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Please send any information concerning education in Belarus to our safe and anonymous Telegram chatbot @eduOST_bot. Please send us news from your educational institution or government agency about repression and various forms of pressure from the administration, corruption and new orders that seem unreasonable or irrational to you. We also invite you to share your ideas and proposals for reforming the education system.

We have launched a website www.asvetaby.org where you can find all issues of the “Asveta” digest in Belarusian, Russian and English.

REPRESSIONS

Danuta Pyarednya, a 20-year-old student of Kuliashou Mahiliou State University, was [sentenced](#) to 6.5 years of general regime colony. On 1 July, the Kirau District court found her guilty of actions aimed at inflicting harm to the national interests of the Republic of Belarus. The conviction was based on Danuta’s repost of a publication to the Telegram chat. The post condemned the actions of Putin and Lukashenka and unleashing war against Ukraine. She was also put on the KGB list of “persons involved in the terrorist activities”.

On 15 July, political prisoner Kanstantsin Rudnitski, a 23-year-old software engineering student at Brest State Technical University, was [sentenced](#) to 6 years in a strict regime colony and a fine in the amount of 3200 roubles (1222 euros). He developed one of the functional elements of the [“Black Map of Belarus”](#), a resource which contains personal data of those responsible for repressions. It has been treated by the prosecution as “aiding and abetting in hate speech” and “assisting in unlawful actions with personal data”. Judge Katsiaryna Hruda found him guilty. It is known that Kanstantsin holds the title of Master of Sport, and he was expelled from the university during his imprisonment.

18-year-old Pavel Piskun from Homel was [sentenced](#) to 3 years in general regime colony for numerous recordings of the Russian military equipment movement on the territory of Belarus and sending the information to a Telegram-channel contributing to the defence of Ukraine against Russian aggression. Judge Aliaksandr Piskunou, known for passing politically motivated judgements, has found Pavel guilty of “assisting extremist activities”. During his arrest, Pavel was still underage.

Music teacher and political prisoner Aksana Kaspiarovich has been [released](#) from Hrodna Prison №1 after the end of her prison term. A court found her guilty of “inciting hatred” due to commenting on a post about the death of a KGB officer during the attempted raid on Andrei Zeltser’s apartment. She spent almost 9 months in custody and was put on the KGB list of “persons involved in the terrorist activities”.

On 13 July, during the mass arrests in Ivanava, teacher Alena Putsykovich was detained once again. She had already been [sentenced](#) to 2,5 years of house arrest for reposting information about the police officers. She was already serving five-day detention in a prison cell at the end of June for allegedly violating the conditions of the home arrest for the third time in a row, and was charged with reposting information from Telegram channels, which were considered extremist by the Belarusian authorities. During the arrest, law enforcement officers shot Alena’s dog with a rubber bullet, after which the animal required veterinary care.

On 5 July, Jury Shyroki, a psychology student of Kuliashou Mahiliou State University, was allegedly [detained](#). He is accused of participating in peaceful protests in 2020 and “distributing extremist materials”.

REGIME’S POLICY

It has become [known](#) that from 1 September, the tuition fees at Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Belarus State Economic University would increase by 10%, despite the fact that in April the head of the main department of professional education of the Ministry of Education Sergei Kaspiarovich claimed that “the applicants will be informed about the increase in tuition fees in advance before the admission campaign starts”. Additionally, there is also [information](#) about the increase in tuition fees at BSMU. According to a [statement](#) by Minister of Education A. Ivanets, it is likely that tuition fees at other universities will also be increased soon. He says that the last year has set many preconditions for this increase.

As of the new school year, the cost of meals for children in schools and kindergartens will be [increased](#) by 10%.

Next year, it will be possible to be [admitted](#) to the degrees with a shortage of applicants (e.g. Degree of Education) based on the results of in-university

competition without passing the Centralized Testing. It is planned to be implemented mainly in regional universities. Thus, it will create “an additional stimulus” for young people to choose a career path that “our economy really needs”, states the Ministry of Education.

Belarusian propaganda [showed](#) news about “17 military-patriotic clubs and 146 camps” recently opened at military units under Lukashenka directive №160 for “ideological education” of children. According to a commander of one of the military units, they “actually have a lot of people who want to join the club”. According to the news, children are taught to use weapons, live in the military camps, and engage in various types of combat, “to understand who a real patriot is and what a state is”. The children are also shown propaganda videos about Russia and taken on excursions. In addition, the news reveals that there are field training camps organised this summer for high school students, and university students are recruited into law enforcement units.

Members of the military-historical club “The 53rd Motorized Rifle Regiment of the NKVD”, consisting of employees of the Homel Heating Networks enterprise, [are visiting](#) children’s health camps and sanatoriums in the Homel region wearing Soviet military uniforms, holding activities for children, and taking pictures with them.

The teachers of Babruisk schools were [obliged](#) to be on work duty at beaches (including out-of-town ones), take photos of underage children and threaten parents to call social care if they found that families with children spent time near places prohibited for swimming. According to one of the teachers, the instructions to organise shifts that are not part of the teachers’ job duties were given by the deputy head of the district education department, Aksana Barysevich, who, in turn, claims that the shifts are voluntary and denies any schedules of duty distribution.

Colonel Uladzimir Dunayenka, commander of the 6th police brigade in Homel, was [transferred](#) to the Military Academy to teach at the Internal Troops Department after the publication of [evidence](#) of his improper conduct and alcohol addiction.

Until August 1, schools [have to determine](#) what will be an obligatory part of school wear in the new school year. It will likely be centrally produced and will include emblems of schools.

SANCTIONS

The portal dev.by published testimonies of Belarusian students about discrimination on ethnic grounds in Czech universities. According to them, the universities reduced a number of scholarships for Belarusians, several universities refused to accept Belarusians for studies, required signing a waiver for lectures in “tactical” degrees or confirming on paper their opposition to Russia’s actions against Ukraine. According to the evidence, discrimination against Belarusians in the Czech university environment is not commonly widespread; it is initiated only in a few universities by internal decision of the administration, and concerns only certain technical degrees.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

[The Belarusian Helsinki Committee has published](#) a checklist for parents whose children are bullied at school or are being bullies themselves. It explains how to recognise that a child has been bullied, what to do first, where to seek help and whether children and their parents can be prosecuted.

On 7 July, an online conference “Higher Education in Belarus: Between the Bologna Process and Russian Colonisation” was held, where prominent Belarusian education experts spoke: Chair of the Public Bologna Committee Aliaksandra Kuzmich-Lebiedzeva, representative of the Institute for Development and Social Market in Belarus and Eastern Europe Andrei Laurukhin, Professor and member of the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee Pavel Tserashkovich, Professor of the National Research University of HSE Ilya Inishev and co-founder of the BSU Independent Professors’ Trade Union Committee Roza Turarbekava. The participants shared their views on the consequences of the disruption of the connections of the Belarusian education system with the European civilisation, and the problems students and teachers should expect due to the withdrawal of Belarusian universities from the Bologna process. [The recording](#) of the conference was published on the Belarus Christian Democracy Party channel.