

Belarus Human Rights Index

<http://index.belhelcom.org>

2025

The right to take part in cultural life:

Expert commentary¹

The score:	1.2	-0.1
<i>including scores by component:</i>		
● Participation in cultural life	1.0	-0.2
● Access to cultural life	1.4	-0.3
● Contribution to cultural life	1	
● Protection of cultural diversity	1.3	-0.1

A description of the baseline situation regarding the realisation of the right to participate in cultural life can be found in the 2019 [review](#). Experts’ assessments for 2025 reflect a further deterioration in the realisation of this right: both the overall score and the scores across most components have declined.

This decline is driven not so much by the emergence of qualitatively new restrictions as by the deepening and expansion of an already established system of control over the cultural sphere. Measures introduced during the review period, including the authorisation-based mechanism for activities through the Register of organisers of cultural and entertainment events, reinforce existing tools of censorship, administrative pressure, and the exclusion of “undesirable” cultural actors from the public sphere.

At the same time, the cumulative effect of previously introduced practices is intensifying: the continued dismantling of the professional and institutional environment, a decline in levels of expertise, and the displacement of independent cultural initiatives. All of this is accompanied by the spread of self-censorship and the involvement of an increasingly broad range of actors in mechanisms of restriction.

¹ ‘Expert’ and other nouns of the masculine grammatical gender are used in a gender-neutral sense and refer to all genders.

As a result, cultural life is sustained predominantly either in controlled forms or outside the public sphere, leading to a critical narrowing of opportunities for participation, access, and contribution to cultural development. In these conditions, cultural diversity is maintained largely outside the official context and institutional support, while cultural practices that fall beyond permitted boundaries are pushed into a narrow and largely invisible space.

- **Participation in cultural life**

During the review period, the overall score for this indicator was reduced to the lowest possible level. This reflects the continued and further intensification of systemic practices interfering with the exercise of the right to participate in cultural life, both by the State and by third parties whose actions are not restrained by the State.

Despite the formal existence of relevant guarantees in legislation, the State fails both to respect this right and to fulfil its positive obligations in the cultural sphere. Among other things, efforts to support cultural diversity, protect the Belarusian language and culture, and preserve cultural heritage remain insufficient and are, to a large extent, formal in nature.

In 2025, experts draw attention to a number of measures adopted by the state that deepen existing forms of intervention and create additional mechanisms of control and censorship. In particular, Regulation No. 454 of the Council of Ministers “On the Register of organisers of cultural and entertainment events”,² adopted in 2025, entrenched an authorisation-based mechanism for conducting cultural activities through mandatory registration in the Register and introduced a multi-level system of ideological oversight

Inclusion in the Register is now required even for state entities (with certain exceptions). The document provides for additional verification procedures for inclusion, including inter-agency approvals involving internal affairs bodies and other State institutions, as well as a revised composition of the Republican Expert Commission, now including representatives of the Presidential Administration and other bodies not directly related to the cultural sphere. Furthermore, the regulation imposes broad and vaguely defined obligations on event organisers, non-compliance with which may lead to exclusion from the Register. These include the requirement to approve event programmes, an abstract obligation to ensure that events are conducted “at a high artistic level in accordance with the requirements of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Culture”, and a prohibition on cooperation with individuals “in respect of whom decisions have been taken to prohibit, restrict or suspend cultural activities” under Article 81 of the Code.³

[According to PEN Belarus](#), the resulting system is arbitrary and non-transparent and significantly simplifies exclusion from the Register. In practice, this creates an additional mechanism for depriving

² <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=C22500454>

³ See paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Regulation, paragraph 12 of the Regulations.



cultural actors and organisations of the ability to organise cultural events, effectively for any activity that supervisory bodies may deem “undesirable”.

In addition to regulatory grounds for interference, experts note the persistence and reproduction of a wide range of practices restricting the right to participate in cultural life. These include, in particular:⁴

- politically motivated persecution,⁵ accompanied by a range of violations of other rights, including the use of prohibited ill-treatment, systemic violations of conditions of detention, serious breaches of the right to a fair trial, arbitrary controls at border crossings, and other manifestations of systematic and widespread repression of dissent⁶ ;
- extrajudicial forms of pressure, including “preventive” conversations, coercion to sign undertakings not to engage in “extremist activities”, inspections of personal devices and other interferences with private life, dismissal or pressure aimed at forcing dismissal, and similar practice;⁷
- the increasing use of “anti-extremism” legislation, including criminal and administrative prosecution on “extremist” grounds, inclusion in lists of persons involved in “extremist” or “terrorist” activities, the designation of organisations as “extremist formations”, as well as the expanding practice of classifying cultural materials as “extremist”;⁸
- the continued use of other forms of restricting access to audiences, including the practice of “blacklists” limiting the ability of “undesirable” cultural actors to engage in public activity. In addition, lists of printed materials whose distribution is deemed capable of harming “national interests” continue to expand, accompanied by increased control over the book market and libraries;
- the persistence of strict ideological control within State cultural institutions, as well as pressure on professional creative associations.

