

Justyna Olędzka*

Deadlock or new opening? Current state and prospects for development of Lithuanian- -Belarusian relations**

Impas czy nowe otwarcie? Stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju stosunków litewsko-białoruskich

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to discuss the trajectory of Belarusian-Lithuanian relations with a particular focus on the period after the 2020 Belarusian presidential election, which resulted in a change in international relations in the region. This was the moment that redefined the Lithuanian-Belarusian relations, which until 2020 were satisfactory for both sides (especially in the economic aspect). However, Lithuania began to pursue a reactive policy of promoting the democratisation of Belarus and provided multi-level support to Belarusian opposition forces. The current problems in bilateral relations (e.g., the future of Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant located in Astravyets) have been put on the agenda for discussion at the EU level, while the instruments of a hybrid conflict in the form of an influx of immigrants into Lithuania, controlled by the Belarusian regime, have become a key issue for the future prospects of relations between Belarus and Lithuania.

Keywords: Lithuanian-Belarusian relations, integration of Russia and Belarus, Eastern Europe, Lithuanian foreign policy

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest omówienie kierunku relacji białorusko-litewskich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem okresu po wyborach prezydenckich na Białorusi w 2020 roku, które spowodowały zmianę stosunków międzynarodowych w regionie. Był to moment, który przededefiniował stosunki litewsko-białoruskie, które do 2020 roku były satysfakcjonujące dla obu stron (zwłaszcza w aspekcie ekonomicznym). Litwa zaczęła jednak prowadzić aktywną politykę promowania demokratyzacji Białorusi i udzielała wielopoziomowego wsparcia siłom białoruskiej opozycji. Bieżące problemy

* Justyna Olędzka – University of Białystok, Poland, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7037-277X>, e-mail: j.oledzka@uwb.edu.pl.

** The work is the result of a research project No. UMO-2014/12/S/HS5/00370 financed by the National Science Centre.

w stosunkach dwustronnych (m.in. przyszłość białoruskiej elektrowni jądrowej w Ostrowcu) weszły na agendę dyskusji na szczeblu unijnym, a instrumenty konfliktu hybrydowego w postaci napływu imigrantów na Litwę, kontrolowanego przez białoruski reżim, stały się kwestią kluczową dla przyszłych perspektyw w stosunkach Białorusi i Litwy.

Słowa kluczowe: stosunki litewsko-białoruskie, integracja Rosji i Białorusi, Europa Wschodnia, polityka zagraniczna Litwy

Introduction

Since 2020, following the social protests and escalation of violence against the opposition after the presidential elections in Belarus, international relations in Central and Eastern Europe changed. The country which is vividly trying to position itself as the leader among those declaring support for the Belarusian opposition is Lithuania, resulting mainly from the refusal to recognise the official election results in Belarus and the swift, unequivocal declaration of support for the anti-regime protests of Belarusian society¹. Lithuania was also in the vanguard of countries proposing sanctions against A. Lukashenko and other representatives of the Belarusian power elite, calling on the international community to support Belarusians persecuted by the authorities.

Such a position of one of the Baltic states should not be surprising. Lithuanians remember the repression of the Soviet era perfectly. They are full of empathy and compassion for their neighbours, with whom they often have social relations. More and more Belarusians are choosing to migrate to Lithuania for work, and the number of Belarusian students is also increasing². Therefore, apart from the official activity of Lithuanian state institutions, non-political factors also contributed to Lithuania's current position towards Minsk. The social memory of the Sąjūdis tradition and the "Baltic Way" is still alive. Many Lithuanians at Euromaidan showed support for Ukrainians³. Fa-

- 1 The President of Lithuania, G. Nausėda, stressed that Lithuania does not recognise A. Lukashenko as the legitimate leader of Belarus. Further, the head of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, L. Linkevičius, stated that Mr Lukashenko is, in a political and legal sense, the former President of Belarus.
- 2 I. Žvinakytė, *Expelled and persecuted Belarusian students find refuge at Lithuanian universities*, <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2021/02/15/expelled-and-persecuted-belarusian-students-find-refuge-at-lithuanian-universities/> [28.05.2021].
- 3 On 23 August 2020, up to 50 000 Lithuanians took part in forming a 32-kilometre-long human chain stretching from Vilnius Cathedral Square to the border town of Medniki as a gesture of solidarity with Belarus. Politicians such as the President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda, former

mous representatives of the media, science, culture, and art in Lithuania⁴ promote initiatives to activate Belarusian civil society⁵. On the other hand, at the level of interstate relations, Vilnius' position was, to some extent, unexpected. Its long-standing flexibility towards Belarus (among the EU member states, Lithuania had for a long time been distinguished by relatively good relations with Belarus) was motivated primarily by fruitful economic cooperation. Another reason was that Lithuania wished to play an increasingly important role in the region's politics by maintaining correct relations with all of its neighbours, regardless of their political peculiarities or problems with respect to human rights⁶. The systematic deepening of authoritarianism in the Belarusian political system has therefore not been an impassable barrier to building a common area of Belarusian-Lithuanian cooperation for many years. Neither did the fact that the two countries belonged to rival military-political blocs stand in the way of dialogue based on the principles of good neighbourliness, nor did the failure of the Eastern Partnership project, which was supposed to give Belarus access to a wide range of instruments for cooperation with Europe in order to build a common area of democracy, prosperity, stability, and dialogue. The Eastern Partnership undoubtedly helped put three countries (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) on the path to democratic and economic transition. Still, in the case of Belarus, the concept did not work. However, Lithuania undoubtedly supported Belarus (Vilnius hosted the Eastern Partnership Summit in 2013) and opted not to use sanctions as a tool to pressure it.

Naturally, Minsk also had a number of non-economic benefits resulting from its cooperation with Vilnius. First and foremost, it was used to strengthen Belarus' position in relations with the Russian Fed-

Presidents Valdas Adamkus and Dalia Grybauskaitė and the President of the Seimas Viktoras Pranckietis also attended the event.

