



The International Strategic Action
Network for Security

KEY CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION
SYSTEM OF BELARUS
DURING THE 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR



I.CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM RELATED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW EDITION OF THE EDUCATION CODE (SEPTEMBER 1, 2022)¹

1.1. Transition to compulsory general secondary education

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
General basic education (9 grades) was compulsory	General secondary education (11 grades) is now required	Until September 1, 2022, students could choose not to continue their studies after 9th grade or continue their studies in international programs without leaving the country. From the 2022-23 academic year, all students in Belarus must continue their education after 9th grade

1.2. Ban on the creation of educational institutions teaching in national minority languages

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
It was possible to create groups, classes, and educational institutions where education and instruction were conducted in the language of the national minority	There remains the possibility of creating groups and classes where education and instruction are conducted in the language of the national minority, however it is no longer possible to found educational institutions that teach in the language of a national minority	Until 2022 in Belarus there were four national minority schools – two Polish schools in Grodno and Vaukavysk and two Lithuanian schools in Pelesa and Rymdyuny. Three schools were changed to other languages of instruction (Russian and Belarusian), and the Pelesa school was closed. This change in legislation was secured

¹ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12200154&p1=1&p5=0>



		through the adoption of a new version of the law "On Languages" ² .
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1.3. Recognizing distance education as an independent form of education

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Distance forms of education were seen as part of low-residence programs and were rarely used in educational institutions	Distance learning has become an independent form alongside full-time and part-time education. This form of education is possible at the vocational, secondary specialized, and university levels, along with supplementary education programs	The coronavirus pandemic notwithstanding, distance learning in Belarus remains unavailable for preschool and general secondary education

1.4. Network form of interaction between educational institutions has emerged

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
There was no option to establish network forms of cooperation between educational institutions	Opportunities are now available to arrange network forms of cooperation between educational institutions	In May 2023, the first case of signing an agreement for network cooperation through the implementation of educational programs between BSUIR and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was documented. ³

² <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12300300>

³ <https://www.bsuir.by/ru/news/109993-bguir-i-akademiya-mvd-budut-sotrudnicat-pri-realizatsii-obrazovatelnykh-programm>



1.5. New form of final certification upon completion of secondary school – the centralized exam (CE) – has been introduced

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
At the end of the 11th grade, students were required to take 4 school exams with grades for the exams taken into account when assigning a final score for diplomas. School exams did not interfere with the process for university admission in any way	At the end of 11th grade, students take 2 Centralized Exams (CEs). Grades for CEs are taken into account when assigning a final score to a diploma. CE certificates are also used for admission to universities	The introduction of the CE significantly reduced students' workload (earlier they took 4 exams + 3-4 Centralized Tests (CT); now they now take 2 CE + 1 CT) and also made it possible to objectively assess knowledge of 11th grade graduates in academic subjects

1.6. Emergence of the principle of inclusion in educational legislation

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The principle of inclusion was not mentioned in the Education Code. Special educational needs were formally met by special education institutions	The principle of inclusion has been singled out as one of the main principles of state policy in the field of education	Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, officials have repeatedly raised the subject of needing to introduce principles of inclusivity in educational institutions. The vast majority of educational institutions in the country have received a license to implement special education programs

1.7. Prohibiting lyceums that do not have dormitories or other living arrangements for students

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The educational	The law has established	As a result of these



legislation made no mention of lyceums' obligation to create housing conditions for students	the obligation of lyceums to create housing conditions for students	changes, a wave of closures of lyceums that provided quality education took place across Belarus, including city lyceums No.1 and No. 2 in Minsk ⁴ and the lyceum in Borisov. ⁵
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1.8. Removing restrictions on class sizes in general education institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Strict restrictions were established on the occupancy of classes in general secondary education institutions (grades I-IV – 20 people max., grades V-XI – 25 people max.)	Decisions on class occupancy are now made by the founder of the educational institution, subject to sanitary and epidemiological requirements	Requirements for class sizes in schools were broadly violated before, but the parent community had clear legislative grounds for ensuring proper quality of the educational process. With the adoption of the new edition of the Code, the process of enforcing such requirements has become more complicated

