

Dialectic State-run TV: opponents are utterly corrupt while we stand for the unity

Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus

(11/01/2021 – 17/01/2021)

The purpose of this monitoring is to study how the Belarusian state conveys its ideological narrative. The most important mechanism for conveying its narrative is the evening broadcast. Then the informational function of media is complemented, and sometimes replaced by, the broadcasting of official ideological messages. We monitor the outputs of the Agency of the Television News (ATN), which prepares the news broadcasts for the **Belarus-1** channel (“Panorama” and Sunday’s “Main Airtime”), the channel **ONT** (“Our News”, “Saturday’s Edition” and “Contours”), and the channel **STV** (“24 Hour News” and “The Week”).

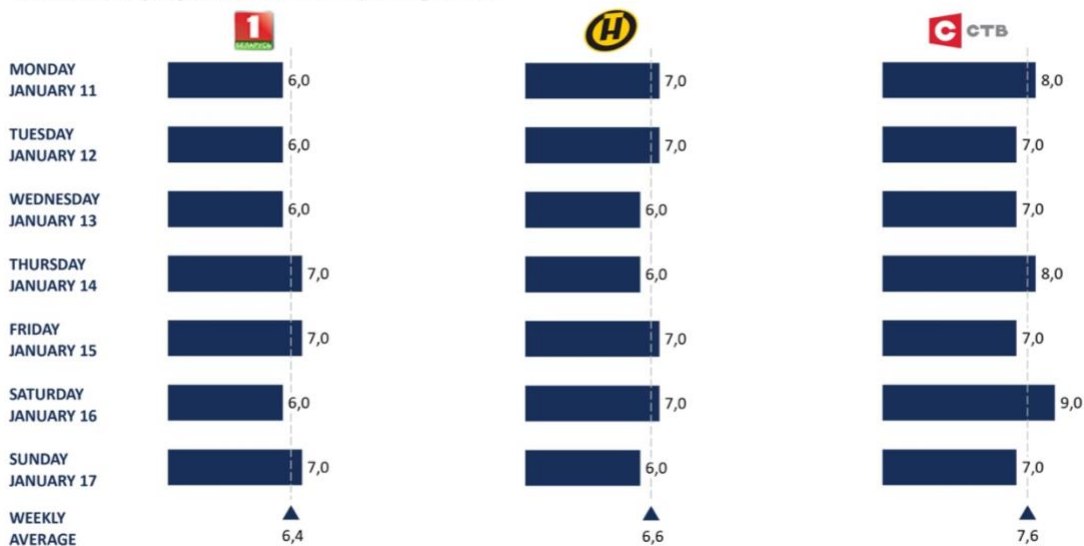
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the week, the main task of the state-run channels was to expose the “venal and immoral nature” of the opposition.

- DISCREDITING THE OPPOSITION WENT THROUGH EXPOSING THEIR “VENAL AND IMMORAL NATURE”. PRIMARILY, WITH THE HELP OF “LIES BY THE FUGITIVES ” PROGRAM SERIES DELIVERED BY IGOR TUR.

CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX*

1 - no threats; 10 - full of threats, attacks and compromising materials



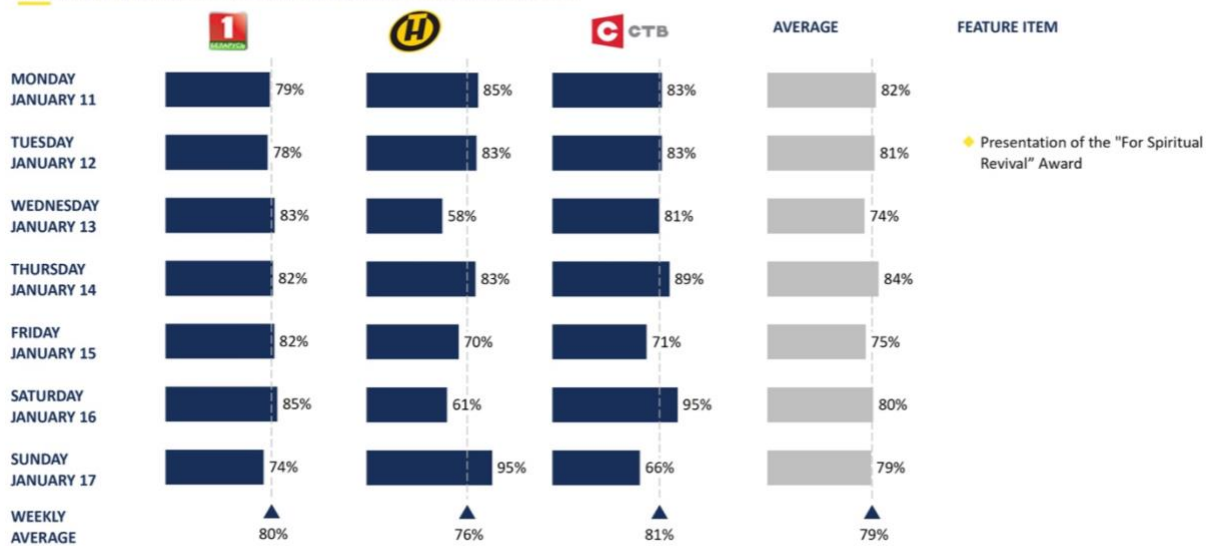
*CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX - an indicator measuring the percentage of news stories that intensify political tension and conflicts (through accusations and threats towards opponents, equating protests to violence, and similar).

