People's Embassies of Belarus

KAŠCIUŠKA SECURITY STUDIES INSTITUTE

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Policy brief

HALF A MILLION LIVES

A quantitative analysis of Belarusian migration to Council of Europe member states

2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2020–2026, Council of Europe member states became the main space for long-term residence and settlement for approximately half a million Belarusians. This harmonized estimate is based on the most complete information available, rather than on any single statistical dataset.

- The study systematizes open official data from Eurostat, national registers, and departmental statistics on Belarusian citizens.

- Secondary migration has become a key trend.

- The most acute risk is associated with Decree No. 278, which deprived Belarusians of the possibility of obtaining and renewing passports at embassies.

- The study recommends that Council of Europe member states expand access to alternative travel documents and sustainable humanitarian grounds for residence for citizens of Belarus.

Belarusian emigration is not exclusively a consequence of the 2020 protests or Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022: it builds on previously established labor, educational and family channels, but was sharply intensified by political repression, war, visa restrictions and transnational pressure from the Belarusian regime. Political and economic contexts often combine with personal circumstances and professional self-realization in one person's biography. Therefore, a rigid division of Belarusians into "political" and "economic" migrants does not reflect the actual structure of migration.

The study systematizes open official data from Eurostat, national registers, and departmental statistics on Belarusian citizens. It records a sustained concentration of Belarusian emigration in Poland and Lithuania, and the growing importance of Spain and other EU countries. Secondary migration has become a key trend: after initially leaving for Ukraine, Georgia, or Turkey, many Belarusians moved to the EU to secure stable legal status.

The most acute risk is associated with Decree No. 278, which deprived Belarusians of the possibility of obtaining and renewing passports at embassies. As Belarusian passports expire, tens of thousands of people struggle to prove their identity, extend their legal status, travel internationally, and access banking services. In this context, national mechanisms

for issuing travel documents to foreigners, already used by Poland, Lithuania, and Germany, are critically important.

The study recommends that Council of Europe member states expand access to alternative travel documents and sustainable humanitarian grounds for residence for citizens of Belarus. Belarusian democratic forces should use these data to advocate targeted, rather than blanket, visa and migration restrictions, and develop legal and humanitarian support mechanisms for Belarusians in countries where their status is most vulnerable, primarily Ukraine and Georgia.

CONTEXT

Over the past six years, Belarus has experienced two major waves of emigration that overlapped. The domestic political crisis of 2020, caused by the falsified presidential election, and the repression that followed were subsequently intensified by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Although these events undoubtedly became key drivers of mass emigration from Belarus in these years, they were not the only drivers.

Belarus was experiencing population outflow even before the events of 2020 and 2022. This had political, economic, and pragmatic causes. A detailed study of that migration is outside the scope of this research; however, briefly outlining the previous context and trend helps explain the specific features of the 2020–2026 migration waves.

Belarusians sought to move to the European Union, and primarily to Poland, through various routes, including obtaining the Pole's Card (Karta Polaka). The scale of the phenomenon is also demonstrated by the fact that Alexander Lukashenka repeatedly personally threatened such Belarusians, while possession of the Pole's Card was also targeted among officials themselves. At least 160,000 Belarusians received the "Karta Polaka", accounting for more than 50% of all recipients of the Pole's Card worldwide.[1] Of them, 80% (137,000) received it before 2020.[2]

Trends in educational emigration are also indicative. An increasing share of young people choose to study abroad rather than in Belarus. While in 2013 only 1 in 14 Belarusian students chose to study abroad, by 2025 the figure was already 1 in 8.[3] Although the absolute number of Belarusian students abroad declined over this period (from around 34,000 in 2013 to 28,800 in 2023), the reasons are demographic rather than migratory (the number of students is also declining within Belarus).

Belarus formally joined the European Higher Education Area (the Bologna Process) back in 2015. However, as the Public Bologna Committee noted in its "White Book 2018"[4], the necessary reforms genuinely harmonizing Belarusian universities with European standards were not implemented to the required extent. Academic freedoms

1. "In 2024, about nine thousand Belarusians received the Pole's Card". Current Time, 27.12.2024, https://www.currenttime.tv/a/v-2024-godu-kartu-polyaka-poluchili-okolo-devyati-tysyach-belorusov/33255167.html
2. "Nearly 137,000 Belarusians received the Pole's Card". Telegraf, 30.09.2019, https://telegraf.news/in-belarus/455733-pochti-137-tis-belorusov-poluchili-kartu-polyaka/
3. "Belarusian Students Abroad". Palitsfera Working Papers No. 1/2026, https://palityka.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/bel_student_europe_eng_3.pdf
4. "White Book 2018: Results of the Bologna Reforms in Belarus". Vladimir Dunaev / Nashe Mnenie, 29.05.2019, https://nmn.media/articles/6819

were ignored, genuine student self-government was absent, and indicators of academic mobility remained extremely low.

