance, millions	0,9487	0,933	0,9345
Number of museums	17	17	17
Annual attendance, millions	1,020,1	1,063	1,2859

There were no statistics available for 2011 at the time of compiling this report.

b. Evidence or examples of trends related to participation e.g. observable growth and decline in attendance and participation in different activities of the cultural sectors.

As shown in section 3.5.1.a. there is evidence of growth in attendance.

3.5.2. Audience Development

Statistics or examples related to audience development and outreach programmes e.g. as part of the core work of theatres, museums, festivals and so on which also given some insight into how developed this activity is.

Cultural institutions do work on popularization but such actions are not systematic.

4. Main Outcomes of the RMCBU Research Visit to the Country

Starting from October 2011, the RMCBU made a series of research visits to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine to establish contacts with key Programme stakeholders in each country and launch the process of identification of specific policy areas in the field of culture to be reinforced at national and regional level. The fieldwork included round-table discussions with key government and civil society stakeholders, meetings with key actors in the culture sector, presentations of the Programme and collection of background data for elaboration of base line studies on cultural policies in the Eastern Partnership countries. Results of the visits and subsequent studies formed the basis for proposals on capacity-building activities in identified priority areas to be implemented by the RMCBU within 2012 – March 2015.

The RMCBU's research visit to Belarus took place in November 2011 by a team of experts consisting of Mr. Luciano Gloor, Team Leader, Ms. Tetiana Biletska, Capacity Building Expert and Ms. Elena Palivoda, Information and Communication Manager, accompanied by Mr Terry Sandell, independent RMCBU expert.

More than 40 representatives of major national stakeholders of the EaP Culture Programme from public, private sector and civil society organizations as well as of the EU Delegation to the country and donor institutions active in Belarus were met, interviewed or contacted during the visit.

The EU Delegation to Belarus provided the RMCBU with substantial support in establishing official contacts with the Ministry of Culture of Belarus, a process which took a long time. Establishing contacts with civil society cultural actors in the country also took longer than expected.

A round-table discussion with more than 30 key stakeholders on needs and priorities of policy reforms in the field of culture held in Minsk became the principal event of the visit. The round-table was co-chaired by the Head of the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Culture Mr. Mikhail Kazhuro. The Ministry was also represented by three other officials who actively participated in the exchange of opinions.

The Ministry of Culture stressed the importance of viewing Belorussian culture as a part of world and European culture and expressed appreciation of EC activities in the cultural domain and development of international cultural cooperation. The Ministry also expressed its hope for deeper interaction with the EC in this area.

All participants at the round-table agreed on the effectiveness of round-tables or other forms of public debates as an instrument for launching and further developing public-private partnerships in the cultural sector of Belarus.

The RMCBU presented the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme including its objectives, tasks and main components. Special attention was paid to explanation of RMCBU tools and working instruments to be used during project implementation including:

- Research process under the activity *Comparative Studies and Diagnostics on Cultural Policy*;
- Regional capacity building activities, namely *Culture Policy Exchange Seminars and Workshops* to be organized by the RMCBU in 2013 - 2014;
- Support in implementation of the projects receiving grants under the EaP Culture Programme;
- Communication and networking, providing visibility and disseminating results of the Programme.

Participants were also informed about the possibility for national authorities to receive country-specific ad hoc technical assistance on cultural policy and legal reform issues within the activity: *Technical Assistance to Eastern Partnership Authorities* of the RMCBU.

National stakeholders were invited to express their interest to participate in the work of the *EaP Culture Programme Advisory Committee*.

RMCBU Expert Mr. Terry Sandell presented to the audience the main outcomes of the Report on Support to the ENPI East Regional Cooperation on Culture (Needs Assessment submitted to the EC in September 2008). While the 2008 Need Assessment did not cover the situation in Belarus, the presentation helped the round-table participants to better understand the background to the EaP Culture Programme.

While sharing the same opinion on the main features of culture and cultural developments in the country for the past three to five years, the representatives of the cultural sector of Belarus mentioned a range of things that have improved or got worse or become new matters of concern in the culture sector or some of its sub-sectors at the national or local (municipal) level.

The following strengths and positive factors were mentioned inter alia:

- Existing human resource potential that combines both professionalism and intellectual capacity;
- Deepening cultural cooperation which also includes joint projects and international partnerships, especially with the EU, in the field of culture and art.

At the same time, the following negative factors and problems were mentioned:

- Lack of democratic, civil society involvement and of open dialogue-based principles in public administration of the cultural sector;
- Excessive government intervention in cultural activities inhibiting freedom of cultural expression and creativity;
- Legislative limitations on cultural activities and administrative barriers obstructing development of the non-governmental cultural sector and hindering grass-root initiatives;
- Lack of professional personnel.

The main needs and priorities for reforming and strengthening the cultural sector, as well as regional and national policy initiatives and different EU and international programmes related to such areas as culture, education and human development, were addressed during discussion.

In terms of the main needs to be addressed by cultural legislation and cultural policies to improve the sector's capacity for modernisation and positive change, the following issues were mentioned by national stakeholders:

- Creation of legal provision for cultural activity and development of the non-governmental cultural sector based on cultural rights and freedoms;
- Provision of free partnerships and cultural dialogue, particularly between the government and civil society sectors, and between state and non-governmental cultural institutions; international cultural cooperation involving international foundations and EaP countries;
- Introduction of new standards and approaches to public administration of the cultural sector based on principles of democracy, cultural rights and freedoms; ensuring a partnership between the government and the civil sector and with improved access to information and community involvement in policy-making processes;
- Introducing tax benefits and fiscal incentives to encourage investment in the cultural sector to contribute to the sustainability of public and non-governmental cultural institutions and individual professionals.

Participants of the round-table and working meetings and interviews noted the importance of exchange of experience and cooperation with EU institutions and also that of strengthening cultural dialogue and exchange for further development of the cultural sector in Belarus.

The Ministry of Culture also asked for a specific type of technical assistance to be provided within the programme, namely for expert support to research into the role of culture in economic and social development and development of relevant sub-sector strategies.

Cultural actors representing the independent contemporary visual arts also mentioned the training of people/professionals who can work in the different sub-domains of culture – visual arts, audiovisual, heritage, festivals etc – as specifically important to the needs of the cultural sector in Belarus.

After the RMCBU research visit to the country, the round-table participants and all national stakeholders met during the visit were invited to contribute to the SWOT analysis of the national culture sector and cultural policy by filling in on-line questionnaires. Detailed information on the SWOT assessment is presented in Annex 1 to the report.

To get more information on the priority needs of the culture sector of Belarus and other partner countries, as well as conditions for the Programme's success, please also refer to the Regional Research Report (section 4: *Major Findings of the RMCBU Research Visits*, Annex 3: *National Stakeholders' SWOT Analysis of Cultural Policy and Priority Needs*).

