

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

The research was initiated by The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House with the expert support of the Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend) and the Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus.



Authors:

Alena Zuikova

Andrei Yahorau

Aksana Shelest

© **Center for European Transformation**, 2017.

The Center for European Transformation allows free reproduction of excerpts from this text provided that the source is mentioned and a copy of the publication, which contains these excerpts, is sent.



Center for European Transformation
Minsk, Belarus

cet@eurobelarus.info

cet.eurobelarus.info

+375 29 6185388



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[VKontakte](#)



Table of contents

Introduction	4
General characteristics of the Belarusian human rights organizations sector	6
Data on respondents	6
Data on organizations.....	9
Perceptions of human rights activity	13
Characteristics of human rights activity	13
Characteristics of human rights defenders	15
Typology of Belarusian human rights defenders groups.....	20
Activity of human rights organizations	27
Fields of activity of Belarusian human rights defenders' activity.....	27
Target groups of Belarusian human rights organizations	31
Levels of human rights organizations' activity	32
Management of the organizations	34
Defining factors of the activity	38
Tools used by human rights organizations	38
Perceptions of problems and achievements of human rights organizations.....	40
Problems of human rights organizations	40
Achievements of human rights organizations.....	42
Achievements of civil society organizations in the perceptions of human rights defenders	43
Work with public opinion	45
Cooperation in the Belarusian human rights organizations sector	47
Perceptions of the cooperation purposes	47
Perceptions of strategically important topics and areas of activity	49
Short-term prospect.....	49
Long-term prospect.....	50
Rights and freedoms that require human rights defenders' joint efforts in order to protect them	52
Factors that conduce to and encumber cooperation between human rights organizations	53
Stimuli to cooperation.....	53
Obstacles to cooperation	54
Some analytical conclusions on the factors influencing cooperation.....	56

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Evaluation of some forms of cooperation between human rights organizations.....	56
Examples of joint actions of organizations of the human rights sector.....	56
Evaluations of successfulness of this cooperation.....	57
Intensity of mutual visiting of actions.....	58
Mutual aid of human rights organizations.....	58
Attitude to the common strategy of developing human rights activity in Belarus.....	59
Structure of network interactions in the sector of human rights organizations.....	65
Network general characteristic.....	65
Centrality of the network (organizations' relative influence measures).....	67
Frequency of contacts.....	70
The interaction experience characteristic.....	71
Intensity, successfulness, and riskiness of cooperation between human rights organizations and various subjects.....	74
Ethics of the human rights defender as viewed by leaders of Belarusan human rights organizations.....	76
Attitude to the necessity of ethical self-regulation for the human rights community.....	76
Perceptions of mechanisms of settlement of conflicts, arising in connection with the human rights ethics' issues.....	77
Perceptions of admissibility of some actions for human rights defenders and human rights organizations.....	81
Perceptions of admissibility of cooperation with political subjects for human rights defenders.....	83
Cooperation with political parties.....	83
Cooperation with the Belarusan authorities.....	86
Strategic development.....	90
Mission of human rights organizations.....	90
Priorities of activity of human rights organizations.....	91
Strategic planning.....	93
Evaluations of human rights organizations' need of educational events and actions.....	95
About authors.....	98
Annexes.....	99
Annex 1. List of the organizations that have taken part in this research.....	99
Annex 2. A sample of the questionnaire for the participants of this research.....	101
Annex 3. Structure of network interactions in the sector of human rights organizations.....	121



Introduction

Despite the general adverse environment for civil society organizations in Belarus, human rights organizations and initiatives keep being rather active and their number continues to increase (from 17 organizations in 2010 to 25 in 2013; although they basically can't obtain a registration because of the current state policy). There are newly created organizations and initiatives that do not always have sufficient experience and understanding of how to cooperate, but they are ready to become effective members of the human rights community.

Earlier, there was already some work on the first joint project of a strategic concept for the Belarusian human rights community, which was accepted at the end of 2011. This work demonstrated that Belarusian human rights organisations did not often have any strategic planning and understanding of the way strategies should be implemented, though a need of a wider, holistic approach to activity was discerned accurately. In 2013, there was also big work aimed at defining joint strategic plans of cooperation for human rights defenders¹. At the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, human rights defenders acted with their joint strategic statements on the situation in the country and the necessary general actions².

At the moment, the orderer of this research and its partners are interested in the implementation of a new stage of work aimed at developing strategic cooperation between human rights organizations. This research is a tool of optimizing this work. Its goal is to reveal what leaders of Belarusian human rights organizations and initiatives think of such questions as the understanding of human rights activity, problems in the human rights sphere in Belarus, problems and achievements in cooperation between human rights organizations, strategic priorities for the Belarusian human rights community, the understanding of various aspects of human rights ethics, and the attitude to ethical self-regulation in the community.

