

BELARUS

ELECTIONS TO THE LOCAL COUNCILS 20TH – 25TH APRIL 2010

FINAL REPORT

1. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its “Temporary Monitoring Report on the 2010 Local Elections”, the initiative “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections”¹ has welcomed the amendments to the electoral code, which were adopted on 4th January in line with the demands of the ODIHR-OSCE and local experts. Of particular importance is the removal of several restrictions on the nomination and registration of candidates. However, the lack of transparency in the assessment of potential candidates’ applications continues to enable the election commissions to treat candidates critical of the regime in a discriminatory manner.

In spite of the amendments to the electoral code, the domestic election observers see no substantial progress towards a democratisation of the election process. Similarly to during previous election campaigns, the 2010 local elections in Belarus were overshadowed by serious and systematic violations of democratic electoral standards. The most important amendments to the electoral code were mostly only formally put into practice or even not at all. During the entire election process, from the formation of the election commissions and the nomination of candidates up to the election campaign itself, enormous acts of manipulation were observed which disadvantaged those candidates critical of the regime. For example, local authorities and security services targeted candidates critical of the regime and their supporters with acts of repression. State companies and public institutions were directly involved in supporting the election campaign activities of candidates loyal to the regime. Activists and members of the opposition were put under pressure by their superiors at work or made redundant. State media provided barely any information about the elections and campaigned for candidates loyal to the regime.

There were numerous cases of opposition candidates’ election campaign materials and radio appearances being censored. In particular, grave irregularities were found during the early and home voting procedures, and during the vote counting process. In addition, almost all appeals which were submitted before, during and after election day, were rejected by the responsible election commission.

The initiative “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections” demands the following amendments to the electoral code:

- A. The introduction of legally prescribed criteria for the assessment of candidacies for the regional and local election commissions;

¹ <http://belhelcom.org/?q=en/node/4252> .

- B. The opportunity for representatives of political parties who put forward candidates to be accepted onto the election commissions;
- C. The removal of the possibility to ban election campaign events at central locations by the local authorities;
- D. The restriction of the early voting process by introducing clear criteria for its application;
- E. Restriction of home voting with mobile ballot boxes: the introduction of supervision of the mobile voting process by election observers and candidates' representatives. These should testify to the lawful nature of the home votes with their signatures;
- F. The creation of collective vote counting by the members of the election commission and the separate announcement of the results from early voting, home voting and the votes from election day itself;
- G. The possibility for domestic election observers and their representatives to be able to carry out unrestricted observation of the vote counting process;
- H. The expansion of domestic election observers' activities during all stages of the election campaign.

2. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with a decree from the Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka on 18th January 2010, the date for elections to the local councils was set for 20th – 25th April. Directly before the local elections, amendments to the electoral code were adopted which had been proposed by ODIHR-OSCE and Belarusian experts. The implementation of the new rules during the local elections can be seen as a test for Lukashenka's government ahead of the presidential elections which are scheduled to take place between November 2010 and February 2011.

According to official reports, 50 foreign diplomats in Belarus were accredited as election observers and they observed the voting and vote counting processes.² However, the Central Commission rejected the proposal to establish a long-term ODIHR-OSCE election monitoring mission. The long-term observation was carried out exclusively by the domestic election observers.

Ever since the parliamentary elections in 2008, European Exchange has been cooperating with the Minsk Human Rights Organisations – the Human Rights Center Viasna³ and the Belarusian Helsinki Committee.⁴ The election monitoring campaign initiated by the partner organisations in 2008, “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections”⁵, was awarded the title “Human Rights Campaign of the Year 2008” by the Association of Pro-Democratic Nongovernmental Organisations in Belarus. This cooperation was also continued during the 2010 local elections and a network of 130 volunteers in all regions of Belarus was established. This includes domestic election observers, legal experts and journalists. The initiative “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections” started its long-term election monitoring mission as early as January and reported on the events of all stages of the election campaign in Belarusian, Russian, English and German.

² http://www.rec.gov.by/pdf/msd2010/int_obs_sved.pdf .

³ Further information about the Human Rights Center Viasna can be found under: <http://www.spring96.org/en/>.

