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BELARUSIAN MEDIA: UNDER THE SELF-CENSORSHIP SWORD OF DAMOCLES

Unsurprisingly, according to the position of the official Minsk, the Belarusian media is free and independent. It is an easily accessible and pluralistic platform where everybody can express their views, including criticisms of the regime. "You can buy an opposition newspaper in a kiosk on the ground floor of my office!", says Lukashenka. However, biased statistics and facts that regime tends to highlight do not tell us the real story. It requires a thorough analysis to comprehend the complex and sophisticated tools of censorship and control that the Belarusian government exerts upon the country's media. In the current issue, Alexander Klaskouski and Paulyuk Bykouski, two Belarusian media experts, reveal the mechanisms of media control in Belarus.

In his article, Alexander Klaskouski highlights that the tools of control and censorship used by the Lukashenka's regime are becoming increasingly diversified and modern, expanding from the traditional media to the electronic one. He argues that even though some of media restrictions are enforced by laws, complex procedures or other formal rules, as well as by direct actions of the government (e.g. putting pro-regime people in the editorial positions at the major newspapers), there is a big pool of "unofficial" means of control like economic discrimination, assaults against journalists, biased bureaucratic procedures and

other obstacles that the government is an efficient user of. Therefore, it is not necessary to practice mass pogroms in mass media sphere; there are enough of "soft" tools available to browbeat the press into self-censorship. Such a mechanism of self-censorship is relatively cheap and a very effective way of exercising control.

Internet is the only space where a decent level of media freedom is maintained so far. Needless to say, this is not because of favourable policies of the regime. The government finds it more difficult to censor the virtual space due to the technical limitations. However, Paulyuk Bykouski notes in his article that recently the government has demonstrated new and innovative methods of controlling even the virtual media. For instance, the old measures of blocking the access to anti-government websites is replaced by trafficking visitors to the fake-versions of the opposition websites created by the pro-government specialists. Acts committed in the virtual space have now become objects to criminal responsibility – one can expect a jail sentence for e.g. criticising Lukashenka on the *LiveJournal*. What impact will these latest moves have on the independent media? Will it lead to further suppressions of the freedom of the speech in Belarus? We hope to provide some answers to these questions in this issue of Bell.

Justinas Pimpė, Editor

MEDIA POLICY OF BELARUSIAN REGIME: SWEEPING PURGE, FILTRATION, AND DAMOCLES' SWORD OF SELF-CENSORSHIP

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At his first news conference after winning the presidential election of 1994 Alexander Lukashenka proclaimed passionately: from now on Belarusian journalists can consider themselves free! Sixteen years later that sounds like a jeer. The country is at the tail-end of all world ratings of media freedom.

For instance, in Freedom House's 2010 Freedom of the Press Index Belarus and Uzbekistan share 189-190 places out of 196 and have the status "Not Free". Reporters Without Borders consider Belarus 154th out of 178 countries in their Press Freedom Index.

The Belarusian regime uses more sophisticated methods to achieve strict control over the media

The needs of “export PR” for the West make the government keep some kind of outward appearance of media pluralism.

sphere than some Asian despotic states. The geographical location in the center of Europe, the needs of “export PR” for the West make the government keep some kind of outward appearance of media pluralism.

The government prefers using cryptic methods: where possible, avoid throwing journalists in jails, but to softly grip the press by the throat. The state monopolized the TV, dictates its rules in the radio sphere and owns the main newspaper brands. A handful of independent media stand at bay, with perdition of self-censorship hanging over their heads. Meanwhile, information streams from abroad are screened.

At the same time, the authorities are incapable of creating an iron curtain and fully blocking the alternative media. A number of independent newspapers sit tight, Internet remains an island of freedom, and radio and TV are broadcasted from abroad. The regime sees its goal in minimizing that ‘harmful’ influence.

Crafty Arithmetic

In the early nineties the press of young independent Belarus gained its freedom after the Soviet era. When Alexander Lukashenka won the first presidential election in 1994, the freedom of the press rapidly came to an end. Already in December 1994 a number of newspapers came out with blank spots: the President’s Office ordered to cut out the revelatory report by MP Siarhei Antonchyk from the issues. That has become the gloomy symbol of the new, repressive era for the Belarusian mass media.