Lists of Sources

Bibliography of printed/web publications on cultural policy and the cultural sector of Belarus

1. A report on the condition of NGOs and independent culture in Belarus (http://kulturaenter.pl/pliki/pdf/Bialorus_E.pdf)
2. Culture and Change in Belarus. Report prepared by Yael Ohana. European Cultural Foundation and German Marshall Fund of the United States, East European Reflection Group (EE RG). Identifying Cultural Actors of Change in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova: <http://www.labforculture.org/en/directory/contents/region-in-focus/belarus/culture-and-change-in-belarus>
3. Interview with Igor Logvinov. [kulturaenter.pl/dzjarzawa-pisymennik-publikacya-igor/2011/10/Abstracts: 2H//69648\(039\)*2H//74471\(039\)](http://kulturaenter.pl/dzjarzawa-pisymennik-publikacya-igor/2011/10/Abstracts:2H//69648(039)*2H//74471(039))
4. Lectures on cultural policy by Matskevich Vladimir <http://methodology.by/?p=661>
5. Vitali Silitski and Jan Zaprudnik (editors): Historical Dictionary of Belarus (The Scarecrow Press, 2007)
6. Беларусь. XXI век : [V Белорусский Международный медиафорум "Партнерство во имя будущего" (8—11 июня 2010 г.) / составители: В. В. Калистратова, Е. И. Семашко]. - Минск : Беларуская Энцыклапедыя, 2010.
7. В соцветии народов и культур : [буклет / Государственное учреждение "Центр культуры "Витебск". - Витебск : [б. и.], 2009.
8. Валер Булгаков (редактор): Беларусь: ни Европа, ни Россия. Мнения белорусских элит (ARCHE, Warsaw, 2006)
9. Вып. 19: Ноосферная экономика в начале XXI века: наука, образование, инновации, культура / [составитель В. Г. Гавриленко. - 2010.
10. Культура и искусство [Электронный ресурс] : сборник нормативных правовых актов законодательства Республики Беларусь и международные правовые акты / Национальный центр правовой информации Республики Беларусь. - Минск : НЦПИ, [2009?].
11. Культура, наука, образование в современном мире : материалы V Международной научной конференции, [посвященные 60-летию УО "Гродненский государственный аграрный университет" / редколлегия: Л. Л. Мельникова и др.]. - Гродно : ГГАУ, 2011.
12. Матвейчук В.Ф. Приоритеты культуры: быть востребованной социумом. http://pu.by/iss/n28/MATVEICHUK_28.pdf
13. Мацкевич, В. В. (род. 1956). Переоценка ценностей в культуре и истории Беларуси / Владимир Мацкевич. - Минск : И.П. Логвинов, 2010.
14. Моральное наследие в динамике культуры: проблема статуса и механизмов трансляции : диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора философских наук : 09.00.05 : защищена 15.11.07 : утверждена 20.02.08 / Лаптёнок Александр Сергеевич ; Учреждение образования "Белорусский государственный университет". - Минск, 2007.
15. Приоритет государства — развитие культуры : библиографический список литературы / Учреждение культуры "Могилевская областная библиотека им. В. И. Ленина", Информационно-справочный отдел. - Могилев : Могилевская областная библиотека, 2011.
16. Социально-психологические проблемы современного общества и человека: пути решения : материалы международной научно-практической конференции, Витебск, 20—21 октября 2011 г. / [редколлегия: Г. А. Качан, С. Д. Матюшкова]. - Витебск : ВГУ, 2011.
17. Татары в Беларуси и их культура (XIV-XVII века) : диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук : защищена 08.04.05 : утверждена 22.06.05 : 07.00.02 / Канапацкая Зорина Ибрагимовна. - Минск, 2005.
18. Шадурский, В. Внешняя культурная политика Беларуси: поиск оптимальной модели / В. Шадурский // Материалы VIII Междунар. науч. конф., посвящ. 88-летию Белорус. гос. ун-та. Минск, 30 октября 2009 г. / редкол.: В. Г. Шадурский [и др.]. — Минск: БГУ, 2009. http://www.fir.bsu.by/chairs/ir/publications_ir/shadursky/shadursky_2009_BMW.pdf
19. Язык. Общество. Медицина : материалы X Республиканской научно-практической студенческой конференции, посвященной 150-летию со дня рождения А. П.Чехова. Материалы VII научно-практического семинара для преподавателей "Технологии обучения языкам и проблемы преподавания в иноязычной аудитории" / [редколлегия: А. А.

- Мельникова (ответственный редактор), Н. А. Мишонкина, В. И. Воронец]. - Гродно : ГрГМУ, 2011.
20. Акудовіч, В. В. (нар. 1950). Архіпелаг Беларусь : кніга дыялогаў / Валянцін Акудовіч. - Мінск : Галіяфы, 2010.
 21. Беларуская культура сёння, 2008 : гадавы агляд / Міністэрства культуры Рэспублікі Беларусь, Беларускі дзяржаўны ўніверсітэт культуры і мастацтваў. - : БДУКіМ, 2009.
 22. Беларуская культура сёння, 2009 : гадавы агляд / Міністэрства культуры Рэспублікі Беларусь, Беларускі дзяржаўны ўніверсітэт культуры і мастацтваў. - Мінск : БДУКіМ, 2010.
 23. Беларуская культура сёння : гадавы агляд, 2010 / І. В. Анціпенка [і інш.]; пад агул. рэд. Т. І. Стружэцкага; М-ва культуры Рэсп. Беларусь, Ін-т культуры Беларусі. — Мінск : БДУ культуры і мастацтваў, 2011.
 24. Дзяржаўная палітыка Беларусі ў галіне прафесійнай мастацкай культуры (1985-2000 гг.) : аўтарэферат дысертацыі на суісканне вучонай ступені кандыдата гістарычных навук : 07.00.02 : 23.09.2005 / Папко Вольга Мікалаеўна ; Нацыянальная акадэмія навук Беларусі, Дзяржаўная навуковая ўстанова Інстытут гісторыі. – Мінск, 2005.
 25. Інстытут беларускай культуры, 1922—1928 : дакументы і матэрыялы / Нацыянальная акадэмія навук Беларусі, Інстытут гісторыі, Дэпартамент па архівах і справаходстве Міністэрства юстыцыі Рэспублікі Беларусь, Нацыянальны архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь. - Мінск : Беларуская навука, 2011.
 26. Культурная спадчына грэка-каталіцкай царквы ў Беларусі ў кантэксце дыхатаміі "Усход — Запад" : дысертацыя на суісканне вучонай ступені кандыдата культуралогіі : 24.00.01 : абаронена 26.11.09 : зацверджана 03.03.10 / Суша Аляксандр Аляксандравіч ; навуковы кіраўнік Смолік Аляксандр Іванавіч ; Установа адукацыі "Беларускі дзяржаўны ўніверсітэт культуры і мастацтваў". – Мінск, 2009.
 27. Навукова-метадычнае і інфармацыйнае суправаджэнне падрыхтоўкі кадраў для сферы культуры і мастацтва : матэрыялы навукова-метадычнай канферэнцыі (3 лютага 2010 года) / [рэдкалегія: Р. А. Ровіна (адказны рэдактар) і інш.]. - Мінск : БДУКіМ, 2010.
 28. Удзел Беларусі ў дзейнасці ЮНЕСКА (1984 - 2001 гг.) : дысертацыя на атрыманне вучонай ступені кандыдата гістарычных навук : 07.00.15 : абаронена 22.02.2007 : зацверджана 16.05.2007 / Раманоўскі Раман Генадзевіч ; навуковы кіраўнік Снапкоўскі У. Е. ; Беларускі дзяржаўны ўніверсітэт. – Мінск, 2006.