1.9. Limiting the rights of legal representatives of minor students

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Legal representatives had the right to familiarize themselves with the progress and	Legal representatives have the right to receive information about the progress and content of	The head of an educational institution has the right to regulate the procedure for

⁴ <https://sputnik.by/20230606/teper-ofitsialno-stalo-izvestno-chno-budet-v-zdaniyakh-minskikh-litseev-1076335334.html>

⁵ <https://mlyn.by/27042023/v-borisove-zakryvayut-edinstvennyj-v-regione-liczej-uznali-v-chem-prichina/>



content of the educational process and results of the educational work of students	the educational process, methods of training and education employed, and results of the educational work of students in the manner determined by the head of the educational institution	familiarizing legal representatives with the progress and content of the educational process, which significantly limits the ability of the parent community to control the quality of education
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1.10. Expanding educational institutions' grounds for expelling students

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The grounds for expulsion of students, graduate students and doctoral students included academic failure, absence from classes without a valid reason, failure to pay tuition fees and other objective reasons	The following have been added to the grounds for expulsion of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absence from classes due to serving an administrative sentence for penalties following an administrative arrest - committing actions that interfere with other education stakeholders in fulfilling their duties and exercising their rights in the field of education - calling on students to fail to fulfill their responsibilities 	Educational institutions have received legal grounds for carrying out politically motivated expulsions. If previously expulsions for political reasons were justified indirectly, the new edition of the Legal Code has significantly simplified the procedure for such expulsions



II.CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND DECISIONS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE COMING INTO EFFECT

2.1. Tightening procedures for founding preschool and general secondary education institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
<p>Kindergartens and schools were created through orders. Schools could voluntarily undergo the state accreditation procedure to issue educational documents</p>	<p>According to Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 572 of August 31, 2022, state accreditation has become mandatory for schools of any form of ownership and accreditation must be completed in the first year of the institution's activities. In October 2022, licensing of educational activities was introduced for preschool and general secondary education institutions⁶. Operating kindergartens and schools without a license is prohibited</p>	<p>These legislative changes became the basis for the crackdown on private kindergartens and schools in Belarus. For example, at the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year, there were 35 private schools in Belarus, 14 of which had state accreditation. Only 6 private schools managed to survive the legislative changes, with 3 of them allowing kindergartens to operate. Some of the remaining schools are directly related to the Lukashenka family, big businessmen, and the Orthodox Church. The result of these changes has been strict regulation of the activities of non-state education and its being subject to state ideology</p>

⁶ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12200213&p1=1>



2.2. Tightening requirements for supplementary education

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Non-state educational initiatives could operate without coordinating educational programs with government agencies	In September 2022, the Ministry of Education adopted Resolution No. 318 ⁷ , which tightened the requirements for all educational initiatives. Before beginning educational activities, activity programs must be approved with government bodies	This change provides government authorities with the opportunity to control the activities of all educational initiatives and may become the basis for the purge of non-state supplementary education for children and youth

2.3. Introduction of elements of school uniforms and strict regulation of children's behavior in schools

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
General secondary education institutions had their own rules of behavior for students and requirements for official dress	Belarus's Ministry of Education adopted the State School Standard ⁸ , which introduced consistent requirements for school student behavior throughout the country, as well as the same elements of clothing, including an "emblem" on elements of official clothing for each general secondary education institution	A transition to elements of school uniforms with consistent elements of school clothing were introduced throughout the country. Students are now prohibited from missing class and informational hours and are required to participate in socially beneficial work. Requirements for student behavior at school, their appearance,

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<https://nchtdm.by/files/2022/%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%20%D0%A3%D0%94%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%B8%D0%9C.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.adu.by/images/2023/obr/gos-shkol-standart.pdf>

		rules for using mobile phones, and much more are strictly regulated
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2.4. Deferments from military service have been canceled for Belarusian students studying at foreign universities

