

National Human Rights Index

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2025

Right to Work

Expert Commentary

The score:	3,3	
<i>Including scores by component:</i>		
• Freely chosen work without any kind of compulsion	2,8	-0,1
• Equal access to work for all	3,3	-0,1
• Just and favorable conditions of work	4	
• Fair remuneration	5	
• Employment promotion and protection against unemployment	2,9	
• Protection mechanisms	1,6	

In assessing the situation with the right to work in 2025, the Index experts largely maintained the scores at the 2024 level, recording declines in two components. Among the key trends of the year:

- A mounting practice of forced labor: police summonses issued to "social parasites," and the expansion of the mandatory job placement system;
- Expansion of the list of professions subject to politically motivated restrictions on access – five new categories in 2025;
- Polarization in labor market regulation: improvements for "good-faith" workers are combined with growing discrimination against those subjected to political persecution;
- Entry into force of legislation that effectively eliminates the unemployment benefit in all but name (5 years of employment record required; benefit set at 40 rubles), while the punitive "parasitism" decree remains in force;
- International attention to systemic violations: appointment of an ILO Special Envoy and publication of a UN Special Rapporteur report;
- Positive developments included improvements in the mechanisms for securing the labor rights of persons with disabilities.

- **Free Labor, Without Any Compulsion**

All practices constituting forms of forced labor, or practices similar thereto, persist:



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- "Mandatory job placement of young specialists";
- Financial sanctions applied to employable individuals "not engaged in the economy";
- The situation of persons placed in "corrective labor and therapeutic centers";
- The labor of prisoners (particularly those held under politically motivated charges);
- Labor mobilization for economic development purposes ("subbotnik" – unpaid work on days off);
- Certain forms of "school-based practical training."

As of 1 January 2025, Articles 1–10 of the updated Law on Employment entered into force.¹ Among the significant conceptual changes, implemented through a package of amendments to secondary legislation,² is the replacement of the term "paid public works" with "(paid) temporary works," so as to distinguish "public works" as a form of administrative penalty from "paid public works" as an employment promotion measure performed under fixed-term employment or civil contracts for the purpose of temporary earnings.³

Amendments to secondary legislation on the promotion of employment⁴ regulate in greater detail the obligations of the State Employment Service with respect to engaging so-called "**obligated persons**" – that is, persons "obligated to reimburse expenses incurred by the state for the maintenance of children placed in state care" – including the establishment of a procedure for engaging such persons in work while they are under administrative arrest (local authorities determine the list of organizations with which the administration of detention facilities concludes agreements). Employment of such "obligated persons" must be arranged by the organization on the day they present themselves on referral from the employment service. Employers are also required to monitor the daily attendance of such persons and immediately notify the internal affairs bodies in the event of their absence from work.

The same amendments enshrine new powers for the Employment Coordination Commissions in the implementation of the "**parasitism**" decree.⁵ Inter-agency monthly data exchange between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Taxes and Duties, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Labor has been regularized for the purpose of "the prompt formation of a database of economically

¹ [Закон Республики Беларусь от 11.10.2024 г. № 36-З «Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения» – Pravo.by](#)

² [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 24.03.2025 г. № 168 «О мерах по реализации Закона Республики Беларусь от 11 октября 2024 г. № 36-З "Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения"» – Pravo.by](#)

³ [Президент подписал Закон по вопросам занятости населения. Рассказываем подробно о его новациях | Новости | Министерство труда и социальной защиты Республики Беларусь. Официальный сайт](#)

⁴ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 24.03.2025 г. № 168 «О мерах по реализации Закона Республики Беларусь от 11 октября 2024 г. № 36-З "Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения"» – Pravo.by](#)

⁵ [Декрет Президента Республики Беларусь от 02.04.2015 г. № 3 «О содействии занятости населения» – Pravo.by](#)



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inactive citizens." The Commissions have been charged with the duty to cooperate with the MIA in the social rehabilitation of persons " engaged in a-social lifestyle."

In May 2025, it became known that persons registered as "economically inactive" began receiving notifications from the police requiring their appearance before the employment commission – notifications resembling formal summonses. This practice had not previously been documented; earlier, letters were used inviting persons to confirm their status or to seek employment assistance.⁶

The mandatory job placement system for graduates is maintained and expanded. In 2025, targeted enrollment in educational institutions was significantly increased, including in medical specializations, with a mandatory five-year work placement obligation.⁷ Experts characterize this as a restriction on freedom of choice of employment: access to education is conditioned upon the acceptance of multi-year labor obligations.