Web-pages

www.34mag.net
www.abiturient.by
<http://another.by>
<http://arche.by/>
www.artaktivist.org
<http://artcode.by/2012>
<http://artkurator.com>
<http://belapan.by>
www.belarus.by/ru/about-belarus/culture
www.belaruspartisan.org
<http://belintellectuals.eu/about/>
<http://belstat.gov.by/homep/en>
<http://bo-promo.com>
www.belta.by
www.belta.by/ru/all_news/culture
www.budzma.org
<http://concert.by>
www.dziejaslou.by
www.en.ngo.by
www.gazetaby.com
<http://gender-route.org>
<http://generation.by>
www.globus.tut.by
www.hoteleurope.by
<http://journal-parter.blog.tut.by>
www.kamunikat.org
<http://knihi.com/>
www.kultura.by
www.kultura.gov.by
www.kyky.org
www.lit-bel.org
www.main.lim.by
<http://methodology.by>
<http://mova.na.by>
<http://n-europe.eu>
<http://naviny.by/rubrics/culture>
www.nesvizh.by
<http://novagallery.by>
<http://pomniki.budzma.org>
www.prastora.org
<http://prasvet.com>
www.pravo.by
<http://pravoby.info>
www.radzima.org
www.rescue01.gov.by
www.svaboda.org
www.telegraf.by
<http://topos.ehu.lt>
<http://vak.org.by>
www.ygallery.by

Annex 1. SWOT Assessment by National Stakeholders of Cultural Policy and Priority Needs of the Cultural Domain of Belarus

This report was prepared by Ms. Svitlana Pakhlova, Senior Researcher of the Ukrainian Centre for Cultural Studies of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, who also provided quantitative and qualitative analysis of questionnaires collected by the RMCBU from the respondents representing cultural sectors of the EaP countries.

The invitation to contribute to the research activities of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme by answering the on-line questionnaire was sent to participants of round-table discussions and other national stakeholders of the programme several times following the research visits to the six EaP countries in December 2011 – March 2012. While the RMCBU contacted in total about 450 stakeholders from the six countries, all in all only 100 responses were received. The responses were distributed by countries, as follows: Armenia – 12, Azerbaijan – 10, Belarus – 10, Georgia – 13, Moldova – 11, and Ukraine – 44.

The low level of response from national stakeholders to the electronic questionnaire seems to be connected to factors, such as lack of familiarity with surveys at all and a lack of trust with regard to data protection. The RMCBU might also have overestimated the level to which stakeholders are familiar with modern technology and have regular access to the Internet.

As the number of respondents from Belarus who contributed to the *National Stakeholders' SWOT Assessment on Cultural Policy and Priority Needs of the Sector* was not sufficient to serve as a basis for the analytical research, the survey results have been included in the report for information purposes only. At the same time, the SWOT assessment results are in agreement with conclusions of the analysis.

Summary

Firstly, it should be mentioned that the level of participation of respondents from Belarus interested in the survey was relatively low at mere 10 % (compared to respondents from other partner countries, particularly, from Ukraine). Therefore the assessment of current situation in the cultural sector of Belarus represents only opinions of a narrow range of stakeholders concerned.

Another important point is that all the respondents from Belarus represented only the non-governmental sector. This is why the assessment demonstrates perceptions of only one side of the cultural sector.

The below SWOT matrix indicates all factors of impact on the cultural sector in accordance with opinions of the respondents from Belarus.

Location of Factor	TYPE OF FACTOR	
	Favorable	Unfavorable
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Human resources that combine both professionalism and intellectual capacity (60%)</i> 2. <i>Developed professional experience (60%)</i> 3. <i>Personal experience-based institutional potential of the private and non-governmental cultural sectors (40%)</i> 4. <i>Emergence of initiatives, new practices and projects that also contribute to the strengthening of cultural promotion and interaction (30%)</i> 5. <i>Creative capacity that contributes to emergence of new ideas (30%)</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Lack of democratic principles based on civil society involvement and introduction of open dialogue in cultural sector administration (60%)</i> 2. <i>Existing administrative barriers and legislative limitations to cultural activities that obstruct cultural development and cultural expression (40%)</i> 3. <i>Lack of cultural management and strategic vision (40%)</i> 4. <i>Low professional level of staff connected to the lack of appropriate knowledge (30%)</i> 5. <i>Lack of partnerships and dialogue within/between sectors and institutions (30%)</i> 6. <i>Unfavorable climate within art community and lack of communality and mutual understanding between actors and society (30%)</i> 7. <i>Low level of community awareness of culture and lack of public interest in cultural activities (30%)</i>
External	Opportunities	Threats
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Reinforcing cultural cooperation, joint project activities and international partnerships - especially with the EU - in the field of culture and art (70%)</i> 2. <i>Dissemination of national culture and reaching larger audiences, in particular, through involvement in cultural projects and promotion initiatives (50%)</i> 3. <i>Growing interest in national culture (especially, in contemporary art) in the community, also among authorities and young people that contributes to emergence of new initiatives (30%)</i> 4. <i>Development of cultural industries and entrepreneurship and implementation of self-sufficiency of cultural institutions (20%)</i> 5. <i>Development and introduction of modern technologies, especially digital and media ones, in cultural sector (20%)</i> 6. <i>Strengthening of motivation to develop culture and encouragement of cultural diversity (20%)</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Legislative limitations of cultural activities and administrative barriers that obstruct development of the non-governmental cultural sector and emergence of public initiatives (50%)</i> 2. <i>Lack of professional staff in the field of culture and art (50%)</i> 3. <i>Lack of partner and cultural cooperation between both sectors and different actors at national and local levels (40%)</i> 4. <i>Low level of interest in cultural activities and initiatives among authorities, actors and communities (30%)</i> 5. <i>Lack of marketing in the cultural sector and low level of advertising and distribution networks for cultural products and services (30%)</i>

The main needs of cultural legislation and policy that should be addressed to improve the culture sector's chance to take advantage of the described above opportunities are:

1. *Creation of legal provisions for cultural activities and development of the non-governmental cultural sector based on cultural rights and freedoms (60%)*
2. *Provision of free and legal partnership and cultural dialogue (60%)*
(Especially, of dialogue and partnership between the government and civil sectors, state and non-governmental cultural institutions as well as international cultural cooperation including with international foundations and EaP countries)
3. *Introduction of new standards and approaches to the public administration of cultural sector based on principles of democracy, cultural rights and freedoms (50%)*
(In particular, ensuring a partnership between the government and civil sectors, access to appropriate information, community involvement in policy-making process)
4. *Introducing tax benefits and incentives to encourage investments in culture and development of cultural activities (40%)*

(Many respondents have noted the necessity of introducing tax benefits and incentives to encourage investments in culture and boost activities of public and non-governmental cultural institutions and of individuals)

The respondents have noted a high potential of cooperation, partnerships and joint activities in the cultural field between Belarus and European Union Member States. As regards cooperation between Belarus and the countries participating in the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), the respondents found it difficult to provide answers. The current indicated level of this activity with all the mentioned countries has been noted as relatively low.

The same number of respondents has expressed their views of the future of culture and the cultural sector as both optimistic and a little pessimistic.

Moreover, the focusing on key components of all vectors of assessment, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, also on main Needs and Priorities of cultural policy begs for the following conclusions concerning three main points that should be taken into account:

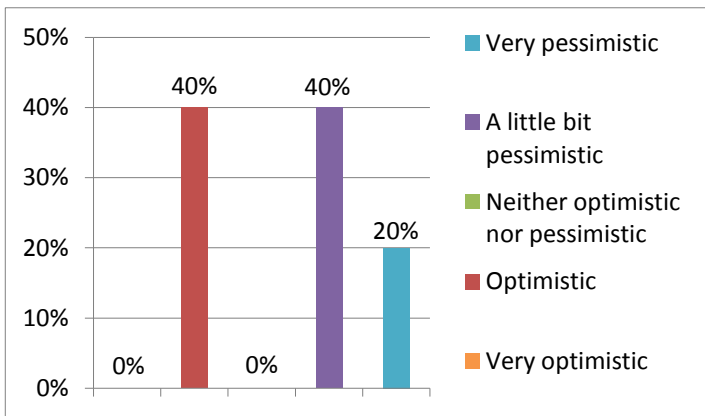
- The main indicated problem of the cultural sector of Belarus is the lack of democratic principles of civil society involvement and introduction of open dialogue in the public administration of the cultural sector. Respondents have also noted excessive government intervention into cultural activities that inhibits the freedom for cultural expression and creativity. Moreover, existing legislative limitations to cultural activities and administrative barriers obstruct development of the non-governmental cultural sector and emergence of public initiatives. The other problem that should be solved is the lack of professional staff.
- At the same time, the favorable factor indicated by respondents has concerned existing human resource with its professionalism and intellectual capacities, and the development of personal professional experience. The positive trend in evolution of the cultural environment in Belarus is about reinforcing cultural cooperation, which also includes joint project activities and international partnerships, especially with the EU, in the field of culture and art. Respondents have noted the importance of exchange of experience and cooperation with EU institutions and of strengthening cultural dialog and exchanges for further development of the cultural sector of Belarus.
- The key component suggested by respondents for inclusion in the list of priority cultural policy development measures has been the creation of legal framework of cultural activities based on democracy, cultural rights and freedoms. Implementation of this task could facilitate achievement of another important objective of introducing free and legal partnerships and cultural dialogue.