⁴ A full list of trends and practices of persecution affecting the cultural sphere and the exercise of human rights by cultural figures, as well as their content, can be found in the Belarus PEN monitoring report: [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural figures. Belarus, 2025](#)

⁵ ‘It is known that criminal cases have been brought against 95 cultural figures (in almost half of these cases, the persecution involves political exiles). At least 66 cultural figures have been prosecuted, including three in trials in absentia. At least 62 people have been subjected to arbitrary detention, three of them twice.’: [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights against cultural figures. Belarus, 2025](#)

⁶ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights against cultural figures. Belarus, 2025](#); see also the 2025 expert comments on relevant human rights, including the right to life, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to a fair trial, etc.: [Belarus Human Rights Index](#)

⁷ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural practitioners. Belarus, 2025](#)

⁸ Belarus PEN [notes](#) a significant increase in the number of acts of censorship and the classification of materials as ‘extremist’ compared to 2024 (see below for details).



With regard to the latter, experts draw particular attention to the situation surrounding the Belarusian Union of Artists. In addition to ongoing pressure – including personal bans on participation in exhibitions, manipulation of membership, direct expulsions from the organisation, and intimidation, facilitated in part by artists’ dependence on studios provided by the union – experts point to the [illustrative example](#) of the 25th Congress of the Belarusian Union of Artists, held in December 2025, during which elections for the chairperson took place.

According to available information, the congress was held under conditions of pressure; preventive detentions of certain participants were reported, with individuals held in police stations until the completion of voting, as well as procedural violations favouring the election of a particular candidate.

- systemic discrimination against the Belarusian language persists; the situation regarding cultural diversity continues to deteriorate overall, including against the backdrop of ongoing Russification (see below);⁹
- experts also note the continuing trend of [distorting historical memory](#), discrediting significant Belarusian public and cultural figures and events, and the removal of their memory from the public space as a component of state policy. This manifests in multiple forms, including the disappearance of memorial markers, the dismantling and censorship of exhibitions, and the imposition of a unified state ideological narrative;
- obstruction of the exercise of the right to participate in cultural life by third parties (primarily pro-government and pro-Russian activists) persists, alongside a tendency of the state to withdraw from preventing such interference.

Experts have been noting this trend for several years.¹⁰ The activities of activists who have gained influence within the existing system (including over decisions of local authorities) affect a wide range of issues – from staffing policies in cultural institutions to the censorship of cultural events, programmes and materials. For example, the influence of blogger O. Bondareva has been exercised through public campaigns, complaints and other forms of pressure on the cultural sphere. According to Belarusian media reports, she has become a prominent figure due to her complaints against bloggers, musicians and public figures, whom she accused of “LGBT propaganda”, “incorrect” views, or unacceptable content. Her activities have been linked to the cancellation of events, inspections, and reputational pressure on specific individuals and projects, contributing to the polarisation and radicalisation of public discourse, as well as to the intensification of ideological control and the spread of xenophobic practices targeting those deemed undesirable.¹¹ The situation is further

⁹ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural workers. Belarus, 2025](#)

¹⁰ See experts’ comments on the assessment of this right in 2024, p. 2:

https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/17_right_to_take_part_in_cultural_life_2024.pdf

¹¹ https://t.me/bondareva_bez_kupjur/52539, [Propagandists were outraged by Christmas baubles in a Minsk shop. They saw them as a provocation and demanded a ‘appropriate’ response; ‘Does the Drug Control Agency](#)

exacerbated by a decline in professional expertise resulting from pressure on qualified specialists in relevant fields of culture and science and their departure from the country. Taken together, these developments alter the structure of decision-making on matters of public importance and reinforce self-censorship not only among cultural actors themselves, but also among officials and employees of institutions responsible for organising events, producing content, and making other decisions in the cultural sphere.