As agreed upon with the orderer, a **questionnaire survey** among leaders of human rights organizations and initiatives was chosen as a research method³. The sample of organizations was made by the orderer according to their purposes; in total — **30 organizations and initiatives** (hereinafter organisations) have been surveyed; the research team polled **50 respondents**. In compliance with the confirmed methodology, two people (leaders) from each organization had to take part in the research. However, due to various reasons (such as: one of leaders refused to participate in the survey; respondents considered themselves leaders of another organizations; there was no second person in an organization), some organizations were represented in the survey by only one respondent. The field investigation phase was implemented in **August-October 2016**.

Some research questions have been aimed at revealing and fixing the current condition of Belarusian human rights organizations — their legal status, time of existence, size of organizations, etc. Although these questions concerned objective data, it is impossible to say that the received results reflect to the full the condition of the human rights organizations sector. Some relativity of the results has to do, first of all, with certain limitation of

¹ General information on this Forum can be received here: **Third Belarusian Human Rights Forum held in Vilnius** (in Belarusian) // Human Rights House Foundation (HRRH), — 28.10.2013: <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/19698.html>.

² See: **Human rights defenders urge the state to accept expeditious measures of a remedial character** (in Belarusian) // Human Rights Center "Viasna". — 09.12.2015: <http://spring96.org/be/news/81545>; **Human rights defenders' coordinated position on priorities while defining the strategy of international partners' interaction with Belarus** (in Belarusian) // Human Rights Center "Viasna". — 28.01.2016: <http://spring96.org/be/news/82090>.

³ See the questionnaire used during the poll in the **Annex 1**.

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

sociological methods of research because of the factor of subjective perception and space for respondents' individual interpretations of formulations of questions and variants of answers. In this research, the limitations of the method are combined with the objectively ambiguous position of human rights organizations in Belarus — therefore, even apparently objective facts can be interpreted differently.

Thus, according to one of participants of this research:

*“depending on one’s subjective perception, the registration [of the organization] abroad can only have a technical character and have no value; also, the time of existence [of the organization] can depend on one’s subjective point of view because in the Belarusan conditions human rights organizations were compelled “to regenerate”. The conclusions concerning financing sources, members, and employees raise doubts, too. Looking at figures, it seems to me that in many respects not the actual, but legal condition is reflected here — it sails under false colors. As for membership, here, there can be a subjective approach as well — the registration of establishments instead of public associations results in the fact when legally there are no members, while actually they are. In this connection, there are different answers. A similar situation is with employees — someone considers all officially employed people to be employees and someone — everybody who receives means.”**

Thus, the received results do not reflect reality 100%; nonetheless, we believe that they substantially reflect the state of affairs and represent the data that can be used by interested parties while their decision-making.

* Hereinafter in the quotation marks and italics are citations from the answers of the respondents received during the survey.



General characteristics of the Belarusian human rights organizations sector

Data on respondents

During the research, 30 organizations, which characterized themselves as human rights NGOs or specified that there is a human rights component in their activity, have been polled.

Representatives of 4 organization refused to take part in the survey.

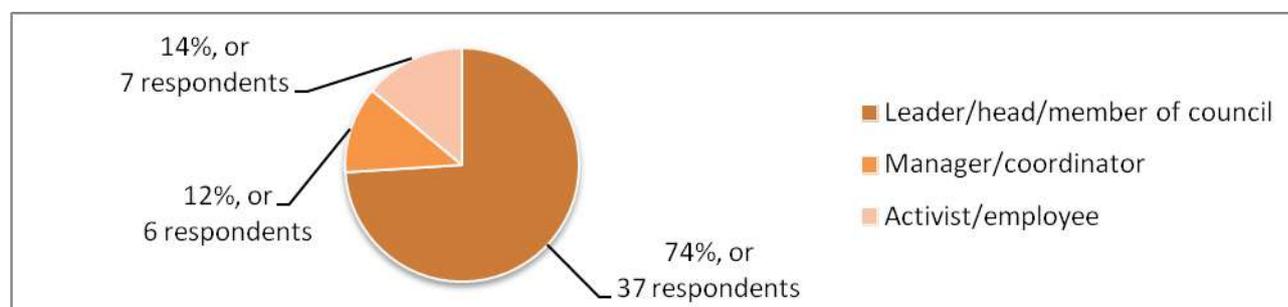
In total — 50 respondents: out of them — the majority (74%) are leaders of organizations (founders, heads and their assistants, chair and members of councils of organizations), and 12% more occupy management positions (program manager, program/project coordinator) (see Table 1 and Diagram 1).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by positions in the organizations, respondents, %

Positions in the organization	Number	%
Leader/head/member of council	37	74
Manager/coordinator	6	12
Activist/employee	7	14
Total	50	100

