



PUBLIC REPORT 2019

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

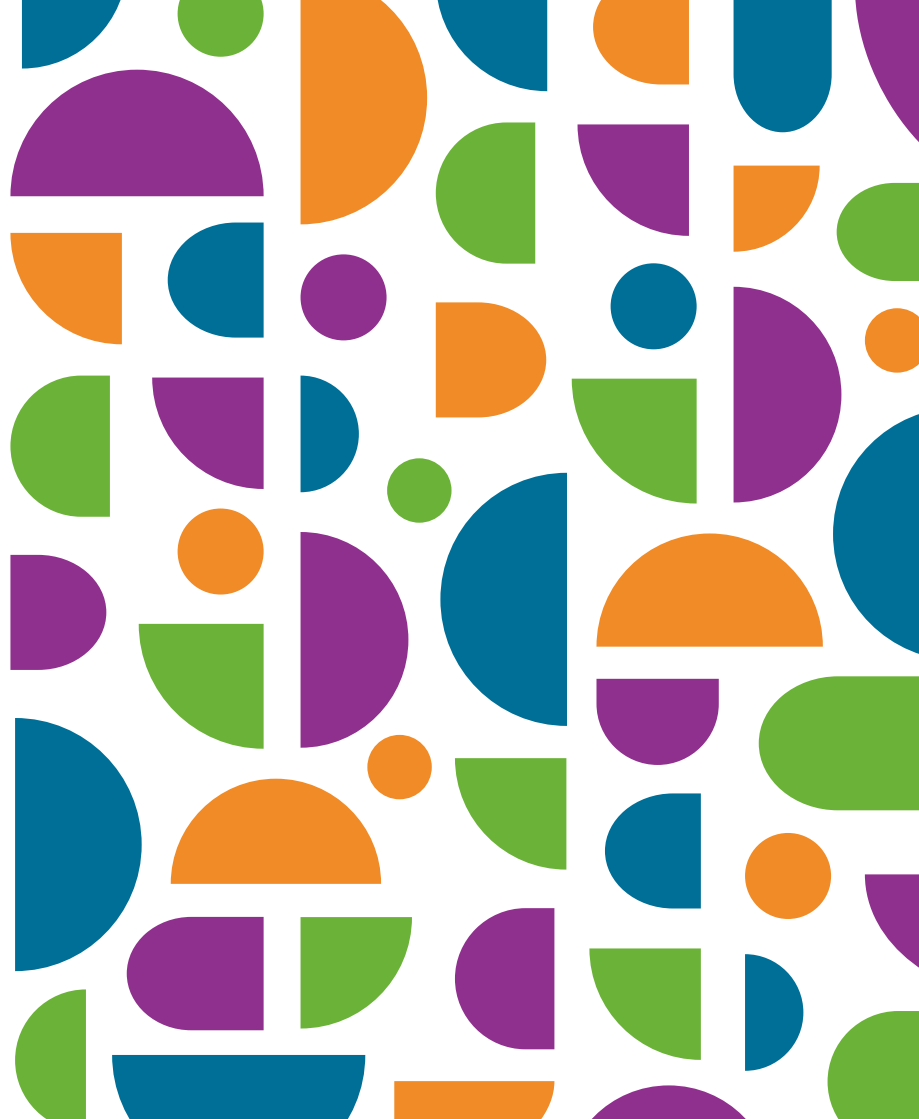




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OUR MISSION

Promotion of public interests and joint actions in response to contemporary human rights challenges.

We adhere to the values enshrined in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and act in public interest.

We set a high value on the possibility of cooperating on equal footing with everyone – the state, business, civil society, and other groups.

We believe that everyone's opinion and contribution are important, and we create conditions for collective actions. The involvement of all stakeholders helps us to work effectively and achieve sustainable results.

Contemporary challenges we work with are topical problems that cannot be solved without a systematic human rights-based approach.



OUR VALUES

1. Empowerment. To inspire, encourage, engage, call for collective action, and unite those around us.
2. Partnership. To be open, able to come to an agreement. To promote ideas of mutual respect and equality by our example. Be able to hear others.
3. Joint actions. We are ready to share our experience, be understandable, accessible, and inclusive.
4. To be changemakers. To see the result of our work and get feedback.
5. Innovativeness. Willingness to change, use of innovative tools and forms of work.
6. Faith in what we do.

OUR TEAM



NASTA LOIKO

Human rights defender, non-formal education coach. She supports and accompanies Vol-unTeam, and is particularly keen on the topics of “extremism” and hate crime.