This, primarily, is in reference to a seven-day cycle of "Lies by the Fugitives " stories delivered by Igor Tur. This cycle not only became the basis of news on ONT, but was also re-broadcast, abridged, on other channels.

The total share of ideological stories was 79%. The personalistic narrative on state-run TV was manifested not only in the constant praise of Aliaksandr Lukashenka, but also in the revisits of the interview for the Russia-1 channel and declarations of his popularity. In addition, the TV channels started patting themselves on the back after being presented several major state awards.

STATE TV EMPHASIZED THE POPULARITY OF LUKASHENKA'S INTERVIEW ON "RUSSIA-1", THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UPCOMING ALL-BELARUSIAN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND PRAISED THEMSELVES AFTER RECEIVING STATE AWARDS

THE SHARE OF STORIES WITH STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE*



*STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE - one or more key ideas that define the content of a news story (e.g., the inadmissibility of destabilizing the political situation).

Praising the upcoming All-Belarusian Assembly was an important part of the broadcast. It was called "the people's Veche", "the most important social and political event", "a forum of epoch-making significance for the Belarusian statehood", etc.

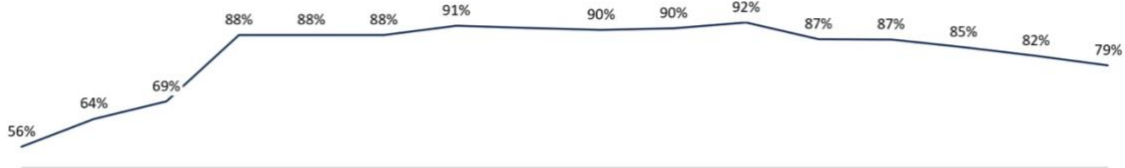
Another topic was the Ice Hockey World Championship. "Certain forces" were accused of the attempts to disrupt it, which put pressure on the International Ice Hockey Federation and added a political component to the considerations about the Championship.

Key narratives can be found in [APPENDIX 1](#)

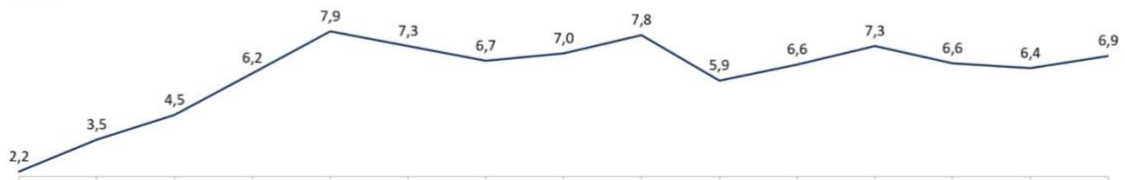
The exposure of the opposition's “venality and immorality” marked the transition from the search for the deep meaning of what is happening in the geopolitical struggle and the in the restoration of fascism or the war for historical memory, to the corrupt nature and greed of the political opponents. The attacks on the opponents of the government and the non-state media did not get in the way of the discussion of national unity.