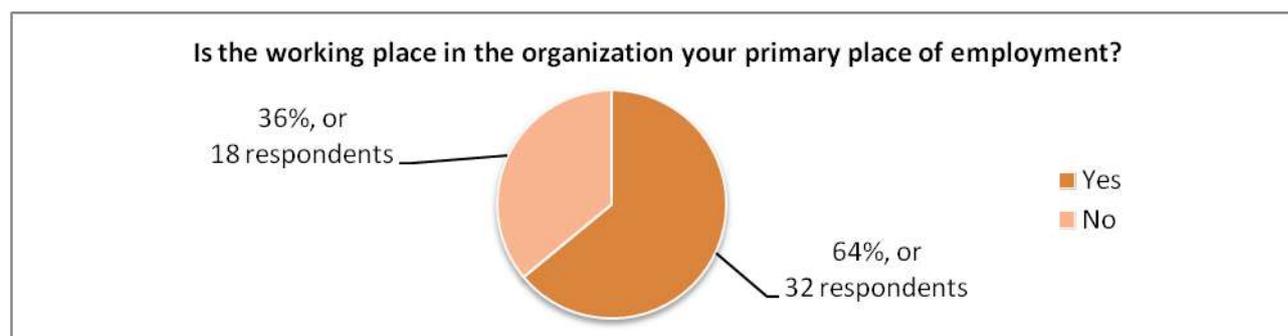
Thus, we shall further speak basically about leaders of organizations, except for special cases when we need to underline a position of activists/employees of organizations.

Diagram 1. Distribution of respondents by positions held in organizations, %, respondents



For 64% respondents, according to the survey results, their work in their organization is the primary place of employment (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2. Distribution of respondents by status of employment in organizations, %, respondents

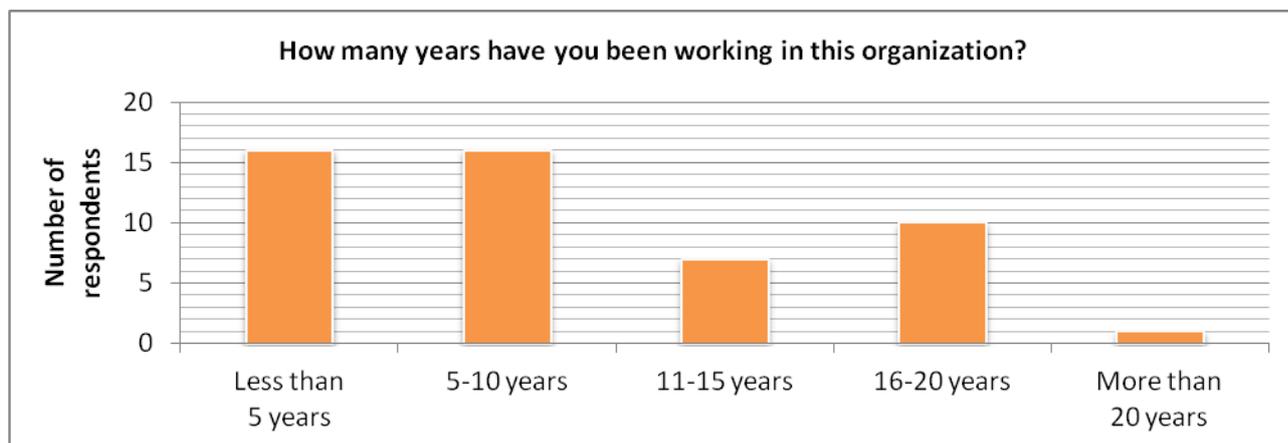


Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

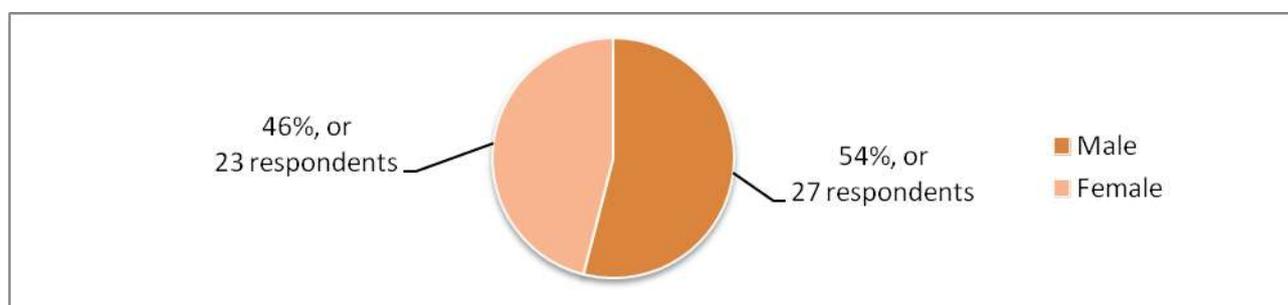
About a third of respondents participate in the activity of their organizations less than 5 years, others have a longer length of work, and 36% respondents have devoted more than 11 years to their organizations (see Diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Distribution of respondents according to length of service in organizations, respondents