Soon after that the president replaced the heads of all biggest newspapers of the country, putting his people in the editorial positions. That was the largest cadre “sweeping purge” in mass media. Simultaneously the government took the national radio and television under strict control. The formal affiliation of mass media was ignored whatsoever. For instance, legendary Iosif Siaredzich, chief editor of Narodnaya Hazeta, was discharged by the President’s decree, although the newspaper belonged to the Supreme Soviet.

Protest attempts of Narodnaya Hazeta editorial team (yours truly was its member too) were probably the last ‘mutiny aboard’. The chief editors have held the main media of the country in leash ever since. There is no need in classic censorship, as heads of state-owned media play that role de-facto: they form their teams no so much according to their professionalism, but loyalty to the state leader.

Chief Editors of these media are gathered for planning sessions in the offices of the top officials in the country. They hear direct instructions: how and what they should write about, what must be avoided, who is to be praised, and who is to be cursed. Any moment editors might receive a phone call “from the top” with instructions what article they should publish.

Again, formally censorship does not exist in the country. It’s just that the chief editors of state-owned media, de-facto being members of the state machinery, respect subordination and follow the instructions.

Meanwhile, the Information Ministry often stresses that more than two thirds of the editions registered in the country are not owned by the state. Indeed, as of March 1st, 2011, out of 668 newspapers registered in Belarus 207 are state-owned, and 461 are non-state; out of 641 magazines there are 180 state-owned and 461 non-state ones.

However, this is crafty arithmetic. It does not take circulation and type of an edition into account. For instance, in circulation the ‘SB-Belarus Segodnya’, which belongs to the President’s Office, exceeds all independent social and political mass media taken together. The circulation of ‘SB’ is over 400, 000 copies, while the circulation of the largest independent newspaper ‘Narodnaya Volia’ (which comes out only twice a week due to limited resources) is only 26, 150 copies.

The total one-time circulation of local state-owned press, as of the beginning of 2011, was 946, 000 copies, which is many times more than the total circulation of the regional social and political mass media.

Besides that, it should be taken into account that the lion’s share of the non-state press is apolitical editions, such as crossword pieces, gardening tips, etc. Independent social and political brands can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The state runs the national TV channels. They are either part of the National State Television and Radio Company (The First National Channel, ‘Lad’ channel), or controlled by the state indirectly (closed joint-stock companies ‘National Television’ and ‘The Capital’s Television’).

The First National Channel of the Belarusian Radio, Radio ‘Kultura’, radio stations ‘Stalitsa’, ‘Radius FM’, and five regional television and radio companies also work under the auspices of the National State Television and Radio Company. This way, the official propaganda dominated the TV and radio broadcasting. The commercial FM-stations that work in the country are also controlled strictly by the ideology officials.

They also monitor the content of TV channel packages in the cable networks. We have seen the cases when the channels which criticized the president of Belarus ‘disappeared’ from the packages. For example, that happened to REN-TV and some other Russian channels in the spring of 2009. Another typical touch: the IPTV protocol of TV broadcasting which is gaining popularity in the country is controlled by the state-owned monopolist “Beltelecom”.

This way, the state has established its monopoly in the sphere of printed and electronic media, while a number of formally non-state media are strictly controlled by the ideological ‘vertical’.

In other words, the authorities agree to tolerate marginal independent press in small doses. Main thing, the level of its influence on the society should not sap the stability of the regime.

Hand on the Throat

Fighting the sedition in the few Fronde-spirited independent newspapers and ByNet (Belarusian segment of the Internet) is a more difficult task.

In the run to presidential elections the pressure on these bases of the freedom of speech traditionally becomes stronger. For instance, before the election of 2006 about two dozen non-state editions were thrown out from the national distribution system. They were no longer included in mail catalogues and/or sold in kiosks.

We should point out, that termination of the contracts was officially motivated by the alleged unprofitability. However, even the popular editions that sold like hotcakes were ostracized. Independent experts named the campaign a sweeping purge of the media space before the election.

In two years, when the dialogue between the EU and the official Minsk began, two editions were 'pardoned'. Some other repressed newspapers just died quietly. The majority have not been returned to mail catalogues and kiosks to present day. They lead a marginal life, dropping in circulation and using odd distribution channels.

Economic discrimination is another disguised cutthroat policy towards the non-state press. State media receive state subsidies, other privileges, equipment and the advanced polygraphic possibilities within the framework of the state programs. Independent newspapers often have problems placing orders for printing, some had to print abroad, which makes printing and publishing longer and more expensive.

