

THE ROADMAP FOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE SECTOR OF BELARUS IN 2025-2027

INTRODUCTION. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Now in Belarus, culture remains one of the main factors of preserving national identity, a means of actively fighting against the aggressive policy of Russification and assimilation of Belarusians, a platform for expressing civil active position and a means of fighting for freedom and human rights against the background of the totalitarian and repressive practices of the Belarusian regime. The Lukashenka authorities understand well the role of culture in awakening society and opposing their policy of destroying national self-awareness, which is why Belarusian creators and cultural organizations have become the object of unprecedented intensity of repression.

The cultural sphere is one of the main tools of the struggle for the expansion of democracy and the communication of human values. This task looks especially significant against the background of the aggressive influence of school and propaganda on the young generation of Belarusians, where ideological norms, a distorted understanding of history and a simplified view of Belarusian culture lead to an indifferent attitude of young people to democratic values and their incorporation into Russian culture and the very state project, which is now has an undisguised militaristic-imperial character.

The Roadmap prioritizes democratic values with core cross-cutting themes: structured integration of cultural rights into human rights, diversity appreciation, and adherence to equality principles. It advocates for gender equality in the cultural sphere by challenging stereotypes, enhancing opportunities, and addressing challenges faced by all genders. Supporting Belarusian language and culture is key, combating discrimination and asserting the nation's right to its cultural development as a fundamental human right.

According to the [monitoring of the Belarusian PEN](#), more than 150 cultural figures are now in jail and have the status of political prisoners, more than a thousand violations of cultural rights are recorded in Belarus every year, well-known performers and musicians became the object of criminal prosecution, social activist and artist Alieś Pushkin died in prison due to non-appearance timely medical care, the works of Belarusian writers are included in “extremist lists” and are removed from sale in stores and from libraries, social and entertainment events are held under the strict control of the authorities.

The document was prepared in the framework of the Needs Assessment of the civil society sector for 2025-2027 with the order of DG NEAR and Coordination Council of Belarusian democratic movement. The main contributors: Belarusian Council of Culture, Office for National Revival, sectoral cultural organizations and initiatives.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT-2024

1. Organizations and cultural sectors in Belarus face significant funding shortages, with limited access to state budgets and declining alternative funding sources. Private patronage's waned since 2020.

2. Management and promotion deficiencies. Belarusian cultural teams and initiatives lack experienced project and communication managers, compounded by inadequate education. Platforms meant to aid in promotion often fall short of connecting cultural figures with potential investors.

3. Maintaining Belarusian identity. The shift towards foreign audiences dilutes Belarusian cultural products, leading to a decline in distinctly Belarusian content. Isolation exacerbates audience fragmentation, hindering culture's societal impact. Additionally, there's a scarcity of cultural products for children to shape their cultural and civic identities.

4. Limited infrastructure abroad. Insufficient technical and human resources hinder a complete cultural cycle. Theatre, filmmaking and art sectors can rely mainly on local venues due to own infrastructure gaps. Funding and distribution channels are limited, lacking legal and social support for cultural figures.

5. There's a shortage of proactive leaders to unite cultural niches and address sector-specific challenges. Professional networks and associations are in nascent stages, lacking organizational stability.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1. Increased production of Belarusian cultural content since 2020 offers prospects for expanding the Belarusian identity, including language and national orientation.

2. Entry into international cultural markets provides access to a global audience, allowing Belarusian culture to integrate into the pan-European context and learn from diverse cultural experiences.

3. Development of cultural infrastructure, addressing the gaps in production, distribution systems, criticism, and cultural management capacities. Good practices include expanding online distribution networks in literature and filmmaking.

4. Self-organization and cooperation. Cultural actors are organizing and collaborating within the sector to address demands and challenges through coalition-building and self-regulation, asserting influence over Belarusian cultural policy.

5. Increasing practices of interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations combine various cultural areas, arts, and new technologies, fostering innovation in the Belarusian cultural sphere.

6. Informal cultural diplomacy channels are expanding, offering an alternative to official international cooperation channels. Strengthening Belarusian diasporas contributes to cultural development.

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE TIMEFRAME: 2025-2027

PRIORITY 1. ENHANCING CULTURAL DISSEMINATION

Financial support for:

- o Promoting Belarusian culture to counter Russian propaganda.
- o Creating and sharing contemporary Belarusian cultural narratives.
- o Implementing cross-sectoral projects involving culture, education, media, IT, business, and civil society.
- o Conducting systematic analysis and expertise on the impact of cultural products and practices on political, social, and economic domains.
- o Enhancing the development of Belarusian culture audiences through: a) Developing distribution channels and launching advertising and communication campaigns; b) Providing arts and culture education, including projects targeting children, teenagers, young adults, and seniors.