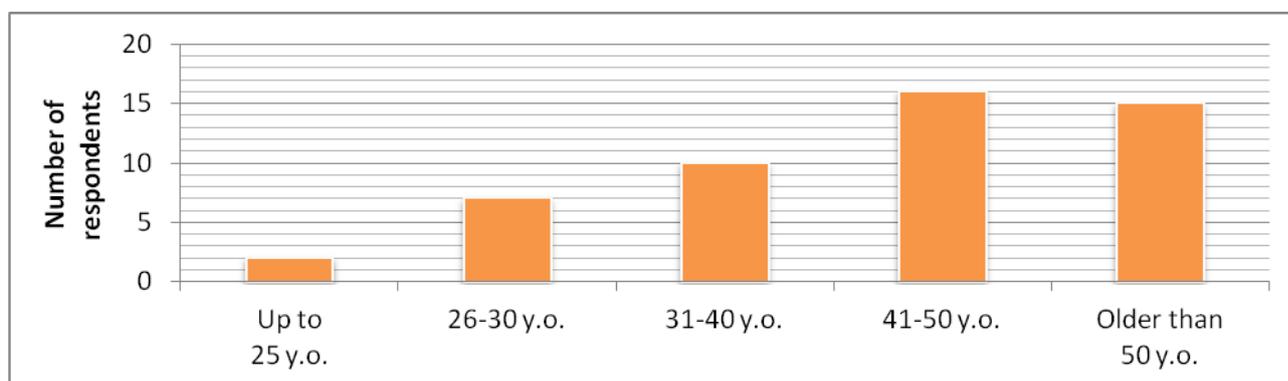
Among respondents (basically leaders of organizations), there are more men than women (see Diagram 4).

Diagram 4. Sex distribution of respondents, %, respondents



Among leaders of organizations, there are also more people of senior and middle age (62% — more than 40 y.o.) than youth (18% — younger than 30 y.o.) (see Diagram 5).

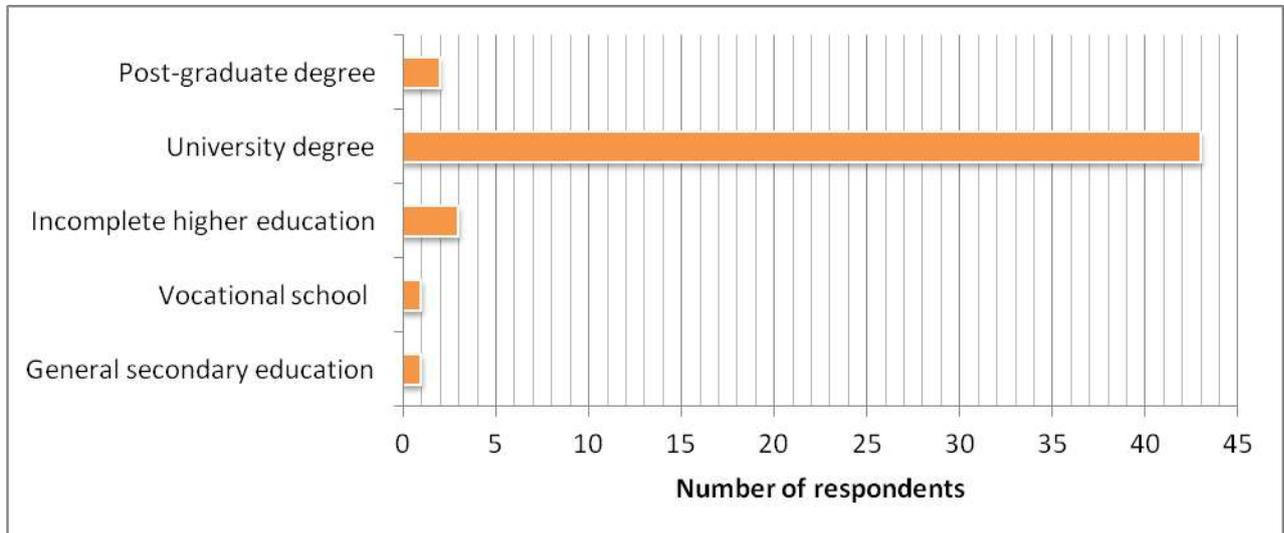
Diagram 5. Age distribution of respondents, respondents