As a result, independent cultural initiatives are placed in a position where their implementation either requires passing through a multi-layered system of filters and self-censorship *or is only possible outside the public sphere*. This reflects a broader trend of shrinking space for participation in cultural life: the state not only fails to fulfil its positive obligations to ensure cultural diversity, but in some cases acts as a factor significantly restricting it. In these conditions, according to experts, cultural diversity is largely sustained *outside the official context and institutional support* and develops more in spite of, rather than thanks to, state policy.

Overall, with regard to the extent of state interference in the realisation of this right in 2025, Belarus PEN [has recorded](#) at least 1,435 violations of cultural and human rights against cultural figures, of which 356 cases relate to the designation of cultural materials or social media accounts of cultural figures as ‘extremist’, and 333 to acts of censorship. Thirteen organisations in the cultural sector were forcibly dissolved.¹²

Among the new practices observed during the reporting period, experts highlight the arbitrary expulsion of certain released political prisoners from the country without the personal documents necessary to exercise basic human rights in exile;¹³ [27 cultural figures](#) were among those expelled.

With regard to the right to choose one’s cultural identity, experts significantly lowered the score, including due to the continued vulnerability of the Belarusian language in the state.

The issue of equality between the two state languages, according to public statements by A. Lukashenko, is still not considered open to discussion.¹⁴ Experts note a clear manifestation of discrimination against the Belarusian language in policies concerning the distribution of literature

[approve of all this? Propagandist Bondareva was outraged by a Belarusian rapper’s performance in Minsk; “Now he’s sitting somewhere else.” Propagandists reported the detention of a musician from Myadel, who had been denounced by Bondareva; Propagandists disrupted a memorial evening for Larisa Genyush in Minsk; Propagandist Bondareva called for Belarusians to be punished for publicly discrediting the draft \(and the army\)](#)

¹² At the same time, PEN [notes](#): the slowdown in the pace of liquidation in 2025 is due solely to the fact that the sector has effectively exhausted itself following the mass purges of previous years.

¹³ [Statement by the human rights coalition on the forced expulsion from the Republic of Belarus of persons released as a result of pardon](#)

¹⁴ [Lukashenko: if we start stirring up the language issue, there will be trouble](#)



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

and book publishing,¹⁵ drawing attention to the ongoing Russification, which is evident in the urban environment (including the [diminished use](#) of the Belarusian Latin script in street navigation) and in the broader cultural context – including the reduced presence of the Belarusian language in the theatre sector,¹⁶ insufficient attention to it within the education system, its effective displacement from official documentation, and other areas of public use.¹⁷ Additional concern arises from reports by released political prisoners of cases of persecution in places of detention related to the use of the Belarusian language.

In addition to the systemic discrimination against the Belarusian language and national culture, experts in this component note persistent problems with the preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities. In particular, there is a *de facto absence of representation of other cultures in the public space* – including in the urban environment, public posters, and cultural events accessible to the population – especially in forms initiated and implemented by the communities themselves. The number of national public associations continues to decline. According to experts, state support for cultural diversity remains insufficient; moreover, existing administrative barriers, including approval procedures for events and initiatives in conditions of self-censorship by state bodies and institutions, further narrow the space for the free representation of national minorities. The ethnocultural diversity characteristic of Belarus has been transformed into a state-controlled display of loyal “diversity”, accompanied by a reduction in independent organisations, education in minority languages, and autonomous cultural activity.

In particular, in 2025 pressure on Polish historical memory and cultural infrastructure in Belarus continued. This manifested, first, in the ongoing policy of dismantling Polish-language education: in October 2025, the European Parliament explicitly condemned decisions aimed at closing Polish schools and eliminating education in the Polish language;¹⁸ second, in attacks on symbolic carriers of memory of the Polish community, including the destruction of cemeteries and cultural heritage sites; and third, in the continuation of repression against representatives of the Polish community, most notably Andrzej Poczobut, who in 2025 remained in harsh conditions of isolation, which also functioned as a means of pressure on the broader environment connected with the preservation of memory, cultural identity, and self-organisation. Thus, in 2025 pressure was directed not only at individuals but also at the systematic dismantling of elements of Polish cultural infrastructure – education, sites of memory, and public symbols.

¹⁵ Books in the Belarusian language [were banned](#) disproportionately more often: of the 36 publications deemed ‘extremist’ in 2025, 55.6% were books in the Belarusian language or publications in which Belarusian was used alongside Russian. Yet the ratio is fundamentally different in the overall volume of book publishing: in 2025, publications in Belarusian accounted for only around 14% of the total number of books published in Belarus.