Key deliverables:

- o Increased cultural and cross-sectoral products promoting Belarusian culture and history: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).
- o Diversified distribution channels and security measures: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).
- o Expanded audience reach through advertising and communication campaigns: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).

Subtotal: €2,700,000

PRIORITY 2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Financial support for:

- o Projects that contribute to the preservation and dissemination of the Belarusian language.
- o Cultural expressions of minorities (gender, national, vulnerable groups) and addressing people with special needs, awareness raising.
- o Promotion and monitoring of cultural rights.
- o Protection of the rights of cultural figures: legal assistance in the field of copyright, social assistance for old age and disability.

Key deliverables:

- o Increased cultural content and translations into other languages: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).
- o Enhanced diversity in cultural, educational, and research products: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).
- o Structured information on cultural rights in Belarus: €150,000 (€50,000 annually)
- o Legal assistance and social protection for Belarusian artists: €300,000 (€100,000 annually).

Subtotal: €2,250,000

PRIORITY 3. CULTURAL PRODUCTION GROWTH

Financial support for:

- o Art and culture projects in Belarus, abroad and in cross-border format
- o Development of institutions, which ensure the production cycle of all the culture sub-sectors, and the development of the culture ecosystem
- o Education and training for a new generation of cultural managers (both in European educational institutions and non-formal education)
- o Advocacy of philanthropy, private patronage, and support of culture among business representatives with Belarusian roots; development of crowdfunding platforms.

Key deliverables:

- o Growth of Belarusian cultural production: €4,500,000 (€1,500,000 annually).
- o Growth of art and educational content for children: €1,500,000 (€500,000 annually).
- o Development of a sustainable trans-border ecosystem: €3,000,000 (€1,000,000 annually).

Subtotal: €9,000,000

PRIORITY 4: STRATEGIC INTERACTION

Financial support for:

- o Regular research, studies and policy analysis in culture.
- o Development of horizontal linkages: coalitions and platforms for interaction of stakeholders on strategic issues of cultural development.

Key deliverables:

- o Development of new coexistence rules: €300,000 (€100,000 annually).
- o Establishment of spaces for strategic interaction: €600,000 (€200,000 annually).

Subtotal: €900,000

Political support for:

- o Development of political dialogue between Belarusian cultural organizations and civil society on foreign aid (incl. Needs assessment process).
- o Promoting the role of Belarusian actors as implementers or (co-)implementers of support programs (per sub-sector).
- o Organizing civil society boards, steering committees around donor's programs.

PRIORITY 5: EUROPEAN (INTERNATIONAL) INTEGRATION AND VISIBILITY

Financial support for:

- o Collaborative multicultural projects created by Belarusian actors in cooperation with foreign partners/executors;
- o Culture mobility (incl. participation in festivals, conferences, networks, professional competitions, screenings, etc);
- o Translation programs (books, artistic, scientific, research texts in and from the Belarusian language, subtitles for movies and theatre performances, etc).
- o Education opportunities for Belarusian cultural figures in the field of foreign languages.

Key deliverables:

- o Increased visibility of Belarusian culture in European societies: €900,000 (€300,000 annually).
- o Membership of Belarusian culture actors in EU and regional networks: €150,000 (€50,000 annually).
- o Establishment of the Institute for the Promotion of Belarusian Culture: €300,000 (€100,000 annually).

Subtotal: €1,350,000

FUNDING MECHANISMS / PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTERS

- o EU4Culture, EU4Belarus through ArtPower.
- o Creative Partnership, Creative Europe.
- o MOST+.
- o Belarus Beehive.
- o Civil society support programs of the EU MSs SALT-2,3, OCTOPUS to support education.
- o Eurimages EU MS programs for national minorities (Lithuania, Poland).

- o Belarusian implementers (consortia):
 - acting in cooperation with EU MS's CSOs.
- o EU Strategic partners acting in partnership with Belarusian CSO.
- o EaP Civil Society Forum.
- o EU MS and municipal institutions.
- o DCI, Goethe Institute, PI and other EUNIC members.
- o NDF.
- o LI, CPMA of Lithuania, the Clearing House consortium.
- o Creative Europe focal points.

In total, estimated support request for culture sector is € 16,200,000 or € 5,400,000 per year

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