- **Equal Access to Work for All**

In 2025, Presidential Decree No. 202⁸ tightened the regulation of external labor migration: additional obligations were imposed on employers not only with respect to the employment of foreign workers, but also in the area of monitoring their private lives (verification of the validity of visas, identity documents, driving licenses, and other documents; monthly visits to migrant workers at their temporary place of residence or sojourn; responsibility for assessing language proficiency). Experts note that while formally similar to European practices of employer responsibility, this provision is drafted with a xenophobic logic – one of distrust toward migrant workers even in issues of personal hygiene – and creates a conflict of interests: the employer simultaneously serves as a party to the employment contract and a state-appointed controller.

Pressure on "disloyal" workers continue, including "preventive conversations," refusals of employment, and dismissals of those who have previously been held accountable in politically motivated cases.⁹ In a number of instances, screening against the "BESporyadki" (Disorder) database and "extremist" lists continues to be used in connection with job applications.

Restrictions on access to professions in the context of political loyalty persist. Over the past two years, the authorities have progressively amended attestation rules, codes of professional ethics, and hiring rules for a range of professions. To the existing list – tourist guides and interpreter-guides (2023 and 2024); notaries and pedagogical staff (2024) – the following were added in 2025: real estate agents,¹⁰

⁶ <https://trends.belhelcom.org/storage/reviews/September2025/R9w7ZxqG2sk0HD6L3kVD.pdf>, P.23

⁷ https://t.me/belhalat_by/9378

⁸ [Указ Президента Республики Беларусь от 21.05.2025 г. № 202 «О повышении роли нанимателей в области внешней трудовой миграции» – Pravo.by](#)

⁹ [Belarus is not a "paradise" for workers: Special Rapporteur | OHCHR](#)

¹⁰ [Постановление Министерства юстиции Республики Беларусь от 29.05.2025 г. № 45 «О проведении аттестационного экзамена и выдаче свидетельства об аттестации риэлтера» – Pravo.by](#)



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insolvency administrators,¹¹ and auditors,¹² as well as certain categories of banking employees¹³ ("key officials and specialists of banks," including heads, their deputies, and persons responsible for risk management, internal control, and audit, as well as other persons occupying key positions and candidates for such positions).

Economic reviews in 2025 noted a combination of low registered unemployment with labor shortages, high labor turnover, and labor market tensions.¹⁴ The growth in the number of vacancies and administrative campaigns against "parasitism" do not address the structural causes of the labor shortage.¹⁵

Amendments to secondary legislation on the promotion of employment¹⁶ simplified the mechanism of state support for the employment of persons with disabilities. Specific funding limits and cost compensation amounts were established for the creation and preservation of one workplace for an invalid ("*invalids*" – the term used in the text of the resolution) – up to 1,500 base amounts. During the adaptation period, employers are reimbursed for wage costs not exceeding the minimum wage, and for insurance contributions. A further significant change is the transition to a new source of funding: until 31 December 2025, funding derives from the Social Protection Fund, and from 1 January 2026, from the national budget. However, experts identified a growing problem with obtaining occupational recommendations from Medical Rehabilitation Expert Commissions (MRECs): when a person with a disability applies for a recommendation (required for the employment), the commission frequently threatens a downgrading of disability classification, which entails the loss of benefits. This may obstruct the exercise of the right to work for a portion of persons with disabilities.

The possibilities for partial compensation of wage costs for citizens released from places of deprivation of liberty – who have registered as unemployed within six months of release and been employed on referral from labor, employment, and social protection bodies – have been expanded.¹⁷ Partial compensation of employer wage costs from budgetary funds will be provided. The previous procedure imposed an additional condition for such partial compensation – that the released individual "had

¹¹ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 13.08.2025 г. № 433 «Об изменении постановлений Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 22 августа 2023 г. № 551 и от 30 сентября 2024 г. № 719» – Pravo.by](#)

¹² [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 01.12.2025 г. № 696 «Об аттестации, подтверждении квалификации, деловой \(профессиональной\) репутации в сфере аудиторской деятельности» – Pravo.by](#)

¹³ [Постановление Правления Национального банка Республики Беларусь от 20.12.2025 г. № 370 «Об изменении постановления Правления Национального банка Республики Беларусь от 19 декабря 2012 г. № 669» – Pravo.by](#)

