

Another definitive victory. Potasevich interview to one TV channel flooded the rest of them

Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus

(31/05/2021 – 06/06/2021)

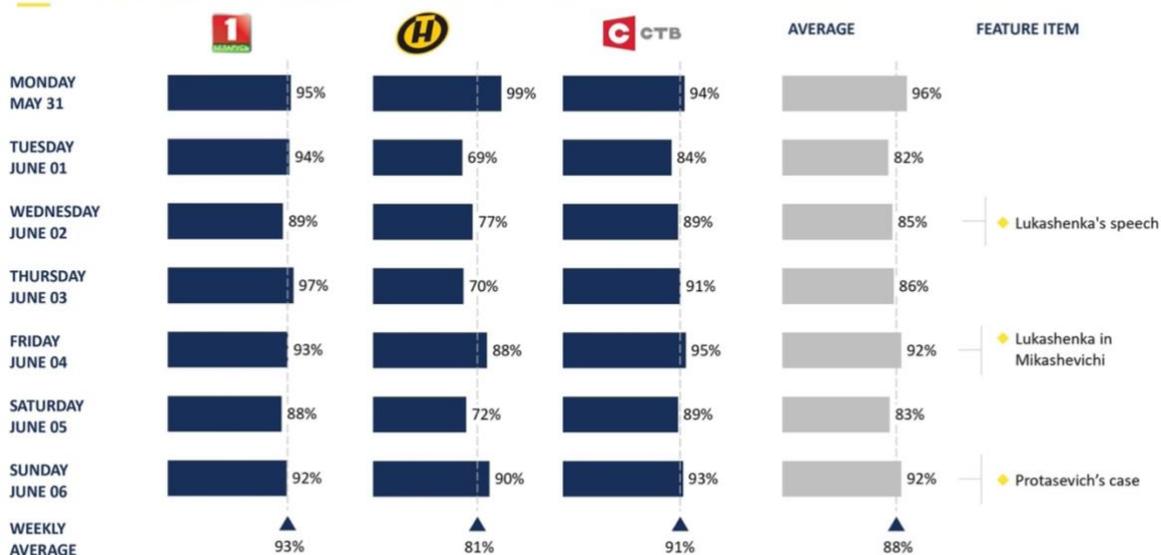
The purpose of this monitoring is to study how the Belarusian state conveys its ideological narrative. The most important mechanism for conveying its narrative is the evening broadcast. Then the informational function of media is complemented, and sometimes replaced by, the broadcasting of official ideological 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

This week the state TV carried on the information campaign around the Protasevich case and the grounding of the Ryanair flight in Minsk. The detained activist's interview for the ONT channel took the spotlight across the entire media landscape.

THIS WEEK THE STATE TV CARRIED ON THE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AROUND THE PROTASEVICH INTERVIEW, THE GROUNDING OF THE RYANAIR FLIGHT IN MINSK AND AIR TRAVEL SANCTIONS

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).

The case of the arrest and statements of Protasevich was used as evidence of uncovering the plans of the “foreign coordinators” of the protests.

THE MAIN ANTI-WEST NARRATIVES AND ATTACKS AGAINST OPPOSITION WERE AIRED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROTASEVICH CASE, AS WELL AS POLITICIZED FLIGHTS BANS

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).

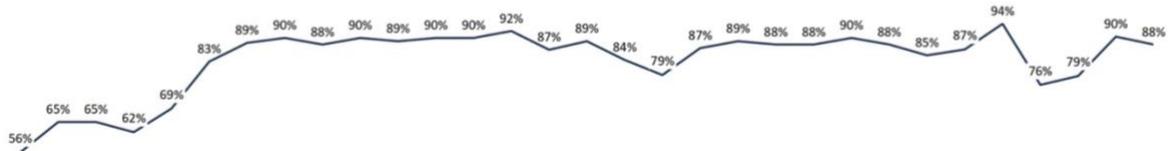
The assessments by the state-run TV ranged from purely mercantile explanations of the opponents' activities to descriptions of large-scale insidious plans of the West with regard to Belarus and Russia.