⁴ Further information about the Belarusian Helsinki Committee can be found under: <http://belhelcom.org/?q=en>

⁵ The reports from the members of the initiative “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections” from all regions of the country can be found under the following links: <http://spring96.org/en/tags/local-council-elections-2010/> and <http://belhelcom.org/?q=en/taxonomy/term/290> .

Throughout the entire election campaign, European Exchange sent a weekly newsletter to interested persons and organisations in both German and English. This was supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Warsaw (MATRA) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Berlin (GMFUS).

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The local elections in Belarus are conducted according to the majority election principle in single vote constituencies. On 4th January, the new electoral code came into force, which met several demands of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODIHR-OSCE) and of Belarusian human rights activists and experts. The following amendments relevant to the local elections were adopted:

1. The simplification of the accreditation of domestic election observers, who can not only be officially registered as election observers as members, but also as representatives of organisations and parties in the regions,
2. The introduction of parity during the formation of the election commissions, according to which at least one third of the members of the election commissions should be made up of representatives of parties and civic organisations,
3. The simplification of the registration and the activities of supporter groups who collect signatures for their candidates,
4. The liberalisation of the registration of candidates for council seats thanks to a less restrictive registration process and expanded possibilities for appealing against the denial of registration,
5. The simplification of receiving permission for an election campaign event: at all locations which are specified by the local authorities, election campaign events no longer have to receive permission, but just be declared; in addition, it is possible for several candidates to hold joint election campaign events and publish joint election campaign materials,
6. Improved transparency during the early voting and home voting processes achieved by daily sealing of the ballot boxes, by publishing the registered election turnout every day, and through the separation of the vote counting into votes from early voting, home voting and the votes cast on the election day itself,
7. The removal of a minimum turnout of 50% at the majority elections in single vote constituencies.

4. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

According to the new electoral code, the opposition parties and NGOs are supposed to be strengthened and the number of officials loyal to the regime reduced in the election commissions. Parties and NGOs on the one hand, and the administration on the other hand, are each allowed to provide up to one third of the election commissions members at the regional and local levels. The electoral code does not however specify any criteria for the selection of candidates for the election commissions and therefore allows scope for manipulation. Furthermore, the role of the domestic election observers is not explicitly set out in the electoral code.

Whilst the quotas set out in the electoral code were formally met, the election commissions were nevertheless made up almost in their entirety of candidates loyal to the regime. Numerous officials loyal to the regime were accepted onto the election commissions as representatives of parties or civic organisations. The actual occupations of these people were not published in the local press. In many regions, election commissions were formed from

employees of one single company or one single public institution, which was designed to ensure their loyalty to the chairman of the election commission – in many cases the head of the company or institution.

In addition, the majority of popular and experienced representatives of opposition parties and nongovernmental organisations, as well as legal experts and journalists critical of the regime, were denied acceptance onto the election commissions. This was made possible by the lack of any legally prescribed criteria for the selection of election commission members. Also, the election commissions were often formed behind closed doors: neither the domestic election observers nor the election commission representatives were invited to the meetings of the relevant authorities. Furthermore, during the meetings, which were often merely held pro forma and ended after only a few minutes, a vote was often taken on a predetermined list of desired commission members. Up to 80% of the teams in the election commissions were left unchanged compared to the last elections.

Formation of the regional election commissions⁶

The domestic election observers point to the low level of participation in the election process shown by political parties: only 407 of a total 16,558 members of the regional election commissions were representatives of parties (approx. 2.4%). In spite of this low number, the candidacies of party representatives were those which were most frequently rejected. At the same time, the opposition was particularly discriminated against: Whilst of the 379 candidates from parties loyal to the regime (including the Belarusian Communist Party, the Agrarian Party), 320 (approx. 84%) were accepted, just 87 of the 238 opposition applicants became election commission members (approx. 37%). Around two thirds of the members of the opposition were denied acceptance onto these committees.⁷ This means that in total just 0.52% of all regional election commission members were provided by opposition parties.

Formation of the local election commissions⁸

The local election committees are directly responsible for the free voting and vote counting processes. Transparency should be guaranteed by allowing a large number of candidates critical of the regime onto the commissions. According to the electoral code, each local election commission can be made of up five to 19 members. In total, 68,881 commission members were named for the 6,387 electoral precincts. In accordance to these numbers, an average of approx. 11 members was appointed onto the election commissions, while numerous candidacies of people critical of the regime were rejected.