ALEKSEI KOZLYUK

Human rights defender, a lawyer working in the sphere of information privacy law. He is specifically enthusiastic about the topic of privacy and personal data protection in Belarus and the region.



VALDIS FUGASH

Human rights defender, coach, and consultant in the field of education and human rights advocacy, public interests, and culture of peace. The intersection between migration and/or sport with human rights is the focus of special attention.



ANDREW SUSHKO

Human rights defender, an expert in the domain of access to information and e-democracy. Pretends to be an expert in the issue of communication with public authorities.



ENIRA BRONITSKAYA

Human rights defender, coordinator for the protection of rights of foreign citizens and stateless persons.



YANA GONCHAROVA

Human rights defender, communications specialist. Organization’s management and development specialist.



ANNA BARANOVSKAYA

Lawyer, human rights defender, as well as an expert in international human rights law; in her spare time, Anna studies innovative policy and commercialization of CleanTech.



ALYONA CHEKHOVICH

Human rights defender and a lawyer in the free legal office for the protection of foreign citizens and stateless persons in Minsk.



KIRILL KOFANOV

Lawyer in the Refugee Assistance Mission of Human Constanta in Brest.



YULIYA STASUK

Coordinator of the Brest office of Human Constanta, SMM-specialist.

HOW DO WE WORK?

ANALYTICS

The solution of any problem begins with an observation: we conduct research, monitor the context, refer to practices of other regions and make a comprehensive analysis in order to find the ways of solving the problem specifically for our country.

ADVOCACY

There are challenges that require a longer and more comprehensive approach. Using our knowledge and experience, research results, and the practice of our colleagues, we try to lobby for changes in legislation, and in some cases to protect individual human beings.

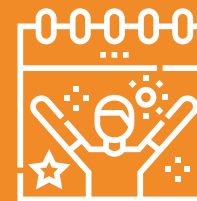
EDUCATION

The change is impossible without each one of us. Many things are not taught in schools, they are impossible to find in textbooks, but they are vital for life, perhaps, they're even more important than the multiplication table. We host educational and awareness-raising events where we talk about human rights in a wide range of forms.

A partnership is also an important principle of our work. We understand that by working together we become stronger and able to do more. 2019 has become one of the most «partner» years for us, and we express our appreciation and gratitude to everyone who was with us!

2019

IN FIGURES



49 events
organized



took part in 47 events
as experts



+1900
new followers



789 requests for the
legal consultation



103 000 website visitors



390 roubles
collected in donations



109 new volunteers

RESEARCH

One of the ways to achieve our goals is to conduct research and monitoring on our topics. We strive to analyze what is happening in Belarus and in the world in order to delve into the subject and context, understand the tendencies, estimate the future prospects, and make decisions based on collected data. This year we conducted several research and monitoring sessions with partner organizations and volunteers:

ONLINE ACTIVISM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

What do Belarusians know about their digital rights? How secure do they consider their personal data? Are they satisfied with government websites? What are they good at, and who do they trust on the Internet? What is the capacity of online activism in Belarus? We asked these and other questions to the Belarusian audience together with the [e-baltic.ORG](https://e-baltic.org/) / Baltic Internet Policy Initiative, which helped us to conduct this research.



REPORTS ON THE SITUATION WITH TRANSIT REFUGEES in BREST (FOR THE 1ST AND 2ND HALF OF 2019)

We continue to monitor the situation on the Belarusian-Polish border in Brest and regularly review what is happening. Human Constanta volunteers help us to collect information and make regular reports.

MONITORING REPORT ON THE HATE MOTIVATED MURDER CASE TRIAL

Last year together with our volunteers we monitored the proceedings that considered the murder of a girl of Roma origin. We tried to understand how the investigative authorities consider the motive of hatred and whether it is taken into account in the courts when delivering a judgment.



OVERVIEW OF EVENTS RELATED TO THE FIGHT AGAINST EXTREMISM IN BELARUS

As part of our work within the antidiscrimination direction, we monitor how Belarus combats extremism and what measures are taken in specific cases. We prepare reviews quarterly as well.



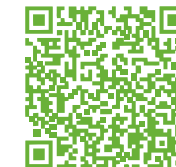


INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Also this year we became a part of an international team with organizations from Armenia, Germany, Latvia, and the Czech Republic aimed at working together on the topic of non-discrimination.

This was our first experience of an international project of such a scale, where together with youth from different countries we exchanged experience and knowledge, sought to talk about human rights and dignity through art in order to contribute to a more just and secure world afterward.

