

Key Results for 2025

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We prepared, approved, and publicly [presented](#) (there is even a [video!](#)) the **Strategy of the Belarusian Council for Culture for 2025–2027**. This document, together with the programmes it defines as core to our activities, serves as the main strategic reference point for the organisation's work over the next three years.

Below we present what has already been accomplished within each of the programmes outlined in the Strategy.

Programme 1. Culture as a Priority

Objectives:

- to demonstrate that culture is not only a field of creative production, but also an instrument of social change and identity formation, with a direct impact on politics and the economy;
- to ensure the growth of the cultural sector through cooperation with other fields and the integration of culture into international programmes.

1.1. Monitoring the State and Trends of the Cultural Sector

In 2025, we continued to systematically observe trends in the Belarusian cultural sphere – both inside the country and in exile. Our aim was not merely to document events, but to contribute to a deeper understanding of processes, changes, and long-term consequences affecting culture under conditions of repression, emigration, and structural transformation.

1. Throughout the year, with the support of our Analytical Group, we prepared and published a series of **quarterly analytical reviews** of Belarusian culture, which became a basis for public discussions:

- [January–March 2025](#)
- [April–June 2025](#)
- [July–September 2025](#)
- October–December 2025 (in preparation for publication)

In a [separate publication](#), we summarised **the outcomes of the year** and presented an overall landscape of Belarusian culture.

We also tested a new format of **in-depth analytical reviews** focused on separate sectors. Expert-authored texts on [academic music](#) and [photography](#) were published.

2. **Research** remains a key area of our work.

We completed and published a [study](#) on the **state policy of destroying Belarusian national memory in 2020–2024**. This work received significant attention both among Belarusians and within international expert circles.

One of the major outcomes of the year was a [baseline study](#) of the **independent Belarusian cultural field**.

3. We continue systematic monitoring of **the situation inside Belarus**. In the summer of 2025, we conducted 18 in-depth interviews with cultural practitioners and activists who continue to work within the country. Based on these materials, we prepared an [analytical article](#).

4. We also worked on **researching the needs** of repressed cultural practitioners: surveys and interviews were conducted with creators in exile and inside Belarus (data processing is still ongoing).

5. We analysed the gender composition of political prisoners from the cultural sector and continued monitoring politically motivated detentions, forming the basis for new analytical and policy documents.

6. A significant focus was placed on **partnerships and participation in international processes**, including international research initiatives whose results may influence support programmes for Belarusian culture.

7. We expanded and partially renewed our expert network. New experts joined our work in the preparation of analytical blocks and thematic reviews.

1.2. Needs Assessment and Development of Policy Documents

In 2025, we made a clear transition from general discussions about the needs of culture to the development of a **concrete toolkit** that can be used in negotiations and public advocacy.

- The key outcome was **the Roadmap for Supporting Belarusian Culture for 2026–2028**, developed in partnership with the Representation for National Revival of the United Transitional Cabinet and other organisations from the cultural sector. The document combines needs assessment, priorities, and practical recommendations for international institutions and donors. The Roadmap was [publicly presented](#) in Brussels and became a foundation for further discussions on systematic support for Belarusian culture.
- As part of strengthening our advocacy work, we prepared the document **Culture as a Security Factor**, in which culture is analysed as a key element of resilience, identity, and democratic security in Belarus and Europe. This text has become an important argument in discussions with international partners and expert communities.
- Complementing these documents, we developed [recommendations for organisers of forums and conferences](#) titled *How and Why to Keep Culture*

in Focus. This is a practical guide that integrates culture into broader social, political, and international discussions without marginalising it.

- A separate and important component is a package of materials on political prisoners from the cultural sector. These materials systematise information on repression and provide a basis for further human rights and advocacy work.

1.3. Advocacy and Expert Engagement

Throughout 2025, we significantly strengthened our advocacy and representational work at the international level. We organised no fewer than **50 working meetings and negotiations**. This approach enables systematic representation of the interests of the Belarusian cultural sector and the development of long-term partnerships.