Of the total 2,212 candidates nominated by political parties, the opposition nominated 604 candidates via party lists. However, the opposition was clearly discriminated against during the selection of candidates: whilst of the 1,608 members of parties loyal to the regime, 1,496 (93%) were selected for the local election commissions, the opposition saw just 76 of its 604 representatives (12.6%)⁹ accepted. A further 24 candidates from opposition parties were able to gain a place on the local election commissions via the means of signature collection. (In total, 26,731 commission members were selected via this route.) Including these commission members, the coalition of the United Democratic Forces of Belarus was represented by just 100 party members in the precinct election committees. This is around 0.14% of all local election commission members.

⁶ See Report Nr. 1, <http://www.european-exchange.org/index.php?id=belarus2010>.

⁷ See Appendix 1.

⁸ See Report Nr. 3 and 4, *ibid*.

⁹ See Appendix 1.

5. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES¹⁰

According to the electoral code, candidates for council seats can be nominated either via party lists or by the means of collecting signatures. Political parties and civic organisations are only able to nominate their candidates in the regions via regional offices. Because several opposition parties and organisations critical of the regime, or in some cases their regional departments, have been denied registration, many members of the opposition put forward their candidacy via signature collection.

It is true that this stage of the election campaign was adjudged by the domestic election observers to be on the whole more democratic than during the local elections in 2007, but there were nevertheless reports from all regions of the country of numerous cases of repression against candidates and their supporters. This led to many members of the opposition withdrawing from the election campaign. Both the candidates and their supporters were put under severe pressure from the local authorities and the secret service (KGB). There were reports of irregularities during the process of checking signatures by the responsible election commission: there was at least one case of the signatures' lists being falsified by the members of the election commission. In other cases, pressure was put on those voters who signed the signature lists.

There were reports from many regions of the country of politically motivated actions whereby candidates who were critical of the regime, and also their supporters, were made redundant from the state companies and public institutions they were working for. Finally, many candidates critical of the regime were unlawfully denied registration and the documentation of the registration process was made available neither on time nor in its complete form. Domestic election observers were also denied access this documentation.

Registration and activity of candidates' supporter groups

The amended electoral code aims to make it more straightforward for candidates' supporter groups to collect signatures: The signatures can be collected throughout electoral districts and not solely within the individual administrative units within the electoral districts. In addition, the process of checking the signature lists has been made more straightforward. As part of an election event, signatures can be collected without explicit permission at all locations where such events have not been explicitly forbidden by the responsible executive committee.

On the whole, the registration of supporter groups was only blocked by the local authorities in a few cases: of the 16,903 applications, only 23 were rejected. Collecting signatures was however made vastly more difficult: in all regions of the country, the collection of signatures was forbidden on most central squares and streets, at stations and in other densely populated areas.

Registration of candidates

The new electoral code liberalises the process of candidate registration: The rejection of a candidacy can only take place when the responsible executive committee deems more than 5% of the signatures submitted by the candidate to be invalid, or it finds his declaration of means to contain errors. According to the old electoral code, the registration could be denied due to nothing more than a minor error in the documents provided, such as in the candidate's CV. Also, candidates were able to see the documentation concerning the registration process. This thereby made it possible to prepare for an appeal against the denial of registration.

¹⁰ See Report Nr. 5, <http://www.european-exchange.org/index.php?id=belarus2010> .

During the registration period, a total of 318 (1.2%) of the 25,475 candidacies were rejected by the regional election commissions.¹¹ However, most denials affected opposition candidates: Of the 679 candidates from registered and unregistered opposition parties and movements, 188 (27.7%) had their registration denied.¹² A further 122 people withdrew their candidacies themselves during the registration process, often under pressure from the state apparatus and their superiors at work in state companies and public institutions.

One striking aspect of this year's local elections was the high number of so called 'alternative-free electoral districts'. After the close of candidate registration there were just 25,035 candidates for 21,303 council seats. This means that there could only be a real electoral battle between at least two candidates in a maximum of 3,732 electoral districts, whilst in at least 17,500 electoral districts only one candidate was standing for election. This meant a country-wide average of 1.17 candidates per council seat. It was only in Minsk that there was an average as high as 3.9 candidates per council seat.