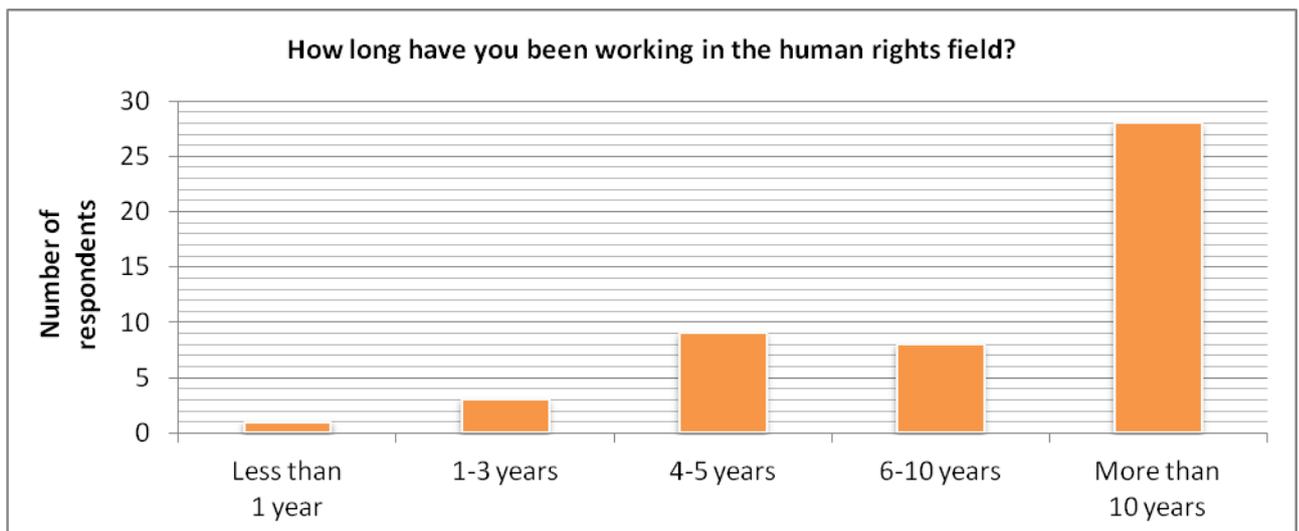
The overwhelming majority of respondents have higher education (see Diagram 6).

Diagram 6. Distribution of respondents according to their educational levels, respondents



The majority of leaders of organizations of this sector is experienced human rights defenders and has devoted more than 10 years to this activity (56%), 32% more — work in the human rights sphere from 4 to 10 years. Among leaders of organizations of the human rights sector, new people are few — only 8% respondents participate in human rights activity less than 3 years (see Diagram 7).

Diagram 7. Distribution of respondents according to length of service in the human rights sphere, respondents



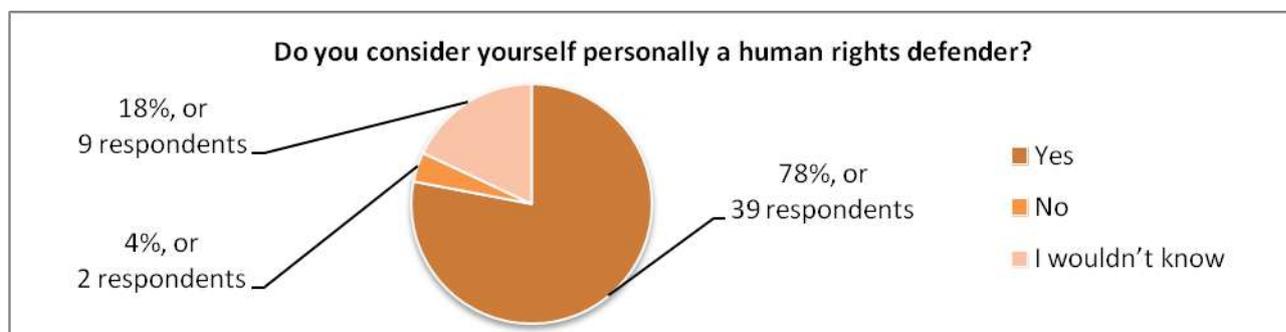
The long presence in the sphere of human rights activity, together with 64% of those who work professionally in this sphere, attests high professionalization among leaders and heads of the sector. A small number of people who have come in the sector during the latest three years attests a rather low rotation and slow replacement of leaders.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

It is remarkable that not all pollees unequivocally consider themselves to be human rights defenders. Two respondents expressly do not consider themselves to be human rights defenders, and 9 more (18%) found it difficult to answer this question (see Diagram 8).

Diagram 8. Distribution of respondents by self-identification with human rights defenders, %, respondents

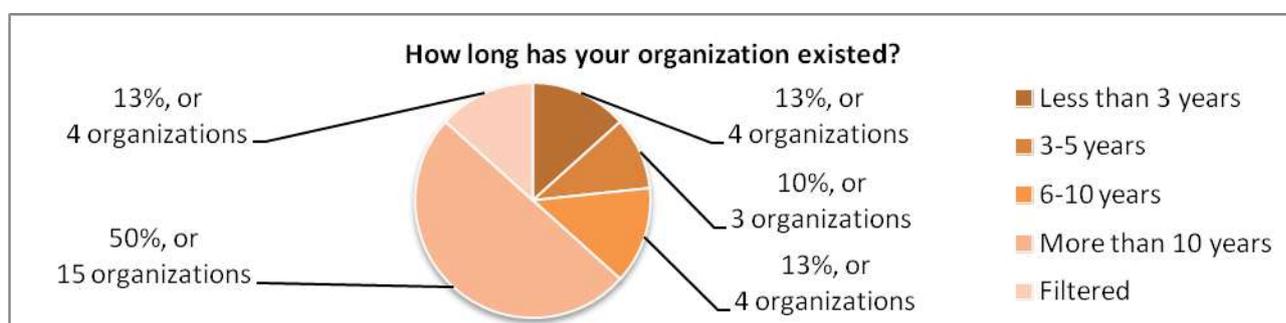


Data on organizations

The overwhelming majority of Belarusian human rights organizations have official registration; more than half of them (16 out of 30 organizations) are registered in Belarus*.