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

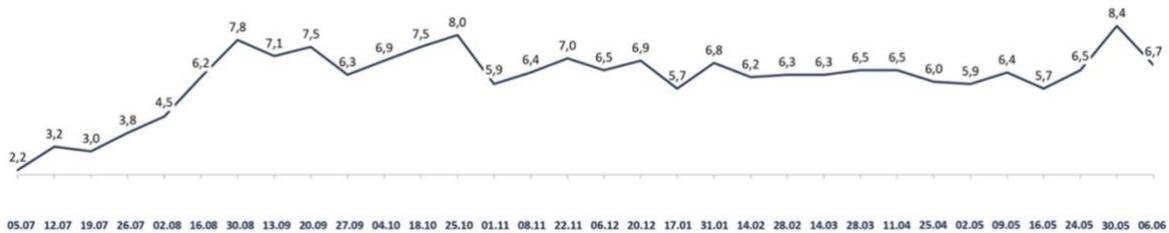
Considerable airtime was given to the indignation about the imposed flight bans, which was interpreted as a politicized reaction or the plot to strangle a competitor — the Belavia air carrier. The deepening of allied relations with Russia was proclaimed in response to "unprecedented external pressure".

JUSTIFICATIONS OF PRESSURE ON NON-STATE MEDIA CONTINUED, THE LATTER BEING ACCUSED OF HOSTILE INFLUENCE AND CATERING TO FOREIGN INTERESTS

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



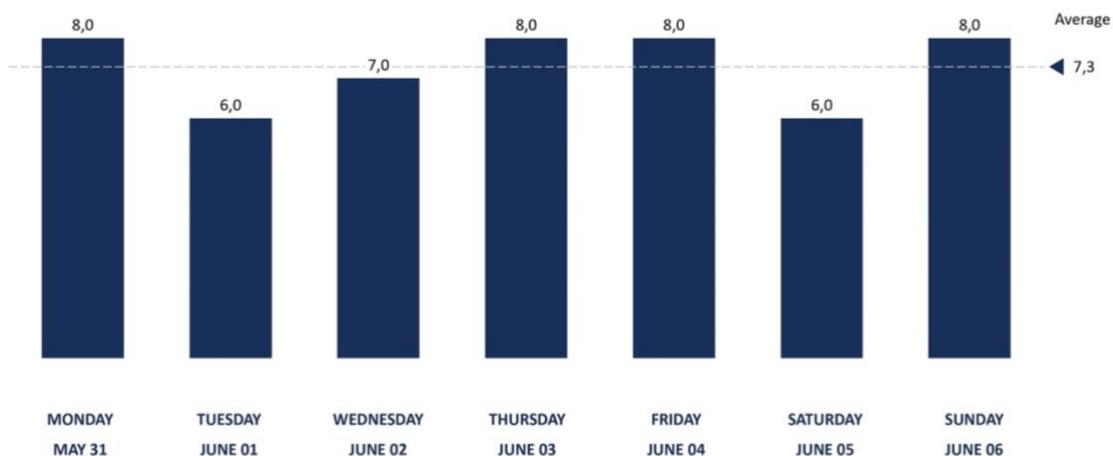
AVERAGE CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX, by weeks



Despite the calls typical for the state-run TV not to involve minors in politics, Children's Day became a pretext for another information campaign. In addition to the usual emphasis on the state's care for children, there were cases of their more active inclusion in the ideologically intensive agenda.

STATE CHANNELS CONTINUE TO BE A KEY INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STATE POLICY, THE REST OF THE CHANNELS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THESE TOPICS

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.

Once again, there were proclamations of the victory over the "incredible" opponents and success in "purging the foreign agents". Justifications of pressure on non-state media continued, the latter being accused of hostile influence and catering to foreign interests.