In 2019, we continued to share our expertise not only in Belarus but also abroad. Our experts from the Digital Freedoms Lab, Alexey Kozliuk and Andrew Sushko, consulted partner organizations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia and worked together on challenges in their regions. Together with Valdis Fugash we shared our expertise on digital rights education with colleagues from Kazakhstan and helped a new generation of coaches.



This year, we started to learn more about the culture of peace and promote it together with our friends from the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network. A few meetings with young people from different European countries with recent or current experience related to armed conflicts took place, where we had more extensive discussions on human rights, narratives, peace journalism, inclusive language, and prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. As the result of one of them, recommendations were developed for the Madrid Association of Journalists, which were later adopted.



ADVOCACY

It is vital for us not only to improve our own competencies but also to strengthen other organizations. We have helped new initiatives in various fields to develop strategies for human rights advocacy at the regional and national levels on various topics: human rights & mental health, people with experience of homelessness, people with experience of incarceration, intersectional LGBTQ+, and others.

We conduct advocacy campaigns aimed at both solving particular problems and changing legislation.

For example, in the spring of 2019, due to a large advocacy campaign, we managed to prevent the expulsion of Mehrdad Jamshidian to Iran.

He has lived in Belarus since 1995, but could not get documents because of the persecution of the Iranian authorities. In Iran, he was threatened with torture and the death penalty, while the Belarusian law enforcement agencies intended to extradite Mehrdad.



He spent 11 months in prison without committing any crime. We dealt with his case: worked with a lawyer, challenged decisions of the court, communicated with the Department of Citizenship and Migration, and invoked international organizations, such as UNHCR, IOM. At the time of the crisis, we resorted to media and Belarusians with the petitions, urging people to contact the Department of Citizenship and Migration and insist that Mehrdad should not be expelled. More than 2,000 signatures were collected, dozens of people wrote personal appeals, and Amnesty International joined the campaign in support of Jamshidian as well. And it worked! Mehrdad wasn't expelled and was granted a residence permit. This was the result of a great collaboration, for which we are grateful to everyone!

We have also submitted proposals to the Parliament on amendments to the Law on the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons, promoted better access to legal and medical care for detained foreigners. We continue to monitor the fate of the draft Law on personal data protection – we have done a lot in order to bring it closer to European standards. Not everything worked out this year, but we continue to work with these issues and try to change the legislation. We have also prepared some of the alternative reports to the Human Rights Committee, [the Committee Against Torture](#), [the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), as well as in the context of the Universal Periodic Review as part of our advocacy work in cooperation with other human rights organizations. These are important documents for promoting the protection of human rights in Belarus.



EVENTS

Apart from research and advocacy work, we organize a lot of educational and professional activities. In 2019, we held 49 events ourselves and participated in 47 events of our friends and partners! We do it to share our experience, values, and knowledge, to give the participants valuable skills, and to widen the circle of our supporters and volunteers. We want to tell you about the events that we are particularly fond of.