Half of the sector of human rights organizations is the organizations that exist more than 10 years (15 organizations out of 30). Absolutely young organizations (less than 3 years of existence) are few (4 organizations). There are 7 associations that exist from 3 to 10 years. Answering this question, 6 respondents (representing 3 organizations) provided antilogous answers. In case of two organizations the discrepancy of answers can be explained by the marginality of the variant — the answers were given in the neighboring ranges: in the first case — “3-5 years” and “6-10 years”; in the second case — “6-10 years” and “more than 10 years”. In the third case, one employee specified the age of “less than 3 years”, the second one — “more than 10 years”. Also, it is necessary to notice that 1 respondent specified that he finds it difficult to answer this question (according to the answer of his colleague in this organization, the organization exists 3-5 years) (see Diagram 9).

Diagram 9. Distribution of the organizations by term of existence, %, frequency

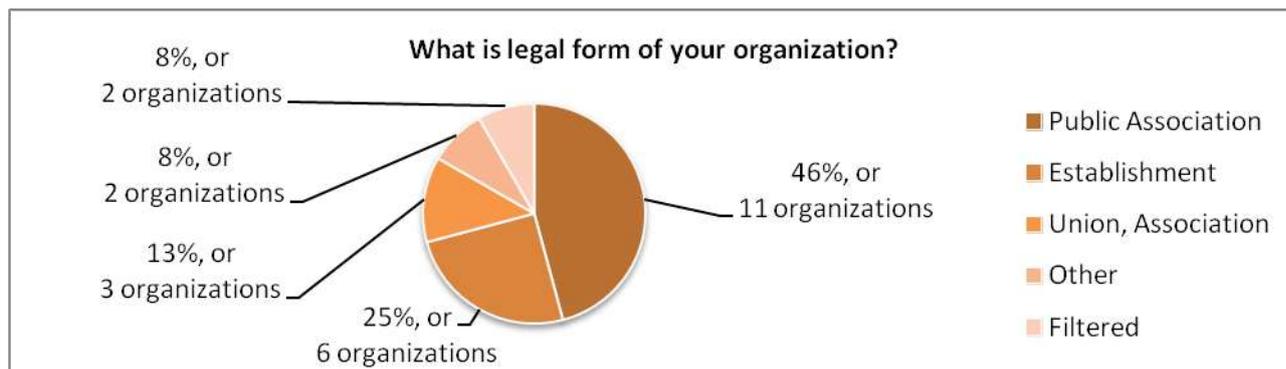


* Hereinafter, analyzing the information about the organizations, we consider the organizations presented by two respondents whose answers coincide and the organizations presented by one respondent. The organizations presented by two respondents who provided different answers are excluded from the general analysis and considered separately; they are marked as filtered (if something else is not specified) on the diagrams.



Among registered organizations, 11 are public associations, 6 — establishments, the organizational-legal form of 3 organizations is a union/association, 1 organization is a trade-union group, 1 — a simple fellowship. Two pairs of respondents representing 2 organizations gave antinomic answers. In one case — “public association” and “establishment”; in the other case — “public association” and “other” (“trade union”) (see Diagram 10).

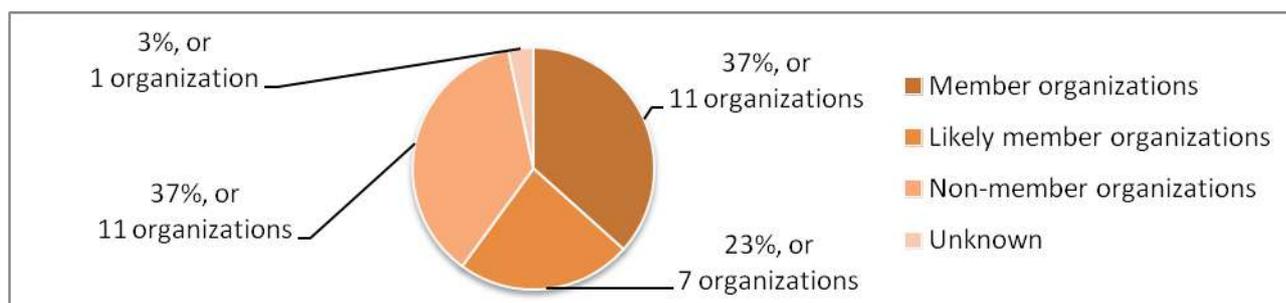
Diagram 10. Distribution of the organizations with the state registration on organizational-legal forms, %, frequency



Among the investigated organizations, 18 organizations have members; 11 are not member organizations; a representative of one organization refused to answer this question.