6. ELECTION CAMPAIGN¹³

The new electoral code provides more flexibility for conducting the election campaign by no longer forcing a candidate to apply for permission, but merely to inform the local authorities of the time, place and character of his election event. The electoral code does not however dictate that such places where election events are allowed have to exist in every electoral district. This means that not all candidates are able to hold election events in their electoral districts. Furthermore, those election events which are held at locations which have not been specified by the executive committees are subject to the restrictive law governing mass public events.

The new electoral code envisages no use of the candidates' private finances, whether they come from voters' donations or from the political parties' or civil society organisations' budgets. This means that for each candidate for a council seat at the village level, just 35,000 Belarusian roubles, BYR (approx. 9 €), are made available for the production of election campaign materials. At the rayon level this is up to 140,000 BYR (approx. 35 €) and at the regional level and for the capital Minsk this is up to 280,000 BYR (approx. 70 €). The restriction of the financial resources is only partly compensated for by the newly introduced law, according to which the candidates are able to cooperate and jointly publish their election campaign materials.

Acts of repression against candidates critical of the regime and domestic election observers during election campaign

During the election campaign, there were cases of searches and arrests of opposition candidates and their supporters, as well as thorough tax investigations of members of the

¹¹ According to information of the Central Election Commission.

¹² According to information from the opposition parties and movements: the Belarusian Christian Democratic Party (BChD), the Belarusian Party of United Leftists "Just World", the United Civic Party (OCP), the Movement "For Freedom", the Party of the Belarusian National Front (PBNF), the Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Gramada", the Belarusian Party "The Greens", the Belarusian Social Democratic "Gramada", the Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Narodnaya Gramada". This refers both to those candidates who were put forward via party lists and via the collection of signatures.

¹³ See Reports Nr. 6 and 7, <http://www.european-exchange.org/index.php?id=belarus2010> .

opposition. Also, cases were documented in many regions of the country where information was withheld and the election monitoring of accredited domestic election observers and candidates' representatives was interfered with.

During the election campaign, at least 53 representatives of opposition parties decided to boycott the elections. Amongst them were all representatives of the opposition coalition, the United Democratic Forces of Belarus, who were operating in the Gomel region. Furthermore, the United Civil Party opted for a complete boycott. The decision to boycott the elections was justified by the ongoing acts of repression during the election campaign and the failure to accept members of the opposition onto the election commissions. In one case, the registration of a popular candidate critical of the regime was unlawfully withdrawn directly before election day. (The distribution of calendars and balloons was adjudged to be bribery of voters.) Besides this, there were several reports of the unlawful withdrawal of domestic election observers' accreditation during the early voting process.

The role of the state authorities

The local authorities passed a ban on carrying out election campaign activities at most central and densely populated areas in the towns. In the cities, there were only a few places, mostly on the outskirts of the city, where election campaign events could take place. In a large number of electoral districts, there were no places at all for election campaign events, because the electoral code does not make it compulsory for local authorities to provide such places in every electoral district. This meant that it was impossible for many candidates to conduct election events in their electoral districts. Whilst the authorities often interfered in the election events of candidates critical of the regime, the election campaign activities of candidates loyal to the regime were often organised or supported by the authorities.

The initiative 'Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections' documented numerous cases of censorship of informational materials of candidates critical of the regime. This was enforced by both the executive committees and the local and regional election commissions. In several cases, the printing houses refused to produce campaign materials, pointing to directives from the executive committees.

Another issue was the fact that many candidates were unable to reach all of their potential voters because of insufficient state funds. Particularly in the regions, the election campaign was practically invisible. In addition, several cases were observed where candidates who were critical of the regime had their election campaign materials destroyed by members of the election commissions and by state housing authority employees.

The role of the media

According to the regulations of the Central Election Commission, only candidates for the city and regional councils are given the opportunity to make a statement of up to five minutes on the regional state cable radio channel for free.

The state media provided barely any information on the election and their coverage was reduced to the publication of official reports and decisions of the election commissions, although even this information was rarely complete. The candidates appearances on the local state cable radio channels were able to reach hardly any voters, because this kind of radio channel is nowadays only received in a few households, mostly those in the country. Candidates for the village councils have no right of access to radio.

In many cases, the state press only released the information concerning the formation of the election commissions or the registration of the candidates when it was too late, which often impeded the possibility of lodging appeals against the decisions of the election commissions. In many cases, this information was published in the hardly available special editions of the local newspapers with a very low readership. This severely damaged the transparency of this stage of the election campaign.