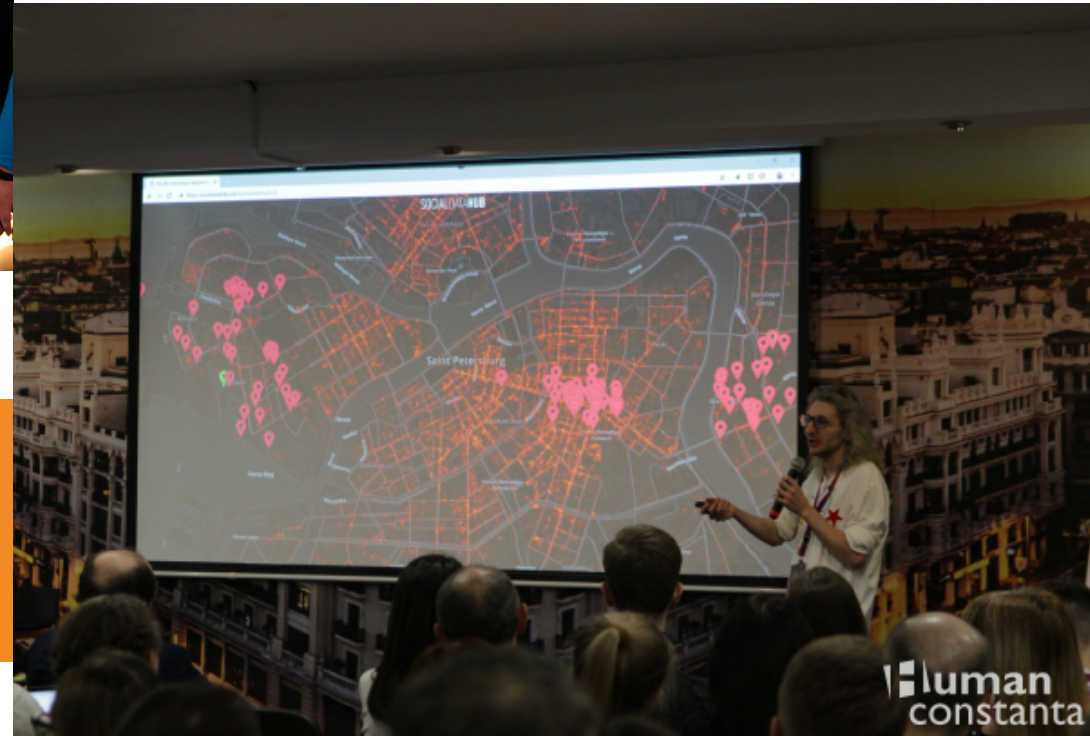
TOOK OUR MOTHERS TO WORK

We've made a «day for parents», which was an interesting way to start 2019. Just as our parents used to bring us to work, this time we decided to bring our mothers to work and tell them what we do. Often, working in the non-profit sector is incomprehensible and scary for parents. We tried to answer the questions and demonstrate our achievements. This event resonated strongly with our colleagues from other organizations!



PRIVACY DAY

On January 26 we held the third Privacy Day — a Protection of Personal Data Day. 217 people attended the event, and we told them about privacy, personal data protection, and how it all relates to human rights. As always, two tracks were made: for business and users. The main speaker was Arthur Hachuan, who deals with processing and analysis of big data. His speech on Privacy Day 2019 reached 350 000 views on YouTube!





INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (IGF) + YOUTH IGF

In November together with Hoster.by, we held the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) with representatives of Belarusian Ministry of Communications and Informatization. Furthermore, in 2019 together with Hoster.by and the Office for European Expertise and Communications we held a Youth Internet Governance Forum for pupils and students. IGF traditionally gathers all stakeholders interested in the development of the Belarusian Internet. At the Youth IGF, we invited popular bloggers, told the youth about the principles of Internet governance, discussed bullying and the protection of our data, and had a great talk! Almost 100 people attended the event during the day!



HUMAN WINTER CAMP'19

At the beginning of winter, we gathered active and interested young people for a winter human rights camp. Over the course of five days, we told them about the human rights-based approach, creation of campaigns and initiatives, teamwork, and many other topics that are important for the protection of public interest. After the camp, there were 25 excellent graduates, some of whom stayed with us to volunteer in the VolunTEAM, and some even continued to work in the human rights sector.





SCHOOL OF PUBLIC EVENTS' MANAGERS

For us, not only the main topic of the event is important, but also how this initiative is being developed and implemented. The issue of how relationships are built within the team and with the audience (online and offline). Therefore, we conducted a series of educational seminars, during which we shared knowledge and experience, developed standards and methods for organizing and conducting public (but not limited to) events, so that each and every person involved would receive the most useful experience based on respect for dignity, equality, and inclusion.

25 new managers from all over the country have successfully graduated from the Human Constanta School of Public Events Managers, and its huge bonus is the «Library of experience, tips, and checklists», which all graduates have access to.

WEEKS FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

In March and November, we held a traditional Week Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism and a Week Against Racism and Discrimination. These days, we invite all our colleagues to join the Weeks with their events, publications, and information support. We held lectures, games, discussions, and even a concert! In 2019, which was quite full of challenges as regards the respect for human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination around the world, we here in Belarus, together with 27 partners, held 21 events in five cities! About 1,300 people took part in the Weeks offline and more than 30,000 watched the broadcasts.





CONFERENCE “MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS”

In 2019, for the first time, we held an international scientific and practical conference on migration and human rights. The aim of the conference was a public professional dialogue on the topic of migration from a human rights perspective. Together with other organizations and experts, we gathered to talk about the following:

- national migration policy and human rights;
- regional migration challenges;
- place of human rights on the global migration agenda.

FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE

Football possesses a unique characteristic of being an agent of social change. Its language is universal, and the rules are the same for everyone. During the game, all differences are erased and the only one that remains and has a conditional and temporary meaning is the color of your team’s shirt.

Together with amateur football clubs and the FARE international network, we organize open training sessions where very different people come and through football get the opportunity to see and feel how to make the world more fair, equal, and inclusive.