As shown by a study[5] of educational emigrants from Belarus in 2013–2025, Poland also became the leading destination. By 2025, 44% of Belarusian students chose it as a study destination (compared with 11% in 2013). The share of other Central and Eastern European countries in Belarusian educational migration is also growing substantially. By contrast, Russia's share in educational emigration fell from 70% to 32%.

Labor migration to Russia stands apart, often on a rotational or seasonal basis, and has been widespread throughout independent Belarus's history. It is facilitated by the absence of language and bureaucratic barriers (including the favorable legislation of the Union State), as well as by the post-Soviet experience of personal and professional ties. Because of the absence of full-fledged border controls and work under grey arrangements (that is, without legal formalization, for example in repair work), an exhaustive quantitative assessment of this phenomenon is not possible.

Thus, migration after 2020 and 2022 is not a new phenomenon. It combines earlier motivations, intensifying them through the risks of political repression and war.

5. "Belarusian Students Abroad". Palitsfera Working Papers No. 1/2026, https://palityka.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/bel_student_europe_eng_3.pdf

RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Research aim:

To assess the scale, dynamics, geographical structure, and key factors of Belarusian citizens' migration to Council of Europe member states in 2020–2026, based on comparable official quantitative data, and to identify related needs for legal and humanitarian support.

Research objectives:

1. To systematize and compare available international, national, and departmental statistics on Belarusian citizens residing in Council of Europe member states, as well as on residence permits issued to them and applications for international protection.

2. To assess the number and distribution of Belarusian citizens by country, identify the main directions of migration and changes in these directions in 2020–2026.

3. To analyze the impact of the 2020 political crisis, Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, visa restrictions and transnational repression by the Belarusian regime on migration routes and the legal situation of Belarusians.

4. To formulate recommendations for Council of Europe member states, international organizations and Belarusian democratic forces on documentation, legal protection and humanitarian support for Belarusians abroad.

METHODOLOGY

> - This study is based on open, public, verifiable, official quantitative data;
>
> - Baseline Eurostat figures were then adjusted where more complete national data were available and supplemented with estimates for Council of Europe member states outside the EU-27;
>
> - This estimate is rounded and should not be regarded as an exact population count;
>
> - Since this study concerns quantitative data, "Belarusians" here refers to holders of a passport of the Republic of Belarus.

This study is based on **open, public, verifiable, official quantitative data**. This means the authors did not conduct surveys, questionnaires, censuses, or use other similar tools to collect primary data. Although data obtained in this way may be more recent and diverse, a full national sample across all Council of Europe member states would be impossible. Moreover, comparability of data across countries is an important element of the study, which requires the data collection methods to be unified as much as possible.

To estimate the total number of Belarusians residing in Council of Europe member states, **2024** was selected as the study's base year, since it is the year for which the most complete set of comparable data is available across the countries covered by the research.

The starting point for the estimate was 386,834 valid residence permits issued to Belarusian citizens in the EU-27 at the end of 2024. This baseline figure was then adjusted where more complete national data were available and supplemented with estimates for Council of Europe member states outside the EU-27. As a result, the total number of Belarusians residing in Council of Europe member states in 2024 is estimated at approximately **490,000 people.**

This estimate is rounded and **should not be regarded as an exact population count**. Different national statistical systems use different indicators to account for the resident population, including data on flows and population stocks at a specific point in time; data may be revised and refined over time, and their availability varies from country to country.

Since this study concerns **quantitative** data, "Belarusians" here refers to holders of a passport of the Republic of Belarus. Qualitative characteristics such as cultural ties with Belarus, self-identification as Belarusian, the definition of ethnicity, and so on are undoubtedly important, but cannot be used to obtain precise quantitative data. The study did not aim, for example, to

answer whether people who have obtained a Pole's Card, declare their Polish ethnicity and are on the path to obtaining Polish citizenship should be regarded as Belarusians; and if so, until what point. Nor where the boundary lies between a practical solution to documentation issues and ceasing to identify oneself as Belarusian internally. Nor what level of connection with Belarus is sufficient to identify someone as Belarusian.