Key Events and International Platforms

- **Ostroh Forum of Experts, Lviv** – for the first time, we organised a dedicated panel on cooperation between Belarusian and Ukrainian cultures in a decolonial perspective.
- **Kościuszko Forum of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gdańsk** – we co-organised and moderated the panel “Culture,” ensuring the presence of cultural topics on this diplomatic platform.
- **Senior Officers Meeting (SOM), Brussels** – participation in the international presentation of the Roadmap for Supporting Belarusian Culture.
- **Congress of Belarusian Researchers, Berlin** – panel contribution on museum practices and international cultural projects.
- **RESET! General Assembly, Skopje** – participation in network activities and discussions on shared advocacy approaches.
- **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Assembly, Brussels** – participation in working groups and discussions.
- **Conference Belarus: A Part of or Apart from Europe’s Security?, Brussels** – presentation of the analytical document on culture as a security factor.
- **Nordic Baltic Conference for Cultural Journals, Gothenburg** – presentation on the state of Belarusian cultural journalism and media.

Strategic Meetings and Negotiations

- **United Kingdom (London)** – participation in strategic dialogue and a series of meetings at the governmental level with British counterparts.
- Meeting with the **UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus**.

- **Poland** – working meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and municipal authorities (culture and international cooperation).
- **Estonia (Tallinn)** – [meetings](#) with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and cultural foundations; discussions on cultural policy models, funding mechanisms, and residency opportunities for Belarusian creators.

Other Meetings and Contacts

- negotiations with European cultural and research institutions;
- contacts with museums and professional communities;
- meetings with experts and initiatives working in advocacy, cultural policy, and international solidarity.

1.4. Creating Intellectual Platforms for Strategic Planning and Development

Throughout 2025, the [Forum of Cultural Organisations](#) – initiated by us in 2023 – continued to develop as a regular professional platform for interaction among Belarusian cultural actors. Today it functions as a joint initiative of more than 20 organisations, with facilitation and moderation rotating among different initiatives, while we support the process and contribute to community development.

The 2nd Forum of Cultural Organisations [took place](#) in Białystok on 28–29 May 2025. The platform acquired a clearly practical character: participants refined shared goals, began working in thematic groups, and identified the need for regular meetings to ensure coordination and joint planning.

The Forum remained active between meetings: communication continued in working chats, online meetings were held, and joint projects were developed. In autumn 2025, a process of community expansion and selection of new members was launched – five organisations will join the Forum.

The next Forum will take place in early 2026 at the Museum of Free Belarus in Warsaw.

1.5. Increasing the Visibility of the Cultural Agenda through Media

In 2025, we worked deliberately to ensure that the **cultural agenda remained visible in Belarusian and international media**, and that themes of independent culture, solidarity, and long-term support resonated within broader public and European contexts.

Media Engagement

- maintained **contacts with Belarusian media** and connected experts for commentary and coverage of cultural topics;
- significantly strengthened **communication with international media**, resulting in a number of publications on Belarusian culture in general and the *ArtPower Belarus* programme in particular;
- **provided expertise and contextual input** for international journalists and editorial teams;
- **provided grant support to several cultural media outlets**, contributing to their sustainability and capacity to continue working under difficult conditions.

International Publications

Linkiesta (Italy) – an [article](#) on ArtPower Belarus in the context of supporting the Belarusian diaspora;

via.ritzau.dk (Denmark) – a [piece](#) on the results of the first edition of ArtPower Belarus and the importance of European support for persecuted creators;

Taurillon.org (Germany / France) – the [publication](#) Artists Against Dictatorship on Belarusian creators and ArtPower Belarus;

RESET Network website – the [essay](#) Independent Culture as a Tool for Transforming the Belarusian Society;

The Quietus (Poland / United Kingdom) – a [feature](#) on music in Central and Eastern Europe mentioning our work and expertise.

Programme 2. Integrity of the Cultural Space

Objectives:

- to consolidate resources and stakeholders and create an inclusive and safe space for cooperation;
- to strengthen the community and overcome existing barriers.