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Belarusian students who entered foreign universities could receive a deferment from military service	In May 2023, amendments were made to <i>On military duty and military service</i> ⁹ which terminate the provision of deferments from military service for Belarusian students who entered foreign universities. The deferment will remain only for those students who entered foreign universities under a targeted direction from government agencies	Over the past 10 years, there has been an outflow of Belarusian school graduates to foreign universities. This primarily concerns Polish universities, where according to the latest data 12,000 Belarusian students are studying. The Belarusian authorities are using legislative restrictions to stop the outflow of young people to states that are considered “unfriendly” by the regime

2.5. Mandatory assessments for university admission have been introduced

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
In Belarusian education there was no single form of assessment for secondary school graduates. Assessments were not included in the mandatory package of documents that a	Resolution of the Ministry of Education No. 58 of February 27, 2023, introduced a unified form of assessment for graduates which must then be provided for admission to the	In addition to general and academic information, the assessment contains ideological aspects. In the “Moral Qualities” section it a graduate’s attitude towards state and public institutions and

⁹ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12300268>



graduate prepared for admission to all educational institutions	country's universities and colleges	constitutional order. This assessment provides information about the political views of graduates and forces the institution that issues the assessment to exercise a function of political control over its students
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2.6. Mandatory course on the history of the Great Patriotic War for 9th grade students

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The study of World War II was included in the history curriculum in grades 9 and 11, however there was no compulsory attendance for additional classes on the subject.	9th grade history courses now include a mandatory module called <i>The Great Patriotic War</i> . ¹⁰ that incorporates previous lessons on the topic of the Second World War in the framework of world history and the history of Belarus. Additionally, a mandatory course called <i>The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People (in the context of the Second World War)</i> has been developed	The theme of the Great Patriotic War is one of the ideological foundations of the current political regime in Belarus. Increasing the time spent studying the Second World War expands possibilities for ideologizing the educational process in schools. This is also evidenced by the fact that in the process of taking this course it is recommended to use materials and manuals prepared by the Prosecutor General's Office as part of a criminal case on the genocide of the Belarusian people during World War II and in the post-war period

¹⁰ <https://adu.by/ru/pedagogam/uchebnyj-modul-velikaya-otechestvennaya-vojna?format=html>



2.7. Required study of *History of Belarusian Statehood, Philosophy, and Modern Political Economy* has begun at universities in Belarus.

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The Concept of Social and Humanities Disciplines (SHD) was in use at universities in Belarus, which required study of modules in philosophy, economics, political science, and history. The political science module included a required course called <i>Fundamentals of the Ideology of the Belarusian State</i> and the history module required study of <i>History of Belarus (in the context of world civilizations)</i>	Beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, universities began teaching according to a new SHD Concept. ¹¹ that introduced the following required courses: <i>History of Belarusian Statehood, Philosophy, and Modern Political Economy</i> . Universities must now include two more social and humanities disciplines of the institution's choosing in studies and an elective that students may choose	The new SHD clearly shows trends toward an ideologization of studies, which can be seen in the transition from studying the history of Belarus in the context of world civilizations to the history of Belarusian statehood and from economics to political economy. The Ministry of Education recommends using courses devoted to the history of the Great Patriotic War and political science as electives, which also indicates a strengthening of ideology

2.8. Ban on the work of public associations that pursue political goals in educational institutions has been lifted

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The Education Code established a ban in educational institutions on the forming and work of political parties and	In March 2023, amendments ¹² were made to the Education Code that kept the ban only on the activities of	Lifting the ban on the activities of public associations pursuing political goals in educational institutions

¹¹ https://gsmu.by/upload/file/metod_otdel/koncepc_opt_soderj.pdf

¹² <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=hk1100243>



public associations pursuing political goals	political parties in educational institutions	opens up broad opportunities for various initiatives to conduct pro-government campaigning and propaganda among children and youth. The creation of opposition movements in institutions is impossible given the comprehensive persecution of such initiatives
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2.9. The importance of foreign languages in schools has decreased