Instead, the authors consider it sufficient to refer to aggregated data from the World Association of Belarusians "Baćkaŭščyna", according to which **around 3.5 million Belarusians live worldwide**[6] (obviously, in the broadest sense of the word). These data also include countries outside the Council of Europe (the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Russia, Kazakhstan, etc.), where studying the number of Belarusians falls outside the purpose of this research.

The aggregated database for this study is built on cross-validation across multiple statistical sources to exclude errors and fill gaps in Eurostat.

- **Supranational statistics (Eurostat).** The main data source for EU countries Includes harmonized datasets: population by citizenship, population by country of birth, first residence permits, valid residence permits, international protection and asylum (Asylum applications).

- **National statistical institutes and population registers.** United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Georgia, etc. These allow accounting for specific registration features unavailable in Eurostat.

- **Special departmental data and additional requests, including parliamentary inquiries.** Verification of official documents, certificates from ministries of internal affairs and ministries of justice of individual states. In certain cases, indirect national data are examined (such as tax residence).

6. "History". World Association of Belarusians "Baćkaŭščyna", https://zbsb.org/news/abroad/226/

MASTER TABLE: ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION DATA

Below are excerpts from the systematized master table combining data on citizenship, country of birth, first residence permits, and gender profile.

The full database is presented in the table: https://shorturl.at/GlX6c

Country	Number of Belarusians	Type of data
Albania	88	Valid residence permits (2024)
Andorra	71	Valid residence permits (2024)
Armenia	400	Estimated, based on the cumulative number of residence permits issued
Austria	1966	Valid residence permits (2024)
Azerbaijan	100	Estimated, based on the cumulative number of residence permits issued
Belgium	909	Valid residence permits (2024)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14	Rely on Population Census 2023
Bulgaria	1228	Valid residence permits (2024)
Croatia	149	Valid residence permits (2024)
Cyprus	2861	Valid residence permits (2024)
Czechia	7299	Valid residence permits (2024)
Denmark	658	Valid residence permits (2024)
Estonia	2859	Valid residence permits (2024)
Finland	1270	Valid residence permits (2024)
France	4007	Valid residence permits (2024)
Georgia	12808	Cumulative net balance (2021–2024)
Germany	20633	Valid residence permits (2024)
Greece	1307	Valid residence permits (2024)
Hungary	828	Valid residence permits (2024)
Iceland	41	Valid residence permits (2024)
Ireland	489	Valid residence permits (2024)
Italy	10101	Valid residence permits (2024)
Latvia	4266	Valid residence permits (2024)
Liechtenstein	3	Valid residence permits (2024)
Lithuania	58632	Valid residence permits (2024)
Luxembourg	214	Valid residence permits (2024)
Malta	184	Valid residence permits (2024)
Moldova	361	Cumulative net balance (2021–2024)

Country	Number of Belarusians	Type of data
Monaco	33	Rely on Population Census 2025
Montenegro	735	Residents with Belarusian citizenship, 2023
Netherlands	2499	Valid residence permits (2024)
North Macedonia	80	Rely on Population census 2021 + net immigration 2021-2024
Norway	400	Valid residence permits (2024)
Poland	310000	Eurostat + PESEL-based estimate
Portugal	1582	Valid residence permits (2024)
Romania	184	Valid residence permits (2024)
San Marino	17	Valid residence permits (2024)
Serbia	1218	Valid residence permits (2024)
Slovak Republic	1774	Valid residence permits (2024)
Slovenia	465	Valid residence permits (2024)
Spain	7843	Valid residence permits (2024)
Sweden	1265	Valid residence permits (2024)
Switzerland	1390	Valid residence permits (2024)
Türkiye	4440	Residents with Belarusian citizenship, 2024
Ukraine	14000	According to the official letter from the government
United Kingdom	10000	Rely on Population Census 2021 as a baseline and Home Office administrative flows
COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES	**491,671**	**TOTAL**

