Human rights in Belarus: has Minsk changed?

May 11, 2015, 3. 00 p.m.

CEU, Nador 9, Popper Room

Over the last 15 years Belarus has been known as "Europe's last dictatorship". However, in the last several months Minsk appears in the news as hosting the Ukraine peace talks and conducting a flexible foreign policy despite its membership in the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. Has President Lukashenka, the absolute ruler of Belarus, eased his trademark suppression of human rights and civic freedoms? Has the EU gained human rights concessions through its evolving détente with the Belarus government? Is Europe on track to re-evaluate Lukashenka in light of what is happening in Ukraine and Russia?

Opening remarks: John Shattuck, President and Rector, Central European University

Speakers:
Ales Bialiatski, Head of the "Viasna" Human Rights Centre of Belarus, Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Miklós Haraszti, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, director of research on human rights at CEU-CENS

Moderated by Péter Balázs, Director, Center for EU Enlargement Studies

Ales Bialiatski PhD, an anti-Soviet dissident in the 1980s, founded the Viasna Human Rights Centre of Belarus in 1996. The Minsk-based organization provides assistance to political prisoners and their families. From 2011, Ales Bialiatski spent three years in prison on made-up criminal charges, and was amnestied in 2014 in the wake of momentous support from governments and international NGOs. Among his many honors, he won the 2012 Lech Wałęsa Award, and the 2013 Václav Havel Human Rights Award of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

RSVP at Ms Zselyke Tófalvi tofalviz@ceu.edu