- 4 Including racing driver Benediktas Vanagas, director Dalia Ibelhauptaitė, actor Marius Repšys, poet Antanas A. Jonynas, leader of the rock band Antis Algirdas Kaušpėdas.
- 5 An example of such a project is *Go Belarus* (<https://www.facebook.com/gobelarus2020/>) campaign, which, for example, raised funds for *BY_Help* (<https://www.belarus97.pro>) campaign aimed at supporting protesters and arrested Belarusians and treating victims of pacification.
- 6 Former President Valdas Adamkus even described Lithuania's policy towards Belarus as a disaster (*V. Adamkus: Lietuvos politika Baltarusijos atžvilgiu ištiko disaster*, <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/vadamkus-lietuvos-politika-baltarusijos-atzilgiu-istiko-katastrofa> [1.06.2021]).

eration (especially during the Russian-Belarusian “gas wars”). It also opened up new opportunities for the diversification of supplies and transportation of energy resources, which was a matter of the utmost political importance.

The dramatic change in Lithuania’s attitude towards the regime of A. Lukashenko is an interesting research issue, and the aim of this article is to answer the following questions: What factors induced the modification of Lithuania’s strategy to date, which primarily involved the pragmatism of bilateral relations with Belarus? Has the lack of results in the liberalisation of the political system in Belarus influenced the change of Lithuania’s stance towards the actions of A. Lukashenko’s regime?

The hypothesis of the paper is that due to the transformation of foreign policy principles, there was a significant adjustment in Lithuania’s policy towards Belarus. It abandoned its long-standing role as a mediator in Belarusian-EU relations, which will consequently result in a loosening of economic ties between Minsk and Vilnius. This also means that faced with the dilemma of choosing the constructional axis of the policy towards Belarus, Lithuania opted for the sphere of democratic values rather than tangible economic benefits generated by the hitherto existing cooperation triangle: economy-trade-transit. This position will certainly also translate into Lithuanian-Russian relations, which will deteriorate significantly.

1. Dilemmas of Lithuanian policy towards Belarus – interests or values?

Lithuania’s policy towards Belarus has gone through different phases. It began on December 20, 1991, when the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania recognised the independence of the Republic of Belarus, and seven days later, the Republic of Belarus acknowledged the independence of the Republic of Lithuania. A year later, diplomatic relations between the countries were established.

Even in the pre-Lukashenko era, the neighbouring states managed to reach an agreement on several contentious issues, and the dialogue involved both symbolic gestures (as in the case of the Belarusian parliament’s stance towards the 1991 events in Vilnius) and formal regulations (the signing of the Declaration on principles of good neighbourly

relations between Lithuania and Belarus by Stanislav Shushkevich and Vytautas Landsbergis on October 24, 1991). On the other hand, the economic rapprochement of the two countries was mainly influenced by their location and the low dynamics of cooperation between Belarus and Poland. This resulted in the signing of an Agreement in 1994 on the use of Lithuanian ports by Belarus and an improvement in the trade balance of the parties. The port of Klaipėda, which gave Belarus access to the sea and enabled Lithuania to reap economic benefits, was of particular importance in this respect.

After Alexander Lukashenko seized power, Belarusian-Lithuanian relations had broad prospects for multi-vector cooperation⁷ despite an apparent anti-democratic turn in Belarus' domestic policy. They were sealed by the President Lukashenko's visit to Vilnius in 1995, during which the Treaty on good neighbourly relations and cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Lithuania was signed.⁸ The next visits took place in 1997 and 2009. In turn, the President of Lithuania was in Belarus in 2010. According to the President of Belarus, the bilateral relations between Minsk and Vilnius at the time could be regarded as exemplary.

At this point, it should be emphasised that diplomatic relations between the European Union and Belarus have been very limited and have deteriorated systematically since 1997. In 1998, the EU announced a ban on issuing entry visas to representatives of the Belarusian authorities EU territory (cancelled in 1999), in 2000 the EU did not send its observers to the parliamentary elections, and in 2004 and 2006 it imposed further sanctions on Belarus. In 2012, some ambassadors were expelled from EU countries as retaliation for EU sanctions (A. Lukashenko and 130 representatives of Belarusian power structures were banned from entering the European Union). However, Lithuania broke the EU solidarity at that time (as did Latvia) and did not apply any personal sanctions against Belarus. To sum up, pragmatic Lithuania, although officially respecting the position of Brussels, was

7 G. Ioffe, *Reassessing Lukashenka. Belarus in Cultural and Geopolitical Context*, Palgrave Macmillan UK 2014, p. 301.

8 The development of bilateral contacts is described in detail, for example, by E. Mironowicz, *Stosunki polityczne i gospodarcze białorusko-litewskie (1990-2015)*, "Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2017, vol. LII, no. 1, p. 239.

not enthusiastic about the restrictions and international isolation of Belarus and maintained diplomatic contacts with Minsk. It also created new areas of dialogue, including military, cultural, and environmental cooperation.

As Minsk became involved in further projects to integrate the post-Soviet space and Vilnius focused on NATO and the EU⁹, the foreign policy vectors of Belarus and Lithuania naturally began to run in separate directions. Lithuania was at the time regarded by Belarusian authorities as an ally of Western countries, hostile to Belarus and fomenting Belarusian opposition, but this did not adversely affect the intensification of economic relations between the two countries. On the contrary, the balance of trade was growing. Both parties were interested in maintaining cooperation in the area of transit and activities aimed at energy diversification. In subsequent years, the shape of relations between Belarus and Lithuania was not a direct derivative of relations between the European Union and Moscow or NATO-Moscow. It was instead just another manifestation of the Belarusian policy of multi-vectorism and economic pragmatism. At the same time, however, Lithuania refused to legitimise the political changes taking place in Belarus. It did not recognise the results of the 1996 constitutional referendum in Belarus or the results of the 2006 presidential elections.