FROM MIGRATION INFLOW TO ACCUMULATED LEGAL PRESENCE

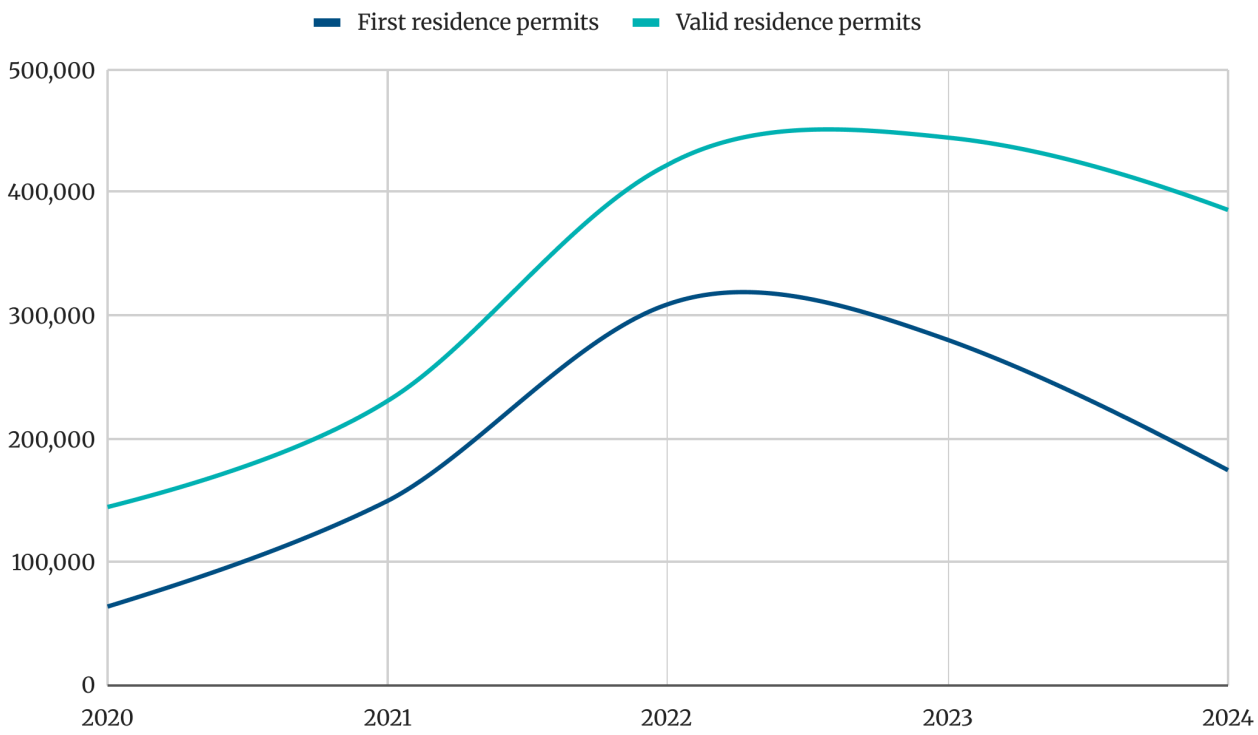
First residence permits and valid residence permits reflect different stages of the migration process. First residence permits show the number of new entries into a country's residence permit system during a given year, while valid residence permits reflect an accumulated indicator — the number of permits remaining valid at a particular point in time. Therefore, these two indicators should not be regarded as equivalent measures of the size of the Belarusian population abroad.

The difference is particularly visible after 2020. In the EU-27, the number of first residence permits issued to citizens of Belarus increased from 63,920 in 2020 to 311,516 in 2022, reflecting the exceptional scale of migration after the political crisis in Belarus and the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The figure subsequently declined to 281,503 in 2023 and 174,712 in 2024.

Valid residence permits showed a different trajectory. Their number increased from 145,177 in 2020 to 232,301 in 2021 and 424,312 in 2022, reaching 446,480 in 2023. Although the figure declined to 386,834 in 2024, it was still approximately 2.7 times higher than in 2020.

The one-year gap between the peak in first residence permits in 2022 and the peak in valid residence permits in 2023 is consistent with a transition from a period of exceptional migration inflow to a substantial accumulated legal presence of citizens of Belarus in the EU. However, residence permit statistics alone do not allow a conclusion about permanent settlement, since permits may expire, be replaced by another legal status, or cease to apply as a result of obtaining citizenship or onward migration.

Figure 1. First and valid residence permits held by Belarusian citizens in the EU-27, 2020–2024. Source: Eurostat



FOUR KEY GEOPOLITICAL SHOCKS

Four key geopolitical shocks shaped the dynamics, structure, and geopolitical direction of the Belarusian diaspora in 2020–2025.