¹⁴ [Labour Market](#)

¹⁵ [Рыжиченко: «Люди ищут различные причины, чтобы, условно, не сидеть 15 суток, но и не идти работать за 800 рублей» - Салідарнасць](#)

¹⁶ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 24.03.2025 г. № 168 «О мерах по реализации Закона Республики Беларусь от 11 октября 2024 г. № 36-З "Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения"» – Pravo.by](#)

¹⁷ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 24.03.2025 г. № 168 «О мерах по реализации Закона Республики Беларусь от 11 октября 2024 г. № 36-З "Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения"» – Pravo.by](#)



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been unable to find suitable employment for reasons beyond their control within 10 days." The change accelerates job placement and reduces the administrative burden on employment services.

- **Fair and Favorable Conditions of Work**

The General Agreement¹⁸ between the Government, employers' associations, and trade unions for 2025–2027 explicitly records the parties' commitment to improving the promotion of safe working conditions and the prevention of workplace injuries within the framework of the Vision Zero concept. This concept was introduced in the General Agreement for 2019–2021¹⁹ as a new information campaign; in the Agreement for 2025–2027, it becomes the foundation for practical measures, such as maintaining workplace discipline and training personnel in self-help and first aid skills. In practice, the Vision Zero concept in Belarus has been institutionalized through social partnership (the General Agreement 2025–2027) and the Ministry of Labor's departmental guidance materials,²⁰ while it is absent as an independent legislative norm.

A positive trend of 2025: the practice of converting employment contracts to open-ended employment agreements began to be applied for workers without disciplinary sanctions. For the Belarusian labor market, which has for decades been built on a system of short-term contracts, this represents a fundamental change. In parallel, statutory guarantees for remote workers were expanded, and the conditions of their employment and flexibility in the use of annual leave were regulated. The General Agreement enshrines a requirement to prevent the substitution of employment relationships with civil contracts in cases where, by law, an employment contract is required.

A new practice in 2025: according to information from experts, the implementation of Directive No. 12 is under way, with local executive committees calling private companies and demanding the introduction of full-time ideological officers on their staff.

Amendments were introduced to the Regulation on the Procedure for Organizing and Financing the Temporary Employment of Young People Studying at Educational Institutions in Their Free Time,²¹ which, on the one hand, brought the regulation into conformity with modern standards of working conditions regulation (for example, "special clothing" was replaced with "personal protective equipment"), and on the other, the mechanism of budgetary financing for the temporary employment of "young citizens" is preserved – in effect a subsidy for a socially significant phenomenon ("with the aim of instilling an attitude toward socially useful labor and acquiring work skills").

Council of Ministers Resolution No. 660 (November 2025, entering into force on 1 March 2026)²²

¹⁸ <https://www.mintrud.gov.by/uploads/files/Generalnoe-soglashenie-na-2025-2027-gody.pdf?utm>

¹⁹ <https://www.mintrud.gov.by/system/extensions/spaw/uploads/files/GS-2019-2021-1.pdf>

²⁰ <https://mintrud.gov.by/uploads/files/nulevogo-travmatizma.pdf>

²¹ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 09.06.2025 г. № 312 «О мерах по содействию занятости населения» – Pravo.by](#)

²² [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 21.11.2025 г. № 660 «Об изменении постановлений Совета Министров Республики Беларусь» – Pravo.by](#)



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provides, inter alia, that a sudden deterioration of health in the workplace may be confirmed exclusively by CCTV footage; witness testimony is no longer admissible. Experts characterize this as a significant deterioration: the provision restricts means of proof available to workers and creates opportunities for the concealment of workplace accidents in the event that video footage is "lost."

A sector-specific example: in 2025, the first qualitative study on harassment of nurses was conducted.²³ All research participants confirmed instances of sexualized violence in the workplace; the competent state bodies (the Ministry of Health and the trade union) responded to inquiries with formal letters denying the existence of the problem.