Quantitative analysis

Question 1

When you think about the future of culture and the culture sector in your country, you are:

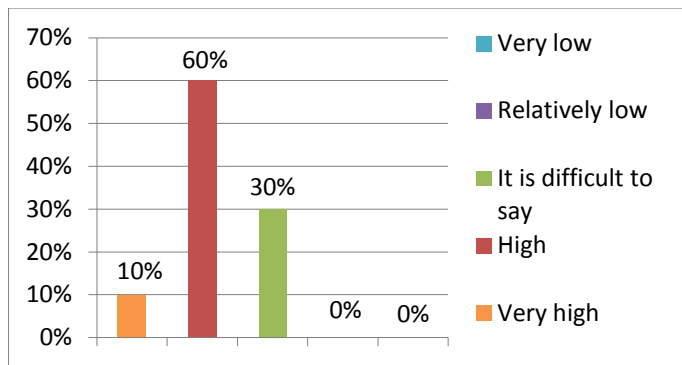
Very optimistic	0/10 – 0%
Optimistic	4/10 – 40%
Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	0/10 – 0%
A little bit pessimistic	4/10 – 40%
Very pessimistic	2/10 – 20%



Question 7

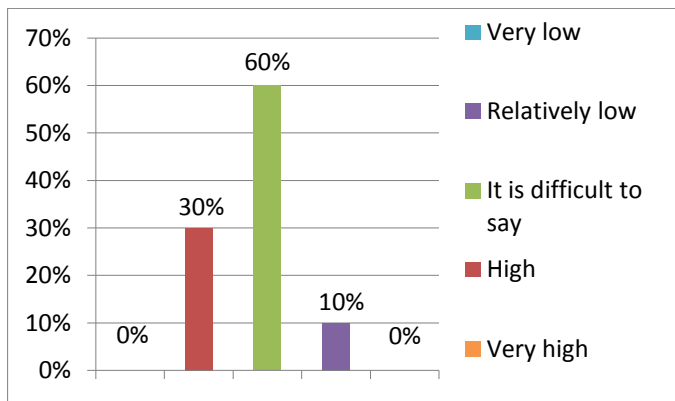
A. What describes best the **potential level** of cooperation, partnership and joint activities in the area of culture between your country and the countries of the European Union? It is:

Very high	1/10 – 10%
High	6/10 – 60%
It is difficult to say	3/10 – 30%
Relatively low	0/10 – 0%
Very low	0/10 – 0%



B. What describes best the **potential level** of cooperation, partnership and joint activities in the area of culture between your country and some or all of the countries participating in the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)? It is:

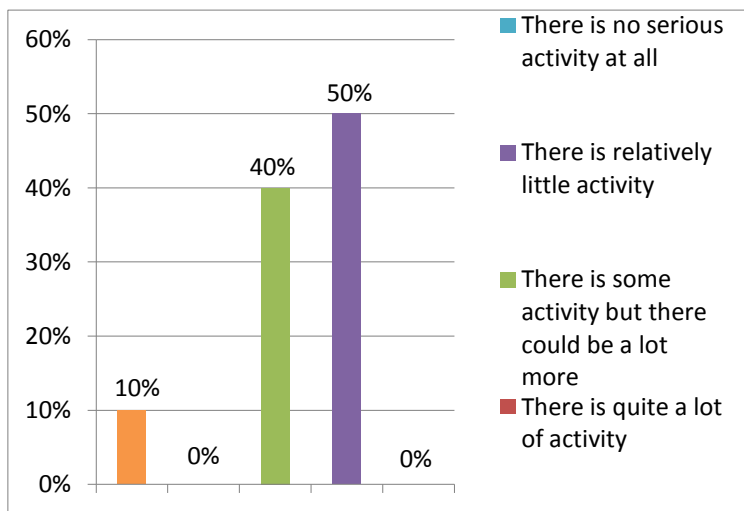
Very high	0/10 – 0%
High	3/10 – 30%
It is difficult to say	6/10 – 60%
Relatively low	1/10 – 10%
Very low	0/10 – 0%



Question 8

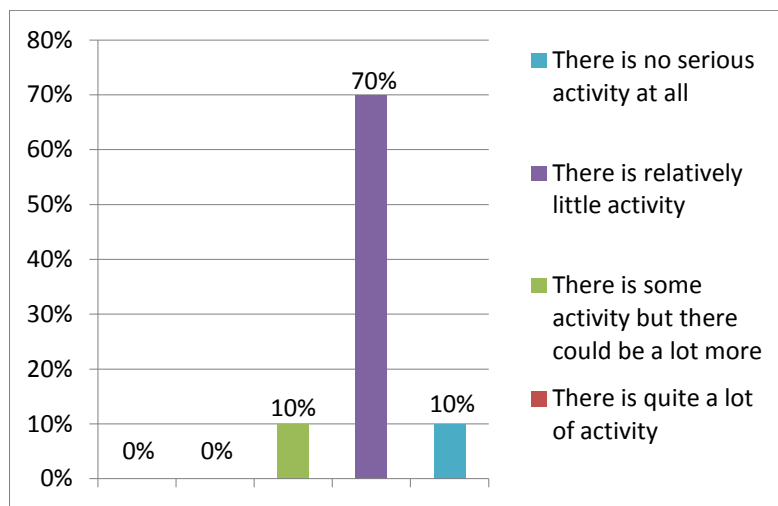
A. How would you describe the **current level** of cooperation, partnership and joint activities in the area of culture between your country and the countries of the European Union?

There is a very high level of activity	1/10 – 10 %
There is quite a lot of activity	0/10 – 0%
There is some activity but there could be a lot more	4/10 – 40%
There is relatively little activity	5/10 – 50%
There is no serious activity at all	0/10 – 0%



B. How would you describe the **current level** of cooperation, partnership and joint activities in the area of culture between your country and some or all of the countries of the EaP region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine)?

