

## Demographical Recession Hasn't Finished

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**R**ussian-Georgian war is inevitably becoming a significant factor also Belarusian and Russian negotiations. The evidence of it became a comment of the Russian Ambassador in Belarus Aleksander Surikov that Russia doesn't understand position of Belarusian authorities in this war.

"We don't understand enough why Belarusian authorities keep modest silence", - said Surikov and added that during all time of the conflict escalation there has been "an expression of a secondary MFA worker" from the Belarusian side only. "It is necessary to express clearer on such questions, moreover to allies", - emphasized Surikov. He mentioned that Russia always supports Belarus, when it faces difficulties at the international arena.

The ambassador also expressed concern that there haven't been any proposals yet about providing humanitarian aid. In connection with that Surikov reminded that Belarus and Russia are building the union state. Thus "citizens of Russia, who got into a humanitarian catastrophe, they are in a certain way citizens of Belarus also", - considers Russian diplomat.



Reaction of Mensk was unexpected. There were neither excuses, nor sympathies yesterday. On the contrary, having heard the report of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Siarhej Martynau about the situation on basic directions of the external politics of Belarus, Aliaksander Lukashenka called to improve negotiations with the USA and the European Union.

"Belarus intends to develop maximally deep, constructive, and productive relations with absolutely all its' strategic partners, neighbors,

countries of the near and far abroad. Thereby the President gave definite assignments regarding what should be done in improving negotiations with the USA and EU", - is said in the official release of the Press Service of the Belarusian President.

Actions or rather inactivity of Lukashenka also caused wide resonance in Belarus itself. Thus, leader of the oppositional United Civil Party Anatol Liabedzka said that the President "specially strengthens" his positions in the Belarusian-Russian dialogue, not commenting events in Georgia. In fact, he wants to sell own support to Russia and bargains now - he, possibly, considers that the support of "the last dictator of Europe" is an expensive thing.

On the demand of the BelaPAN agency member of the Council of Republic (Upper Chamber of the parliament) Aliaksander Zimousky commented words of the Russian ambassador. Thus, he mentioned that the reason for modest silence is that "all necessary conditions for modesty had been created" for Belarus as an ally. A. Zimouski mentioned at that that in the moment of the beginning

of nowadays Caucasus war formal leader of the Union state Aliaksander Lukashenka and formal premier of the Union state Vladimir Putin were at the distance of visual contact at seats of a stadium "Bird Nest" in Beijing. But Putin discussed Caucasus knot not with his formal boss and juridical ally, but with other persons.

"It follows from this that Belarus considers Russia its own ally historically and permanently, but Russia considers Belarus its ally of a certain minute and when it's politically and economically reasonable", - said Belarusian senator. According to number of observers, the content of the following dialogue between Minsk and Moscow for Georgian topic can be clarified after the meeting of leaders of governments of both countries, planned on August 14. And also, with possible participation of Russian Air Forces in large-scale war-games of the Belarusian army.

Such participation of Russian AF by the strength of assault, fighting and air force directly near border countries with Belarus (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia), who energetically oppose Russian aggression in Georgia, can create strained atmosphere in this region also. It is also worth to note that there hasn't been yet a concrete address on behalf of arrival of Russian air force from the

Belarusian side hasn't been yet for today.

Meanwhile, party opposition and others prepare for Parliamentary elections on September 28. Congress of the Belarusian Popular Front Party took place on August 9, which confirmed decision of the Board of the Party about exclusion out of the Party its former deputy, supporter of Aliaksander Milinkevich, activist of the movement "For Freedom" and an aspirant for the post of the Party Chairman at the previous Congress Ales Michalevich.

There was a decision also taken at the Party Board, which explains meaning of Michalevich exclusion (as well as displacement of Aliaksander Kazulin from the post of the Chairman of the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party "Hramada"). BPF Party will nominate Presidential candidate "from among Party members and if necessary will participate in nominating the only

candidate from the United Democratic Forces" (UDF). It is explained at that that BPF will propose their candidate only "in the case, if the decision about the procedure of nominating the only candidate will be taken by the consensus of all subjects, which will propose its pretenders for the post of the united candidate from the United Democratic Forces".