1. Domestic political crisis and repression in Belarus in 2020

The mass protests of 2020 and the subsequent wave of systematic political persecution fundamentally changed the nature of Belarusian emigration. Traditional labor and educational channels gave way to mass political, humanitarian, and corporate evacuation. Special programs (such as Poland. Business Harbor and humanitarian visa corridors) led to the issuance of the first EU residence permits to citizens of the Republic of Belarus, increasing by more than 4.8 times.

2. Full-scale war in Ukraine (February 2022)

For Belarusians in Ukraine, the war created a critical legal trap. With 11,025 permanent residence permits and 2,958 temporary residence permits, Belarusians faced frozen bank accounts, suspension of administrative procedures, inability to renew passports, and the threat of deportation. Over four years, only 38 people applied for international protection: 3 received refugee status and 16 received complementary protection.

For external relocation hubs, the war caused the immediate departure of tens of thousands of Belarusians from Ukraine and also triggered secondary movement from visa-free hubs (Georgia, Turkey, Armenia) to European Union countries.

3. Visa crisis and institutional barriers in the EU (2022–2024)

Decisions by several EU states (Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) to fully or partially stop issuing Schengen and national visas (types C and D, respectively) blocked direct routes out of Belarus. This forced Belarusians to seek complex humanitarian routes or use transit countries (Georgia, Armenia, Turkey) for subsequent secondary migration.

4. Decree No. 278 and other transnational repression

The adoption of Lukashenko's Decree No. 278 (a ban on issuing and replacing passports, as well as executing powers of attorney at consulates abroad), trials in absentia, special proceedings and the threat of detention in CIS/EAEU countries significantly increased the importance of EU countries as a space of physical and legal security and long-term settlement for Belarusian emigration.

Documents such as Lithuania's "Užsieniečio pasas", Poland's "dokument podróży dla cudzoziemca" (PDPC), Germany's "Reiseausweis für Ausländer" or Austria's "Fremdenpass" are also known as a "travel document" or "Alien's passport". They do not confer citizenship or other similar rights, but they can be used precisely as a passport where one is required and a plastic ID card is insufficient.

Therefore, EU countries that issue travel documents to foreigners and humanitarian residence permits have become the main centers of long-term settlement of the diaspora. Council of Europe member states where such documents cannot be obtained or are extremely difficult to obtain (such as Georgia or Armenia) face an outflow of the Belarusian diaspora.

TWO-STAGE SECONDARY MIGRATION MODEL

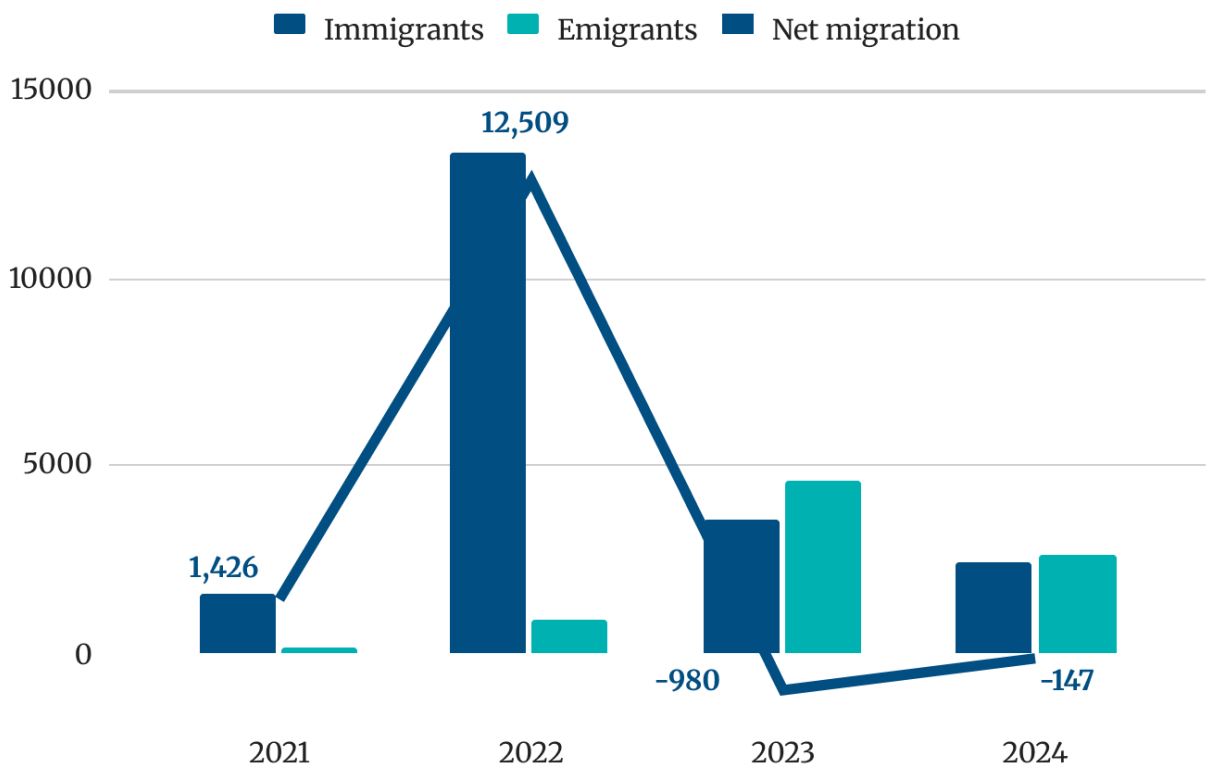
(Georgia / Turkey / Ukraine → EU)