Internet media do not need printing presses, paper and kiosks. That is why the development of the social and political segment of the ByNet has become a real headache for the ruling clique. The new Law on press passed in 2008 requires registration of Internet media. Admittedly, the clause was frozen during the honeymoon in the relations between Minsk and the EU. However, in the beginning of this year Information Minister Aleh Praliaskouski announced that they were working on the document about registration of Internet media.

Last year's presidential decree #60 was another attempt to stifle the sedition in the ByNet. The decree provides for registration of all Internet resources, creation of black lists of the web-sites access to which should be blocked, and a number of other restrictive measures. Admittedly, they are not used on their all cylinders. Experts believe the decree has created the repressive arsenal 'in reserve'.

In general, the Belarusian authorities are certain in the efficiency of the Damocles' Sword method. It is not necessary to practice mass pogroms in mass media sphere, it is enough to browbeat the press into self-censorship by the very possibility of repressive measures. Evidently, some popular Internet-media became more cautious and softened their criticism of the government after decree #60.

Possibly, the ruling clique is even interested in keeping a showcase with a number of independ-

ent media for Europe to see. From time to time Lukashenka 'kills' Western interviewers by an argument: you can buy an opposition newspaper in a kiosk on the ground floor of my office! In other words, the authorities agree to tolerate marginal independent press in small doses. Main thing, the level of its influence on the society should not sap the stability of the regime.

This is exactly why they block access to opposition web-resources on the days of mass protests and elections. This is also a know-how of the government – to stifle the mutiny in the media sphere on the peak of crisis situations and loosen the slipknot the rest of the time.

Not to Play Havoc But to Marginalize

The audience of the radio and TV broadcasting to Belarus from abroad is comparatively small, primarily, for technical reasons. The people have few short-wave radios needed to listen to the Belarusian service of the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. FM-stations broadcasting from abroad, for example, Radio Racyja from Bialystok or Euroradio from Warsaw, can be heard only near the border. In order to watch Belsat, satellite TV channel for Belarus, one needs a satellite dish, which is rather a luxury for many Belarusian families.

On the whole, the regime does not consider the influence of these mass media critical for its stability. As a 'preventive measure', the authorities organize a 'hunt' for reporters of Belsat and other foreign mass media working in Belarus from time to time. Not once their offices were searched and equipment confiscated. Some journalists receive prosecutor's warnings about inadmissibility of work for a foreign mass media without credentials. At the same time, the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects their applications for accreditation. It's a vicious circle, a trap, although formally the authorities keep within the law!

Last year's information war with Moscow demonstrated that Minsk could quite effectively filter the content of the Russian TV channels broadcasted in Belarus. Some time ago the authorities created hybrid channels with mixed content on their basis ('NTV-Belarus', 'RTR-Belarus'). Such channels replace Russian news with the news programs cooked in Belarus, and cut out the undesired Russian programs and news pieces.

Certainly, the regime is not radiant with courtly behavior towards the independent press. Belarusian journalists do get both under the batons of the riot police and behind bars. In particular, Mikalai Markevich, Paval Mazheika, Viktor Ivashkevich, Andrei Klimau, and Alexander Sdvizhkov served significant terms of deprivation or restraint of liberty for their publications. We do not even take into account "petty" arrests for 10-15 days.

At the same time, it is evident that the Belarusian regime does not want to look like dictatorships that throw dozens of journalists and bloggers in jails. In the majority of cases the authorities use

After the December 19 events in 2010 the Belarusian government lost interest in normalizing the relations with Europe, and the Internet media faced the threat of obligatory registration again.

other methods against the unwanted media and individual 'scribblers.' One of the repressive know-how ways is to beat not with a baton but with a rube. We mean fines and payments of moral harm inflicted by courts. As a rule, officials suing an opposition newspaper are doomed to victory, while the charges are exorbitant. Such suits do not have a limit in Belarus.

Astronomical amounts can simply bring an edition to ruin (and that did happen in Belarus). They also incline editors and journalists to self-censorship.

Finally, the strict law on mass media plays a role in that too. In particular, it allows the Ministry of Information to issue warnings to mass media. Often warnings are issued for petty and formal reasons (for example, the standard of arranging the imprint is violated). A newspaper may be closed down by court after two warnings during a year.

