

Contents:

- *Situation of civil society organizations: Review for April 2024*
- *Legislative News*
- *Legal Drafting News*
- *International reaction to the violation of human rights*

Lawtrend

is a group of professionals who work together using legal research and educational methods for the realization and effective protection of human rights and freedoms.

Dear Readers,

This *LawtrendMonitor* provides an overview of the situation with freedom of association and the situation of civil society organisations for April 2024. It traditionally contains information on new normative legal acts adopted in the Republic of Belarus and related to civil society organisations. You can find news about legislative activities, as well as information on the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and the establishment of an expert group on the situation of human rights in Belarus.

Situation of civil society organizations

1. *Lawtrend experts prepared an overview of the situation with freedom of association and the legal framework for civil society organisations in Belarus in April 2024. The overview is available on the [Lawtrend website](#).*

Legislative News

2. The Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 361-3 of 1 April 2024 "[On Responsible Treatment of Animals](#)".

In addition to regulating legal relations of treatment of animals, the law defines such a concept as an animal protection organisation - a non-profit organisation whose main activity is animal protection.

In connection with the introduction of such a provision in the law, we recommend that initiatives operating in the field of animal protection and preparing documents for registration indicate the words "animal protection" in the name as the character of their activities.

The Law has become one of the few normative acts in Belarus that defines such concepts as a volunteer, an individual providing volunteer assistance on a voluntary basis, and volunteer assistance, voluntary and gratuitous performing work (rendering services) by an individual to care for animals kept in animal holding facilities and (or) animal shelters, and participating in the activity of catching neglected animals. The document also defines the rights and obligations of a volunteer when providing volunteer assistance, as well as the ones of a recipient of volunteer assistance.

The main provisions of the law are to come into force on 1 January 2025.

3. The Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 363-3 of 3 April 2024 "[On Amendments to the Laws on National Security](#)".

The document amends the laws on ensuring national security. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Belarus of 3 November 1992 No. 1902-XII "On Defence" is supplemented with Article 141, according to which citizens who reach the age of 16 are entitled to participate in the performance of defence work in peacetime, before the imposition of martial law. Citizens' participation in the performance of defence work in peacetime, before imposing martial law, is voluntary.

The document also introduces amendments to the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 1914-XII of 5 November 1992 "On Military Duty and Military Service".

Thus, according to the document, citizens may be informed about the need to appear at the military commissar's office at their place of residence and at the regional department of the State Security Committee by text messages. When citizens are conscripted, they are also obliged to appear at the recruitment events having been informed by text messages.

According to the amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, the maximum fine for failure to appear at conscription events upon summons or a referral, including when notified via a text message, was increased from 5 to 30 basic units, and, at the same time, a 10 Belarusian rubles minimum fine was introduced (Article 26.1). The fine for violating military registration obligations by citizens was also increased from 3 to 25 basic units (Article 26.3(1) of the Code of Administrative Offences).

4. [The resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection](#) No. 17 of 8 April 2024 expands the list of organisations where citizens of the Republic of Belarus may perform alternative service. Conforming amendments were made to the Resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection No. 24 of 31 May 2016.

The Resolution came into force on 19 April 2024.

5. On 17 April, the decision of the Minsk City Council of Deputies No. 556 of 22 December 2023 "[On the procedure for the implementation of civic initiatives in the city of Minsk](#)" was officially published; it came into force from the next day.

The document defines the requirements for:
preliminary considering civic initiatives projects;
open competitive selecting the projects;
financing of civic initiatives.

It is established that the property created as a result of the implementation of civic initiatives is transferred to the ownership of the city of Minsk.

6. From 5 April 2024, according to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers dated 28 December 2023 No. 958 "On Amending the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 11 August 2012 No. 745", the assessment procedure of an employee of a consumers' association was changed: in particular, the procedure for confirmation of an assessee's work in such a public association or its organisational structure.

7. As of 26 April 2024, the Law of 17 July 2023 No. 294-3, an amended version of the Law of 26 November 1992 No. 1982-XII "On Environmental Protection", came into force, as well as a number of resolutions of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Nature adopted in furtherance of the new law norms.

Legal Drafting News.

8. The National Centre for Legislation and Legal Research is developing a draft decree "On the Plan for Drafting Legislative Acts for 2025".

It is possible to make proposals on the preparation of draft laws (concepts of draft laws), as well as draft President's normative legal acts, with justification of the need for their preparation, on [the Belarus' Legal Forum](#) until 30 April 2024.

International reaction to human rights violations, in particular of freedom of association, in Belarus.

9. On 4 April, at its 55th session, the UN Human Rights Council voted to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus for one year. The Council also decided to urgently establish, for a renewable period of one year, a group of three independent experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, to be appointed by the President of the Council.