Thus, as well as separation from administrating in the coalition of Aliaksander Milinkevich at the UDF Congress, clearing the party from the influence of former Presidential candidates is made in the name of the coalition union. Both faces of the opposition, the only widely well-known figures of the democratic camp, which cause sympathy by own political capitals and able to mobilize at least some part of the population in their support, are being moved to the background for roles of "symbols", pictures on t-shirts and

photos, which are possible to keep in hands at protest actions like pictures of disappeared Ganchar, Zavadsky, Zaharanka, but with whom is not supposed to consider.

Oppositional Belarusian Party of Communists refused from boycott of "elections" and will participate in the "electoral campaign" until the very end. Party Congress took such decision in Minsk on August 10.

It is important to note that the unity for what party coalition (UDF) steadily deprives from all bright and self-reliant figures, does not provide expected results, which is clearly seen at the example of the running Parliamentary campaign.

UDF took a decision to participate in elections, and not to boycott it. But "Young Front" does boycott it, and the movement "for Freedom" doesn't participate in it. Moreover, UDF couldn't insist on fulfilling its decision by all UDF subjects.



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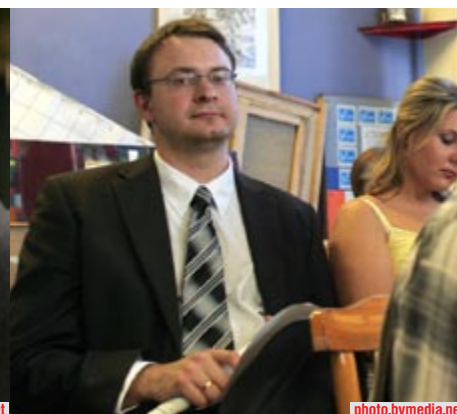


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UDF took a decision to nominate one candidate from opposition with one platform at every district. But, "European Coalition" formed its own parallel list of candidates, and it was found out in the last moment that the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party Hramada, led by S. Shushkevich, ignored coalitional agreements and nominated more than 20 candidates. And even there UDF was unable to implement "coalitional" and "unity" decisions.

In general even those loyal to the United Democratic Forces who make its basis and management do not observe their own decisions. Thus, UDF did not manage to cover all 110 districts with its candidates, but succeeded only to register 96 initiative groups (the central election committee did not reject any). UDF does not pretend to be a united political alliance. This alliance has a common message but does not possess a common platform. Certain UDF members (Belarusian People Front in private) pretend to 'spin' their party during the parliament elections meanwhile certain people in UDF management are busy in self-advancement which is harmful to 'common' position.

As a result, UDF performs function of coordinating organization instead of coalition structure. It means that the mechanism of managing the

opposition, created by the Congress of democratic forces, refuses to work.

The party coalition fully lost both presidential candidates (Aliaksandr Milinkevich and Aliaksandr Kazulin) at the previous president elections. The recent congress at BPF party and the Belarusian Social Democratic party (Gramada) were the first steps to future presidential campaign. Now the platform for new 'single' opposition candidates is cleared. A 'single' candidate will be again a person without personal political capital.

As many observers declare, a new war at Caucus region will move aside all other events in post-soviet states. Now the USA, Russia and Europe will be busy solving the armed conflict at Caucus region. They will not have any time to deal with Belarusian problems and Lukashenka will hold the elections in most convenient conditions for manipulating and forgery.

It is not the first case when the world situation favors the Lukashenka regime. Such a situation occurred during the terrorist attack in New York. That was a time of president elections in Belarus. The situation repeated in 2004 when terrorists captured a school in Beslan, Russia. At that time there was a referendum about prolongation of Lukashenka authority.

## OFFICIALLY

### Demographical Recession Hasn't Finished

*Population of the country decreased by 14 thousand people during the first half of the year 2008.*

Deputy Chief of the Main Department of Population and Employment Policy of the Ministry of Labor and Social Defense Tatsiana Shametavets informed about it on August 12.

Population of the country compounded 9 mln 675,4 thousand people by July 1.

### 'Belavia' will refund money for cancelled flights to Tbilisi

*The national Airline Company 'Belavia' cancelled regular flights Minsk-Tbilisi planned for August, 13-14.*



As a General Manager Deputy of the Company Igar Charginec reported to Euradio, everyone who bought tickets for these flights can easily return them to ticket-offices with no losses or use them later.

'It depends on passenger's will. We can move them to other convenient dates or refund them.'

Besides, Charginec noticed that they are not sure about future flights. According to his words it depends on the situation in Georgia.