¹⁶ By the end of 2025, out of 28 theatres in the country, only 3 stage performances exclusively in Belarusian (with a [trend](#) towards a further deterioration of the situation): [Belarusian Culture: Review \(October – December '25\)](#).

¹⁷ [A language in incommunicado: why is the state afraid of the Belarusian word?](#)

¹⁸ [Joint motion for a resolution - RC-B10-0451/2025](#)



Experts also draw attention to reports of informal recommendations to refrain from publishing translations of books from Polish in Belarus, which further restricts access to the culture of the respective communities.

- **Access to cultural life**

Experts lowered the scores across all components of this indicator, pointing to the continued deterioration of access to cultural life, driven by the cumulative effect of the systemic problems outlined above.

With regard to ensuring adequate public education and awareness of the right to participate in cultural life, both the scope of relevant activities – particularly in the regions – and the dissemination of information about them remain limited. Experts point to a predominantly formal approach by State bodies and institutions to their organisation. A trend towards the *folklorisation* of cultural events, the maintenance of a display-oriented cultural diversity, and its imitation without meaningful involvement of expert communities and representatives of the relevant cultures and minorities has been observed. The decline in expert capacity and its perceived value for decision-making bodies further contributes to a reduction in the quality and substantive content of such activities.

At the same time, as noted above, the space for independent initiative remains critically restricted, limiting access to cultural life both for the broader public and for cultural actors themselves – particularly in the case of national minorities. In these conditions, the exercise of cultural identity is possible only to a limited extent and cannot rely on the necessary platforms and channels for wide dissemination.

These trends are also reflected in the education system. Despite the formal inclusion of information on the country’s cultural diversity in school curricula, opportunities for its practical representation are significantly limited: the involvement of representatives of relevant cultural and national communities is constrained due to censorship restrictions and the cautious approach of educational institutions. According to experts, discussion of the culture of certain minorities – for example, the Polish minority – may be perceived as contrary to state policy, making such discussions difficult to conduct in both public and educational settings.

Furthermore, experts note the ongoing militarisation of education and the expansion of ‘patriotic education’, proclaimed in 2025 as one of the priorities of state policy.¹⁹ The strengthening of the state’s monopoly over the formation of the “only permissible” historical narrative is reflected, inter alia, in the establishment, under the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, of a

¹⁹ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural figures. Belarus, 2025; It has become known how many children are being drawn into ‘military patriotism’ in schools](#)



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

Commission “on the preservation and protection of historical memory”, whose activities include work with youth through the development of a network of “centres of patriotic education”.²⁰

In the context of ongoing practices of censorship and self-censorship, public access to a wide range of cultural events and cultural production continues to narrow.

The systemic “purging” of the cultural sphere through the use of “anti-extremism” legislation continues. [According to PEN Belarus](#), the designation of cultural actors as participants in “extremist formations” has, for the first time during the monitoring period, become one of the most common violations of cultural rights. Overall, experts note an intensification in the application of this legislation: 356 cases were recorded in which cultural materials or the accounts of cultural figures were designated as ‘extremist’; 60 persons were included in the list of individuals involved in “extremist activities”, and 10 in the list of organisations and individuals involved in “terrorist activities”.²¹

Furthermore, 222 works of fiction, popular science and historical literature [were added](#) either to the list of ‘extremist materials’ or to the list of printed publications whose distribution is deemed “capable of harming the national interests of the Republic of Belarus”. Compliance with these prohibitions [is monitored](#), including in bookshops and libraries; the relevant publications are removed from collections.

Experts particularly emphasise the continued severe restrictions on access to cultural life [in places of detention](#). In particular, cases have been documented of bans on studying foreign languages, confiscation of textbooks and books in foreign languages, removal of other publications and the impoverishment of library collections (including due to the exclusion of “prohibited” books), as well as the introduction in certain institutions of bans on library use for persons designated as “extremists”.

A particularly unacceptable practice is the confiscation of manuscripts and other results of intellectual activity created by cultural actors in detention.²² In a statement by PEN Belarus, this practice is characterised as an act of cultural vandalism, comparable to the destruction of archives or works of art.²³ Index experts also draw attention to the loss, as a result, of a significant layer of Belarusian culture – testimony of the present time and the human experience lived within it.

The decrease in the score for this component is also обусловлено the adoption of the above-mentioned Regulation No. 454 of the Council of Ministers regulating the Register of organisers

²⁰ [Ivan Melnikov: the Commission for the Preservation and Protection of Historical Memory has many interesting ideas and promising projects](#)

²¹ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural figures. Belarus, 2025.](#)

²² The PEN monitoring [contains](#) detailed information on cultural figures known to have been subjected to such practices, as well as details of exactly what was confiscated.