2.1. Implementation and Support of Projects Connecting Cultural Actors and Audiences on Both Sides of the Border

In 2025, we continued to implement and support initiatives that connect cultural actors and their audiences on both sides of the border, with a focus on sustainable development, knowledge exchange, and the preservation of

cultural memory.

We completed the full cycle of an educational project for art and cultural managers (including meetings, lectures, a retreat, final materials, and an archive), delivered several mentoring programmes and pitching sessions, and initiated and strengthened professional communities.

We consulted and supported more than 10 initiatives – ranging from research and artistic projects to IT and start-up solutions – including financial support, assistance with fundraising, and guidance on copyright and intellectual property issues. Part of this work remains non-public, but each supported project has a tangible impact within its respective community.

2.2. Participation in International Networks and Associations

We deliberately engage in international networks and associations and invest resources in this work, as for the cultural sector such participation is not a matter of “protocol,” but a way to maintain visibility and influence processes. Through these platforms, Belarusian cultural actors remain in professional dialogue with Europe and the wider region, articulate their needs, engage in joint advocacy, and shape how culture is perceived within broader social and political processes.

In 2025, we were actively involved in several international formats.

RESET! (a European network of cultural organisations working on issues of solidarity, freedom of expression, and support for independent culture in challenging contexts): we participated in the General Assembly and other meetings. We also continued cooperation within the permanent working group Non-European Voices, focusing on collecting needs and discussing possible joint advocacy actions with participants originating from countries outside the European Union. One of the outcomes was an analytical text on independent Belarusian culture as a factor of societal transformation, published on the network’s platform. This material made the Belarusian context visible to a broader audience.

ENCATC (the European network on cultural management, education, and cultural policy): we decided to join the network and prepared for membership starting in 2026, with the aim of integrating Belarusian experience into European discussions and developing long-term professional connections.

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (a regional platform bringing together NGOs from Eastern Partnership countries for dialogue and advocacy): throughout the year, we participated in the work of a thematic working group, discussions on the Forum’s strategy and internal organisation, contributed proposals on systematising work processes and fundraising, and represented the cultural sector at the annual Civil Society Forum in Brussels in December.

Independent Cultural Organisations Network (an international network of independent cultural organisations from Eastern Partnership countries engaged in joint research and advocacy within the European context): we joined a collaborative international research project focused on the impact of creators' migration on the cultures of Eastern Partnership countries over the past five years. Acting as consultants in this project, we ensured that the Belarusian experience was integrated into the broader regional picture and made visible within the European dialogue.

2.3. Promotion of Belarusian Culture on International Platforms and at International Events

In 2025, we worked systematically to ensure that Belarusian culture became visible, recognisable, and integrated into the international context, despite isolation and restrictions. This work was not about one-off appearances, but about building infrastructure and long-term channels for promotion.

In this area, we operate through grant support, consultancy, and international presence, including through the following actions:

- participation in a joint project to develop a catalogue of contemporary Belarusian culture as a tool for long-term international promotion;
- participation in the BUSH music showcase (Budapest) to establish contacts within the international music industry;
- support for the Belarusian stand at the world's largest IT event, Web Summit in Portugal, including work on the communication framework and promotional materials;
- presence and networking at the Impact Summit as a platform for dialogue between culture, innovation, and social change;
- support for international mobility of Belarusian cultural practitioners and facilitation of Belarusian projects' participation in international festivals and exhibitions, as a means of integrating Belarusian culture into the global professional context.

Programme 3. The Creator and Their Art as a Value

Objectives:

- to ensure creators' access to resources, education, humanitarian and legal support;
- to create safe conditions for creative development and self-realisation.

3.1. Designing and Implementing Resource Programmes to Finance Cultural Projects (sub-granting, sponsorship support, crowdfunding)

In 2025, we systematically developed two sustainable models of private, long-term support for culture. These are the “[Belarusian Magistrates](#)” initiative and the [Belarusian Patrons Club](#). Both models bring people together around Belarusian culture as a value, enable the mobilisation of private funds, and channel them to cultural and research projects (through transparent rules, collective decision-making, and trust).