This way, the Belarusian government has established a strict and quite effective system of control over the national media space. It is a complex system combining the elements of monopoly, oppression, content filtration and self-censorship. That allows the regime to keep a certain face of media pluralism

– and at the same time dominate the minds of the Belarusian electorate and brainwash the significant part of the population.

At the same time, it is difficult to overrate the importance of the bases of independent journalism. A handful of non-state newspapers and Internet-editions, as well as the network of reporters of foreign media broadcasting to Belarus fulfill their professional obligation in infernally difficult conditions and provide the public with alternative information and analysis. The support of the world democratic community is extremely important for them.

Despite the efforts of the regime, the authority of the independent media is growing gradually. According to the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IIEPS), registered in Vilnius, during the time between the third and the fourth presidential election the rating of confidence to non-state media grew by almost 9 pct: in October 2006 37.7% trusted them, while in December 2010 the number was 46.3%. Little strokes fell great oaks.

BELARUSIAN MEDIA IN THE VIRTUAL SPACE

*Paulyuk Bykouski, Belarusy 1
Rynok political editor, Minsk*

The Belarusian government controls the country's information space virtually in full measure.

Internet is an exception, but the Belarusian authorities made significant progress in that sphere in 2010: they obliged all legal bodies to move to the national domain *zone.by*, to use the services of the local hosting companies, regulated identification of subscriber's units, while in Internet cafes and clubs they introduced identification of Internet users. Besides that, the authorities carried out registration of Internet-resources and officially introduced filtration of undesired content in the state-run organizations, as well the establishments of culture and education.

The recent innovation in regulation of the Belarusian segment of the World Wide Web has significantly changed the conditions for business, making a negative impact on investors' intention to start new projects. As for the freedom of speech in the ByNet, there have been no visible changes so far.

The Belarusian law on Mass Media requires registration of mass media, including the media distributed through the Internet. However, the law commissioned the Council of Ministers to determine what an Internet-medium is, and how they are to be registered. The latter refused to do that: Belarus was trying to patch up ties with the West, and the Belarusian officials declared they would not encroach upon the freedom in the World Wide Web.

After the December 19 events in 2010 the Belarusian government lost interest in normalizing the relations with Europe, and the Internet media faced the threat of obligatory registration again. "I ordered to finish the elaboration and coordination of that issue in the near future", – Belarus' minister of information Aleh Praliaskouski claimed in the end of January 2011¹.

At a news conference held right after the election president Alexander Lukashenka who remained in office claimed that journalists would bear responsibility for every word, including the ones said in the Internet. "Even if your editorial teams are located far abroad, we will present claims to the states which host the editorial teams", – the state leader stressed².

In the end of March 2011 the president's threat was put into practice. Andrzej Poczobut, Belarusian citizen and journalist of the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza*, was accused of violating Article 368 of the Criminal Code (insult of the president of the Republic of Belarus)³.

1 O. Shvaiko. A. Praliaskouski thinks it is expedient to make some changes in the law on mass media//BELTA, 28.01.2011, http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Proleskovskij-schitaet-tselesoobraznym-vnesti-nekotorye-izmenenija-v-zakon-o-SMI_i_540908.html

2 A. Lukashenka promises, the journalists will bear responsibility for every word, including the ones said in the Internet// "Interfax-Zapad", 20.12.2010, <http://www.interfax.by/news/belarus/85095>

3 S. Pulsha. Journalist Andrzej Poczobut Accused of "Insult of the President of the Republic of Belarus"//BelaPAN, 28.03.2011, http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2011/03/28/ic_news_112_364300/

The wave of repression against independent journalists did not stop by the end of January, although searches and detentions reduced in number.

According to Poczobut, on March 28 he was summoned to Hrodna Region Prosecutor's Office and presented a resolution about instituting criminal proceedings against him for publication of articles in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the "Belarusian Partizan" website, and his personal blog (poczobut.livejournal.com). "I guess this is the first criminal case in Belarus instituted for publication of one's personal opinion in LiveJournal", – Andrzej Poczobut pointed out.

"I believe I did not commit any insult of Alexander Lukashenka. Yes, the publications do criticize Lukashenka. But my publications do not contain insults – only criticism. Fierce criticism may be, but no insult", A. Poczobut said⁴.

The criminal procedures against Poczobut will become a test case in prosecution for blog opinions in Belarus.