This policy of double optics was particularly characteristic of the initial period of Dalia Grybauskaitė's presidency. By 2010, relations between Minsk and Vilnius had warmed significantly, and both countries benefited from such a turn of events. There were phases during which the Lithuanian President criticised the Belarusian opposition¹⁰. This rotation enabled Lithuania to pursue its own interests, which did not always coincide with the European Union's plans for Belarus¹¹. At that time, diplomatic relations at the highest levels were usually improved – the President of Belarus visited Lithuania; in turn, the President of

9 A broad description of the dynamics of international relations in the region includes the text: R. Ginevičius, M. Tvaronaviciene, M. Tvaronaviciene, R. Korsakiene, K. Kalaūinskaitė, *Lithuania – Belarus economic relations: How the EU accession impacted bilateral trade*, "Journal of Business Economics and Management" 2007, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 140.

10 See analysis: T. Janeliūnas, *Grybauskaitė zawiiodła się na Polsce*, <https://przegladbaltycki.pl/9225,tomas-janeliunas-grybauskaite-zawiodla-sie-na-polsce.html> [18.05.2021].

11 K. Buchowski, *Polityka zagraniczna Litwy 1990-2012. Główne kierunki i uwarunkowania*, Białystok 2013, pp. 90-91.

Lithuania visited the Belarus Expo 2009 exhibition. As a result, economic cooperation vividly intensified¹². However, Lithuania's stance towards Belarus was not unusual during this period. In 2009, President A. Lukashenko came on an official visit to Italy, and lower-ranking officials of the Belarusian regime paid official visits to Poland and Germany. At the same time, Belarus hosted, among others, the ministers of foreign affairs of Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Finland. There was, therefore, no question of the actual isolation of the Belarusian dictatorship.

The illusion of future improvement in Belarus's relations with the European Union was shattered in 2010 when, once again, it became apparent that Alexander Lukashenko's regime was suppressing opposition protests challenging the election results. At that time, the position of President D. Grybauskaitė also changed dramatically, and Belarusian-Lithuanian relations were redefined. Even then, however, there was no shortage of critics who believed that once again, after the presidential elections in Belarus, Lithuania applied double standards by taking a vague stance officially criticising the undemocratic conduct and the non-transparent nature of the election campaign, while at the same time continuing the successful Lithuanian-Belarusian economic dialogue. Lithuania's actions were criticised in the European forum. Strong opposition voices also emerged in Vilnius's internal politics. Under their influence, among others, a whole series of measures were initiated to support the Belarusian opposition. The leading measures were relocating the European Humanities University¹³ from Minsk, as well as allocation of the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, the Belarusian House for Human Rights and the Independent Institute for Social, Economic and Political Studies in Lithuania.

Despite these overtly anti-Lukashenko gestures, practically until the start of open hostilities between Ukraine and Russia, bilateral relations between Lithuania and Belarus maintained a mutually convenient status quo, even as over the years, much changed at the level of

12 G. Ioffe, *Belarus and Lithuania: The Estranged Brethren*, "Eurasia Daily Monitor" 2012, vol. 9, issue 214, Jamestown Foundation, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/50b348782.html> [9.06.2021].

13 Transferred from Minsk to Vilnius in 2005, the European Humanities University is funded by EU countries. Over 15 years, 2,500 people have graduated from the university, 95% of whom were citizens of Belarus.

dialogue between the societies of these countries. Critical towards the regime of A. Lukashenko, young Belarusians who were willing to visit Lithuania for tourist, educational, and social purposes were increasingly feeling the difference that separated their homeland from democratic Europe. However, this did not significantly affect the revision of the Lithuanian authorities' stance because after Gitanas Nausėda became President, the option of softening Lithuania's approach to Belarus returned once again¹⁴. In 2019, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius met Vladimir Makei, head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. Also, Jaroslav Narkevič, Minister of Transport and Communications of Lithuania, visited Minsk.

2. Difficult topics in Lithuanian-Belarusian relations

Despite their successful long-term economic cooperation, these neighbouring countries still have many complex topics that reappeared in the public debate. One of them was a shared history, documented by the existence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to which the emblem of Belarus, adopted in 1991, referred. Historical subjects were essential in the 1990s when newly established independent states sought sources of their identity, even in negative identification instruments¹⁵. A common past could therefore divide instead of connect, especially since Belarus during the presidency of A. Lukashenko returned to the Soviet historiographic concept, in which Belarusians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were part of a second-class society, exploited and suppressed in their political and national aspirations¹⁶.

The date of the chance for a symbolic new opening could have been November 22, 2019, when the state funeral of the remains, discovered in 2017, of Konstanty 'Kastus' Kalinowski, Zygmunt Sierakowski and 18 other participants of the 1863-1864 uprising was held. A. Lu-

14 In December 2019, during a speech at the conference of Eastern Europe Studies Centre, the President of Lithuania called for new ties with Belarus and questioned the effectiveness of the EU's policy of isolating the country.

15 D. Potjomkina, D. Šukytė, *Belarus and the Baltics: Did Crisis Really Become an Opportunity?* [in:] *Belarusian Foreign Policy: 360°*, A. Kudors (ed.), Centre for East European Policy Studies, 2017, pp. 140-146.

16 G. Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus and How Western Foreign Policy Misses the Mark*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2014, p. 200.

kashenko's absence at the ceremony was significant, as were the words of Minister G. Landsbergis emphasising the validity of the slogan "For our freedom and yours", which sounded like a strong expression of solidarity with the Belarusian opposition. They highlighted not only the common history but also the universality and timelessness of pro-democracy activities. In response, the Belarusian authorities deplored, in official statements, the instrumentalization of historical memory by Poland and Lithuania, saying that such action is evidence of attempts by neighbouring countries to destabilise the situation in Belarus.