MOST OFTEN, SPECIFIC OPPOSITION FIGURES, MEDIA AND SOLIDARITY FOUNDATIONS WERE TARGETED. PARTS OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS, SCREENSHOTS OF CHATS AND TELEGRAM CHANNELS WERE ADDUCED

AVERAGE SHARE OF STORIES WITH STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE, by weeks



AVERAGE CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX, by weeks



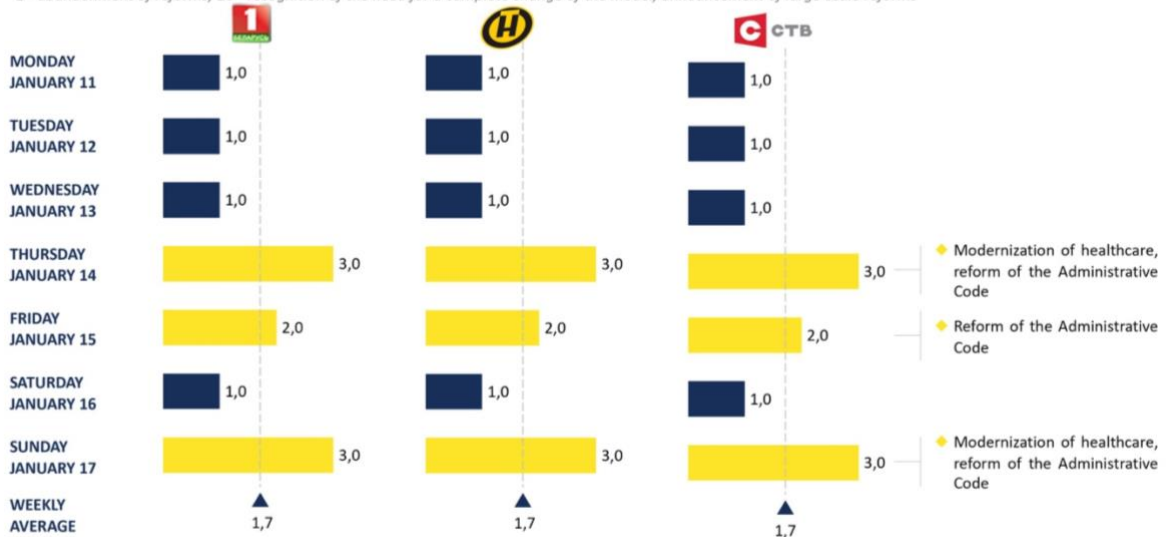
29.06 – 05.07 06.07 – 26.07 27.07 – 02.08 10.08 – 16.08 17.08 – 30.08 31.08 – 20.09 21.09 – 04.10 05.10 – 18.10 19.10 – 01.11 02.11 – 08.11 09.11 – 22.11 23.11 – 06.12 07.12 – 13.12 14.12 – 20.12 11.01 – 17.01

Reformism manifested itself in the description of novelties in administrative legislation.

REFORMISM SHOWED UP IN THE DISCUSSION OF INNOVATIONS IN ADMINISTRATIVE LEGISLATION. LIABILITY FOR DISPLAYING THE OPPOSITIONAL SYMBOLS AND PROTESTS GOT HARsher, WHILE IN OTHER CASES, FOCUS SHIFTED TO PREVENTION

REFORM-ORIENTATION INDEX*

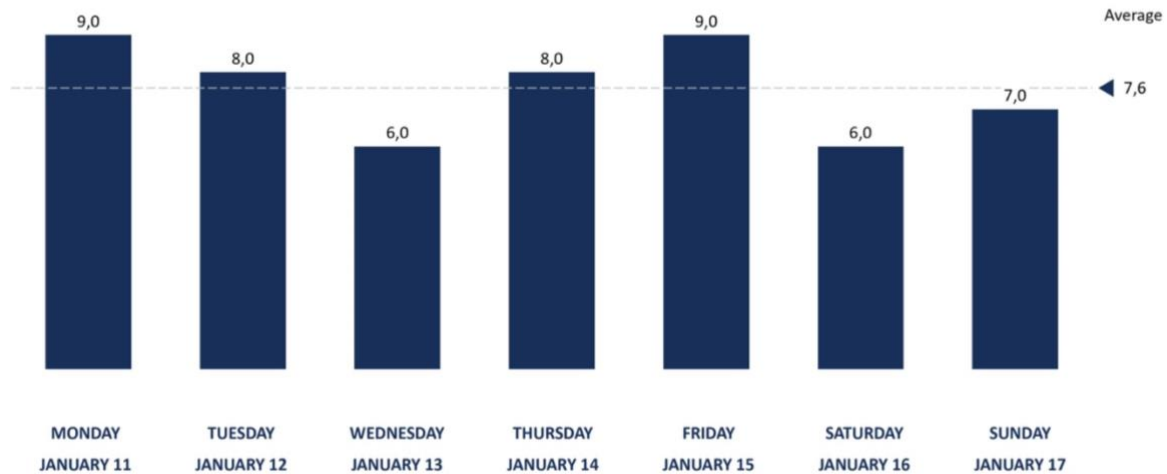
1 - abandonment of reforms; 10 - recognition of the need for a complete change of the model, announcement of large-scale reforms