As for the traditional media, the ruling regime keeps the monopoly on radio and television. Heads of TV channels, including the half-state-owned ONT ("The Second National TV Channel" closed joint-stock company) are appointed personally by the president by his edicts. There are small private channels in the regions, but they virtually do not produce any news content, or, in case they have news, as a rule, it lacks the political block.

The election of December 19, 2010 was the first time when candidates had an opportunity to collect donations for their election funds and use them to pay for media advertising. Meanwhile, in reality only one FM-station, "Autoradio", agreed to place such radio spots. After the election "Autoradio" was deprived of the frequencies allegedly for promoting extremism, although the election advertising was coordinated with the Central Election Commission. The court of the first instance supported the position of "Autoradio", but later the case was reviewed⁵.

On December 19, 2010 the Belarusian authorities fully blocked the outward traffic at https (Port 443), which makes it impossible to access e-mail through a secure protocol of information exchange, to enter passwords for accessing foreign social networks, as well as to manage the content of the web-sited hosted abroad from Belarus.

That day some opposition Internet resources (Charter'97, Belarusian Partisan, and the web-site of *Salidarnasts* newspaper) were inaccessible⁶.

Simultaneously, fake web-sites imitating Charter'97, European Radio for Belarus, and "Salidarnasts" web-site, were opened in .in domain zone. All three

belonged to the same owner and were hosted in Belarus. Experts made an assumption, as the national monopolist provider "Beltelecom" has a possibility to modify DNS (*Domain Name System*) entries on queries from Belarus, the Belarusian authorities wittingly tried to redirect the visitors from Belarus to fake web-sites⁷. They were used in an attempt of distributing information which was not controlled by the teams of the web-sites. Fake sites were closed down after the end of the voting.

Later KGB searched the offices and seized all information carriers from "Nasha Niva" newspaper and local office of "Euroradio". That did not have a strong impact on the work of the radio station broadcasting from Warsaw, while the web-site of *Nasha Niva* was paralyzed at first, and later worked less intensively. As of now, the work of *Nasha Niva* web-site got back to normal.

According to BAJ, 26 reporters were detained on December 19, and 22 had physical injuries, but were not detained⁸. The wave of repression against independent journalists did not stop by the end of January, although searches and detentions reduced in number. In some cases, for example, *BelaPAN* investigative journalist Viktor Fedarovich, repression is directed not only against a journalist personally, but also against members of their families. In January they seized all information carriers from Fedarovich, and still did not return them. His wife was forced to leave public service. V. Fedarovich is known for his publications about the criminal proceedings against chief investigator for special cases of Prosecutor's General Office Svetlana Baikova and about the circumstances of death of journalist Aleh Bebenin, founder of the opposition web-site *Charter'97*⁹.

The Belarusian law does not provide for freelance activities. Reporters of foreign media are prohibited to work without credentials. Many reporters of foreign media do not have credentials and held liable for that.

Registered non-state mass media, as well as independent Internet resources continue to complain that the authorities privately recommend their traditional advertisers to stop placing advertisement there – either completely, or near the articles criticizing the ruling regime.

As of March 21, the Belarusian mass media received 26 warnings from the Ministry of Information. Some media, such as *Narodnaya Volia* newspaper, have several warnings, which is a sufficient cause for suspending or closing down the newspaper by court.

Another effective tool the ruling regime is using to control the media space is the authorization-based

4 S. Pulsha. Journalist Andrzej Poczobut Accused of "Insult of the President of the Republic of Belarus"//*BelaPAN*, 28.03.2011, http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2011/03/28/ic_news_112_364300/

5 The Supreme Economic Court Upheld Decision about Closure of *Autoradio*//*BELTA*, 29.03.2011, http://www.belta.by/ru/pda/all_news/society?id=547778

6 P. Bykouski. What to Do When Internet Is Limited?// "Belorusy I Rynok", 19.12.2010, <http://www.belmarket.by/ru/105/1/8273/%D0%A7%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%8C-%D0%B2-%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%98%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B0.htm>

7 Fake Web-sites of Belarusian Internet Media Created in .IN Domain//*Electroname.com*, 19.12.2010, <http://www.electroname.com/story/9178>

8 Lists of Detained and Injured Journalists and BAJ Members//BAJ, 14.01.2011, <http://baj.by/m-p-viewpub-tid-1-pid-9546.html>

9 S.Pulsha. Searches Carried Out in Apartment of Journalist Viktor Fedarovich and in His Parents' House//*BelaPAN*, 15.01.2011

We should point out that a number of non-state mass media has changed their content, and reduced the criticism of the government.

registration of media and re-registration campaigns held from time to time.