Undoubtedly, however, one of the most critical barriers to Lithuanian-Belarusian relations became not the past, but the issue of the future of the Astravets NPP, built thanks to Russian loans by Rosatom¹⁷. Belarus accused Vilnius of politicising nuclear security because of Lithuania's negative attitude towards this investment. For Lithuania, the Belarusian power plant poses a potential threat, and this position was extended to other countries involved in the work of the Baltic Council of Ministers, which plan to boycott electricity from Belarus¹⁸. As initially the position of Estonia and Latvia was not identical to that of Lithuania, this is a diplomatic success for Lithuania. Latvia had not ruled out the possibility of purchasing energy from a Belarusian power plant, but thanks to the fact that the Baltic states unanimously did not recognise the electoral legitimacy of A. Lukashenko, it was also possible to politicise the problem of energy purchases from Astravets. Previously, despite appeals from the Lithuanian Parliament¹⁹ condemning the Belarusian investment and expressing concern over the region's energy²⁰ and ecological security, and despite President Nausėda's position urging the implementation of requirements and recommendations for tests prior to the nuclear power plant's commissioning, or

17 Z. Kriščiūnė, *Astravets Nuclear Power Plant*, <https://cepa.org/astravets-nuclear-power-plant/> [10.05.2021].

18 R. Astapenia, *Belarus-Lithuania Relations: Common Interests and the Nuclear Dispute*, "Analytical paper 12" 2018, <https://belarusdigest.com/belarus-lithuania-relations-en.pdf> [20.05.2021].

19 In 2017, a statement by the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the construction of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant (the Astravets NPP) in Belarus was published (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, <https://www.urm.lt/default/en/news/statement-by-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-on-astravets-nuclear-power-plant-under-construction-in-belarus> [15.05.2021]), and subsequently the Lithuanian government adopted a law prohibiting the purchase of energy from power plants that do not meet international safety standards.

20 It was due to the probability of contamination of water flowing through Vilnius.

Lithuania sending protest notes to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the start of electricity production in Astravets, no progress had actually been made.

Due to the importance of the matter and the memory of the Chernobyl disaster²¹, but also due to unofficial reports that the Belarusian side hid information about incidents related to the commissioning of the power plant (which the Belarusian side has consistently denied)²², the problem of the Astravets Power Plant became a socially important issue and an element of the internal political game in Lithuania. Two-thirds of Lithuanians are afraid of the consequences of the power plant in Astravets, which is only 40 kilometres from Vilnius²³. In the event of a disaster at the power plant, evacuation drills are being held to simulate the coordination of government structures in a crisis caused by a nuclear power plant accident²⁴. Lithuania also increased stocks of potassium iodide (the main component of Lugol's solution). In addition, simulated rescue operations are planned on an international level. The lack of clear decisions by the Belarusian side on where waste from the power plant will be stored is not conducive to lowering the temperature of the dispute. Therefore, it is not surprising that in June of this year, Litgrid²⁵ reported that after the first unit of the Astravets Power Plant started operating, Lithuania began the process of imple-

- 21 Tension was further heightened on 25 April 2021, when, on the eve of the 35th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, a message was posted on the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant's website in which plant workers reported on the haste and pressure from the authorities accompanying the reactor start-up. According to the Belarusian authorities, it was a cyber-attack (statement by the Ministry of Energy on the subject, https://t.me/Minenergo_by/264 [1.05.2021]).
- 22 On 7 March, Belarusian users reported on Telegram about the failure of the cooling system at the Astravets NPP. According to Julius Žiliukas, head of the Lithuanian Centre for Radiological Safety, it is impossible to determine unequivocally whether such an accident occurred (B. Gerdžiūnas, *Belarus' radiation monitoring goes dark after the alleged incident*, 25 March 2021, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1372826/belarus-radiation-monitoring-goes-dark-after-alleged-incident> [11.05.2021]).
- 23 According to the Baltijos Tyrimai survey, 65.5% of Lithuanians believe that the power plant in Astravets poses a threat. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the results of research conducted by scientists from the Kaunas University of Technology (Kauno technologijos universitetas, *Tyrimas: Lietuvos gyventojams Astravo atominės elektrinės kaimynystė – nepriimtina ir grėsminga*, 29 April 2019, <https://ktu.edu/news/tyrimas-lietuvos-gyventojams-astravo-atomines-elektrines-kaimynyste-nepriimtina-ir-gresminga/> [10.05.2021]).
- 24 J. Juozaitis, *Astravo atominė elektrinė Lietuvos užsienio politikoje: tikslai, priemonės ir ateities perspektyvos*, "Lietuvos Metine Strayegine Apžvalga" 2019, vol. 17, p. 297.
- 25 *Lithuania takes steps to control power links with Belarus*, https://www.baltictimes.com/lithuania_takes_steps_to_control_power_links_with_belarus/ [6.06.2021].

menting the so-called Anti-Contamination Law, which prohibits the import of electricity from countries in which nuclear power plants are considered unsafe.

3. Lithuania in the face of the political crisis in Belarus

Despite the contentious historical issues and the lack of agreement on the power plant in Astravets, it was only the events of August 2020 that radically changed the optics of the future of Belarusian-Lithuanian relations. Lithuania's position on the results of the presidential elections in Belarus was clear and immediate. The Lithuanian authorities did not recognise A. Lukashenko as President and resolutely engaged in dialogue with the Belarusian opposition. The pro-Belarusian measures taken by Vilnius were bi-vector. On the one hand, support was provided to those affected by political repression (including simplifying asylum procedures), financial support was increased for Belarusian students at the European Humanities University, and relocation of highly qualified professionals to Lithuania were facilitated.

On the other hand, Lithuania recognised Svetlana Tikhanovskaya as the only legitimately elected President, and Lithuanian politicians supported the Belarusian opposition in the struggle to hold new presidential elections²⁶ and lobbied for financial support from the European Union²⁷. It is significant that today President G. Nausėda, who was originally one of the greatest optimists for the past normalisation of relations with A. Lukashenko's Belarus, can be considered one of the most active advocates of the Belarusian opposition's cause.

Lithuania also announced five-year personal sanctions against A. Lukashenko and the people associated with his regime (with the possibility of extending the list and the period of application of the sanctions)²⁸. Another undoubted diplomatic success of Lithuania is its regional activity: working out a unified position with Latvia and Estonia on Be-

26 Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and her children were given shelter in Lithuania.

27 Lithuania proposed the European Commission to establish an EU support fund for the opposition, and on August 19, 2020, on the Polish-Lithuanian initiative, an extraordinary meeting of the European Council was held, devoted to the events in Belarus.

