

## CEMR joins the 2022 Campaign #DemocracyUnderPressure in Belarus

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions joins the campaign this year- [similar to last year](#), #DemocracyUnderPressure in Belarus initiated by the Young European Federalists (JEF).

We **support** the Belarusian people's wishes for a peaceful democratic transition in the country at all levels -including the local governance systems to make them more democratic. The process following the Presidential elections of August 2020, which were neither free nor fair.

CEMR **recalls** the last year's [statement](#) and urges the EU institutions and national governments to strengthen assistance to Belarusian civil society, including to organisations promoting local democracy and municipal autonomy, which are a genuine training ground for democratic citizenship and the rule of law.

We **express** our solidarity towards border cities and regions in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and we welcome the European Commission's [proposition](#) on the temporary legal and practical measures to address the emergency situation at the EU's external border with Belarus.

We **address** our members, like last year, to illuminate their public buildings in the colour of the Belarusian flag on 25 March unofficial day of freedom in Belarus, celebrated annually by the democratic opposition.

### Information corner

#### **Local Government in Belarus, discover how it works:**

Belarus is not a member state of the [Council of Europe](#) and therefore, has not adhered to the [European Charter for Local Self-Government](#).

According to the [comparative study](#) published by the Council of Europe on the Roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in the [Eastern Partnership](#) Countries, there are two types of local authorities in Belarus:

- **Local Governments** refer to **Executive Committees**. They are state administration bodies, not accountable to citizens. They are directly nominated by, subordinated and accountable to the President of the Republic of Belarus.
- **Local self-government** refers to the **Local Council of Deputies** elected by citizens every four years. Local councillors execute their powers on an unpaid basis.

Local Governments have a greater sphere of competencies than the Local Council of Deputies (130 against 50) and have a direct impact on citizens day-to-day life activities. Read more about competences [here](#).

There are three levels of local self-government:

- **Regional level** There are three paid members of staff (chairperson of the Council, main specialist and the driver)
- **Basic level** There are three paid members of staff (chairperson of the Council, main specialist and the driver)
- **Primary level** There are no paid members of staff.

It is noteworthy that there is a combination of elected and executive powers at the primary (rural) level: the chairperson of the council also serves as the chairperson of the executive committee at the primary (rural) level (state administration). Therefore, if such a chairperson



of the executive committee leaves the post, such person automatically loses the elected position of the chairperson of the council at the primary (rural) level.

According to the Constitution, there is no municipal property, it is considered a subclass of state property.