



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Council of International Programs USA to host advocacy
& non-profit professionals from Belarus**

[Cleveland, Ohio] — Eleven participants from Belarus, a former Soviet country, will arrive in Cleveland on Monday, June 1st to begin their near month long study of advocacy and non-profit organizations in the United States. The participants, all of who hold leadership positions in their home country in the non-profit division, represent a wide variety of the Belarusian third sector. Participants will stay with volunteer host families as a way to further experience American culture and traditions.

The Council of International Programs USA (CIPUSA), a 53-year old international exchange program, based in Cleveland will host the delegation. CIPUSA is committed to promoting international understanding in global communities through professional development and cross-cultural exchange. The overall goal of the program is to provide tools so that participants can effectively carry out key objectives in the advocacy area which include, but are not limited to: giving a voice to misrepresented citizen interests, mobilizing citizens to participate in the democratic process, supporting the development of a culture of democracy, assisting in the development of better public policy, and ensuring the governments' accountability to citizens. The main cultural objective of this program is to underscore the importance of citizen involvement and how citizen's voices became an important thread in weaving the tapestry of an inclusive, just, and civil society, especially in regions where such principles are still tenuous.

While in the area, the delegates will take full advantage of everything the city has to offer. The visiting participant's program will comprise of classroom learning and observation including presentations from such organizations as the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, Environmental Health Watch and the Mental Health Advocacy Coalition, site visits to Case Western Reserve University and The Center for Community Solutions, and cultural outings including trips to Amish Country, Cedar Point and Niagara Falls. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to draft and refine action plans to implement upon their return to Belarus.

Participants will also have the opportunity to volunteer at local organizations and thus reap the benefits that service brings to both volunteer and recipient.

The visiting delegates are:

- **Mr. Oleg Bakoulin** - Chairperson of a non-profit organization that *protects the rights of parents and children*, with a special emphasis on the rights of fathers.
- **Ms. Irina Baranskovskaya** - Lawyer and Human Trafficking Hotline Operator for a non-profit organization that *protects and represents the rights of women*.
- **Mr. Sergei Butko** - Chairperson of a non-profit organization that organizes social and sporting events for the disabled and focuses on the *social protection of disabled individuals*.
- **Mr. Dzianis Hil** – Lawyer and Legal Consultant for a non-profit that works to build efficient mechanisms for the *social security of citizens*, supports citizens’ new initiatives and non-profit startups, and cooperation among various social groups.
- **Ms. Daria Korsak** - Public Relations Coordinator for a human rights organization with a main objective to *increase citizens’ social and political activity/responsibility* by minimizing the consequences of political repressions.
- **Mr. Vasili Poliakov** - Programs Coordinator for a Republican non-profit organization that gathers and analyzes information on *human rights violations and organizes campaigns to defend civil rights*.
- **Ms. Alina Shostak** - Lawyer for a human rights organization that *works to protect citizens’ human rights* guaranteed by the Belarusian Constitution, legislation and Helsinki agreements.
- **Ms. Ludmila Truhan** - Deputy Chairperson for a Republican non-profit organization that offers *prevention, education and treatment services for substance abuse and HIV/AIDS*.
- **Ms. Elena Volynee-Cherniaeva** - Executive Director of an Assembly of Democratic non-profit organizations that *works toward the establishment of a civil society in Belarus* with a focus on improving communications and cooperation methods of non-profits.
- **Ms. Natalia Yanushkevich** – Teacher and Tutor for the Belarus Department of Education with a focus on working with foster children and adolescents (Minsk District Administration). She is also a foster parent herself and volunteers with a non-profit organization that *protects the rights and interests of foster children and families*.
- **Mr. Aleh Yaromin** - Chairperson of the Coordination Committee for an association of twelve non-profit organizations focusing on *HIV/AIDS prevention, education and services*.

CIPUSA has tailored programming and speakers to individual participant’s interests and employment areas.

For more information, please contact Lisa Purdy, CIPUSA at 216-566-1088. For more information on CIPUSA visit www.cipusa.org.

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