- **Fair Remuneration**

As of 1 January 2025, the monthly minimum wage was set at 726 rubles.²⁴ The base rate was increased twice in 2025: from 1 January from 253 to 270 rubles, and from 1 September to 273 rubles.²⁵ Economists emphasize the gap between wage growth and productivity growth, which heightens the risk of income being eroded by inflation and of gains being uneven across sectors.²⁶

- **Promotion of Employment and Protection Against Unemployment**

In 2025, employment promotion activities continued alongside what amounts in practice to forced labor (see above). Amendments adopted through the new version of the Law on Employment (see commentary for 2024) entered into force, radically tightening the conditions for the receipt of unemployment benefits. The key changes are: a requirement of not less than 5 years of employment record prior to registration; a reduction of the payment period from 26 to 13 weeks; and the unification of the benefit amount at 40 rubles per month (approximately 12 euros) for all categories of claimants. Experts characterize the totality of these changes as the effective elimination of the mechanism: the five-year employment record requirement creates a situation in which a significant portion of the population (those over 21 seeking work for the first time; persons who have had breaks in employment) has only two legal statuses – employed, or "social parasite."

Amendments to secondary employment legislation²⁷ additionally regulated the activities of employment agencies, clarified the mechanisms for maintaining the state Registry of Employment Agencies, and established their obligation to submit annually (by 25 January) to the Ministry of Labor information on the number of citizens who applied and were placed in employment.

In the view of experts, the digitalization of the labor market serves primarily as a tool of state control:

²³ ["Вплоть до лишения лицензий". Как в мире борются с харассментом?](#)

²⁴ [Размер месячной минимальной заработной платы | Министерство труда и социальной защиты Республики Беларусь. Официальный сайт](#)

²⁵ [Продолжается поэтапный рост зарплаты бюджетников: с 1 сентября 2025 г. повышается базовая ставка](#)

²⁶ [Презентация PowerPoint](#)

²⁷ [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 24.03.2025 г. № 168 «О мерах по реализации Закона Республики Беларусь от 11 октября 2024 г. № 36-З "Об изменении законов по вопросам занятости населения"» – Pravo.by](#)



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both the National Vacancy Bank and the digital employment record ensure total transparency of individuals' employment histories for the state.

Retraining and professional development programs are maintained at their previous volume. The state projects a labor shortage and in 2025 continued to encourage labor migration from EAEU member states for the most in-demand professions.

- **Protection Mechanisms**

In 2025, consideration of the Belarusian situation continued in ILO bodies in connection with the long-standing non-implementation of recommendations,²⁸ which underscores the persistent problems with institutional guarantees for the protection of labor rights (including freedom of association). In June 2025, the ILO appointed a Special Envoy for Belarus,²⁹ conferring upon him a mandate to engage with the government and social partners with a view to facilitating the release of detained trade union activists, the recognition of independent trade unions, and coordination with UN agencies to ensure concerted action.

UN special procedures also drew attention to the situation with the right to work: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus³⁰ prepared a report in 2025³¹ on the human rights situation in Belarus in the area of labor and employment, examining several aspects with particular attention to discrimination, forced and compulsory labor, and the right to form and join trade unions. The Special Rapporteur concluded that Belarus engages in a systematic practice of violating human rights in the area of labor and employment.

In materials prepared under the UN Universal Periodic Review procedure, interested parties expressed expectations regarding an end to the persecution of trade unions and the release of trade union activists.³²

As of 2025, the **new General Agreement** for 2025–2027³³ entered into force, defining the framework for social partnership, including targets for incomes, minimum wages, indexation, and the monitoring of the timeliness of wage payments. The General Agreement introduces the principle of the "priority use of national personnel" in the implementation of state employment policy. Following the General Agreement, in the course of 2025, sectoral agreements, regional-level agreements, and collective bargaining agreements were updated throughout the country.

National protection mechanisms (labor dispute commissions, courts, the labor inspectorate, and trade union support) do not function in the context of politically motivated pressure on workers and

²⁸ [ILC113-CAN-PV Belarus-\[NORMES-250527-024\]-Web-EFS.pdf](#)

²⁹ [Decision concerning the composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings | International Labour Organization](#)

³⁰ [Belarus is not a "paradise" for workers: Special Rapporteur | OHCHR](#)

³¹ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/217>

³² <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/50/BLR/3?utm>

³³ <https://www.mintrud.gov.by/uploads/files/Generalnoe-soglashenie-na-2025-2027-gody.pdf?utm>



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dismissals, which continued in 2025.³⁴

In December 2025, the office of the independent miners' trade union ("Nezavisimyi Profsoiuz Gornyakov," NPG) at the enterprise Belaruskali was transferred to the balance sheet of the city executive committee – effectively completing the liquidation of the property base of the independent trade unions.

³⁴ [В Беларуси новые "экстремистские материалы", экстремисты и "экстремистские формирования": хроника репрессий 21-23 мая](#)



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