In addition, the state publications in all regions of the country, from the beginning of the election campaign, promoted exclusively the candidates loyal to the regime. Covert campaigning was to be found in numerous interviews and profiles of such candidates even before the legally prescribed start of the election campaign. By contrast, the representatives of the opposition were often misrepresented or simply ignored by the state newspapers.

7. EARLY VOTING PROCESS AND ELECTION DAY¹⁴

The voting took place between the 20th and 25th of April 2010. The changes in the electoral code aimed to achieve more transparency during the voting process and the counting of the votes. The new rules included a daily sealing of the ballot boxes and a daily publication of the amount of registered voters as well as a separate counting of votes during the homebound voting, the early voting process and on the actual election day. In order to avoid repeated elections due to low voting turnout in the different electoral district, the electoral code no longer requires a minimum of 50% turnout during voting.

The new rules were not fully implemented. The initiative group “Human Rights Activists for Free Elections” reported of grave manipulation and falsification of election results in all regions of the country. In contrast to existing electoral laws, the new laws were not explained in the handbooks published by the Central Electoral Commission for the Regional and District Offices. In all regions of the country there were reports of misinterpretation and non-implementation of the new laws regarding daily publication of the registered voters and the separate counting procedures of the different ballot boxes.

According to the official results the voting turnout between 20th and 25th of April 2010 throughout the whole country was 79.5 %. While during the early voting process 29.3% voters have cast their ballots (In some districts the voting turnout during the early voting reached up to 60%), the official voting turnout on election day was 49.8%. According to local election observers and representatives of opposition candidates who supervised the entire process in some polling stations and on specific days the official voting turnout was artificially exaggerated by up to 30%. According to estimations by the opposition candidates the overall voting turnout in the entire country could not exceed 50%.¹⁵

In all regions of the country the local Executive Committee set up Advisory Boards, Coordination Offices and Curators which are supposed to support the electoral commission. The state could therefore directly influence the activity of the local and regional electoral commissions.

¹⁴ See Report Nr. 8, <http://european-exchange.org/index.php?id=300#c811> .

¹⁵ These figures are based on estimates of the election observers and representatives of the candidates who are critical of the regime in specific regions and electoral districts. A complete investigation covering all regions and districts could not be carried out due to a lack of resources.

The early voting process

The entire state apparatus (local authorities, the secret service KGB, the financial offices, the media and enterprises controlled by the state and state institutions) were mobilized to ensure a high voting turnout even before election day. In some regions of the country public transportation and private mobile phone operators advertised the early voting process without mentioning the possibility of voting on election day.

The massive participation organized by the state apparatus led to a considerably high voting turnout in closed voting precincts (such as barracks, maternity wards etc) and in voting districts where most registered voters are employed in certain enterprises, are enrolled at specific universities or live in cheap accommodations provided by the government (such as boarding schools, student dormitories, etc). The participation in the voting at universities was directly controlled by the Deans and published on the names boards.

In most districts where candidates loyal to the government had to face opposition parties and activists, and where voting turnout were high, large discrepancies between early voting round results and election day results were recorded. In many cases the opposition was beaten on the basis of early voting results, although they received the majority of votes on election day.

Election Day Voting

On the 25th of April voting was carried out without proper checking of identity documents and there were cases of voting in the name of several individuals. A separate counting of votes from the early voting processes and mobile ballot boxes and election day voting was also not carried out. Local election observers noted that ballot boxes were often not correctly sealed and placed in unknown location. Protocols were often written in pencil and changed later. Also blank documents were signed by election commission members and filled out by the chairmen of those commissions once the voting process finished.

After the ballot boxes were closed the voting ballots and protocols were often brought to city officials rather than the regional election commission. In three voting districts government loyal candidates were also members of the local election commissions, which is a direct violation of electoral law. The following breaches on election day were also noted: Falsification of voter lists, handing out of several voting ballots to individuals, the removal of voting ballots from the voting precincts, the casting of several votes and the presence of unauthorized individuals and police in the precincts.

When counting the votes there was a lack of transparency, the collective counting of the votes was not carried out (every commission member only counted a part of the votes, so that the final result was announced only after it was entered into the protocol) and observers were hindered in doing their work, i.e. they were often not being allowed to be present at the voting tables. In some cases observers were forcefully removed from the precincts by the police.