²³ [Belarus: Statement on the systematic confiscation and destruction of manuscripts by prison authorities](#)

of cultural and entertainment events. The established multi-level control mechanism reinforces existing restrictions both on the access of cultural actors and organisers to audiences and on the access of audiences to cultural products. In particular, the requirement to avoid cooperation with persons previously restricted in carrying out cultural activities contributes to the further exclusion of independent actors from the cultural space

The decline in the score was also influenced by the [continued dismantling](#) of cultural infrastructure: in particular, the country's largest non-state ticketing service, Kvitki.by, which provided access to thousands of cultural events nationwide, is currently in the process of liquidation.²⁴

Experts also note the continued tendency to replace cultural events with propagandistic ones, with administrative resources used to ensure attendance, including through the mobilisation of students, school pupils and public sector employees.²⁵

In 2025, the deterioration of transport connectivity in rural regions of Belarus manifested itself in a reduction in the effective availability of regular transport services for small settlements: the Ministry of Transport openly acknowledged problems in servicing villages with low passenger volumes, as well as the impossibility of launching bus routes in certain cases due to road conditions and parameters. In response, the authorities began shifting from a model of direct service provision to a more limited "coverage zone" standard, under which the distance to the nearest stop may reach up to 3 km, and also prepared a pilot project for "on-demand" transport services. This indicates that in 2025, in some rural areas, the State did not expand the transport system but rather adapted it to an already deteriorating infrastructure, accompanied by a further decline in transport accessibility.²⁶

With regard to respect for the free access of minorities to their own culture, heritage and other forms of expression, including the right to acquire knowledge of their own and other cultures, experts lowered the scores in light of the evidence of deterioration outlined above. A trend towards the *ghettoisation* of cultural practices that fall outside what the State considers acceptable for preservation and public representation has been observed. In these conditions, the exercise of cultural identity becomes possible primarily within a narrow, non-public sphere, without access to a wider audience and without the necessary institutional support.

- **Contribution to cultural life**

The score for this component has remained at the lowest possible level for the third consecutive year; however, this does not indicate the absence of further deterioration. The right to freedom of artistic expression without censorship is effectively inaccessible in practice; the practices obstructing its

²⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DPYSLh3AqmY/>

²⁵ <https://nashaniva.com/ru/378593>

²⁶

<https://www.mintrans.gov.by/ru/press-tsentr/novosti/item/13660-v-belarusi-prorabatyvaetsya-vopros-obespechennosti-transportom-naseleennykh-punktov-s-neznachitelnykh-passazhiropotokom>



exercise persist and continue to expand. According to PEN Belarus, in 2025 censorship, broadly understood, [remained](#) the most frequently recorded violation of cultural rights.

The mechanisms of censorship are systemic in nature and form a complex infrastructure of control over the cultural sphere and the suppression of “undesirable” initiatives. Additional opportunities for such control are created, *inter alia*, through the introduction of an authorisation-based mechanism for activities via the above-mentioned Register of organisers of cultural and entertainment events. Other practices include²⁷ the removal of works from exhibitions, publication bans imposed on “undesirable” authors, refusals to distribute products of private publishers, targeted bans on public performances, and refusals to approve concert programmes.

The practice of prior vetting of participants in cultural events, involving internal affairs bodies and other state institutions, continues, including through recourse to arbitrarily compiled “blacklists”.²⁸ Cases of cancellation of already approved events continue to be recorded.²⁹

Cultural events and products associated with particular periods and figures of Belarusian national culture, perceived by the state and pro-government, pro-Russian activists as contradicting the official narrative, [remain](#) under heightened scrutiny.³⁰ In 2025, a new wave of repression, manifested in coordinated detentions and criminal prosecutions, targeted administrators of the Belarusian Wikipedia for creating and editing articles on historical and political topics.³¹

The right to freedom of expression³² and the right to participate in decision-making processes of public importance likewise remain effectively inaccessible.

- **Protection of cultural diversity**

State policy in this area continues to be aimed at maintaining the status quo and preserving permitted forms of participation in cultural life, while simultaneously promoting “safe” ideas, opinions and narratives.

In addition to the systemic problems already mentioned in creating and sustaining opportunities for the representation of cultural diversity, experts note a deterioration linked to the adoption, during the

²⁷ For more detailed information on existing practices and mechanisms, see [the relevant section](#) of the PEN monitoring report.