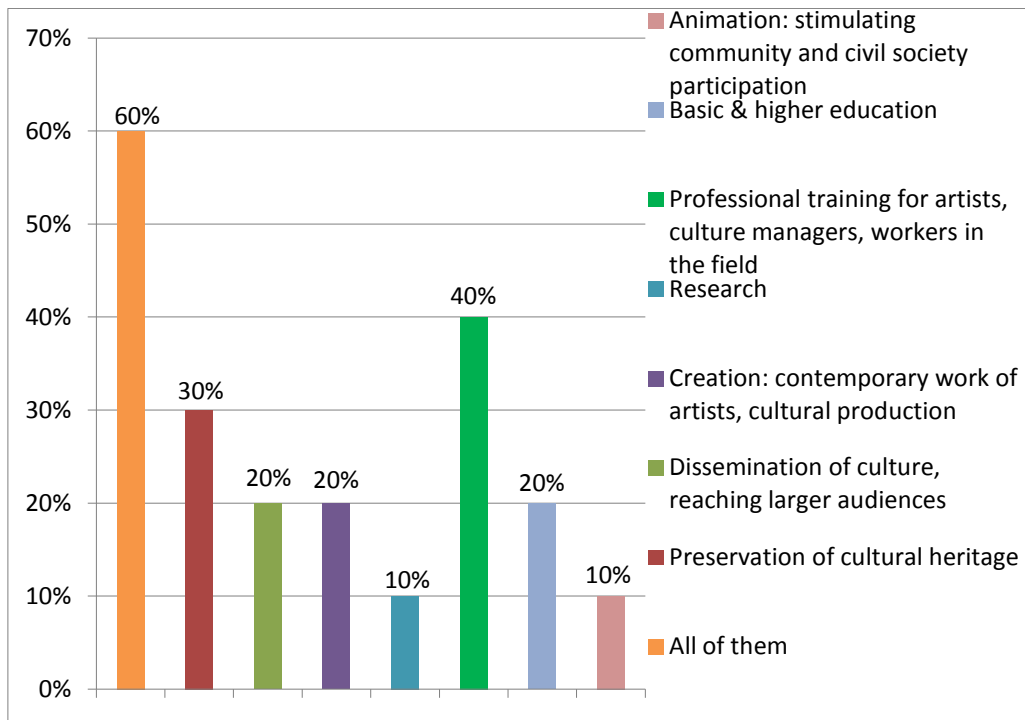
There is a very high level of activity	0/10(9) – 0%
There is quite a lot of activity	0/10 – 0%
There is some activity but there could be a lot more	1/10 – 10%
There is relatively little activity	7/10 – 70%
There is no serious activity at all	1/10 – 10%



Question 9

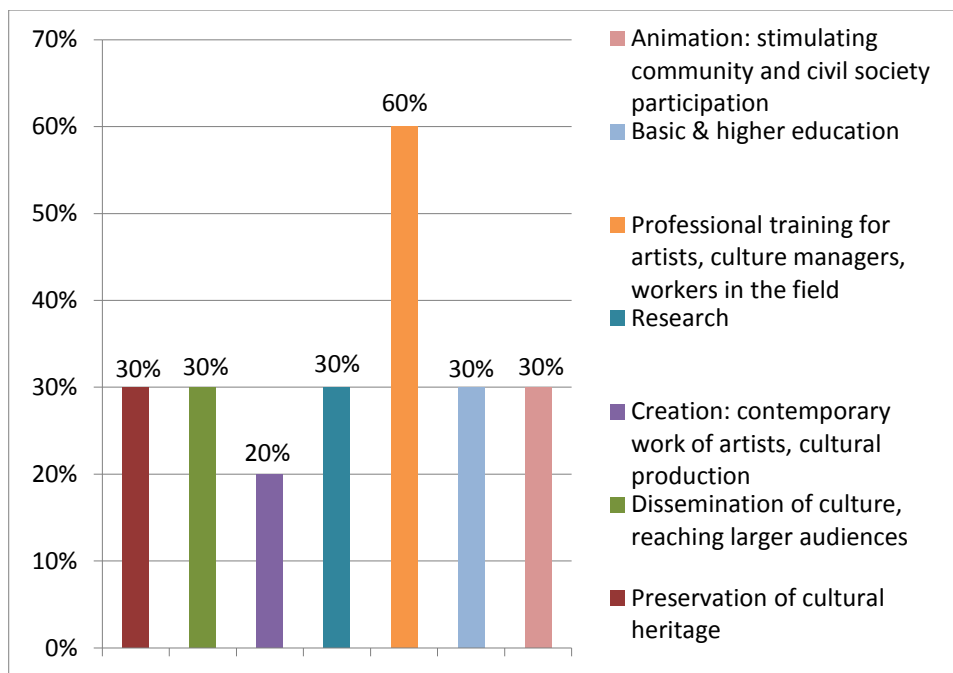
a) Which of the following do you consider to be main components of a comprehensive cultural policy?

- 60% (6/10) – All of them
- 30% (3/10) – Preservation of cultural heritage (sites, artifacts, cultural skills)
- 20% (2/10) – Dissemination of culture, reaching larger audiences
- 20% (2/10) – Creation: contemporary work of artists, cultural production
- 10% (1/10) – Research (audience research, culture mapping, cultural education)
- 40% (4/10) – Professional training for artists, culture managers, workers in the field
- 20% (2/10) – Basic & higher education (curricula development)
- 10% (1/10) – Animation: stimulating community and civil society participation



b) Which three of these are going to be most relevant to the needs in your country in the next three years?

- 30% (3/10)(8) – Preservation of cultural heritage (sites, artifacts, cultural skills)
- 30% (3/10) – Dissemination of culture, reaching larger audiences
- 20% (2/10) – Creation: contemporary work of artists, cultural production
- 30% (3/10) – Research (audience research, culture mapping, cultural education)
- 60% (6/10) – Professional training for artists, culture managers, workers in the field
- 30% (3/10) – Basic & higher education (curricula development)
- 30% (3/10) – Animation: stimulating community and civil society participation



Qualitative analysis

Question 2

What do you think will be the three main threats or challenges for you or for your organization in the next three years (beside financial constraints)?

1.	Legislative limitations of cultural activities and administrative barriers that obstruct development of non-governmental cultural sector and emergence of public initiatives	50% (5/10)
2.	Lack of professional staff in the field of culture and art <i>(Including low professional level of actors)</i>	50% (5/10)
3.	Lack of partnership and cultural cooperation between both sectors and different actors at national and local levels <i>(Including low level of interaction with audiences, also through media)</i>	40% (4/10)
4.	Low level of interest in cultural activities and initiatives among authorities, actors and communities	30% (3/10)
5.	Lack of marketing in the cultural sector and low level of advertising and distribution networks for cultural products and services	30% (3/10)
6.	Lack of democratic principles in the public administration system that inhibits social and cultural activities	20% (2/10)
7.	Lack of vocational training on contemporary art and art management	20% (2/10)
8.	Low level of community involvement in policy-making process in the cultural sector, also the lack of motivation	20% (2/10)
9.	Lack of mutual understanding and communality between government and public sectors	10% (1/10)
10.	Lack of support for contemporary art by the government and through public initiatives	10% (1/10)
11.	Unfavorable political climate that inhibits qualitative forecasting and long-term planning	10% (1/10)

Question 3

What do you think are the three main current strengths, advantages or positive characteristics of your organization or of the culture sector in your country?

1.	Human resource that would combine both staff professionalism and intellectual capacity	60% (6/10)
2.	Developed professional experience	60% (6/10)
3.	Personal experience-based institutional potential of the private and non-governmental cultural sector <i>(Respondents indicated existence of certain institutions that create innovative cultural products and combine new functions)</i>	40% (4/10)
4.	Emergence of initiatives, new practices and projects that also contribute to the strengthening of cultural promotion and interaction	30% (3/10)
5.	Creative capacity that effects emergence of new ideas	30% (3/10)
6.	Openness for communication and joint activities	20% (2/10)
7.	Financial independence from the state	10% (1/10)
8.	High level of cultural products	10% (1/10)

Question 4

What do you think are the three main current weaknesses or problems of your organization or of the culture sector in your country (other than lack of financial funding)?