28 The sanctions list published on 31 August included 32 names alongside Lukashenko, his son Viktor and people from the dictator's administration and power ministries. They shall not be entitled to enter Lithuania for a period of five years.

larus²⁹, providing an active presence in the Lublin Triangle initiatives, and consolidating the political perspective of Lithuania and Ukraine on the future of Belarus.

Vytis Jurkonis, director of Freedom House's Lithuanian branch, described the current state of bilateral relations as a "dystopian relationship"³⁰, which is evidence of the wasted potential of shared history and good neighbourly relations. According to the current message of A. Lukashenko, the relationship between the countries has changed from a state maintaining good neighbourly relations to Lithuania becoming an enemy (on a par with Poland or other Baltic states). According to the Belarusian leader, Poland's and Lithuania's position towards Belarus may negate much, if not all, of what was achieved³¹. In the meantime, Lithuanian Interior Minister Agne Bilaitė said that the regime of Alexander Lukashenko was conducting hybrid warfare actions against Lithuania³². To confirm these words, the Lithuanian authorities gave the example of Belarus deliberately allowing illegal immigrants from Asia and the Middle East to pass through its territory. According to A. Bilaitė, the Belarusian authorities do it on purpose (the Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makey even threatened that Minsk would break off cooperation with the EU in fighting illegal migration³³)³⁴.

29 A list of Belarusian officials banned from entering the Baltic states was jointly elaborated. In total, there are currently 274 Belarusian officials and representatives of the armed forces on the sanctions lists.

30 Quote for V. Jurkonis, *Atsitiktinumai – Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos tarpusavio santykių distopija*, <https://www.tspmi.vu.lt/komentarai/vytis-jurkonis-atsitiktinumai-baltarusijos-ir-lietuvos-tarpusavio-santykiu-distopija/1.06.2021>.

31 See the audio-visual material: *Лукашенко: позиция Польши и Литвы может перечеркнуть многие достижения в наших отношениях*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_xE8h4ymOw [15.05.2021].

32 The minister's statement is available at: Delfi.lt, *Bilaitė: prieš Lietuvą pradėtas hibridinis karas, bet situacija valdoma*, 4 June 2021, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/bilotaite-pries-lietuva-pradetas-hibridinis-karas-bet-situacija-valdoma.d?id=87389401>, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/bilotaite-pries-lietuva-pradetas-hibridinis-karas-bet-situacija-valdoma.d?id=87389401> [4.06.2021].

33 The entire statement of the minister is available at: Belta.by, *Беларусь может приостановить взаимодействие с ЕС по борьбе с нелегальной миграцией и рассматривает целесообразность участия в ВП*, 26 May 2021, <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-mozhet-priostanovit-vzaimodejstvie-s-es-po-borbe-s-negalnoj-migratsiej-i-rassmatrivaet-443059-2021/> [1.05.2021].

34 Agne Bilaitė's position is presented in the text: G. Jaruševičiūtė, *A. Bilaitė: lyginant su visais 2020 m. nelegalių migrantų srautai iš Baltarusijos šiemet padvigubėjo*, 2 June 2021, <https://www.>

According to the officers of the Lithuanian border guards, the Belarusian side is not only pushing out illegal immigrants who are brought to Lithuania within the framework of the „Sluice” operation to Belarus, but it is also recording videos with false testimonies by immigrants in which they accuse the Lithuanian border guards of beating them and the Belarusian border guards of violating the Lithuanian state border. This is one of the manifestations of disinformation used by Belarus to discredit Lithuania’s actions in retaliation for the Lithuanian support for the Belarusian opposition.

The Lithuanian side has undertaken a number of actions aimed at curbing the illegal migration procedure stimulated by Belarus. It has decided to build about 500 km of fence on the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, reinforce border controls and the number of border patrols, and introduce a state of emergency. Belarus, on the other hand, in response to another package of EU sanctions, has suspended the implementation of its agreement with the EU on readmission, which means that the migrants whom Lithuania plans to send back to Belarus will not be accepted by them.

The escalating problem of illegal migration has also motivated Ukraine to act, which has supported Lithuania with 38 tons of humanitarian aid materials and pledged to donate barbed wire. Meanwhile, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, declared support for Lithuania (the most likely dimensions of assistance are access to special funds and support for Lithuanian services in patrolling the borders).

Lithuania is strengthening its contacts with Western countries by building its position as an advocate of the democratic interest of Belarus. In this situation, the chances of maintaining economic cooperation with Belarus at the current level are diminishing, especially as the successive actions of the Belarusian authorities are becoming less and less pragmatic. The Belarusian Oil Company has terminated its cooperation with Klaipėdos Nafta, and consequently, the transportation and shipment of Belarusian petroleum products will be carried out to a greater extent through Russian ports and become 2-3 times

more expensive. This is not only more costly but also in the long term significantly weakens the position of Belarus vis-à-vis Russia. Lithuania's attitude will undoubtedly accelerate the process of Belarusian-Russian integration into the economic sphere and end a period of attempts to diversify Belarusian exports.

In addition, Lithuanian-Belarusian relations complicate Russia's position, which is not indifferent to Lithuania's commitment to defending the rights of the Belarusian opposition and maintains the narrative that Lithuania interferes with Belarus' internal affairs. The Russian-Belarusian integration project (including in terms of the armed forces) is seen by Vilnius as a threat to the security, stability, and independence of the Belarusian state, as expressed by the adoption by the Seimas on September 10, 2020, of a resolution on the "illegal and imposed Belarus" union with Russia. It defines the process of deeper integration as a crime against the Belarusian people and the annexation of Belarus³⁵.

This is another demonstration of the unequivocal position of Lithuanian parliamentarians on the events in Belarus after the resolution of August 18 2020³⁶. Almost immediately, a delegation for Belarus headed by Gediminas Kirkilas was also created, and Lithuanian parliamentarians repeatedly appealed to the institutions of the European Union and its Member States, the Council of Europe, and the NATO countries not to recognise A. Lukashenko as a legitimately elected leader. They also called for a repeat of the presidential elections in Belarus and patronised the "Parliamentarians for Freedom (MP4Freedom)" campaign.

