



***The position of the Belarusian National Platform  
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum***

on the progress of the Interagency Plan on Implementation of Recommendations accepted by the Republic of Belarus following the second cycle of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review and recommendations addressed to the Republic of Belarus by Human Rights Treaty Bodies for 2016-2019.

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Since the adoption of the Interagency Plan on Implementation of Recommendations accepted by the Republic of Belarus following the second cycle of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review and recommendations addressed to the Republic of Belarus by Human Rights Treaty Bodies for 2016-2019 half of its duration has effectively passed, so it is possible to bring some interim results of its implementation.

It should be recalled that the mere adoption of Interagency Plan was welcomed by representatives of human rights organizations in Belarus, which was noted in their [Joint Position](#)<sup>1</sup>. Some of the activities of the plan were based on the proposals of human rights organizations sent to the Foreign Ministry in May 2016, which should be [indicators](#)<sup>2</sup> of the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Republic of Belarus in the framework of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. Unfortunately, many of the proposals, including the improvement of the legislation on freedom of association, did not in the end become part of the Interagency Plan. The government institutions have failed to provide any analysis of the indicators submitted by the human rights community.

It is important to note some positive developments that have been made possible thanks to the adoption of the Interagency Plan. In particular:

- 1) The country's first program of actions was adopted aiming at strengthening human rights and providing the basis for interaction between civil society organizations and public authorities;
- 2) Feasibility study on the preparation of a comprehensive legislative act on the prohibition of discrimination, the adoption of which had long been urged by the human rights community, was launched;
- 3) Representatives of human rights organizations are invited to by government institutions to take part in human rights related events;
- 4) [Report on the implementation of activities of the Plan in 2017](#)<sup>3</sup> was published, allowing to get more information about the activities of state bodies in the development of human rights fulfilment.

The analysis of the Report indicates that the government has done a considerable work within the framework of the Interagency Plan, carried out a number of activities, and achieved some of the provisions of the Plan (Report on the implementation of paragraphs 2, 38, 40, 45, 85 of the Interagency Plan). The most extensive and systematic work has been done on the issues, dealt with together with UN agencies and supported by them, in particular, activities on combating domestic violence and human trafficking, HIV prevention.

At the same time, the analysis of the Report shows that there is a number of issues subject to concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://belhelcom.org/ru/news/obshchaya-poziciya-belorusskih-pravozashchitnyh-organizacij-v-svyazi-s-prinyatiem>

<sup>2</sup> <http://upr.belhelcom.org/docs/indikatory-k-rekomendaciam-upo.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://mfa.gov.by/upload/18.06.26\\_HR\\_report\\_2017.pdf](http://mfa.gov.by/upload/18.06.26_HR_report_2017.pdf)

Some of the provisions of the Interagency Plan aimed at improving the system of work in certain areas of human rights, however, the Report contains only an enumeration of activities made in the framework of the implementation without pointing to the weaknesses identified and achieved or anticipated improvement (Report on the implementation of paragraphs 3, 6, 24, 28, 65, 66, 67, 79, 80 of the Interagency plan).

Many of the provisions of the Interagency Plan envisage an analysis of the fulfilment of human rights in certain areas. According to the Report, such analysis has been made by relevant authorities. However, civil society experts haven't been invited to join this work, the prepared analytical materials are often not public and unavailable to the civil society, although they serve as the basis for developing measures for the fulfilment of human rights (Report on the implementation of paragraphs 9, 10, 12, 22, 23, 37, 39, 52, 53, 56, 61, 68, 92, 93 of the Interagency plan).

There is a difficulty in the evaluation of the implementation of the provisions of the Plan, formulated in the terms of a process, the Report does not help to assess the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies in these areas.

The information provided in the Report often does not allow to assess the feasibility of full and effective implementation of the Plan activities and achievement of its goals. Another shortcoming of the Report is the lack of analysis of the circumstances that hinder the achievement of the goals of the Plan.

We believe that the potential of the Interagency Plan is not fully used, in particular, due to lack of involvement of the civil society organizations in its implementation. Up to the present time there is a number of unresolved problems that prevent the Plan from becoming a genuinely effective tool for improving the situation with human rights:

- There are still not created platforms for discussion of current problems in the field of human rights operating in a predictable manner with the participation of competent representatives from relevant state bodies and civil society organizations;
- The state bodies responsible for implementation of specific activities within the Interagency Plan have failed to develop detailed implementation plans, at least, such plans are not known to the civil society;
- The current system of attracting non-state resources for human rights activities creates serious obstacles to the effective use of the potential. During the existence of the Interagency Plan, single substantive events were held with the participation of representatives of civil society organizations.

It should be noted that since the adoption of the Plan the UN Treaty bodies have considered three periodic reviews of the Republic of Belarus on implementation of norms:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Following the consideration of these reviews, the UN Treaty bodies have made to the Republic of Belarus a number of recommendations that need an objective and comprehensive analysis which can be conducted with the involvement of the civil society. The government has already made the first step in this direction. Thus, according to the [Report](#) on the implementation of the Plan activities, recommendations of the Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women were discussed at a meeting of the National Council on gender policy under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus. In addition, the government plans to create a list of possible activities for consideration and implementation of recommendations of the Committee on the elimination of racial discrimination.

To improve the efficiency of the Interagency Plan and transparency on its implementation the civil society organizations of Belarus put forward the following recommendations:

- 1) To organize platforms operating in predictable manner (for example, quarterly consultation meetings) under the relevant state bodies responsible for implementation of specific activities of the Plan to discuss its implementation with the civil society and to develop proposals on filling events with specific content;
- 2) To involve civil society experts in the preparation of analytical materials on the basis of which measures will be developed to improve legislation and practice in the field of human rights, in particular, the analytical reports provided for under the plan.
- 3) To develop agency plans of implementation by state bodies' officials responsible for implementation of specific activities of the Plan, while using the indicators proposed by the human rights defenders;
- 4) To conduct, together with civil society organizations, analysis of recommendations from UN Treaty bodies following the adoption of the Interagency Plan and make appropriate adjustments to implementation of these recommendations;
- 5) To invite relevant human rights organizations to human rights related events, without discrimination on the basis of the availability or absence of the state registration;
- 6) For international organizations, including donors, involved in the implementation of the Interagency Plan or its specific measures, to keep in focus the value of involvement of civil society in the process as an important element in enhancing the efficiency of achieving the goals of the Plan.

Civil society organizations are ready to further contribute to increase the efficiency of the Interagency Plan in order to improve the situation with human rights.

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*This document is prepared for BNP by experts of the National Human Rights Public Association "The Belarusian Helsinki Committee" on the basis of joint position of Belarusian community of human rights organisations and consultations within Working Group 1 of the BNP EaP CSF.*

*The Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was established in July 2010 to assure active participation of civil society organizations in development of Belarus-EU relations and reforms implementation. As for today, the Belarusian EaP CSF National Platform unites over 70 civil society organizations of Belarus.*