Among these 18 organizations, with a big share of confidence we consider member organization 11 associations: the affirmative reply on this question has been received in 5 organizations presented by two respondents and in 6 organizations presented by one respondent. Also, we consider member organizations (with a share of doubt) 7 more organizations in which pairs of respondents gave inconsistent answers: one of leaders specified the number of members, while the other one chose the variants “has no members” (4 cases), “do not want to answer” (2 cases), and “I do not know” (1 case) (see Diagram 11).

Diagram 11. Distribution of organizations by organizational structure, %, frequency



If to consider the size of human rights organizations with members, then, according to answers of respondents (here we consider all answers that specify the number of members even if only one of respondents in the pair gave a quantitative answer — thus, all 18 organizations with members are considered; it is interesting that in all 5 organizations in which both respondents specified the number of members, the pairs of participants of the research provided coinciding answers), such organizations are often large enough, uniting several tens and even hundreds of members — half of organizations count more than 69 members. There are only 4 organizations with a small number of members (up to 10); also, there are only 3 organizations with more than 1,000 members (see Diagram 12).

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Diagram 12. Distribution of membership organizations by number of members, frequency



The question about the number of constant paid workers (half-pay and full pay) in the organization caused some difficulties among respondents. Only 41 respondents out of 50 answered this question (9 chose the variant “I find it difficult to answer”). As for organizations, in 5 organizations the pairs of respondents provided coinciding answers and in 7 organizations — different answers; in 8 organizations — only one of two respondents specified the number of employees (the other one chose the variant “I find it difficult to answer”); among 10 organizations represented by one respondent, 9 specified the number and 1 chose the variant “I find it difficult to answer”.

Thus, there is data on 29 organizations out of 30 organizations of the general totality; it is possible to analyze 22 organizations (represented by one respondent and those in what only one of two respondents gave a quantitative answer; 7 organizations cannot be analyzed because their pairs of respondents provided different quantitative answers — they are marked on the Diagram 13 as “filtered”, and 1 more organization in which the only one respondent did not give a quantitative answer — it is marked on the diagram as “unknown”).

Almost half of organizations in the human rights sector (13 organizations) have no constant paid employees. 7 more organizations have small staff (2-7 constant paid employees). Only two organizations have more than 10-people staff: one has 11 constant paid employees; the other one — 40.

Answers in the pairs of respondents, who provided different answers, vary in the range from 4 to 14 constant paid employees; only in one pair of respondents, one of participants of the research specified 50 employees although his/her colleague specified 7 respondents (see Diagram 13).

Diagram 13. Distribution of organizations by the number of regularly paid employees, frequency





The question of the number of volunteers also caused some difficulties, which was quite expected because volunteers are a less accurately outlined category and it is hard to keep track of their exact number. Amazing is the fact that these difficulties are no bigger than those appeared during the evaluation of the number of constant paid employees. The answer “I find it difficult to answer” was chosen by 10 respondents, and only 4 pairs of respondents, who specified the number, provided identical answers.

The data on the number of volunteers have been obtained in 28 organizations (in two organizations, the only one and both respondents chose the answer “I find it difficult to answer” — they are marked as “unknown” on the Diagram 14), among which 20 organizations are to be analyzed — 4 organizations, in which the pairs of respondents provided coinciding quantitative answers; 7 organizations, in which only one respondent in the pair gave a quantitative answer; and 9 organizations presented by one respondent who gave a quantitative answer. 8 organizations, in which pairs of respondents provided different quantitative answers (they are marked as “filtered” on the Diagram 14), are excluded from the analysis.

Being based on the received data, the volunteer resource of human rights organizations can be considered small — 4 organizations out of 30 have no volunteers at all; 7 organizations have up to 6 volunteers; 4 organizations — 8-12 volunteers; 3 organizations — 25 volunteers. Only two organizations have large-scale volunteer networks (150 and 500 volunteers) (see Diagram 14).

The volunteer potential of the organizations which representatives gave discordant answers is estimated differently — in 3 organizations, the answers vary in the range of less than 10 volunteers; in 4 organizations — in the range from 5 to 30 volunteers; in the eighth organization, one respondent specified the number of volunteers as 32, while the other one — 160 people.

Diagram 14. Distribution of organizations by the number of volunteers involved, frequency



Perceptions of human rights activity

Characteristics of human rights activity

Basically, respondents agree with the standard definitions of human rights activity:

- Human rights activity is the activity of individuals, groups, or society's institutions that promote and protect the universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Human rights activity stands in promoting and protecting civil and political rights, as well as in promoting, protecting, and implementing economic, social, and cultural rights.

96% respondents agree with these statements (see Diagram 15).

At the same time, in an insignificant degree, there is some disagreement with separate essential moments characterizing human rights activity:

- the fact that human rights activity covers all groups of the population;
- the absence of violence.