Mobile voting

Massive falsification of votes was recorded during the mobile voting process. Cases were recorded, where individuals that had passed away several years earlier had applied to take part in the mobile voting service. Many voters were surprised by the mobile voting units, since they had not wished to take part in this service. This was recorded more often in voting districts where opposition candidates were present. In some districts over 500 people were registered in the mobile voting process, whilst the procedure was carried out in 1-2 hours.

8. INVESTIGATION OF APPEALS

Formation of the election commissions

Not one of the multitude of appeals against the rejection of candidates critical of the regime who attempted to become members of the election commissions at the regional and local level was decided positively. The formulation of an effective appeal was made almost impossible by the lack of any criteria for the selection of election commission members in the electoral code.

Registration of candidates

Numerous appeals were submitted against the refusal to register candidates for council seats to the responsible election commissions and, in the case of the appeal being rejected, passed on to the courts. During this process, both the members of the election commissions and the courts responsible for the appeals proved themselves to be unable to competently investigate an appeal relating to the election. In most cases, appeals which had often been unlawfully rejected by the election commissions at local level were often similarly rejected by the superior election commission, and finally by the judges, without being thoroughly investigated.

According to the figures of the opposition parties and movements, at least 127 appeals were submitted against the refusal to register a candidate. Only two opposition candidates were able to be registered by attaining a positive decision from the responsible election commission or the courts.

Election campaign

Throughout the entire election campaign, large numbers of oral and written appeals against the decisions of the election commissions were submitted. Up to seven appeals against the insufficient specification of places for campaigning were decided positively. Further appeals related to the refusal of state printing houses to publish campaign materials of candidates critical of the regime. In several cases, complaints were registered against the housing authorities regarding the unlawful removal of posters of candidates critical of the regime. Other appeals related to cases of censorship and the broadcast times of opposition candidates' radio appearances being moved unfavourably. In a number of cases, the candidates were able to force a positive decision and their radio appearances were then broadcast.

Early voting and the election day

Numerous appeals were submitted to the Central Election Commission after the voting and vote-counting processes had been completed. They referred to, among other issues, the falsification of voter lists, the lack of ballot boxes in the polling stations on election day, and the prevention of effective election monitoring during the vote counting process. In many electoral districts, appeals were submitted against the recognition of the election results due to the falsification of the ballot papers during the early voting and home voting processes. In three electoral districts, appeals were made against the recognition of the election results because the candidates were simultaneously members of the local election commissions.

All election-day related complaints have been rejected by the election commissions and the courts. The Central Election Commission refused to inform the domestic observers about the amount of claims that have been filed to the CEC.

APPENDIX 1: Rejection of members of the opposition in the election commissions – Comparison between the 2008 parliamentary elections and the 2010 local elections

Regional election commissions

	Nominated	Accepted	Rejected
2008 Parliamentary Elections	136	38	98 (72,1%)
2010 Local Elections	238	87	151 (62,4%)

Precinct election commissions

	Nominated	Accepted	Rejected
2008 Parliamentary Elections	1.515	48	1467 (96,8%)
2010 Local Elections	604	100	504 (83,4%)

Opposition representatives in the precinct election commissions

	Total commission members	Commission members from the opposition
2008 Parliamentary Elections	73.576	48 (0,07%)
2010 Local Elections	68.881	100 (0,15%)

APPENDIX 2: Rejection of registration of opposition candidates for seats in parliament or on local councils – Comparison between 2008 and 2010

	Nominated	Registered	Rejected
2008 Parliamentary Elections *)	149	99	50 (33,6%)
2010 Local Elections **)	611	416	195 (31,9%)

*) Candidates from the opposition coalitions: United Democratic Forces of Belarus and European Coalition.

**) Candidates from the registered and unregistered parties critical of the regime who took part in the coalition United Democratic Forces of Belarus.

All news, announcements and comments about the elections can be downloaded any time on the website of the European Exchange in Berlin (www.european-exchange.org), on the website of the Human Rights Centre „Viasna“ (www.spring96.org) and the Belarusian Helsinki Committee in Minsk (www.belhelcom.org).

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European Exchange is also responsible for the German-Ukrainian conference series 'The Kiev Dialogue' and a number of cooperation projects with independent Belarusian and Ukrainian nongovernmental organisations.

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