Through these instruments, **20 cultural and research projects were supported in 2025**, and more than 30 projects in total since the launch of both models. These include theatre productions, book publishing, media, exhibitions, and international screenings. A significant part of this support remains non-public, including support provided inside Belarus.

A separate strand of work focused on the return and preservation of important cultural artefacts. Through the efforts of the patrons’ community, items and archives held in private collections—or even believed to be lost—were purchased. Among the artefacts returned to the public sphere is a map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This copy originates from an atlas published in Amsterdam in 1649. The Club also purchased the travelogue book by Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “Sirotka” *Peregrinatio, or Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* (in Latin; the edition is dated 1614).

Around each artefact, a public outreach project naturally grows: we organise lectures and exhibitions, initiate research, and even develop publishing plans. It is crucial that these items become part of living cultural memory, remain accessible to broad audiences, and be preserved for future generations.

3.2. Legal Protection and Individual Support for Belarusian Creators (expanding assistance, cooperation with human rights organisations)

Against the background of **prolonged and systematic repression in Belarus**, the cultural field remains one of the most vulnerable areas. We record increasing pressure on cultural practitioners: detentions, searches, administrative arrests, criminal cases for public activity, destruction of independent archives, and the gradual takeover of cultural institutions by pro-Russian actors.

In 2025, our “Assistance” track continued to support Belarusian cultural practitioners who faced repression, forced emigration, and crisis life situations. The year became a period of greater stabilisation, improvement of internal processes, development of partnerships, and deeper expertise.

The main areas of this work include:

- consultations (legal, psychological, financial, visa-related, and others);
- financial, psychological, and visa support;
- preparation of recommendation letters and petitions (including for migration authorities, foundations, and human rights organisations);
- collecting and analysing information on political prisoners from among cultural practitioners;
- monitoring the needs of the cultural community through research, surveys, and direct contact with creators.

Overall results and statistics

In 2025, we processed **257 requests** from cultural practitioners.

- We delivered **192 consultations** (including psychological, financial, legal, visa-related, and employment-related consultations);
- We prepared **29 recommendation and support letters** (including for legalisation processes in various countries such as Lithuania, Poland, Georgia, and Portugal);
- **51 beneficiaries** received direct financial payments.

In addition:

- We created a “one-stop” support system that brought together funding, consultations, psychological and visa assistance, as well as support on legalisation and continuity of creative practice;
- We established rapid response mechanisms for emergency situations, including financial support for people in acute difficulty;
- We supported a number of creative initiatives, including theatre and exhibition projects, children’s animation, and others;
- We prepared a guide to organisations (international and Belarusian) that provide support to cultural practitioners;
- We conducted the survey “Needs and Problems of Cultural Practitioners in Emigration” (28 processed responses);
- We carried out the study “Problems and Needs of Cultural Practitioners in Belarus” (8 in-depth interviews and 8 processed questionnaires).

The data obtained through the survey and study became the basis for strategic planning of new projects and further development of this track for 2026–2027.

3.3. Organising and Supporting Educational Tracks and Training Programmes to Strengthen Creators' Qualifications in Cultural Management

Our main educational work in 2025 was delivered within the ArtPower Belarus programme and focused on strengthening the qualifications of Belarusian creators and cultural organisations in the field of cultural management. We concentrated on practical formats that help teams navigate grant processes more effectively, assess their organisational capacity, and plan sustainable development under difficult conditions.

Within this track, we:

- provided **mentoring to 33 organisations** (assessing teams, roles, processes, goals, and resources);
- delivered **6 information sessions** on grant processes and typical mistakes (212 participants);
- organised **6 workshops on project** management and initiative sustainability (118 participants);
- ensured online access to all key events and produced a video guide on how to submit an application;
- published educational video materials that collectively reached around **1, 500 views**.

The total annual reach of the educational track was at least **330 participants**.

3.4. Sub-granting for Creative and Other Projects by Artists

In 2025, sub-granting was implemented through the ArtPower Belarus programme, which we implement together with the Danish Cultural Institute.

