



Country Profile: Belarus

Belarus became an independent republic on August 25, 1991, after the breakup of the Soviet Union. In November 1996, a constitutional referendum, not recognized by the international community, centralized power in the executive branch (president), headed by Aleksandr Lukashenka. Economic and political reform in Belarus has stalled or is being reversed under his authoritarian government. The Belarusian Government's human rights record remains very poor. President Lukashenka gained a third five-year term as president in March 2006, in an election that international observers judged to be seriously flawed. Democratic nations, including the U.S. and EU, condemned the subsequent governmental crackdown on peaceful protests in Minsk, and imposed visa restrictions and other sanctions on senior officials. Both Belarusian and Russian are official languages, and Russian is widely spoken throughout the country, particularly in the cities. Tourist facilities are not highly developed, but food and lodging in the capital and some regional centers are adequate. Read the Department of State [Background Notes](#) on Belarus for additional information.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Name:	Belarus
Continent:	Europe
Capital City:	Minsk
Boundary Countries:	Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine
Recommended Hospitals in Capital:	
Main Cities:	Minsk, Brest, Polatsk, Orsha, Mazyr, Pinsk, Hrodna
Country Size:	207,600 sq km
Population:	9,724,723

COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

Language:	Belarusian, Russian, other
Currency:	Belarusian Ruble (BYB/BYR)
Predominant Religions:	Eastern Orthodox 80%, other (including Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim) 20%
National Holidays:	Independence Day, 3 July (1944); note - 3 July 1944 was the date Minsk was liberated from German troops, 25 August 1991 was the date of independence from the Soviet Union
Economic Status:	Belarus's economy in 2006 posted more than 8% growth. Trade with Russia - by far its largest single trade partner - decreased in 2006, largely as a result of a change in the way the Value Added Tax (VAT) on trade was collected. Trade with European countries increased.
Security:	Belarus Armed Forces: Land Force, Air and Air Defense Force
US Presence:	U.S. Embassy Minsk 46 Starovilenskaya St. Minsk 220002, Belarus Phone: +375 17 210-12-83 / 217-7347 / 217-7348 Fax: +375 17 234-78-53

Major Airports:	Airports: 86, Airports with paved runways: 41 Minsk Airport, Belarus, 220054 Minsk, BELARUS Tel: +375 17 279-14-36, +375 17 279-17-84, (Cargo Handling) +375 17 279-17-04, +375 17 279-10-69, (Operating Company) +375 17 279-18-44, +375 17 279-14-61 Fax: +375 17 279-17-68, +375 17 279-14-36, +375 17 279-10-69, +375 17 279-10-62 Email: info@airport.by Website: www.airport.by Customs Tel: +375 17 279-10-37 Fax: +375 17 279-16-39 Customs Hours: 24 hours
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