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Foreign languages were studied in grades 10-11 at 3 hours per week (basic level) and 5 hours per week (advanced level). Exams for foreign languages were one of four exams all secondary school graduates were required to take after 11th grade	The Ministry of Education published new standard curricula according to which the study of foreign languages in grades 10-11 has been reduced to 2 hours per week (basic level) and 4 hours per week (advanced level). Foreign languages were the only subject removed from the list of school exams (Russian and Belarusian languages are taken after 9th and 11th grades, mathematics must be taken after 9th grade, and the mandatory exam on the history of Belarus was moved from 11th to 9th grade)	Foreign language exams were introduced in schools at a time when Belarusian authorities sought to join the Bologna process and cooperated in every possible way with European educational institutions. After the protests of 2020, European countries were deemed “unfriendly” by state propaganda. The Belarusian authorities are trying in every possible way to limit contact between Belarusian students and European education. The reduction in the importance of foreign languages in schools and the doing



		away with compulsory exams is one manifestation of isolationist tendencies in Belarusian education
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III.CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM UNRELATED TO NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE ACTS

3.1. Impossibility of receiving education in international education programs for Belarusian children in Belarus

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
The QSI school operated in Belarus for a long time. Some private schools also had international accreditation, including Innovation (Pearson) and Stembridge (IB Diploma Program). Given that general basic education is required, Belarusian schoolchildren, after completing 9th grade, could study in international educational programs in Belarus	The private schools Innovation and Stembridge were not licensed. Compulsory general secondary education was introduced, which made it impossible for Belarusian schoolchildren to study at QSI. At the moment, Belarusian schoolchildren do not have any opportunity to study in international education programs in Belarus	This situation clearly demonstrates a tendency towards isolating Belarusian education from European standards and approaches. From the point of view of the Belarusian authorities, any European or American international education program can be interpreted as “unfriendly”

3.2. Introduction of mandatory ideological meetings in educational institutions in Belarus

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
In educational institutions in Belarus there was no practice of holding special classes	At all levels of education, mandatory courses dedicated to individual dates have been	After the protests of 2020, the Belarusian authorities began implementing large-



<p>dedicated to certain dates. At ceremonial events the national anthem was played</p>	<p>introduced (Constitution Day, National Unity Day, Unity Day of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia, etc.). Also in schools, meetings are being held at the beginning and at the end of each academic quarter. Mandatory components of such meetings have become the lowering and raising of state symbols by special banner groups, for which flagpoles were purchased in large quantities and installed in educational institutions across the country</p>	<p>scale propaganda of state symbols throughout the population. This propaganda is reflected in educational institutions and is one of the most striking examples of the ideologization of Belarusian education</p>
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3.3. Required establishment of museums and museum exhibitions in educational institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
<p>The establishing of museums in educational institutions was voluntary. Museums' focuses were varied and were not tied to specific ideological objectives</p>	<p>During the academic year, a widespread opening of museums and museum exhibitions were documented in educational institutions throughout the country. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the museums and museum exhibitions that opened were dedicated to the subject of the Great Patriotic War and the subsequent genocide of</p>	<p>In the summer of 2022, a seminar entitled <i>Use of information and analytical materials and documents on the investigation of the criminal case of the genocide of the Belarusian people in studies</i> was held in Belarus, where Deputy Minister of Education Sergei Rudy stated that museums or exhibitions dedicated to the Second</p>

	the Belarusian people	World War or the genocide of the Belarusian people during the Second World War. ¹³ would be created in every school in Belarus. This was echoed by Minister of Education Andrei Ivanets in the winter of 2023. ¹⁴ . These statements were not formalized in the form of a resolution, but this did not prevent schools from undertaking work on a mass scale to open museums and exhibitions, which have become one of the most striking ideologies in education
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3.4. Mass viewing of Lukashenka's speeches in educational institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
There were no cases of pupils, students and even employees assembled to watch Lukashenka's speeches in educational institutions. In some cases, official institutional resources posted news with outlining the main themes of speeches or employee meetings were held to "discuss" a speech	On September 1, 2022, Lukashenka spoke for several hours as part of an open lecture entitled <i>Historical memory – the road to the future</i> . This event was broadcast in all schools, colleges, and universities in the country, with many students watching the entire performance to	This situation is an indicator that of an increased ideologization of not only Belarusian education, but also society on the whole. Following the protests of 2020, pro-government propaganda has developed an image of Lukashenka as the savior of Belarus. Widespread