*REFORM-ORIENTATION INDEX – an indicator evaluating the presence of news stories with reformatory proposals or decisions.

■ SOMETIMES STATE CHANNELS COMPLETELY REPEATED THE STRUCTURE OF THE STORIES, ON OTHER DAYS, SIGNATURE PRODUCTS (COMMENTARIES, FINAL NEWS PROGRAMS) PROVIDED MORE VARIETY

THE LEVEL OF INFORMATION POLICY COORDINATION*



*THE LEVEL OF INFORMATION POLICY COORDINATION – an indicator evaluating coordination across the air. This is inferred from news stories having similar structures, as well as the duplication of opinions, positions and ideologemes among state TV channels.

The two-sided approach was clearly acknowledged — there will be greater liability for carrying certain symbols and protest actions, while in other cases the focus is on prevention.

■ THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATIONS OF PLURALISM

PLURALISM INDEX*

1 - absence of alternative viewpoints; 10 - diversity of opinions, journalistic and expert approaches



*PLURALISM INDEX - an indicator evaluating the share of critical reports and news stories citing opposing, critical, and other opinions alternative to the official rhetoric.

There were no significant manifestations of pluralism.

The project “Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus” is implemented by Sense Analytics in partnership with Press Club Belarus and with the support of [Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung](#). The author of the weekly reports is Maxim Stefanovich, the editor and coordinator of the project is Artyom Shraibman. The authors of the project thank the SATIO team for their help with illustrating the monitoring results.

To see the full version of the report in Russian [click here](#).

APPENDIX 1 KEY NARRATIVES

UNDERMINING THE PROTESTERS

- “Our colleagues from the ONT TV channel continue talking about the true face of the Belarusian opposition. The topic of today's story is the fate of Babariko's headquarters, or rather, the squabbling of these people for influence and European money.”
- “Damned is treacherous Judas, who chokes on the money he seeks. This is the "Order of Judas". We are talking about defectors, cowards and traitors. My name is Grigory Azarenok.”
- “After watching the entire series about greed called “Lies by the Fugitives” you will probably be seeking the right word to characterize the Belarusian opposition. I'll give you the right word — "abomination". My name is Igor Tur, stay tuned.”
- “After Svetlana gets dismissed, Pavel Latushka was to take her place. And his temporary Council is a temporary structure to wait it out. Latushka had an agreement on this with Vecherka, who is the puppeteer of Svetlana. But Vecherka at some point decided that it would be better, easier and more profitable for him to run this operation on his own, and decided to kick Latushka to the curb.”
- “Those who recklessly committed insane acts in August-September are now being held accountable. Legality in the state has been restored in full.”
- “As practice shows, there were enough people with a dark history and unsettling record at the protests to conclude that they were far from peaceful. In search of a better life, some go to unauthorized rallies, while some go out to outright commit crimes.”
- “And I will add a few words about the so-called “Honest people”. They are now working with Pavel Latushka and his People's Anti-Crisis Management. The picture is not clear, but the meaning, I think, is clear. Both for those who are for Lukashenka and those against him, it is clear that Latushka and honesty are generally incompatible concepts.”
- “So, Tsikhanouskaya is a puppet in the hands of Vecherka and the Lithuanian puppeteers, who do not benefit from the victory of the revolution in Belarus, because then the grants will stop coming. Solidarity funds are now all packed to leave with the money they raised for a better destination to enjoy life in peace.”