1.	Lack of democratic principles in the administration of cultural sector based on civil society involvement and introduction of open dialogue <i>(Respondents have also noted excessive government intervention into cultural activities that inhibits freedom of cultural expression and creativity)</i>	60% (6/10)
2.	Existing administrative barriers to, and legislative limitations of cultural activities that obstruct cultural development and cultural expression	40% (4/10)
3.	Lack of cultural management and strategic vision <i>(Including evaluation of possibilities and definition of priorities of personal activities)</i>	40% (4/10)

4.	Low professional level of staff and the lack of appropriate knowledge <i>(Especially, the lack of knowledge on management, fundraising, art criticism, visual art, project management, etc.)</i>	30% (3/10)
5.	Lack of partnership and dialogue within/between sectors and institutions	30% (3/10)
6.	Unfavourable climate within art community, and lack of communality and mutual understanding between actors and society	30% (3/10)
7.	Low level of community awareness of culture and lack of public interest in cultural activity	30% (3/10)
8.	Unfavourable and specific political situation	10% (1/10)

Question 5

What do you think are the three main actual or upcoming opportunities for your organization or for the culture sector in your country, which should not be missed?

1.	Reinforcing cultural cooperation, joint project activities and international partnerships, especially with the EU in the field of culture and art <i>(Respondents have noted the importance of exchange of experience and cooperation with EU institutions and also the importance of strengthening cultural dialog and exchanges)</i>	70% (7/10)
2.	Dissemination of national culture and the reaching of larger audiences, in particular, through involvement in cultural projects and promotion initiatives <i>(Including the promotion of national contemporary art abroad and promotion culture by the media)</i>	50% (5/10)
3.	Growing interest in national culture (especially, in contemporary art) among community and authorities, also among young generation that contributes to emergence of new initiatives	30% (3/10)
4.	Development of cultural industries and entrepreneurship and implementation of self-sufficiency of cultural institutions	20% (2/10)
5.	Development and introduction of modern technologies in the cultural sector, especially of digital and media technologies	20% (2/10)
6.	Strengthening motivation to develop culture and encourage cultural diversity	20% (2/10)
7.	Reforms of the cultural sector (cultural policy and cultural institutions)	10% (1/10)
8.	Implementation of international standards and principles in accordance with the adopted Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	10% (1/10)

Question 6

What do you think are the three main needs cultural legislation and cultural policies should address, either in general or specifically to improve your/your organization/the culture sector's chance to take advantage of the above described opportunities (other than increase of available financial funding)?

1.	Creation of legal provisions for cultural activities and development of the non-governmental cultural sector based on cultural rights and freedoms	60% (6/10)
2.	Providing free and legal partnership and cultural dialogue <i>(Especially a dialogue and partnerships between the government and civil sectors, state and non-governmental cultural institutions, international cultural cooperation, including with international foundations and EaP countries)</i>	60% (6/10)
3.	Introduction of new standards and approaches to the public administration of the cultural sector based on principles of democracy, cultural rights and freedoms <i>(In particular, the ensuring of partnership between the government and civil sector; the access to appropriate information; community involvement in policy making process etc.)</i>	50% (5/10)
4.	Introducing tax benefits and incentives for encouragement of investments in culture and development of cultural activities <i>(Many respondents noted the necessity of introducing tax benefits and incentives for encouragement of investments in culture and for the strengthening of activities of public and non-governmental cultural institutions and of individuals)</i>	40% (4/10)
5.	Development of professional training and educational programs in the cultural field	20% (2/10)
6.	Support to cultural initiatives and art projects	10% (1/10)

Annex 2. Background – Belarus in an Historical Context³³

The countries of the Eastern Partnership are less known, and as a result less well understood, than they should be in the member states of the EU. In the case of Belarus this is certainly true with both ignorance and lack of knowledge combining with a simplistic western media 'sound-bite' dismissal of the country as 'the last dictatorship of Europe'.

In reality Belarus is a complex, diverse, interesting country at the very geographical heart of Europe. Its mainly unrecognized twentieth century history, a history possibly more tragic than that of any other country in Europe, has produced since independence in 1991 striking strengths, as well as vulnerabilities, including a positive uniqueness, quite unrelated to the uniqueness of its current eccentric, personality-driven political system.

The fact that this political system fails to meet European norms and standards has had consequences which have unjustifiably and unfairly affected the image and international opportunities of the professional and younger parts of its population who are worthy of comparison with the best in Europe. It has also distorted both the development and external understanding of its contemporary culture. The country's history has produced in its educated class a mainly conservative and serious people for whom values, stable progress and professionalism are central and this adds to the paradox of it currently being a 'pariah' European state.

As with the other Eastern Partnership countries there have been special factors inhibiting understanding of the country. Its history has been quite complex and also been further complicated by terminology issues. There has been confusion even over its name - Byelorussia, the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and now Belarus. All mean 'White Rus' rather than 'White Russia', although even in this context there are various views as to the derivation of the adjective 'White'. The term 'White Russia' (e.g. Weissrussland as the country is often still called in German) has been doubly confusing in that even when it became part of the Russian Empire, it was never 'Russian' in the contemporary sense of that word, nor was it related to the 'White Russians' of the Russian Revolution.

The starting point for an understanding of contemporary Belarus is the centrality of its European location and its open geographical landscape which throughout its history has made it the crossroads of Europe for invading armies. Geography and geopolitics are today still key factors in the shaping of Belarus's domestic politics and international relations.

Seen from a Belarusian and historical perspective, it has found itself squeezed between two expansionist neighbours, Poland and Russia, who have continually fought over it. For much of the time, until independence twenty years ago, its history was 'lost' as part of a 'sub-plot' or 'sub-narrative' of their histories. While Poland and Russia have had great influence on the cultural, religious and linguistic development of Belarus, the country has a rich cultural heritage (notwithstanding the enormous destruction and losses) that is providing a base for the development of a distinct national identity, albeit contested, which is in turn slowly contributing to growing and real, political and intellectual independence.

Land-locked, Belarus's neighbours are the Russian Federation to the north and east, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, Lithuania to the north-west, and Latvia to the north. A mainly flat country of gentle hills and lowlands, about 40% of the country is forest and it is well-watered with rivers, and in particular with lakes, the number being in excess of 11,000. Ecologically it is one of Europe's most unspoilt regions, a fact that tends to be forgotten because of international consciousness of the serious consequences the Chernobyl disaster had for parts of southern Belarus.

According to the 2009 census, the population of Belarus is 9.5 million. The most significant change from the 1999 census is a sharp decline in the ethnic minority numbers e.g. the number of Russians fell by a third from 1.1 million to 785,000, the number of Poles by a quarter from 396,000 to 295,000 and Ukrainians by a third from 237,000 to 159,000. This would suggest a trend to mono-ethnicism but it may

³³ This section is intended as a background introduction for people not familiar with Belarus or its historical development. It has been written by Terry Sandell based on previous work and research he has done

also be significantly affected by people from the minorities self-identifying themselves as part of the titular nation, rather than with their ethnic origins. Similarly, the other significant 2009 census result is related to an apparent dramatic decline in the number of people claiming Belarus as a 'mother tongue'. The change however from 73.6% in 1999 to 53.2% in 2009 may be in large measure linked to the different way in which the question was formulated in the two censuses.

The origin of the Belarusians is disputed. A theory that they are of pure Slavic stock, particularly favoured in Soviet times, is challenged by an increasingly influential theory that they were a fusion of Balts and Slavs or were from the 8th to the 13th centuries slowly Slavicised Balts and it was this that created the context for the future development of the Belarusian language and 'nationality'. During this early period, Belarus's two main rivers shaped its history. The Dniapro (Dniro/Dnieper) flowed towards the Black Sea and provided a link with Byzantium (the famous 'Trade Route from the Varangians to the Greeks' through Kyiv), while the West Dzvina (Dvina) connected with the Baltic Sea and the cities of northern Germany. A network of waterways provided links to Poland to the west and later to Muscovy in the east.