¹³ <https://www.belta.by/society/view/muzejnye-ekspozitsii-o-vov-i-genotside-sozdadut-v-kazhdoj-shkole-v-techenie-novogo-uchebnogo-goda-509050-2022/>

¹⁴ <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/29831.html>



	<p>the detriment of their studies. Also, a viewing of Lukashenka's presidential address in March 2023 was coordinated on a large scale in educational institutions. In many colleges and universities, studies were halted and students and staff watched the entire speech. Throughout April following the speech, discussion of the main tenets of the address were organized in educational institutions at all levels</p>	<p>viewing and discussion of his speeches in educational institutions is a clear marker of the increased ideologization of the educational process and the forming of a personality cult of Lukashenka</p>
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3.5. Extensive viewing of pro-government propaganda in educational institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
<p>There had been no documented cases of secondary and university students being brought together to view propaganda films and programs in Belarusian educational institutions</p>	<p>In May 2023, a massive wave of events swept through schools, colleges, and universities across the country during which secondary and university students were shown the propaganda films <i>"Gaspar" Did Not Contact</i> and <i>Killer Package</i> from Belarusian television. Both films are supposedly dedicated to the disclosure by the Belarusian special</p>	<p>In April 2023, the Deputy Head of Lukashenka's Administration Olga Chupris proposed screening these kinds of films in educational institutions¹⁵. As in the case of museum exhibitions in schools, the official's idea was taken up by educational institutions even without any written resolution. Mass viewing and discussion of</p>

¹⁵ <https://t.me/zachisleno1/5556>



	<p>services of planned terrorist attacks in Belarus which are blamed on the Ukrainian special services and the Belarusian opposition. Film screenings in educational institutions were accompanied by a discussion of what was seen, often in the presence of law enforcement officers</p>	<p>propaganda films became a clear marker of increased ideologization of the educational process towards the end of the academic year</p>
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3.6. Systematic meetings with pro-government propagandists and activists in educational institutions

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
<p>Meetings of secondary and university students with officials, pro-government activists and propagandists were limited and targeted in nature</p>	<p>Dozens of meetings have been held between college and university students and officials, pro-government activists, and propagandists on a systematic basis within the framework of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union project <i>Valid Conversation</i>¹⁶. As part of the project, students met with such figures as Grigory Azarenok, Sergei Klishevich, Lyudmila Gladkaya, Ksenia Lebedeva, Pavel Alekso, Alexander Lukyanov,</p>	<p>After the protests of 2020, the Belarusian authorities have been trying their best to prevent young people from participating in new protests and are attempting to interrupt the opposition’s information agenda. Such meetings became especially relevant after the start of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. During the meetings, students listen to a pro-government interpretations of the political situation in the</p>

¹⁶

<https://www.sb.by/articles/tags/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80/>



	Andrei Mukovozchik, Alexey Avdonin, Oleg Romanov, and many other supporters of the current regime	country and the world, the war in Ukraine, and socio-economic development. This project is also an integral element in the process of ideologization of the educational process
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3.7. Cooperation between Belarusian military-patriotic clubs and Russian paramilitary organizations has started

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
There was no documented cooperation between military-patriotic clubs and similar organizations from Russia	In January 2023, an Agreement on cooperation between the military-patriotic club OMON of the Central Internal Affairs Directorate of the Minsk City Executive Committee was signed with the Russian movement <i>Yunarmen</i> and the association <i>Young Friends of the Police</i> ¹⁷ . Several trips by Belarusian military-patriotic clubs to Russia to participate in the work of paramilitary camps have been documented	After the start of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, not only a pro-government, but a pro-Russian agenda is being planted in Belarusian society. The same is happening in the Belarusian security forces, where pro-Russian views have always been strong. The authorities’ interest in the militarization of Belarusian education gives a certain freedom of action to Belarusian security forces in working with children, including through spreading pro-Russian propaganda