☰ THERE WAS NO DISPLAY OF PLURALISM ON THE AIR

PLURALISM INDEX*

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



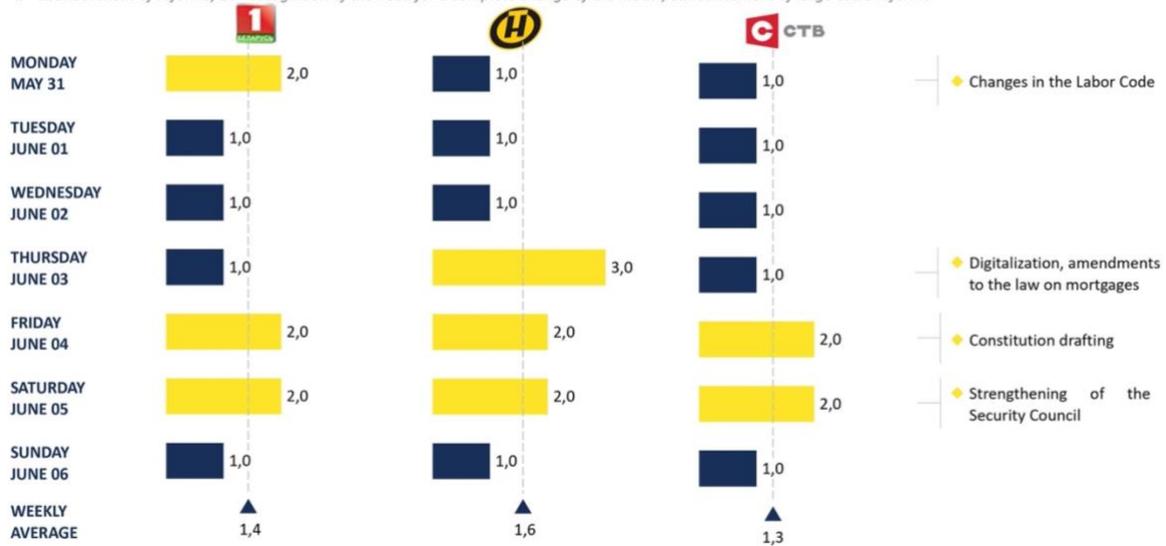
*PLURALISM INDEX - an indicator evaluating the share of critical reports and news stories citing opposing, critical, and other opinions alternative to the official rhetoric.

Periodic mentions of the work on the Constitution, digitalization and changes to the Labor Code can be attributed to reformatory and modernization messages. However, legislative changes are most often of an explicitly restrictive nature.

PERIODIC MENTIONS OF THE WORK ON THE CONSTITUTION, DIGITALIZATION AND CHANGES TO THE LABOR CODE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO REFORMATORY MESSAGES

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.

The project “Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus” is implemented by Sense Analytics in partnership with Press Club Belarus. The author of the weekly reports is Maxim Stefanovich, the editor and coordinator of the project is Artyom Shraibman.

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

APPENDIX 1 KEY NARRATIVES

ANTI-WEST NARRATIVES

- “And here is a reason to think about whether we doing a right thing by still supporting the Ukrainian economy, for example, by importing crushed stone from a neighboring country”.
- “You know, I have been thinking about the new Ukrainian democracy for a long time. For me personally, it is akin to the statements of an alcoholic: “I am not an alcoholic, I can quit any time!”
- “The situation with wiretapping of telephone conversations of European politicians by the US and Danish special services is a travesty. And the lack of reaction to this case confirms the lack of principles in international relations.”
- “Belarus retaliated against the US sanctions imposed on the Belneftekhim group of companies.”
- “NATO and the European Union are striving to dictate their will to other states without hindrance. For this, the West is building its offensive military capacity.”
- “There is no place for alternative opinions in the European media space. But the colonial practice of shutting one’s mouth is obvious. And European officials believe that there can be only one opinion ”.

ANTI-PROTEST NARRATIVES, LASHING OUT AT INDEPENDENT MEDIA

- “And with the liquidation of state television and shutdown of state newspapers, the main media will not be the boys from the Azov battalion, but our two or three large Internet portals.”
- “Hunger riots — this is how fugitive politicians and traitors see Belarus of the future.”
- “So the hot speech and the later staged suicide is just cheap attention whoring. Because even the extremist online septic tanks have forgotten who Latypov is and what he is being tried for.”
- “Two residents of Philadelphia, in protest, burned a white-red-white banner saying that Belarusian workers have the right to decide their own future, and not the US, EU or Canada”.
- “Here is another mercantile character from among the incredible ones — Yanina Sazonova — the administrator of the protest telegram channels. This aspiring revolutionary called for violence, collected money for murders and sabotage. For the sake of fame and money, she is ready to do anything and even condemn innocent people to death.”
- “All the fugitive criminals damned by fate and the people will lean into the TV screens. Protasevich will speak. And you traitors will yell, scream, cry and shake with fear. This is your destiny. The fate of the traitors.”
- “Well, rats, how do you like it? How does it feel to live with the feeling that you all can be set up any time, that no one can guarantee you anything, that your Western masters look at you like dirt on the sole of their shoes to be cleaned at any moment?”

FORCE-FEEDING PATRIOTISM, ENGAGING THE YOUTH

- “Emotional and touching message by 10-year-old Evelina from Gomel to the head of state”.