The early political history of Belarus was tied up with that of Kyivan Rus and its complicated expansionist aspirations and the various rivalries of the time, including with Novgorod. The city of Polacak (Polatsk) became the principal medieval political centre in the Belarusian territories and is perceived by nationalist Belarusians as the symbolic source of the earliest Belarusian independence aspirations. Christianity was adopted soon after its adoption in Kyiv and by 992 Polacak (Polatsk) was a bishopric. Strong pre-Christian traditions however were still evident in the 19th century. Polacak (Polatsk) went in to decline in the late 12th century and other political centres such as the Duchy of Turau and Pinsk emerged and then Navahradak. Navahradak was in constant conflict with the German Knights who became dominant in the Baltic area and whose power over the Baltic and Slav lands was helped by the Mongol destruction of Kyiv in 1240.

Navahradak later became the base of Mindouh (Mindaugas), the Litva³⁴ duke who united eastern Litva and some of the Belarusian lands into a new state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As a significant proportion of the inhabitants of Litva were both illiterate, and until 1386, pagan, the state consolidated around Byzantine-rite Christianity with a form of Belarusian becoming the official state language which continued until 1697.³⁵

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania expanded during the 14th century becoming the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus and Samogitia reflecting its huge territory which extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The capital of this empire moved from Navahradak to modern-day Vilnius in 1323. In a 1385 dynastic union between the Grand Duchy and Poland, the Grand Duke, Jahaila, became also King of Poland by marrying the Polish queen. He was therefore simultaneously and in parallel Grand Duke of the Duchy and the Polish king. He converted to Catholicism, which became the religion of the pagan Lithuanians, while the populations of the Grand Duchy's Belarusian and Ukrainian territories continued to follow the Byzantine rite.

Catholicism did however begin to penetrate into these territories and as a result of privileges given to Catholicism in the Grand Duchy, the social elite of Belarus (as in 'Right-Bank' Ukraine) became attached to Catholicism and Polish culture. This trend strengthened with the 1569 Union of Lublin which turned the 1385 dynastic union into a political union of the Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Poland and the creation of a new federated state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. One consequence of this was that Ukrainian lands came under Polish ownership and Polonization and Catholicization of the Belarusian and Lithuanian nobility greatly increased. The Grand Duchy retained much, however, including continued use of the Belarusian Slav language for official transactions.

³⁴ Part of the terminological confusion which has added to Belarus's historical complexity, and caused some contemporary tensions, concerns the use of the terms 'Litva' and 'Lithuania'. In modern Lithuanian, 'Litva' is Lietuva, their name for Lithuania. As will be seen below, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was one of the biggest states in Europe which lasted de facto from about the 12th century until the 'third partition' in 1795. Notwithstanding the name and its contemporary connotations, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in fact consisted of territories and populations which are today parts of present-day Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Russia, Latvia, Estonia and Moldova.

³⁵ When it was replaced by Polish as a result of Polonization which came through a series of agreements and unions between the Grand Duchy and the Polish Crown. See below.

The phenomenon of the Belarusian nobility accepting, because of its political and other advantages, Polonisation while ordinary people remained loyal to Byzantine-rite eastern Christianity, led to religious antagonism and a confessional complexity which still has an impact on contemporary Belarus.

The 1596 Union of Brest (Bierascie) brought about an act of formal 'unification' of the Byzantine-rite Orthodox and Catholic Churches in which the Orthodox Church became the Uniate Church and preserved its hierarchy, the Byzantine rite and use of Church-Slavonic but accepted the supremacy of the Pope and some Catholic dogma. Many Orthodox however refused to recognize the Union leading to a major division in society and considerable violence.

Although other religions were tolerated, the appearance of the Uniate Church as a de facto 'established church' created great tensions reflected not only in extensive polemical debate and literature but also in bloodshed. Catholicism and Catholic influence increasingly came to be identified with Polishness while Orthodoxy started to become identified with Muscovy and Russian. The Russian Tsars in their self-proclaimed role as the 'Third Rome' subsequently used this to justify westward imperial expansion - which had begun in a series of wars in the 16th century - as well as to justify claims of "liberating" the Orthodox.

Notwithstanding the wars with Muscovy, the 16th century saw a flourishing of trade and economic activity, especially through the self-government of cities, as well as a 'Golden Age' of Belarusian cultural activity. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements both had a deep impact on Belarusian culture and on religious developments, including for example, on intellectual debate and publishing, the latter particularly remembered through Francisak Skaryna who translated and published a Belarusian version of the Bible.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth began to decline in the 17th century because of debilitating internal contradictions in Poland. Muscovite interference in the political life of the Commonwealth began. It culminated with the disappearance of the Commonwealth from the map of Europe through Catherine the Great's arrangements with Prussia and Austria for the three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772, 1793 and 1795. All of Belarus became part of the Russian Empire, except for a small piece of territory in the west which went to Prussia.

Apart from the Catholic-Orthodox-Uniate religious dimension, other religions were also represented in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its continuation as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, notably the Litvak Jews. The Jews were the result of probably two migrations, one of which could be traced back to the 8th century. The Jewish population was significant both numerically and in the prominent role they played. Their position alternated between periods when they had special privileges, were freemen and were responsible directly to the monarchy with periods where they faced some persecution, including expulsion in 1495, until 1503, when they were allowed to return. Resentment against the Jews from the nobility/szlachta often came from their tax-farming role while peasant resentment against the Jews was because they were often used by the wealthy nobles as managers of their estates. With the 'third partition' in 1795 the Litvak Jews became part of the Russian Empire and could officially only live within the 'Pale of Settlement' decreed by Catherine the Great which was basically that part of the Russian Empire which had been the old borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Another significant group were the Lipka³⁶ Tatars, who arrived during the 14th century in two migrations, the first group seeking religious asylum to preserve their shamanist religion, the second later group were Tatar Muslims invited by Vitautas, the Grand Duke. It has been suggested that at the end of the 16th century there were 200,000 of them living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. While they remained Muslims, there was a lot of assimilation, mainly through polonisation, into the mainstream Belarus, Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian populations. It has been claimed that those who adopted the Belarusian language wrote it in Arabic script until the 1930s. There are about ten to fifteen thousand Tatars today living on the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

As part of the Russian Empire, Belarus was subjected to Russification and the suppression of the Uniate Church (to which probably about three-quarters of the population at the time adhered). The Belarusian

³⁶ Lipka was the Crimean Tatar word for Lithuania.

language was treated as a dialect of Russian but initially the Polish language retained its position until the 1830 Polish Uprising which had much support in the Belarusian territories. By 1836 Russian was declared to be the exclusive language of instruction and Polish banned.

In 1839 the Uniate Church was finally 'abolished' and its adherents forcibly converted to Russian Orthodoxy. By 1840, the terms Litva and Belarus (which referred to the eastern part of contemporary Belarus) were banned and Belarusian territories were called simply imperial provinces (guberniyas). Opposition to Russification was reflected in Belarusian support for the 1863 Polish Uprising which led to executions and over 12,000 Belarusians being exiled to Siberia but ultimately led to the intensification of Russification and further countering of Polish influences. Continuing Russian and Polish nationalist claims to Belarus in nineteenth-century Russian and Polish publications gradually fuelled an emerging modern Belarusian nationalism.

In the late 19th century this slowly emerging modern Belarusian nationalism appeared initially as a literary phenomenon amongst the bilingual Belarusian-Polish and Belarusian-Russian intelligentsia, influenced by romanticism, and historically inspired by the historical periods of the Duchy of Polacak (Polatsk) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Since that time the nationalist movement has often been connected with the revival and re-establishment of the Belarusian language as a means of artistic expression.

