



FACTSHEET:

UNIVERSITY IN EXILE

The European Humanities University (EHU) is a Belarusian university-in-exile based in Vilnius, Lithuania. EHU was founded in Minsk in 1992 and forcibly closed in 2004. It reorganized in Vilnius and became a private Lithuanian university in 2006.

EHU presently offers quality undergraduate and graduate academic programs based on the best practices of liberal education worldwide. Students choose face-to-face or low residence modes of study. The University is open to exchange and interaction with students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. EHU aims to become an integral part of the European and international academic network.

EHU developed distinct advantages by being the first institution integrating European standards and methods in Belarusian higher education. With the support of the Lithuanian government, EHU relocated to Vilnius, where it contributes to the advancement of higher education both in Lithuania and Belarus.

HISTORY

Since 1992 EHU sought to educate a new generation of leaders capable of promoting East-West dialogue and building an open society in Belarus based on the values of European civilization. EHU became the only university in the history of higher education in Belarus to retain full university autonomy, despite powerful pressure from authorities.

1992- 2004:

ADVANCING AN INTERNATIONAL MODEL OF LIBERAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELARUS

- The University became a leader in the development of a Bologna model of higher education for Belarus.
- EHU consolidated a strong and eminently-qualified faculty by inviting well-known specialists of high standing and gifted young scholars in social sciences and humanities.
- The University consisted of 10 undergraduate departments, along with original graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral, pre-admission and lifelong learning programs.
- The library stored unique classical and contemporary collections, including an extensive stock of literature in foreign languages.

“...By educating and informing young Belarusians and others, your school serves as a beacon of hope and gives the next generation of leaders the knowledge and understanding to build a world where people everywhere enjoy freedom and dignity...”

George W. Bush
President of the United States of America, in a letter from the White House to EHU on March 1, 2006

Photo: EHU students carried out the first flash mob demonstration in Belarus in protest of the closure of the University in 2004.



IN THE 2008-2009

ACADEMIC YEAR:

The Strategic Plan was adopted to guide the university community in five strategic areas of focus: education, research, regional impact, international cooperation, and sustainability. The Plan is available on the website in English and Russian.

Nearly 2,000 students participated in various forms of education: degree-seeking, undergraduate academic programs offered on BA and MA levels in Vilnius and via low residence learning and non-degree, continuing adult education for students studying at other universities or those currently working and looking to gain knowledge and improve skills through single courses offered via distance learning.

In the forthcoming academic years, EHU will focus on:

- Implementing a strategic plan that will transition the university into a center for academic excellence in education and research.
- Building networks with European and North American universities in the interest of fully integrating EHU in the family of global liberal educators.
- Moving toward financial stabilization by reaching out to new donors and partners.

- EHU served as a venue for significant cultural events, research conferences, colloquia and international seminars. It opened the first ever university art gallery in Belarus.
- Unprecedented international cooperation enabled EHU to establish the Institute for German Studies, French-Belarusian Department of Political Science and European Integration, Research and Resource Centers for American Studies, European and Transatlantic Studies, Gender Studies, Problems of European Integration, Civic Education, Scandinavian Studies, Advanced Studies and Education (CASE), the latter specializing in Central and East European Border Studies.
- EHU joined Campus Europae, the international university consortium based in Luxembourg, which emphasized harmonization of curricula, reciprocal recognition of degrees and provision of full-scale mobility for students from among 18 European universities.

2004-2007:

OVERCOMING FORCED CLOSURE AND REBIRTH IN EXILE

- Over time the regime began to change policy and sharply curtail academic rights and freedoms. The move was meant to isolate Belarusian higher education from outside influences and restore a Soviet-style control.
- State authorities attempted to force Rector Anatoli Mikhailov to resign; they solicited members of governance bodies to call for his dismissal. When governance bodies refused, state agencies made endless inspections, suspended licenses and, finally, ordered EHU to vacate its building.
- Every wave of repression against EHU caused large-scale public protests. The University's faculty members, administrative staff and students stood up courageously in support of the fundamental values of academic culture.
- With widespread support in political and academic circles, it became possible to re-establish activities in exile in 2005. In preparing students for the challenges of international education, EHU rolled out pre-admission programs followed by undergraduate academic programs.
- In 2006 EHU was granted the status of a private Lithuanian university offering face-to-face education and low residence programs. The university continued to produce innovative research and publications.

2008

AND BEYOND

In 2007 EHU inaugurated an international Governing Board and expanded the body of founders, called the General Assembly of Part-Owners. More than 2,000 students participate in various educational programs. EHU became the only university for Belarusian youth awarded the Erasmus Charter!