- “Well, now there is an unexpected perspective of what happened in Belarus last year. Children’s view of attempts to rock the society. Yulia Artyukh will continue the topic. I am proud of my president. I think he will stay. ”
- “Brest paratroopers suggested to start the summer with new experiences and invited children from school camps to visit”.
- “The agenda includes a development strategy for the coming years. As it was noted during the discussion, the Belarusian Republican Youth Union lacks bright leaders. The largest youth organization is the state’s personnel reserve ”.
- “Laureates and scholars of the president’s special funds to support talented and gifted youth were awarded today in Minsk”.
- “Those events of 1941 are an example of a feat of national unity, regardless of nationality. These days, the Belarusian forests are a set for shooting a Kazakh military drama "Summer of 1941" about the guerilla warriors."

PROTASEVICH’S CONFESSION, NEW CONSPIRACY DETAILS

- “The sensational confessions of Roman Protasevich were the main strokes to the information painting. In a hybrid war, it is rather a shell that did not only threw the dirt up, but destroyed many of the enemy’s fortifications.”
- “Who was involved in coordinating the protests in Belarus, who benefits from supporting Latushko and Tikhonovskaya, and which Telegram channels Roman Protasevich is following? The detained blogger told about this on the air of the *ONT* TV channel yesterday.
- "It seems that he is no longer afraid of anyone, revealing all the new details of the conspiracy."
- “Today it is obvious: behind the extremist telegram channels are not just young resentful bloggers, but real special services. And we see how other governments of neighboring states have turned into vultures and are ready to tear our country apart.”
- “Belarusian political scientists and public figures have spoken about the true, mercantile, goals of the fugitives on the air of our TV channel many times”.
- “The entire European elite howled like a she-wolf. Torture, Stalinism, Gestapo. Inhumans with deadpan faces suddenly pretend to be innocent schoolgirls. ”
- “Video from Protasevich’s phone was filmed on August 9-10. The agents provocateurs and failed revolutionaries are in a great mood.”
- “Everything took place during those very zoom-conferences of conspirators who planned to off the president, his children, intern Belarusians, and then divide power and tear Belarus apart.”

AIR TRAFFIC SANCTIONS, JUSTIFYING THE GROUNDING OF RYANAIR FLIGHT

- “Answers have been received to all questions, including about the military MiG 29, which escorted the Ryanair plane, and covered Minsk in case of potential danger. But it didn’t intercept the passenger vessel, as pseudo-experts in the West persistently tried to present it.”
- “Sanctions are above all an opportunity. The opportunity to throw competitors out of the market under the pretext of protecting democratic values.”

- “Only that time the West was fussing about, backed it up with political overtones, and sanctions immediately followed. While this one time there is silence, no reaction.”
- “Europe’s asymmetrical response to the Ryanair air incidents has caused bewilderment among experts and diplomats.”

FRATERNITY WITH RUSSIA AS A GUARANTEE FOR SOVEREIGNTY

- “In such an aggressive environment as it is today, Belarus and Russia have only two options: to wait for it all to clear up by itself, or to be proactive — to build their own space, their new economic model, their pool of allies and good-faith partners”.
- “The main argument is that it is the union integration that allows us to expand our sovereign capabilities: from the economy to the quality of life of every Belarusian.”
- “Russia is ready to give the “cornflower airline” a shoulder to lean on. Belarusians can expect for new flights not only to Moscow and St. Petersburg.”
- “A tranche of a loan of half a billion dollars, specific agreements on oil supplies and coordination of positions on gas prices for the next year - the results of negotiations between the presidents of Belarus and Russia.”
- “Even if Belarus completely turns towards Russia and its Asian partners, our economy will not only not suffer, but will also be in the black.”

UPDATING THE LEGISLATION

- “The day before, the senators held visiting receptions of citizens in the village councils and came to the conclusion that 70% of the reported issues can and should be resolved locally.”
- “The government has been instructed to develop amendments to the laws on the state of emergency and martial law.”
- “Responding to aggressive threats to our internal security and decisive measures to protect the interests and peace of our citizens.”
- “Several high-profile articles have been added to the Labor Code. The trigger for the changes was the last year — some workers, without thinking about the consequences, actively called for stopping the assembly lines even at especially dangerous industries.”
- “The bill introduced to the House of Representatives by the President provides for a single voting day for elections of deputies of all levels.”
- “A response to aggressive threats to our internal security. The President of Belarus signed the Security Council Resolution No. 1 “On Measures to Ensure the National Security of the Republic of Belarus”.