²⁸ For more details on this censorship mechanism, the informal classification of cultural figures whose access to the public sphere is to be restricted, and the individuals subject to such bans, see [the relevant section](#) of the PEN monitoring.

²⁹ For further details, see [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights in relation to cultural figures. Belarus, 2025](#)

³⁰ [Belarusian Culture: Review \(October – December '25\)](#)

³¹ [Monitoring of violations of cultural rights and human rights of cultural figures. Belarus, 2025.](#)

³² For an overview, see the expert commentary on this right for 2025: [Belarus Human Rights Index](#)

period under review, of the first reading of the draft law “On Amending the Codes on Administrative Offences”. The draft provides for the introduction of liability for the “dissemination in any form of information aimed at shaping citizens’ perceptions of the attractiveness of homosexual relationships, gender transition, childlessness, or the acceptability of paedophilia”.³³ Rather than adopting measures to raise awareness and tolerance, the state is introducing measures that contribute to the stigmatisation of certain groups and viewpoints.³⁴ This policy is also reflected in the content of the list of printed publications prohibited from distribution, a significant portion of which consists of materials addressing LGBTQ+ issues, sexual education and the psychology of minors.³⁵

In addition, experts draw attention to the updated agreement between the Ministry of Information and the Belarusian Orthodox Church, which provides, inter alia, for “joint work on the upbringing of the younger generation through the mass media”, as well as countering “negative activities” that “may be carried out through publications coming from outside” and combating “values imposed from outside”,³⁶ which does not contribute to the support of cultural diversity.

During the review period, cases of improper treatment of cultural heritage sites and places of memory continued to be recorded (according to the Belarusian PEN Centre, at least 97 such cases in 2025; for the first time, violations in this area ranked among the most common³⁷).

At the same time, the Index’s experts continue to emphasise the need for systematic independent monitoring of this area by specialised professionals.

A continued decline in professional expertise is observed, due to the departure of specialists, their exclusion from professional life within the country, the overall decline in the quality of administrative governance in the heritage sector, and increasing international isolation, all of which affect the quality of decision-making in this field. Experts note a slowdown in the addition of new entries to the State List of Historical and Cultural Values, alongside a trend towards the accelerated removal of certain objects from the list, accompanied by a weakening of previously existing safeguards, including requirements for comprehensive expert assessments. This, in turn, creates conditions for arbitrary decision-making by local authorities in these matters.

Overall, the available data indicate both the persistence of practices of improper treatment of cultural heritage – including poor-quality restoration and other violations (in particular, experts note the

³³ <https://pravo.by/document/?quid=3941&p0=2025035001>

³⁴ Regarding the continued stigmatisation of the LGBTQ+ community during the reporting period, see the relevant monitoring report: <https://tbelarus.com/en/post/the-monitoring-of-repression-2025>

³⁵ [Overview of the fight against ‘extremism’ in Belarus for January–March 2025](#)

³⁶ [The Ministry of Information and the Belarusian Orthodox Church have signed a cooperation agreement](#)

³⁷ See PEN’s [monitoring](#)

telling example of the restoration of the palace and park ensemble in Zhilichi³⁸⁾³⁹ – and the existence of certain positive measures.⁴⁰ Among the latter is the creation of a high-quality project documenting significant works of Soviet monumental art in Belarus.⁴¹

With regard to the provision of financial and other support to artists and cultural organisations, experts note the continuation of previously identified trends: state support continues to be distributed in a discriminatory manner. In particular, State awards and prizes are predominantly granted to individuals associated with the governing authorities and the implementation of ideological projects.⁴² At the same time, the large-scale use of budgetary funds for the production and dissemination of pro-government cultural content persists.⁴³

³⁸ <https://t.me/spadczyna/14928>

³⁹ <https://t.me/spadczyna/14928>, <https://t.me/spadczyna/14285>

⁴⁰

<https://www.facebook.com/monumentalartby/posts/pfbid02w667Ljt4TdKRgVs44LcT7BNvT4DVTOH3evGTA3GR3pjALeMDUTW3LeNpBs6BZFwBl>

⁴¹ <https://monumental.by/en/>

⁴² For further details, see [the relevant section](#) of the Belarusian PEN's monitoring report.

⁴³ In particular, state bodies and institutions made bulk purchases of Alexander Lukashenko's biography 'Our President', published on the eve of the January 2025 elections, spending over 260,000 Belarusian rubles from the budget on this (see *ibid.*).