The last re-registration of mass media, held under the Law "On Mass Media", began on February 8, 2009 and ended on February 8, 2010.

In total, 1, 075 printed media, 211 electronic media, and 6 news agencies were reregistered^{10 11}. While 230 printed media, 17 electronic media, and 3 news agencies failed to go through the re-registration procedures. "Due to reasons beyond control of the Ministry of Information, 250 mass media did not state their desire to continue the work", – Lilia Ananich, first deputy of the minister of information, commented¹².

Looking at the patterns of ownership, 182 non-state and 51 state-run media failed to go through re-registration procedures.

When the new law on mass media came into force in February 2010, there were 1, 305 media registered in Belarus, including 413 state-run and 982 non-state media. As of February 8, 2010, the National register of mass media includes 1, 209 printed, 230 electronic mass media, and 8 news agencies^{13 14 15}.

Taking away the data about re-registration, we see that during one year only 134 printed and 19 electronic media, as well as 2 news agencies. Ac-

ording to BELTA¹⁶, during the seminar about the role of mass media in ensuring the constitutional rights of citizens during election campaigns held on February 16, deputy minister of information Lilia Ananich pointed out, non-state mass media have a bigger share of the information space (two thirds). According to Ananich, the re-registration data demonstrate the stability of the national mass media market.

Meanwhile, the non-profit Belarusian Association of Journalists is less positive about the year of living with the new law on media. "The authorities continue trying to keep the information space of Belarus under their control", – BAJ deputy chairman Andrei Bastunets says – "Positive changes in mass media sphere observed in late 2008 – early 2009 were not systematic and irreversible, which was proved by further deterioration of the situation. The legal environment for mass media in Belarus deteriorated when the new law and a number of legal acts in media sphere were passed"¹⁷.

We should point out that a number of non-state mass media has changed their content, and some newspapers that used to be rather in opposition to the ruling regime, are now talking about the achievements of the regional authorities and reduced the criticism of the government¹⁸.

Evidently, the change of the editorial line was caused by a secret demand to a number of large advertisers with the state share not to place advertisement in mass media which criticize the government. As the prohibition was made as a verbal recommendation, neither mass media, nor the human rights defenders were able to fight it.

About 20% of private editions did not survive under the new law on media, while only 12% of editions in the state sector discontinued their activity¹⁹.

10 Information about mass media and news agencies. As of February 8, 2010 printed media and news agencies went through re-registration procedures // Official web-site of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, 20.02.2010, <http://www.mininform.gov.by/smi/elek/>.

11 Information about mass media and news agencies. As of February 8, 2010 electronic media went through re-registration procedures // Official web-site of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, 20.02.2010, <http://www.mininform.gov.by/smi/elek/>.

12 E.Nechayeva. 150 new periodicals are registered in Belarus // BELTA, 16.02.2010

13 Cashe: data of the official web-site of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, as of 15.02.2010, <http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:vG1WdbgkH2oJ:www.mininform.gov.by/smi/%22%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D0%BE+%D0%A1%D0%9C%D0%98%22&cd=5&hl=ru&ct=clnk>

14 As of February 1, State Register includes 1, 048 printed media // BELTA, 02.02.2010, <http://www.belta.by/ru/news/society/?id=482998>

15 The National register of mass media includes 8 news agencies, 1, 209 printed, and 230 electronic mass media – Belarusian Ministry of Information // BELTA, 17.02.2010

16 E.Nechayeva. 150 new periodicals are registered in Belarus // BELTA, 16.02.2010

17 Press service of the Belarusian Association of Journalists. A year with the new law "About mass media" // BAJ, 08.02.2010, <http://baj.by/m-p-viewpub-tid-1-pid-8001.html>

18 V. Tshankou. Isn't Government's Campaign against Internet Mass Media Too Early? // RFE/RL, 26.02.2010, <http://www.svaboda.org/content/transcript/1969642.html>

19 P. Bykouski. Results of Re-registration // "Belorusy I Rynok", 22.02.2010, <http://www.belmarket.by/ru/66/16/5124/>

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