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Dear Readers,

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This *LawtrendMonitor* presents an overview of the situation with freedom of association and the situation of civil society organisations in October 2023. The newsletter traditionally presents information on new normative legal acts relating to civil society organisations adopted in the Republic of Belarus, as well as legislative activities in this area. We kindly invite the readers to familiarise themselves with the *Lawtrend*'s information item "Memo on Paying the Real Estate Tax by Individuals in 2023." The newsletter also presents information on the information system (AIS) "Humanitarian Activities" in the Department for Humanitarian Activity of the Presidential Property Management Directorate.

Situation of Civil Society Organizations

1. *Lawtrend* experts prepared a review of the situation of freedom of association and the environment for civil society organizations in Belarus in October 2023. It is available on the [Lawtrend website](#).

Legislative News

2. The Resolution No. 328 "On Amending Resolution of the Board of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus No. 63 dated 29 March 2001" of 27 September 2023 made amendments to the Instruction on the procedure for making settlements from accounts, electronic purses in the order of priority established by law, including the procedure for making debit transactions on payments in the event of liquidation of legal entities.

3. On 7 October 2023, the Law No. 274-3 of 30.06.2023 "On Amending the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Mass Media" came into force. The Law was supplemented with the notions "news items", "news aggregator", "owner of a news aggregator", "owner of an online outlet." The rights and obligations of an owner of a news aggregator were established. The list of grounds for revoking a certificate of state registration of a mass media outlet is supplemented. The Law on Mass Media introduces a mechanism for taking measures against foreign mass media operating in the territory of the Republic of Belarus in case of confirmation of hostile actions of foreign states towards domestic mass media.

4. On 7 October 2023, a joint resolution of the Operational and Analytical Center under the President, the Ministry of Communications and

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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.



Informatization and the Ministry of Information No. 5/18/4 of 13 September 2023 came into force, which amended the Regulation on the procedure for restricting (resuming) access to an Internet resource or an online outlet. The list of restricted access is renamed the list of identifiers of Internet resources which access is restricted to, and the list of its users is expanded.

5. On 21 October 2023, amendments to the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 281-3 of 12 July 2023 "On Amendments to the Laws on Local Governance and Self-Governance" came into force, in particular newly included Article 36(1) regulating the implementation of civic initiatives. It is defined that civic initiatives are measures aimed at improving the quality of life of the population in the administrative-territorial unit or a part thereof, including improvement of the territory, construction (erection, repair, reconstruction, restoration, improvement) of socially important objects, general prevention of offences, prevention of injuries and fatalities, as well as solution of other issues of local importance. The law contains regulations on initiators of implementing a civic initiative, the procedure of its submission and mandatory information for financing of a civic initiative at the local level.

6. On 22 October 2023, the Law of 17 July 2023 No. 283-3 'On Amending the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Publishing in the Republic of Belarus"' came into force. The Law provides for the expansion of the list of grounds for re-registering publishers and manufacturers of printed publications, as well as the list of grounds for suspension and termination of a certificate of state registration of a publisher, of a manufacturer, and of a distributor of printed publications.

The Ministry of Information is authorised to maintain the list of printed publications with identified information messages or items that may harm the national interests of the Republic of Belarus through their dissemination.

Legislative Drafting News

7. The [draft law](#) "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals" was adopted in the first reading.

From 12 to 22 October 2023, a [public discussion](#) of the draft law organised by the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus was held at the Legal Forum of Belarus.



Among other provisions, the draft law contains the notions of "animal protection organisation", "volunteer" and "volunteer assistance", as well as the rights and obligations of volunteers when providing volunteer assistance and of recipients of this assistance.

8. The draft law "On Amending Laws on the Activities of Religious Organisations" was adopted in the first reading, setting out in a new version of the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations."

The draft law proposes to introduce prohibitive rules regarding the use of any symbols other than religious symbols, as well as publications and images propagandising war or calling for hostility on racial, religious, or national grounds in places designated for public worship. The draft law contains a ban on the participation of religious organisations in political activity and in the activities of political parties. Some provisions are envisaged to allow religious organisations to establish legal entities or structural subdivisions to provide social services to certain categories of citizens. The draft law specifies the procedure for establishing and registering a religious organisation and the requirements for its founders. The list of grounds for liquidation of religious organisations is expanded; those include, among others, activities of a religious organisation that contradict key focused areas of domestic and foreign policy of the state, or being aimed at discrediting the Republic of Belarus, propaganda of war, social, national, religious, racial enmity, or other extremist activities, humiliation of national honour and dignity. The draft law also introduces a number of amendments concerning the property relations of religious organisations with regard to the use of their immovable and other property.

The draft law also establishes mandatory re-registration for religious organisations.

9. The draft law "On Amendments to the Codes" (on legal regulation of economic activity) was adopted in the second reading.

The draft law, in particular, provides for amendments to the articles regulating the registration, reorganisation, and liquidation of legal entities, including ensuring a number of guarantees of creditors' rights during reorganisation and liquidation of legal entities, fixing organisational and legal forms of non-profit organisations provided for by various legislative acts (gardener`s partnerships, homeowners' associations), and clarifying



the fundamentals of legal regulation of public associations and religious organisations.

Memo on paying the real estate tax by individuals in 2023.

10. We would like to remind you that since 2022, under the law, a physical person must pay property tax even if he/she owns only one real estate object, for example, an apartment or a share in it.

Annually, individuals must pay three types of property tax: in addition to the real estate tax, it is transportation tax and land tax, if they have the taxable objects.

All the above taxes must be paid not later than November 15th. In 2023, individuals pay additional real estate tax and land tax for 2022, because last year they made 50% advance payment, and transportation tax is paid in full for the entire last year.

Lawtrend experts prepared a [memo](#) that provides information on who is a payer of the real estate tax, which persons have the tax exemptions, how to pay the real estate tax and how to find out the amount for the payment.

'Humanitarian Activities' Information System (AIS)

11. The automated information system (AIS) "Humanitarian Activities" was [put into operation](#) in the Department for Humanitarian Activity of the Presidential Property Management Directorate.

Applicants can now use the AIS "Humanitarian Activities" for submitting documents to the Department to receive petitions for granting visas of the Republic of Belarus without consular fees and to register vehicles delivering humanitarian aid cargoes from foreign organisations in the electronic toll collection system for vehicles exempted from tolls on toll roads of the Republic of Belarus.

Legal entities and individuals may register as aid recipients and send electronic documents through the relevant services of the state-wide automated information system (3.73.01 "Registration of a FGA recipient", 3.73.02 "Submission of documents by a FGA recipient"). The services are provided free of charge. In addition, an applicant's account is available here: <https://ibp.gov.by/recipient/>.