

THE BELARUSIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

Mass Media Week in Belarus

Info-posting – February 27 – March 4, 2012

On February 27 it became known that the editors' board of the independent regional newspaper "Inform-Progulka" received a written warning from the Ministry of Information for "dissemination of untruthful information" in violation of Article 4 of the "Law on Mass Media". The document was signed on **February 24** by the Minister of Information **Aleh Praliaskouski**.

The reason for the sanction was the article "In the independent trade union..." (dated December 29, 2012 – as it's written in the warning). The Ministry of Information considered untruthful the sentence "Around 600 workers of the factory "Granit" left the trade union of the factory".

On February 27 correspondent for Radio *Racyia* **Grazhyna Shalkevich** received an official warning from Hrodna prosecutor's office for collaboration with foreign mass media without accreditation. The deputy head **Valery Pavedayka** showed the journalist handouts of her publications from the Radio *Racyia* website, as proofs for the accusations. He warned the journalist that new facts of her collaboration with foreign mass media can result in a fine of 20 – 50 base amounts, according to the Administrative Code.

*Earlier, on **January 30** Grazhyna Shalkevich got a verbal warning against collaboration with foreign mass media without accreditation from the KGB.*

On February 28 Hrodna journalist and BAJ member **Andrey Mialeshka** got a verbal warning from Hrodna department of the KGB. The journalist appeared on an official summons, brought to him by the district policeman on February 27, after Andrey had refused to appear in the KGB on an invitation via phone. The KGB man named **Zhukau** was interested in the journalist's articles, written for the website "Tvoy Styl" (Your Style). "Mr Zhukau asked me not to make any journalistic mistakes and observe laws of the Republic of Belarus. Otherwise, some "measures will be taken". The talk lasted 20 – 25 minutes," wrote Andrey Mialeshka on the website "Tvoy Styl".

On February 28 the human rights defender **Ales Bialiatski** was transferred from Minsk detention center No1 (Valadarka) to Babruysk correctional colony No2. The head of the human rights center Viasna will have to serve 4-year imprisonment in a high security colony.

*We remind that on November 24 the Pershamayski district judge Siarhey Bandarenka found Ales Bialiatski guilty of large-scale tax evasion (Art. 243/2 of the Criminal Code). He was sentenced to four years and a half in a high security prison with property confiscation. Ales Bialiatski denied any guilt and called the trial a political one. The ground for the criminal prosecution was information about foreign bank accounts, provided by the Lithuanian Ministry of Justice and the General Prosecutor's Office of Poland. The money wasn't his private, but meant for the support of the repressed, paying for legal services and other human rights activities. On **January 24** the judicial panel of Minsk City Court heard and turned down the appeal against the sentence.*

The address of the colony: **213800, Mahilou region, the city of Babruysk, Sikorski Street, 1.**

On March 1 Sviatlana Kalinkina, Editor-in-chief of “*Narodnaya Volia*”, was awarded Sviatlana Navumava Prize in the nomination “Journalism”. According to the results of the vote, she was ahead of her colleagues Aleh Hruzdilovich and Viktor Martsinovich. This year the jury included 30 people.

Note: Sviatlana Navumava - political scientist, EHU teacher – died on March 10, 2011. Soon after her death, her colleagues decided to honor her memory by founding a special award for political scientist, analysts and journalists. The initiative came from the activists of the campaign “Tell the Truth!” with whom Sviatlana worked her last year and a half, teacher colleagues and the Portal of NGOs of the Republic of Belarus.

On March 2 journalists were denied access to the meeting of the organizational committee about preparing celebration of the national poets’ Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas anniversary. Half an hour before the meeting it became known that it was closed to the majority of journalists. The spokesman of the Ministry of Culture **Hanna Smolskaya** was unable to explain the decision – she remarked that “only one TV channel had been invited” for covering the event. The Prime Minister Deputy **Anatol Tozik** presided at the meeting, and many officials from the Ministries of Culture, Foreign Affairs, Information and Education also took place in the event.

On March 2 it became known that the Administration of the Kastychnitski district in Minsk sent letters to the city communal service, demanding to dismantle satellite dishes from people’s houses. The communal service must report about the enforcement of the order till March 12.

In particular, Ludmila Belakhvostava, one of the city residents, was handed in the written warning by a communal service worker in person: if she doesn’t dismantle the satellite dish in her balcony, she will be held liable “according to the law”.