## POLITICS

### Observers from CIS Started Work

*Observers from countries of CIS have started work in all regions of Belarus on August 12.*

Groups of long-term observers will be mobile and not tied to one town, informs BelaPAN. 30 persons are accredited in the structure of mission observers from CIS in the Central Election Committee for the current moment.

It is planned that 35 long-term and 300 short-term observers will work at the mission. The mission will prepare an appeal about results of monitoring of Parliamentary elections in Belarus.



## SOCIETY

## Solidarity Meeting With Georgia

*A solidarity meeting with Georgia took place in the evening of August 10, in Minsk, near the building of the Georgian embassy.*

Young activists from the “Bunt” organization gathered near the embassy building holding banners that read “We’re with you, Georgia! Russians, GO HOME!”, as well as Georgian flags.

Participants of the solidarity action transferred the letter to the Embassy with words of support. The meeting didn’t last long, as the police forced the activists to leave.

At the same time, the Russian embassy in Belarus received a letter, in which Belarusian youth expressed their indignation regarding Russia’s actions in Georgia. “We condemn illegitimate actions of the Russian army against Georgia’s sovereignty and independence. Russia must realize the USSR no longer exists, and free countries have a right to shape their own future independently,” – the letter reads.

## OPPOSITION

## Head of OSCE Office Visited A. Kazulin

*Head of the OSCE office in Minsk Hans Jochen Schmidt visited Alyaksandr Kazulin, who is serving a sentence of 5,5 years of imprisonment in Vitsebsk colony Vitsba-3.*

The visit was a duty of OSCE office in the field of monitoring of legal cases development. The OSCE office is satisfied to note that the request for a meeting with Alyaksandr Kazulin was answered in the positive by the state authorities.

## Sentenced for Action of Solidarity with Georgia

*Liudvisya Atakulava, a Young Front activist, has been sentenced to 10 days of administrative arrest, and reports were drawn for Ivan and Illya Shyla and Andrusj Tychyna.*

The youth was arrested during the rally near the Russian Embassy in Minsk. Young front activists organized action of solidarity with Georgia.

15 activists of the organization gathered near the Russian Embassy with



streamers: “Stop aggression”, “Russia-Georgia: war with peacekeeping goals?” “One sixth part of land – is it not enough?”

Liudvisya Atakulava spent the night at Acrestsina detention center. The trial has been held behind the closed doors today.

Police checked documents of independent mass media journalists, which were at the action place. At first, the police demanded to destroy photos and video from the action, but the journalists insisted that it’s their professional right.

## CULTURE

## Polish PROVINCE IN MINSK

*At the art gallery ‘World of photo’ (Prityckaga street, 10) an exhibition ‘Melancholy and charm of province’ by Ezhi Piontak is held. There are*

*black-and-white pictures with touching attention of the author to its characters, recent past that reveal our nowadays reality.*

Polish backwoods of 30-40-th years is shown at the exhibition ‘Melancholy and charm of province’ as Ezhi Piontak saw it. Ill-clad people, ordinary buildings, scrubby streets, overworked hands, expressions with no sign of optimism – in general all the things that were not to be said publicly, that ran counter to official ideology, that demonstrated a critical view of that time reality and resembled soviet way of life.

## ECONOMY

## Vodka Got More Expensive for the Second Time During a Month

*Prices for vodka got raised for 4% percents in Belarus since August 12. Release price for alcohol increased for 6%.*



Ministry of Economy explained that such decision was taken for the proposal of concerns “Beldziarzhachprom” and “Belbiofarm” with the goal to compensate price of excise and raised price of grain. Last time the prices got raised for alcohol on 10% and vodka for 4%.

## ACCIDENTS

### Family Died in Road Accident

*5 people died in road accident the previous Saturday in Lida.*

The guilty in the road accident was a driver of Mitsubishi auto who did not manage with operation, drove to the wrong side of the road and crashed with Audi. A whole family (a husband with wife and two little children) was in the Audi car operated by the wife's father.

As a result two Audi passengers died immediately, other three died in hospital as a result of injuries. In Mitsubishi there were 5 passengers who got injuries of various degrees.

A criminal case was started and investigation process is held now.



There are various sites devoted to events in Belarus, which are, however, little known in Western Europe, and among people dealing with politics towards Belarus who do not understand the Russian or Belarusian languages.

The site [belarus-live](http://belarus-live.eu) fills this gap. The site allows to order weekly reception of news in English, Polish, Belarusian, Russian.