Lithuania unequivocally responded negatively to the request of the Investigative Committee of Belarus for the extradition of Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Mantas Adomenas, insisted that Lithuania "does not betray people", and diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Belarus after the summon-

35 Full text of the resolution: *Seimo rezoliucijos „Dėl neteisėtos ir primetamos Rusijos sąjungos Baltarusijai“ projektas*, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/7d1d07b1f28811eab72ddb4a109da1b5> [1.05.2021].

36 On 18 August, at an extraordinary session, the Seimas of Lithuania adopted a resolution „On the situation in the Republic of Belarus after the rigged presidential elections“. The resolution states that the election results were falsified and also draws attention to violations of human and civil rights in Belarus. Full text of the act: *Seimo rezoliucijos „Dėl padėties Baltarusijos Respublikoje po suklastotų Prezidento rinkimų“ projektas*, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/34f7df80ddf411ea8f4ce1816a470b26> [1.05.2021].

ing of the Lithuanian ambassador for consultations are so bad that they could not be worse³⁷. It turned out, however, that they could be. Tensions between Minsk and Vilnius escalated after provocative actions by the Belarusian side involving the forced landing in Minsk of a Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius³⁸ and the arrest of journalist and blogger Roman Protasiewicz. In response to this hostile gesture, Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė demanded the immediate release of the passengers and crew detained in Minsk, and the Lithuanian prosecutor's office initiated an investigation into the matter.

Another provocation by the Belarusian side was the request by the General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus to question former Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus as a witness. The former President would be interrogated about the genocide of the Belarusian people during World War II (in the territory of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), committed by the German occupiers and their aides, the Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalions (Adamkus was a soldier in one of these formations, which is a well-known fact in Lithuania)³⁹.

The next step in violating the standards of international coexistence was the illegal detention by Belarus of a Lithuanian diplomatic vehicle at the border crossing in Miedniki and its return to Lithuania after Lithuanian couriers refused to open the car and break democratic seals⁴⁰. In the face of this act, which, according to the Lithuanian side, violates "all civilised principles" and violates the Vienna Convention

37 The entire statement of Minister M. Adomenas on: Lrt.lt, *Viceministras Adomėnas: Lietuva neišduos Cichanouskajos Baltarusijos režimui*, 3 March 2020, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1358468/landsbergis-apie-minsko-prasyma-iskuoti-cichanouskaja-greiciau-pragaras-uzsals-nei-mes-svarstysime-jusu-prasymus> [1.05.2021].

38 President G. Nausėda described it as an act of state terrorism, called on NATO and European Union allies to react, and assessed that the Belarusian regime posed a threat to international civil aviation, T. Vaitelė, *Nausėda Baltarusijos veiksmus vadina valstybinio terorizmo aktu: "Šį įvykį reikia vertinti kaip žmogaus pagrobimą"*, 23 May 2021, <https://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/lietuva/nauseda-baltarusijos-veiksmus-vadina-valstybinio-terorizmo-aktu-si-ivyki-reikia-vertinti-kaip-zmogaus-pagrobima-m1097338> [5.06.2021].

39 Lrytas, *Neįtikėtinų Baltarusijos režimo įtarimų sulaukęs V. Adamkus ir pats negalėjo patikėti: „Nesąmonė“*, 2 June 2021, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/06/02/news/baltarusijos-rezimas-nusitaikė-i-v-adamku-praso-apklausti-dėl-baltarusiu-genocido-karo-metais-19595971> [12.07.2021].

40 Z. Abromaitis, E. Špokas, M. Vilikanskytė, *Buęs ambasadorius Vaitiekūnas apie Baltarusijos akibrokštą pasienyje: tokio masto neadekvataus veikimo dar nebuvo*, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1425544/buves-ambasadorius-vaitiekunas-apie-baltarusijos-akibroksta-pasienyje-tokio-masto-neadekvataus-veikimo-dar-nebuvo> [4.06.2021].

on Diplomatic Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania expressed strong opposition, and Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis stated that “there is a raging dictator in the centre of Europe”⁴¹. As a matter of urgency, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned a representative of the Belarusian embassy, who was handed a protest note on this matter.

Was the lack of results in the area of liberalisation of the political system of Belarus the only factor influencing the change in Lithuania’s posture towards the actions of the Lukashenko regime? The issue of the integration of Russia and Belarus, especially in economic and military spheres, became an equally important problem. Lithuania’s security is also seen as regional security, and this is guaranteed by safeguarding the sovereignty of individual states of the area⁴². The outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict was also not without significance, as it built a new geopolitical situation in the region and became another signal for Lithuania that Russia did not give up its neo-imperial ambitions. This translated into a revision of the security philosophy of the Lithuanian state, as did the plans to allocate a Russian military base in Belarus. Integration of Russia and Belarus may be dangerous for Lithuania for another reason as well: Belarus will cease to be a kind of buffer zone that used to separate the Russian Federation from the West and, to some extent, protect Lithuania from Moscow’s hybrid actions, the effectiveness of which can be observed today in Ukraine.

Summary

Lithuania, which long held an extraordinarily flexible and often idealistic stance with the non-democratic regime of A. Lukashenko, is trying to redefine its position towards Belarus. It boldly corrects the hitherto priorities of bilateral policy and, thanks to the intensity and range of assistance provided to the Belarusian opposition, opens up an entirely new area of regional cooperation, building a broad coalition of

41 The radical position of Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis is described in the text: Delfi.lt, *Landsbergis: yra Europos patikinimas, kad nebūsime palikti vieni akivaizdoje su siautejančiu diktatoriumi*, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/landsbergis-yra-europos-patikinimas-kad-nebusime-palikti-vieni-akivaizdoje-su-siautejanciu-diktatoriumi.d?id=87337065> [4.06.2021].

42 A. Wilson, *Belarus: The Last European Dictatorship*, Yale University Press, 2021, pp. 300-322.

support for the initiatives of Belarusian civil society. The geographical proximity of Lithuania and the experience of Soviet times, which caused Lithuanian society to suffer severely, do not allow indifference to the events in Belarus. The demands for democratisation and the need to defend human rights in Belarus promoted by Vilnius are in line with Lithuania's broader international activities, which have included providing humanitarian support to the Palestinians and speaking out at the 45th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) as part of an interactive dialogue with the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine.