The introduction of visa bans by a number of EU countries (Czechia, Estonia, Latvia) and the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022 forced Belarusians into secondary migration. Belarusians in Ukraine left mainly for Poland, along with Ukrainians, because they had no other options for logistical reasons. Belarusians from Belarus, in turn, often used visa-free third countries as an initial refuge. However, in 2023–2026 there was a large-scale secondary movement to safe EU countries.

- Initial shock (2020–2022):
After the 2020 protests and the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022, Belarusians faced repression alongside the introduction of visa bans by a number of EU countries (Czechia, Estonia, Latvia). This made direct departure for Europe difficult.

> **- Stage 1: Initial evacuation to visa-free hubs (2020–2022)**
> Georgia, Turkey, and Armenia acted as primary filters because of their visa-free regimes and ease of entry. Belarusians moved IT businesses, personal savings, and families there, regarding these countries as temporary or medium-term bases.
>
> Thus, for example, Georgia illustrates the transition from initial relocation to secondary migration: net migration of citizens of Belarus rose to +12,509 people in 2022, then became negative in 2023 (-980) and remained close to zero in 2024 (-147). Although the data do not show where those who left Georgia subsequently went, this dynamic indicates a shift in the country's role—from a main relocation destination to a transit migration hub.

Figure 2. Net migration of Belarusian citizens to Georgia, 2021–2024.
Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).



Push factors (catalysts of Stage 2):

- **Decree of the Republic of Belarus No. 278.** The ban on embassies renewing passports and generally providing full consular services created a threat of losing legal status in third countries.

- **Changes in third-country policies.** Mass refusals by Turkey to renew tourist residence permits (turistik ikamet) and political risks in Georgia forced relocatees to seek more stable jurisdictions.

- **Institutional insecurity.** The absence of travel documents and humanitarian protection mechanisms in third countries.

- **Stage 2: Secondary movement to "EU Safe Havens" (2023–2026)**
Belarusians began systematic relocation from Georgia and Turkey to EU countries (Spain, Poland, Germany, Cyprus). The EU became the final point of settlement because it provides physical security, legal protection against extradition, and issues alternative travel documents — Alien's passports.

GENDER ASPECTS OF BELARUSIAN EMIGRATION

The study of the gender composition of Belarusian migration makes it possible to identify several key patterns:

- **Marriage-related southern migration** (Southern and South-Western Europe). In countries such as Italy, Spain, and Turkey, women are pronouncedly predominant among Belarusians (up to 60–65%).

This is associated with historically established labor migration channels in services, care, and education, as well as marriage migration. Turkey (73.5% F) and Italy (62% F) retain a marriage-family vector that is practically isolated from geopolitical shocks.

- **Labor and technological migration** (Lithuania, Poland, Czechia). In states with a high share of the IT sector and construction/transport industries, the initial flow (2020–2022) was dominated by men (up to 58–62%). This imbalance subsequently leveled out (see below).

- **Specific micro-cases.** In small locations, extreme imbalances are observed (for example, a predominant share of women in San Marino), reflecting individual, highly specific trends (marriages, specific recruitment), but with low representativeness for macro-analysis.