ANTI-WEST NARRATIVES

- “Overloaded morgues as a result of failing hospitals have become a morbid reality for the German public.”
- “UK media reports local hospitals overcrowded.”
- “The absence of mass vaccination plans shows not only the decline of the health care system, but also the weakness of the Ukrainian political leadership. This opinion was expressed by the well-known Ukrainian epidemiologist Andriy Alexandrin.”

- “Meanwhile, the US continues to show the world the collapse of its own democracy. While Washington is recovering from the storming of the Capitol, during which four peaceful unarmed protesters and one policeman were killed, a new era of absolute state control and tough censorship on social networks is being discussed on the Internet.”
- “This very same Washington, these very same American politicians call it a struggle for democracy in other countries. And now the policy of double standards and the imposition of so-called democratic values have turned out to be a tough lesson for America.”
- “These are hard times for Europe, where mass gatherings are prohibited. People are tired of the lockdown. The strengthening of quarantine measures provoked massive protests.”

PREPAREDNESS FOR COVID-19 SECOND WAVE

- “The clear organization and precise approaches of the Belarusian healthcare make us capable of holding the blow of the pandemic resiliently.”
- “In our country, the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine is used, which has passed three stages of clinical trials and has already proven its effectiveness.”
- “In Belarus, health workers, teachers and those who, by virtue of their profession, have a lot of contact with people, are on the priority lists for vaccination against coronavirus. For their selfless work, the team of medical workers was awarded the prize "For Spiritual Revival".
- "The incidence is lower than expected, which is why many hospitals are returning to business as usual."
- “There are also questions about the safety of the American vaccine itself. 23 people have died in Norway the other day after being vaccinated with a Pfizer vaccine. In our country, we use the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine, which has passed three stages of clinical trials and has already proven its effectiveness. ”

PATERNALISM, DIRIGISME

- “The requirement has always been unchanged — to preserve the industry, but at the same time not to lose our own enterprises, many of which are brand names already. And the “Made in Belarus” moniker is known on all continents.”
- “The results in figures: 1185 buses assembled — this is 10 and a half percent more than a year earlier. About eight thousand trucks and tractors, more than 360 dump trucks.”
- “Today we spoke directly with the Chairman of the Council of the Republic about the problems that were not resolved for various reasons. Natalya Kochanova ran a telephone line.”
- “The domestic automotive industry has shown a decent growth rate in the difficult 2020. 9 thousand Geely cars were sold in Belarus, while the company was able to sell 50% more cars to Russia that previously.”

- “In Gomel they even preform the minimally invasive operations at the polyclinics and future parents are being prepared for free IVF”.
- “Belarusian mothers have the opportunity, while on maternity leave, to telework without losing their benefits.”

PROMOTING THE ALL-BELARUSIAN PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY

- “So, in addition to the invitees, there are almost 2,400 delegates. Almost 36% of them are women. This time there are many young participants, those who are not even 30 yet — 6% of those. The largest age group is 41-50 — 846 people. The Assembly is a good sample of society, and the professions of the participants speak about it.”
- “And what is important — the delegates of the upcoming All-Belarusian People's Assembly are also people of different views and beliefs, who know the problems and are reputed in their regions.”
- “Unfortunately, we are not able to tell about each of them. Still, 2,700 people! But about those with whom I had a chance to communicate, I can say for sure that these are people with vast experience — both personal and professional. And what is important — they are not indifferent.”
- “The Belarusian socio-political course has proved its effectiveness more than once. And somewhere deep down, the opponents of the authorities understand this. Thanks to its own development model, Belarus managed to save the country from crises and to resiliently withstand the consequences that many countries have experienced.”
- “Those who today are against holding such a meeting, first of all, are against social stability and public dialogue in the Belarusian society”.
- “Forum participants will discuss possible mechanisms for transferring powers from the executive to the legislative branch of government and ensuring the uninterrupted execution of the “new” powers by state bodies and officials.”
- “The All-Belarusian People's Assembly and its delegates have already (expectedly) begun to be subjected to information attacks. But the fugitive oppositionists do not intend to sit down at the negotiating table, they need a protest street, in which they themselves, by the way, do not participate.”

PERSONALISM

- “There is still preserved attention to the big interview of the Belarusian president to the journalist Naila Asker-Zade. Today it is the top trending YouTube video. The video includes many unexpected twists and locations for filming. And the main thing is the open conversation.”