MINSK HALF MARATHON

It has already become a tradition for us to gather our team (“Different-Equal”) to participate in one of the largest sports events in Belarus — Minsk Half Marathon.

This year, a team of 13 volunteers, friends, and colleagues ran different distances in t-shirts with messages for equality and inclusion, which could be seen by more than 40,000 runners from 68 countries and thousands of spectators.



BEACH FOOTBALL ON VULICA BRASIL

Together with the “Pasternak” project and with the great support of many others, we organized the first legendary beach football tournament at the Vulica Brasil international festival.

8 teams consisting of people of different genders enjoyed the game in the center of Minsk for several hours, in the spirit of fair play. This demonstrated that gender, age, skill level, and other features do not matter!



REFUGEE DAY

For the World Refugee Day commemorated on June 20, we’ve set up a photo exhibition of Alexander Vasyukovich’s works devoted to refugees from the North Caucasus and held a touching and exciting event — a public reading of the stories of refugees. We invited nine people, including our friends, activists, journalists, volunteers, and even a singer: Nadezhda Krapivina, Anastasia Boyko, Rusya, Enira Bronitskaya, Olga Romashko, Jacob Rasek, Daria Rublevskaya, Dmitry Mickevich, and Andrey Zavaley. They’ve read nine sincere stories about why people run and what they face on their way, as well as in foreign countries. And later, these stories were heard in Brest, performed by the actors of the theater «Wings of Halop».



QUIZZES AND QUESTS

We love new technologies and formats with which we can reach more people and promote human rights. To do this, in 2019, we organized a series of events with our partners from the «Legal initiative»: quiz “Mozgoboynya” (Brainstorming) and city quests on the topic of human rights. 420 people played our Brainstorming game, and 150 people passed quests in a number of Belarusian cities. It was an unusual and joyful experience!



WORK WITH FOREIGN NATIONALS

Our free legal offices in Minsk and Brest continue their work. We provide free legal counseling to foreign citizens. In 2019, we consulted 420 people from 60 countries in Minsk and 369 people from 10 countries in Brest. The main issues raised are connected with the work of migration services, illegal expulsions, long-term detention in isolation cells that are not intended for this purpose, and the lack of the right to protection.

As a part of the work of legal offices, we provide legal support to those who find themselves in a difficult situation while being detained or placed in isolation. Such situations occur when other States request extradition of a person. We protect people when they are persecuted for political, religious, or other reasons that violate human rights.

In 2019, we had similar cases with a favorable outcome and without such. For instance, we didn't manage to help Ismail Nalgiev and Nikita Chirtsov, who were sent to Russia. There, they became subjects of criminal proceedings because of participating in peaceful protests. But we managed to stop the expulsion of Mehrdad Jamshidian and Farkhod Odinayev. They were also accused of crimes in their countries of citizenship — Iraq and Tajikistan, respectively.



Over the course of 2019, 109 new people joined us, and VolunTeam has already become a large community of 240 members!

During this year, they completed about 300 different tasks and held 12 volunteer meetings (even one in Brest). Apart from Brest, our volunteers visited Grodno, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk, and even Budapest, Warsaw, Kyiv, Madrid, Munich, Setubal, Strasbourg, and other beautiful places.

Volunteers were among the first to explore the Supreme court, translate and write important articles, run the topical Telegram channel, assist with an organization of 20 events, come up with ideas and save the Human Constanta team as best they could.

We are very grateful to this cool team and appreciate their contribution and participation. Human Constanta is love!



FUNDRAISING

In 2019, we began to focus on internal fundraising and seek assistance among our supporters and Belarusian business. We have built in a donation module on the website, enabled the ability to transfer money to us through the electronic payment system (ERIP), and started using the Donation box at our events. In addition, we encourage businesses to participate in our events: for instance, at the Privacy Day, we were able to find co-financing for the event among several law firms in Belarus. We will develop this part of our activities because we consider it important for strengthening our sustainability, as well as inculcating in Belarusian citizens and business the idea of importance, usefulness, and propriety of supporting the non-profit sector.



We thank everyone who was with us in 2019! We are confident that joint activities, partnerships, and support are the things that will help Belarusian civil society to become stronger and more stable. We are always open to any new ideas and suggestions and are happy to share our experience and knowledge. We hope that there will be more collaborative projects, and human rights will become fashionable and cool — this is what we were planning it for. In 2020, there will be many new challenges that we can only respond to together. See you there!



CONTACTS



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