Vilnius also used the problematic international situation to reopen the topic of the energy and ecological future of the region, which is threatened by the launch of the Astravets NPP, portrayed as a geopolitical project of the Kremlin⁴³. The change of policy in Vilnius is undoubtedly influenced by the rapprochement between Moscow and Minsk, which is an essential factor affecting the security of Lithuania, the European Union, and NATO⁴⁴. This could lead to a strengthening of NATO's eastern flank and an intensification of Lithuania's cooperation with the United States in the future⁴⁵. In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė even emphasised that in relations with the regime of A. Lukashenko, "nothing can be excluded" and "one must be prepared for everything"⁴⁶.

A rational answer to the question of whether relations between Lithuania and Belarus has currently reached a deadlock is difficult because successive weeks provide evidence of increasingly irrational actions taken by A. Lukashenko not only towards Belarusian society but also towards neighbouring states. The narrowing potential for dialogue between Lithuania and Belarus is therefore also a reaction to the in-

43 The subject of threats to state security is discussed in the report *Grėsmių Nacionaliniam saugumui vertinimas 2021*, Vilnius 2021, https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-LT-el_.pdf [1.06.2021].

44 L. Kojala, W. Jakóbiak, *Russia's Influence and Presence in Lithuania*, <https://newdirection.online/2018-publications-pdf/ND-RussianInfluenceInLithuania-preview%28low-res%29.pdf> [1.06.2021].

45 For example, the visit of Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius to Washington in September 2020.

46 Based on the article: Lrytas, I. *Šimonytės interviu „Financial Times“: Lietuvai svarbiausia, kad nereikėtų spręsti, kieno argumentai geresni*, 10 June 2021, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/06/10/news/i-simonytes-interviu-financial-times-lietuvai-svarbiausia-kad-nereiketu-spresti-kieno-argumentai-geresni-es-ar-jav-19689074/> [6.10.2021].

creasing unpredictability of the Belarusian dictator, who in his foreign policy has departed both from pragmatism, which favours economic interests, and even common sense. It is certain that in the long term, this redefinition of Lithuanian-Belarusian relations may bring many changes to Lithuania, both in its domestic and foreign policy. First of all, the position of the pro-Belarusian economic lobby, which periodically influenced the directions of Lithuania's foreign policy mainly due to the prospects of the development of Lithuanian investments in Belarus, will be weakened. This may also have an impact (at least in the short term) on the inhibition of the transit of Belarusian goods through Lithuania and the overall balance of bilateral trade.

On the other hand, we are indeed facing a new opening in Lithuania's security policy, which should not come as a surprise since further steps by the Belarusian regime prove that many of the previous potential threats may change into actual ones. From Lithuania's point of view, a democratic, predictable, and separated-from-Russia Belarus increases the security of Lithuania and the entire region. Lithuania's diplomatic success undoubtedly was the publicising of the Belarusian issue in the Euro-Atlantic forum and the return to the international debate of all the Baltic states, whose importance in NATO defence policy automatically grows with the Russian-Belarusian rapprochement. Lithuania discounts these circumstances very skilfully and, in the long term, may become a key player for the entire region due to its strategic location. Although NATO is steadily strengthening its eastern flank so that, according to Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, "Lithuania has never been safer than it is now", the challenges Lithuania faces as a result of the complicated situation in Belarus have never been more significant⁴⁷. If Lithuania rises to this challenge, it has the chance to become a significant Euro-Atlantic political player and, at the same time, secure its economic interests.

47 Compare the diagnosis of Lithuania's security condition on: *Lietuva isitikinusi saugumu nepaisant regioninio nestabilumo*, 30 May 2021, <https://kriptovaliutos.org> [1.06.2021].

References

- Abromaitis Z., Špokas E., Vilikanskytė M., *Buvęs ambasadorius Vaitiekūnas apie Baltarusijos akibrokštą pasienyje: tokio masto neadekvataus veikimo dar nebuvo*, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1425544/buves-ambasadorius-vaitiekunas-apie-baltarusijos-akibroksta-pasienyje-tokio-masto-neadekvataus-veikimo-dar-nebuvo>.
- Astapenia R., *Belarus – Lithuania Relations: Common Interests and the Nuclear Dispute*, “Analytical paper 12” 2018, <https://belarusdigest.com/belarus-lithuania-relations-en.pdf>.
- Belta.by, *Беларусь может приостановить взаимодействие с ЕС по борьбе с нелегальной миграцией и рассматривает целесообразность участия в ВП*, 26 May 2021, <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-mozhet-priostanovit-vzaimodejstvie-s-es-po-borbe-s-nelegalnoj-migratsiej-i-rassmatrivaet-443059-2021/>.
- Buchowski K., *Polityka zagraniczna Litwy 1990-2012. Główne kierunki i uwarunkowania*, Białystok 2013.
- Delfi.lt, *Bilotaitė: prieš Lietuvą pradėtas hibridinis karas, bet situacija valdoma*, 4 June 2021, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/bilotaite-pries-lietuva-pradetas-hibridinis-karas-bet-situacija-valdoma.d?id=87389401>, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/bilotaite-pries-lietuva-pradetas-hibridinis-karas-bet-situacija-valdoma.d?id=87389401>.
- Delfi.lt, *Landsbergis: yra Europos patikinimas, kad nebūsime palikti vieni akivaizdoje su siautejančiu diktatoriumi*, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/landsbergis-yra-europos-patikinimas-kad-nebusime-palikti-vieni-akivaizdoje-su-siautejanciu-diktatoriumi.d?id=87337065>.
- Gerdžiūnas B., *Belarus’ radiation monitoring goes dark after the alleged incident*, 25 March 2021, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1372826/belarus-radiation-monitoring-goes-dark-after-alleged-incident>.
- Ginevičius R., Tvaronaviciene M., Tvaronaviciene M., Korsakiene R., Kalaūniskaitė K., *Lithuania – Belarus economic relations: How the EU accession impacted bilateral trade*, “Journal of Business Economics and Management” 2007, vol. 8, issue 2.
- Grėsmių Nacionaliniam saugumui vertinimas 2021*, Vilnius 2021, https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-LT-el_.pdf.
- Ioffe G., *Belarus and Lithuania: The Estranged Brethren*, “Eurasia Daily Monitor” 2012, vol. 9, issue 214, Jamestown Foundation, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/50b348782.html>.
- Ioffe G., *Reassessing Lukashenka. Belarus in Cultural and Geopolitical Context*, Palgrave Macmillan UK 2014.
- Ioffe G., *Understanding Belarus and How Western Foreign Policy Misses the Mark*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2014.
- Janeliūnas T., *Grybauskaitė zawiodła się na Polsce*, <https://przegladbaltycki.pl/9225,tomas-janeliunas-grybauskaite-zawiodla-sie-na-polsce.html>.