Together with partners, we prepared and delivered the first round of the grant competition: conducted information sessions, consultations, and workshops; organised the work of the expert community and selection across all three tracks; and launched a new round within the second track.

Based on earlier experience, we optimised processes, prepared unified reporting guidelines, and launched contracting, payments, and monitoring of the supported projects.

In total, we **supported 49 projects**, including:

- 9 – Track 1 (organisational development);
- 26 – Track 2 (creative projects);
- 14 – Track 3 (projects in special circumstances).

The supported projects cover performing and visual arts, literature and publishing, music and sound art, film and television, cultural education and research, new media and promotion, as well as initiatives of communities and professional associations. This cross-sectoral coverage demonstrates an effort to maintain a balance between creative practices, infrastructure projects, and overall community development.

After the first rounds of the programme started (summer 2025), we received:

- almost **300 applications**;
- total demand exceeding **EUR 6 million**.

17.1% of applicants were supported: on average, **every sixth** project submitted to the competition was approved.

Despite the difficult context and high risks, we continue to support cultural projects implemented inside Belarus or in a cross-border format. Such cooperation requires particular caution, flexibility, and trust, but it remains fundamentally important to maintain a living presence inside the country and to sustain connections between Belarusian creators and the international space.

What We Did for the Organisation's Institutional Development

In 2025, we focused on strengthening the Belarusian Council for Culture institutionally in order to ensure the organisation's sustainable work in the medium-term perspective.

In addition to developing and presenting the [Strategy](#), we prepared a detailed operational plan for 2026–2027 with performance indicators. The document will serve as the basis for two-year budgeting and activity planning.

We formed the organisation's Board and held four meetings, during which we improved the Rules of Procedure and the core internal documents.

We developed and approved the Rules of Procedure and also finalised the Code of Conduct, which regulates ethical standards, internal communication, and conflict resolution procedures.

We prepared and signed key policies and regulations: the accounting policy, procurement regulation, and sanctions policy; work continues on the financial policy and the security policy.

We completed a significant stage of organisational development, including adaptation to changes in funding and internal processes.

We systematised the organisation's project history – at present it comprises **almost 60 projects** implemented independently, in partnership, or in the role of a fiscal partner.

We underwent audits for four projects, which confirmed the quality of our financial processes and the reliability of our information-handling protocols.

We established an internal communication and data exchange system and developed basic security protocols for working with grantees and partners.

How We Communicated with the Audience

In 2025, we approached communication with our audiences as systematic work aimed at increasing transparency, explaining our activities, and expanding the visibility of Belarusian culture in the international context.

Presence in media

Over the year, we recorded around 70 mentions of the Belarusian Council for Culture in the media, including authored materials, reprints, partner publications, interviews, indirect comments, and posts on social networks.

Key themes of mentions:

- **ArtPower Belarus** – the most recognisable topic; media discussed programme results, continuation of the grant competition, and different assessments of its implementation;
- **Analytics and research** – materials on the state of culture in Belarus and beyond;
- **Advocacy and cultural events** – meetings, public appearances, and promotion of new ideas;
- **Solidarity and the international context** – mentions linked to international events and support from European institutions.

Website and social media statistics

In 2025, the byculture.org website had around **8,400 users** and **43,000 page views**. The main interest is concentrated around ArtPower Belarus: programme pages and news about calls and results are among the most viewed pages, along with the homepage.

Formally, **the leading countries by geography are Poland, the USA, Lithuania, Germany, China, France, and the Netherlands**. However, given the high share of direct traffic, the popularity of Belarusian-language pages, a significant number of document downloads, and activity aligned with Minsk time, it can be assumed that around **25–35% of visits in fact come from Belarus** but are recorded by analytics as entries from other countries via VPN.

Brand and visual identity

As part of developing the new strategy, we updated the Belarusian Council for Culture's brand book, created a **small set of merchandise**, and developed a **separate brand** for the *ArtPower Belarus* programme. This became part of our work on recognisability, coherence, and a modern communication language for the organisation.

Stay up to date with the Belarusian Council for Culture – [subscribe](#) to our newsletter and visit the website byculture.org.