- **Male skew of the first wave (2020–2022).** In 2022, inflows to Georgia (55.2% M) and Lithuania (58% M) were predominantly male, coinciding with the relocation of the IT sector and a new wave of politically driven emigration.

At the beginning of the war, men may also have left faster than their families, fearing mobilization or other forms of conscription against their will.

- **Family stabilization (2023–2025).** In Poland, Lithuania, Czechia, and Slovenia, the share of women gradually increased to 42–50% due to family reunification. Settlement in a new place contributes to equalizing the gender balance.

KEY THESES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The dual perception of Belarusian emigration in Council of Europe member states: from sympathy for Belarusian heroism and expressions of solidarity to perceptions of Belarusian emigrants as a security threat and potential agents of Russian influence;

- Belarusian migration since 2020 has been driven by multiple factors: it is impossible to characterise it in a single way or draw a clear-cut distinction between "political" and "economic" migrants;

- The key priorities for Belarusian democratic forces in supporting the Belarusian diaspora should include advocating for alternative identity and travel documents (foreigners' passports, a national Belarusian passport, and broader access to refugee status) and providing humanitarian assistance to diaspora communities in countries where foreigners' passports are not issued and Belarusians face difficulties in obtaining a secure legal status.

Theses:

- **Belarusian migration after 2020 is multifactorial and involves overlapping motivations.** Political, economic, educational, and personal reasons for departure often combine in one person's biography. Therefore, one cannot speak of any single character of Belarusian emigration or clearly divide, for example, "political" and "economic" migrants. A political activist may be a victim of repression while also holding a "Pole's Card" and seeking a better life. A Belarusian student studying in Lithuania may seek not only a European education but also distance from the risk of conscription into the Belarusian army during the war. A Belarusian IT specialist who moved to Spain on a "digital nomad" residence permit may be a secondary migrant from Georgia who previously left Belarus after taking part in peaceful demonstrations. And a Belarusian businessperson or construction worker in Poland may be a volunteer veteran from Ukraine, for which they face criminal prosecution at home.

- **Institutionally driven emigration.** Highly qualified Belarusian specialists, such as doctors and researchers, may emigrate because of the consequences of state policy: chronic underfunding of sectors, distorted budget priorities, limited professional autonomy, and a lack of opportunities for development. Formally, such a departure may appear "economic", but its roots lie in political decisions that shape working conditions and professional

prospects. The same applies to departure motivated by Belarus's complicity in the war. Although there is no fighting on Belarusian territory and Belarusian soldiers are not sent to the front, justified concerns may push Belarusians to emigrate. The same applies to a possible unwillingness to work at enterprises or scientific organizations whose products or developments may, to one degree or another, be oriented towards the Russian military-industrial complex.

- Ambivalent perception of Belarusian emigration in Council of Europe member states. On the one hand, countries closest to Belarus after 2020 sympathized with Belarusian heroism and showed solidarity with those forced to flee repression. On the other hand, after 2022, Belarusian emigration also came to be perceived as a security threat, as potential agents of the Russian threat (a perception reinforced by real cases of sabotage in the EU carried out by people holding Belarusian passports). At the same time, third countries, primarily those geographically distant from Belarus, were generally not deeply familiar with Belarusian specifics, distancing themselves both from solidarity with Belarusians and from viewing Belarusians as a threat.

Recommendations:

- Advocacy for alternative documents. Decree No. 278 sets a special precedent—the state's voluntary refusal to provide consular services, moreover, of a universal nature (geographically and socio-politically). As Belarusian (blue) passports expire for Belarusians residing in the EU who have no other documents, this becomes a problem not only for holders of expired passports. Their countries of residence will increasingly need to address the legal status and documentation of Belarusians with expired passports.

Mass granting of citizenship or refugee status could be a solution for Council of Europe member states where this is politically acceptable.

Another solution could be recognition of the national Belarusian passport (red; the "New Belarus Passport") — with a status ranging from an additional identification document to a valid passport. This, however, requires enormous political will, as does creating a universal analog of the "Nansen passport".

In these circumstances, the most realistic approach appears to be advocating the experience of Poland, Lithuania, Germany, and other countries that issue alien passports (travel documents).