- Jaruševičiūtė G., *A. Bilotaitė: lyginant su visais 2020 m. nelegalių migrantų srautais iš Baltarusijos šiemet padvigubėjo*, 2 June 2021, https://www.respublika.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva/lietuvas_politika/a_bilotaite_lyginant_su_visais_2020_m_nelegaliu_migrantu_srautai_is_baltarusijos_siemet_padvigubejo.
- Jurkonis V., *Atsitiktinumai – Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos tarpusavio santykių distopija*, <https://www.tspmi.vu.lt/komentarai/vytis-jurkonis-atsitiktinumai-baltarusijos-ir-lietuvas-tarpusavio-santykiu-distopija/>.
- Juozaitis J., *Astravo atominė elektrinė Lietuvos užsienio politikoje: tikslai, priemonės ir ateities perspektyvos*, „Lietuvos Metine Strayegine Apžvalga“ 2019, 17 tomas, p. 297.
- Kauno technologijos universitetas, *Tyrimas: Lietuvos gyventojams Astravo atominės elektrinės kaimynystė – nepriimtina ir grėsminga*, 29 April 2019, <https://ktu.edu/news/tyrimas-lietuvas-gyventojams-astravo-atominės-elektrinės-kaimynystė-nepriimtina-ir-gresminga/>.
- Kojala L., Jakóbiak W., *Russia's Influence and Presence in Lithuania*, <https://newdirection.online/2018-publications-pdf/ND-RussianInfluenceInLithuania-preview%28low-res%29.pdf>.
- Kriščiūnė Z., *Astravets Nuclear Power Plant*, <https://cepa.org/astravets-nuclear-power-plant/>.
- Lietuva isitikinusi saugumu nepaisant regioninio nestabilumo*, 30 May 2021, <https://kriptoaliutos.org>.
- Lithuania takes steps to control power links with Belarus*, https://www.baltic-times.com/lithuania_takes_steps_to_control_power_links_with_belarus/.
- Lrt.lt, *Viceministras Adomėnas: Lietuva neišduos Cichanouskajos Baltarusijos režimui*, 3 March 2020, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1358468/landsbergis-apie-minsko-prasyma-isduoti-cichanouskaja-greiciau-pragaras-uzsals-nei-mes-svarstysime-jusu-prasymus>.
- Lrytas, *Neįtikėtinų Baltarusijos režimo įtarimų sulaukęs V. Adamkus ir pats negalėjo patikėti: „Nesąmonė“*, 2 June 2021, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/06/02/news/baltarusijos-rezimas-nusitaikė-i-v-adamku-praso-apklausti-del-baltarusiu-genocido-karo-metais-19595971>.
- Lrytas, *Šimonytės interviu „Financial Times“: Lietuvai svarbiausia, kad nereikėtų spręsti, kieno argumentai geresni*, 10 June 2021, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/06/10/news/i-simonytes-interviu-financial-times-lituvai-svarbiausia-kad-nereiketu-spresti-kieno-argumentai-geresni-es-ar-jav-19689074/>.
- Ministry of Energy, https://t.me/Minenergo_by/264.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, <https://www.urm.lt/default/en/news/statement-by-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-on-astravets-nuclear-power-plant-under-construction-in-belarus>.
- Mironowicz E., *Stosunki polityczne i gospodarcze białorusko-litewskie (1990-2015)*, „Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej”, LII (1).

- Potjomkina D., Šukytė D., *Belarus and the Baltics: Did Crisis Really Become an Opportunity?* [in:] "Belarusian Foreign Policy: 360°, Centre for East European Policy Studies" 2017, A. Kudors (ed.), pp. 140-146.
- Seimo rezoliucijos „Dėl neteisėtos ir primetamos Rusijos sąjungos Baltarusijai“ projektas, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/7d1do7b1f28811eab72ddb4a109da1b5>.
- Seimo rezoliucijos „Dėl padėties Baltarusijos Respublikoje po suklastotų Prezidento rinkimų“ projektas, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/34f7df8oddf411ea8f4ce1816a470b26>.
- V. Adamkus: *Lietuvos politika Baltarusijos atžvilgiu ištiko disaster*, <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/vadamkus-lietuvos-politika-baltarusijos-atzvilgiu-istiko-katastrofa>.
- Vaitelė T., *Nausėda Baltarusijos veiksmus vadina valstybinio terorizmo aktu: „Ši įvykį reikia vertinti kaip žmogaus pagrobimą“*, 23 May 2021, <https://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/lietuva/nauseda-baltarusijos-veiksmus-vadina-valstybinio-terorizmo-aktu-si-ivyki-reikia-vertinti-kaip-zmogaus-pagrobi-ma-n1097338>.
- Wilson A., *Belarus: The Last European Dictatorship*, Yale University Press, 2021.
- Žvinakytė I., *Expelled and persecuted Belarusian students find refuge at Lithuanian universities*, "New Eastern Europe", 15 February 2021, <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2021/02/15/expelled-and-persecuted-belarusian-students-find-refuge-at-lithuanian-universities/>.
- Лукашенко: позиция Польши и Литвы может перечеркнуть многие достижения в наших отношениях, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_xE8h4ymOw.