¹⁷ <https://t.me/orlyataklub/101>

3.8. All-national military-patriotic rallies and gatherings with an enhanced paramilitary component have commenced

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
No cases of enhanced paramilitary training on a nationwide scale were documented	In October 2022, regular enhanced field training known as <i>Challenge</i> began for students of schools, colleges, and students of civilian universities, based at the Military Academy ¹⁸ . In the summer of 2023, the first open gathering of students of military-patriotic clubs of formations and military units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was held near Minsk, within the framework of which intensive classes in tactical and fire training were conducted with schoolchildren. Here they demonstrated their teamwork skills	Since 2021, the educational system of Belarus has been undergoing a process of systematic militarization at all levels. Such events are a continuation of this emerging trend and are a clear manifestation of the authorities' desire to involve security forces in working with youth and propaganda to promote a pro-government agenda among children and youth

3.9. Transforming China into a serious educational partner for Belarus

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
For a long time, educational relations with China developed slowly and concerned mainly the issue of educating Chinese	In 2023, a sharp increase in international educational contacts between universities in Belarus and China was noted. In the period from	The impetus for intensifying cooperation in the educational sphere between the two states was Lukashenka's visit to China in March 2023. In

¹⁸ <https://t.me/bratsouz/11865>



citizens in universities in Belarus	March to August 2023, more than 60 contacts were documented between educational institutions of the two states, which makes China the second most important educational partner of Belarus after Russia	In addition, cooperation with China is of interest to the Belarusian authorities both in the context of economic sanctions against the Belarusian regime and due to Belarus's isolation from European and American educational institutions
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IV.CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM RELATED TO THE INFLUENCE OF PRO-RUSSIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND RUSSIA IN GENERAL

4.0. Work of Russian actors to expand their influence on Belarusian university applicants

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
In 2019, the Russian Government quota for fully-funded scholarship spots for students from Belarus was only 73	By 2023, a sharp increase in the number of scholarship places for students from Belarus was recorded at 1,300, or representing a growth of more than 17 times over 4 years	A sharp increase in intensified cooperation in the educational sphere between the two states became visible after the 2020 events in Belarus. Another even more important factor was Russia's war against Ukraine. In addition, cooperation with Russia is of interest to the Belarusian authorities due to the effects of economic sanctions, and because of their being isolated from European and American educational structures, from programs for teachers and students,

		and because of the general anti-Western rhetoric at the state level, including in the education system
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4.1. Pro-Russian organizations' work with students and working youth of Belarus over the summer

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
For a long time, pro-Russian organizations (foremost among them Rossotrudnichestvo) did not have the opportunity to implement programs for sending abroad high school and university students and working youth to Russia. Such cases were isolated	Over the 2022-23 summer period, at least 200 high school and university students and representatives of working youth visited Russia under the New Generation and Hello Russia programs, including representatives of state public associations	Since the 2021-22 academic year, there has been a sharp increase in the number of events held for youth and students from Belarus under programs by various pro-Russian organizations (with the leader being Rossotrudnichestvo)

4.2. Visits to Ukrainian occupied territories by Belarusian students and representatives of youth organizations, universities, and the Belarusian academic community

Prior to the 2022-23 academic year	Introduced in the 2022-23 academic year	Context
Visits to the occupied territories until 2022-23 were intermittent. They were unofficially prohibited and Belarus's system of education showed no initiative in making contact, particularly through Pro-Russian actors and	After the end of the 2022-23 academic year, a sharp increase in trips (especially in the summer) of students from Belarusian schools to Crimea (mainly Artek) was noted. Students of various ages from Belarus have the opportunity to	After the start of the active phase of Russia's war against Ukraine in February 2022, Belarus gradually lifted the unspoken ban on visiting the occupied territories (Crimea) for students from Belarus. Belarus has not directly entered the



<p>organizations</p>	<p>visit Artek as part of competitions held by Russia Houses in the regions (Gomel, Brest, and Minsk). Working youth as part of professional skills competitions have also become frequent visitors to Crimea. First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union Alexander Lukyanov and the Director of the National Library Vadim Gigin visited the occupied territories (Mariupol)</p>	<p>war, but has been very active in supporting Russia. Support consists precisely in establishing contacts in the educational and humanities spheres</p>
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