- “We checked the Instagram account of the interviewer for comments. “Bravo! Don't pay attention to the opposition. Let them choke on their bile. And Aliaksandr Grigorievich is the best for us. Thanks for the interview”.
- “But let me remind you that Lukashenka declared 2021 the Year of National Unity. There is no place for hatred and anger, we stand as one.”
- “Thank you sincerely, Aliaksandr Grigorievich, for your attention and care for Filaret, you supported in the most difficult times. I would also like to thank you for protecting your people from those unfortunate people who decided to outrage the peace in your state. You are a hero of our time.”

READINESS FOR THE IIHF 2021 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

- “Whether the ice hockey federation will be able to cope with the pressure, and whether the upcoming world championship will be held in Minsk and Riga, as it was decided back in 2017, is still an open question.”
- “The President assured that security will be properly ensured. Fortunately, our Capitol is not being stormed. Hospitable Belarus remains the best place to bring the ideas of Olympism to life.”
- “Aliaksandr Lukashenka said that Belarus is ready to host the championship at any time, the entire sports and tourism infrastructure has been ready for this for a long time.”

INFORMATION SOVEREIGNTY

- “Many passed their baptism by fire in the street and, at times, in the midst of an uncontrollable mob. But they did not betray themselves and their business. The President will even call them heroes.”
- “It is significant that during this time the journalists of different TV channels became one team. We worked for one cause.”
- “And even though our ranks have thinned a little, the more valuable is the support and the more reliable is the shoulder of those who are still in the ranks today”.
- “Against the background of the above, Khizhinkova's stories about bedbugs lack, to put it mildly, credibility and have all the signs of propaganda. These emotions are well understood by the West, the leadership of our country, and the entire people, who do not pay any real attention.”
- “The emotions portrayed by TUT.BY, Onliner and Nasha Niva are understandable: they poison the society against the government. They add kindle to the fire of hatred towards the president and officials. Their goal is to overthrow the current government, take their places and establish a new order in their own interests.”
- “Let's remember how various Radio Liberty, TUT.BY, Kyky, Belsat and others poured out tubs of lies, filth, and outright fakes about our state. After the events of August, people were driven

crazy, mentally crippled, brainwashed with the new fakes. This is not journalism — this is political pandering."

- "And TUT.BY now, hiding behind the "experts", goes on the offensive itself: " We believe that the President of Belarus should answer our questions and the questions of the Internet audience". Okay, I think that TUT.BY should have stopped its anti-state activities long ago. As well as part of the Internet audience. How about that for my New Year wish, huh?" "But those nurturing 10% of the "protest masses" remain hysterical: "Moreover, the people should have the right to control what decisions the president makes." I can imagine the housewife Chernyavskaya, who can barely count, Loiko and the like controlling, right. Because they are the people. This a travesty, honestly."
- "The situation in Novaya Borovaya turned out to be somewhat simpler than some media outlets reported. As we were told by the housing and communal services, there was no accident leading to a sharp decrease in the supply of heat to the apartments."
- "Many journalists did not flinch, they showed their true colors. Of course, Grigory Azarenok is one of them. He was not afraid to go into the eye of the storm. There they tried to insult and humiliate him. But he, as a real journalist, while in a hostile environment, showed real courage — both as a male and as a professional."

ADMINISTRATIVE NOVELTIES

- "At the same time, in the non-political sphere, the focus is on prevention. That is, a punitive bias is excluded. "
- "The new documents are aimed at liberalizing administrative responsibility. The main novelty is the proactive and preventive course. Changes to the legislation were prepared on behalf of the head of state. "
- "Along with liberalization, there are some moments in the code that will force us to look differently at violation of public order, for example, at the placement of prohibited symbols or the dissemination of personal data of law enforcement officers".
- "This is worth taking note of for those who like revolutions. The duration of administrative arrest for repeated participation in protest actions has been increased from 15 to 30 days."

ALL STAKES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND WEAPON EMPLOYMENT

- "Law enforcers continue to identify individuals who post insults, defamation and threats against police officers and their families. In this regard, 332 criminal cases have been initiated, 127 people have already been brought to administrative responsibility."
- "The police shed light on the hidden mechanisms of recent events in Belarus. The Interior Ministry suspects two individual entrepreneurs of financing the protests."

- “Two years in prison for the attack on the operator of the state broadcaster. The court of the Oktyabrsky district of Minsk passed a sentence to Vyacheslav Lomonosov, who attacked our colleague.”