- Demonstrating the ineffectiveness of blanket visa bans. The economic and humanitarian harm is more real than the hypothetical security benefits. Belarusian democratic forces can demonstrate to EU countries the ineffectiveness of blanket visa bans (Czechia, Estonia), which encourage relocatees to move into irregular status or third countries. This issue, however, is extremely politically sensitive in the context of trends towards securitization and growing anti-migrant sentiment in European societies as a whole.

- Humanitarian assistance to diasporas in countries where Alien's passports are not issued, and the legal status of Belarusians is complicated. In countries such as Ukraine or Georgia, under specific conditions, there are more than ten thousand Belarusians in each. Unable to obtain new documents, these people inevitably become stranded in the country without access to basic services such as international travel or banking. Belarusian democratic forces will need to develop targeted humanitarian and legal assistance mechanisms for these tens of thousands of people, in cooperation with both local authorities and international humanitarian organizations.

ANNEX

Methodological notes on the aggregated database:

The information collection system is based on grouping 46 Council of Europe member states into 4 analytical groups (Groups A–D):

- **Group A** (Harmonized EU Statistics / Eurostat): 27 EU member states.

Supranational datasets used:

- migr_pop1ctz — resident population by citizenship (as of 1 January).

- migr_pop3ctb — population by country of birth (BSSR/Republic of Belarus).

- migr_resfirst — first residence permits.

- migr_resvalid — valid temporary/permanent residence permits at the end of the year (Valid permits).

- migr_asyappctza — applications for international protection (Asylum).

- **Group B** (Developed non-EU countries / High-Quality NSI Registers): Countries with high standards of national population registers (United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein). Data directly from statistical offices (Home Office UK, SSB, FSO).

- **Group C** (Eastern Europe, Balkans and Caucasus / NSI + Administrative Data): Countries with partial publication of data, requiring cross-validation through departmental requests (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

- **Group D** (Microstates and specific jurisdictions / Special Jurisdiction NSI): Territories with targeted registers or specific accounting systems (Turkey, Andorra, San Marino, Monaco).

Research models:

- Flow and stock analysis (Inflow / Outflow & Stock Framework):

Comparison of the annual net migration balance (Net Flow = Inflow - Outflow) with the accumulated core (Stock). For example, in Georgia, the cumulative balance for 2021–2024 was +12,808 people (an inflow of 13,361 in 2022 was followed by a net outflow of -980 in 2023 and -147 in 2024).

- Two-stage secondary migration model (Two-Stage Secondary Relocation):

    Stage 1 (2020–2022): Initial evacuation to visa-free jurisdictions (Georgia, Turkey, Armenia).

    Stage 2 (2023–2026): Secondary movement from visa-free hubs to EU countries (Spain, Poland, Germany, Cyprus) due to residence permit refusals, Decree No. 278, and geopolitical risks.

- Service and roaming indication:

Use of aggregated mobile operator data to verify actual presence. In Slovenia, the increase in unique users of Belarusian SIM cards from 2,095 (2021) to 3,713 (2025), alongside a decline in the share of tourists from 37.8% to 22.6%, demonstrated the transition of a transit flow into the category of temporary residence.

Methodological Vocabulary

- Population Stock (migr_pop1ctz): Accumulated number of persons with Belarusian citizenship legally residing in the country as of 1 January.

- Migration Flow (Migration Flow / Inflow-Outflow): Number of registered entries and exits during a calendar year with the intention to reside for more than 183 days.

- First Residence Permit (migr_resfirst): A residence permit valid for at least 3 months, issued to a citizen of Belarus for the first time in that state.

- Valid Residence Permit (Valid Permit / migr_resvalid): Total number of active residence permits as of 31 December.

- Country of Birth (migr_pop3ctb): A classifier recording birth in the territory of the BSSR/ Republic of Belarus, regardless of current citizenship.

- Alien's Travel Document: A passport substitute issued by EU states (Poland, Germany, Lithuania) to Belarusians when they cannot renew their national passport due to the risk of repression.

- Decree No. 278 (Transnational Repression): A regulatory act dated 04.09.2023 that prohibited diplomatic missions of the Republic of Belarus from renewing passports abroad.

- Status Stability Index (1.0–10.0): An assessment of the reliability and long-term sustainability of a Belarusian's legal position in the country of residence. (assessment category)

- Degree of Legal Risk (Low/Medium/High/Critical): The level of vulnerability of the diaspora to extraterritorial persecution, cancellation of a residence permit, or deportation. (assessment category)

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