The issue of identity, so important in Belarus today, was an issue for the nationalist movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Distorted demographics had led to a situation where under 3% of Belarusians were urban dwellers. The other 97% lived in rural areas and identified themselves by religion and by their village or region, rather than by nationality. The small number of those who were urbanized were often anyway Russified or Polonized. The inhabitants of the main urban centres – the crucibles where nationalist movements developed in other European countries - were mainly Jews (a result of Catherine the Great's 'Pale of Settlement' decree and Alexander III's 1883 ban on Jews settling in rural areas) and immigrant Russians.

Massive emigration in the late 19th century and early 20th century has also played a role in the identity issue. For mainly economic reasons it has been estimated that about half a million people left Belarusian territories for the United States, Brazil, Argentina and Canada while there was also in the late 19th century a mass migration by peasants to Russia looking for work. While there was an enormous diaspora, instead of joining or forming Belarusian diaspora organizations, the emigrants tended to join the Polish or Russian ones thereby weakening any clear perception of Belarusian national identity abroad.

The 20th century began with Belarus suffering enormously in the First World War, followed by revolution and an attempt to establish an independent Belarusian Democratic Republic, proclaimed in 1918, but which in the following year became an independent Belarusian/Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. This partly precipitated the Russo-Polish War of 1919-1920 with Belarus a major issue and with it ending in partition under the 1921 Treaty of Riga. Under this treaty the western Belarusian territories went to Poland, a central part remained nominally as an independent Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic while its eastern territories became part of the Russian Federation until they were returned in 1924 and 1926.

Under Soviet rule in the 1920s and the policy of 'korenizatsiya' (indigenization), 'Belarusianization' was encouraged and equal rights given to the four main languages – Belarusian, Polish, Russian and Yiddish. From 1922-1926 most primary schools went over to using Belarusian as the language of instruction and it even started to be introduced into higher education institutions. The return of Belarusian ethnic territories from the Russian Federation to the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924 and 1926 was significant and increased the population from 1.5 million to nearly 5 million.

Meanwhile in Poland, but for a briefer period, west Belarusians saw over 400 Belarusian primary schools open as well as some other educational establishments. But by 1924, the situation was already changing. The schools were closed down, there were severe curbs on publishing, a de-facto policy of colonization by Polish farmers of Belarusian ethnic territories was taking place and other measures were taken to polonize and Catholicize 'western Belarus'.

As in Ukraine, the cultural flourishing in the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic ended in 1928 with new Moscow policies, particularly forced collectivization of agriculture, the end of 'Belarusianization', the re-writing of history and mass arrests, executions and deportations involving about two million people.

In 1939, Soviet troops invaded Poland, annexing 'western Belarus' and 'western Ukraine' to the respective Soviet republics. Soon after the annexation of 'western Belarus' the Soviet government transferred the Vilnia (Vilnius) region to Lithuania. This was also a period of mass arrests and deportations. Germany then occupied the area from 1941 until 1944 and during the period of German occupation it is estimated that 2.2 million people died.

As in Ukraine, the Germans did tolerate some aspects of nationalism, especially by those opposing Soviet bolshevism, which with the return of Soviet rule led to flight west, executions, arrests and deportation to Siberia and elsewhere. Belarus was devastated at all levels by World War II.

During the Cold War, because of its geographic position, Belarus was the most militarized republic in the Soviet Union and with the top positions in Minsk/Mensk and the cities of Grodna (Hrodno/Grodno) and Brest on the western border given to immigrant ethnic Russians. Very active Russification took place during this period with the Belarusian language informally banned from the early 1950s and other 'cultural cleansing' measures put in place. While there was some dissident opposition, resistance to Russification was weak. The Russian language became the language of good jobs, education, urbanization and modernization while Soviet domestic propaganda promoted the Belarusians as the 'most Soviet' of all the nationalities in the USSR.

Belarus therefore existed in a cultural environment where expression of national identity was severely repressed, the 'mother tongue' suppressed and marginalized and national history was unknown to most people. In addition its people had been subject to devastation and exhaustion as a result of two world wars disproportionately fought on their territory by Moscow and Berlin on top of ideological, religious and territorial propaganda carried out over centuries by Warsaw and Moscow. In this context it was hardly surprising that Belarusians, grateful for the existence of a territorial entity with which they could identify and with UN state membership in their own right, found it difficult to be an 'imagined community' outside of a Soviet context. They were the republic where from, or because of, the greatest devastation and unbelievable human suffering, the Communist experiment had been most successful, albeit at the possible cost of Belarusian spiritual extinction and severe cultural distortion.

Against this background, the disaster of Chernobyl in 1986, as in Ukraine, had a slow-burning, long-term fundamental effect on Belarusian perceptions as did, two years later, the mass graves discovered at Kurapaty, near Minsk/Mensk, of up to a quarter of a million civilian victims of previously unrecorded Stalinist repression. While history was moving in one direction, Belarusians, having been conditioned by experience into fearing history and change, conservatively refused to move. In March 1991, in a referendum, 82% endorsed the preservation of the Soviet Union as a single state.

Change, however, came. In September 1991 Parliament renamed the Soviet Republic, the Republic of Belarus and adopted a new national flag and coat of arms (but this was reversed some time later under President Lukashenka). In December 1991, ironically in Belavezhskaya Pushcha (Bielaviezia Forest) in Belarus, at a meeting of the leaders of Belarus/Byelorussia, Russia and Ukraine, the USSR was dissolved to be replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States. Belarus subsequently issued a declaration of state sovereignty whereby it chose neutrality and along with Ukraine and Kazakhstan dismantled the nuclear arsenal on its territory, which included over eighty intercontinental ballistic missiles, the nuclear warheads being passed to the Russian Federation. This led to the possibility of Belarus widening its international contacts.

Domestically the early 1990's were a difficult period. The Soviet nomenklatura and old political guard remained, and it was easier to go backwards to the known than forwards to the unknown. Thus the neutrality was being replaced by plans to join new Russian security arrangements, introduce the Russian rouble as legal tender and so on. The opposition became marginalized and the economic and social crisis that was being experienced was associated with the collapse of the USSR. In 1994, a presidential as opposed to a parliamentary republic was established and in the elections that followed, of the four

candidates, Aleksandr Lukashenka, Head of the Anti-Corruption Committee, won an unexpected and overwhelming victory.

With further constitutional changes to increase the powers of the presidency and with solid support from pensioners (about a quarter of the population), those living in rural areas, most Russians and a good proportion of the working class, President Lukashenka established his position. A detailed account of the mercurial rule of Lukashenka as president is beyond the scope of this introduction. Significant elements of his rule have included granting Russian equal status with Belarusian, changing the state symbols of independent Belarus back to the old Soviet ones with very slight changes, a 'yo-yoing' of relations with Russia and zigzags in the project for a Union State of Belarus and Russia. His retention and use of the death penalty and a repressive and undemocratic style of leadership have effectively isolated Belarus from wider European engagement, for example through the Council of Europe, with direct and indirect cultural consequences.

President Lukashenka's capricious and opportunistic rule has also thrown up all sorts of contradictions obscured by the EU and others' unfortunate dismissal of the country as the 'last dictatorship in Europe'. For example the dour image and dull Soviet provincial reality of Minsk/Mensk before independence has given way to it being not only a socially-thriving 'capital of cappuccino communism' but also an interesting centre of nascent professional and young people's movements whose members are beginning to understand their historical and Soviet past, find their Belarusian identity/identities and aspire to engage with Europe, in the heart of which their country is geographically situated.