There is one respondent who allows violence; one who denies the allness of human rights activity; 2 more respondents found it difficult to answer these questions.

Respondents hold different views on the question that human rights activity is only aimed at the state's encroachments. 74% agree (completely or partially) with such a formulation, whereas 24% allow a possibility that human rights activity includes relations between citizens.

Not everybody agrees that human rights activity has an exclusively public character. 36% respondents consider that human rights activity extends to the activities of state officials, civil servants, and members of the business sector; 10% found it difficult to answer this question. It is necessary notice, however, that this question could be understood differently by participants of the research* — one of respondents said:

"Reading the question, I did not completely understand its essence. "Does not extend" — does it mean that we do not think that these categories are engaged in human rights activity, or does it mean that our activity does not touch them?"

Thus, 82% respondents (52% agree partially; 30% agree completely) agree with the exclusive approach to human rights activity and believe that it is carried out by a narrow circle of subjects (human rights organizations or individual human rights defenders) and requires special knowledge and qualification standards.

Only 14% do not agree with such a formulation.

* The question in the questionnaire was formulated as follows — Please, say in what degree you agree with such a characteristic of human rights activity as "Human rights activity has a public character and does extend to activities of state officials, civil servants and members of the business sector".



Diagram 15. Distribution of respondents' answers based on the proposed characteristics of the human rights activities, %



Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

In addition, respondents mentioned the following characteristics of human rights activity:

"Impartiality, nonpoliticizedness (which is frequently ignored by the Belarusans)";

"It is also an activity that has to do with the dissemination of human rights values";

"A special culture of human rights defenders' environment, a special methodology, an axiological approach";

"Human rights activity is an activity aimed at educating citizens, explaining them their rights and duties (the specificity of the USSR)";

"Human rights activity is gratuitous; it is not aimed at receiving any income";

"Human rights activity is incompatible with the achievement of political ends (race for power)";

"Human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights";

"Recognition of the universality (of the principle of) of human rights; the use of clear methods: non-violence, refusal of corruption methods of gathering information";

"To share the value of the universality and indivisibility of human rights";

"Vexed is the question of whether such forms as the blocking of movement (e.g. of officials to their work place) should be considered acts of violence";

"Universality and indissolubility; to be engaged in human rights activity — to execute a certain public function and to bear the corresponding responsibility".

Characteristics of human rights defenders

As for characteristics of human rights defenders, respondents are almost unanimous in the majority of parameters (see Diagram 16). More than 85% respondents completely agree with four characteristics offered for evaluation:

- Human rights defenders are those who individually or jointly with others seek to promote, protect, and implement human rights and fundamental freedoms at local, national, regional, and/or international levels;
- Human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights for all without any distinctions;
- Human rights defenders protect human rights by peaceful means only;
- Human rights defenders protect the rights of any groups, including the rights of women, children, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as the rights of national, linguistic, and sexual minorities.

About 5% respondents partially agree with these characteristics and about 5% find it difficult to answer. Among the polled leaders and activists, there are no those who expressed their disagreement with these characteristics of human rights defenders.



It is interesting to pay attention to the fact that 6% respondents (3 respondents) do not agree with the following statement:

- Human rights defenders work with any violations of human rights, including mass executions, tortures, arbitrary arrests and detentions, discrimination, employment, access to health care, toxic wastes and their impact on the environment.

It is necessary to consider separately the aspect of the polled group's perceptions of the universality of human rights. 86% respondents (43 respondents) completely agree with the statement that human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights for all without any distinctions. 3 respondents (6%) partially agree with this characteristic of human rights defenders; 3 more (6%) found it difficult to answer.

A differently formulated question on the universality ("Human rights defenders protect the rights of any groups, including the rights of women, children, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as the rights of national, linguistic, and sexual minorities") is also supported by 96% (90% — completely agree, 6% — partially agree), and only 4% found it difficult to answer.

At the same time, only 50% respondents do not agree categorically that:

- In exceptional cases human rights defenders can allow withdrawals of some human rights for certain people or population groups (terrorists, pedophiles, etc.).

20% respondents (10 respondents) partially agree with this statement and the same number found it difficult to answer. 5 respondents (10%) completely agree with the statement that such withdrawals are admissible. One respondent specified his/her position on this question by introducing a hierarchy of human rights, which withdrawals are admissible and inadmissible:

"I agree if these withdrawals concerns the rights to freedom, freedom of movement, etc. It is impossible to exclude the right to life, protection against slavery."

Thus, it is possible to say that in the Belarusian human rights community the understanding of the universality of human rights is quite often combined with the perceptions that in exceptional cases withdrawals are admissible for some groups.

In addition, respondents mentioned the following characteristics of human rights defenders:

"Impartiality, nonpoliticizedness (which is frequently ignored by the Belarusians)";

"Non-party character of activity; if a person starts to work for the state (e.g. he/she becomes a member of parliament), he/she loses his/her status of a human rights defender";

"They consistently and fundamentally protect the rights";

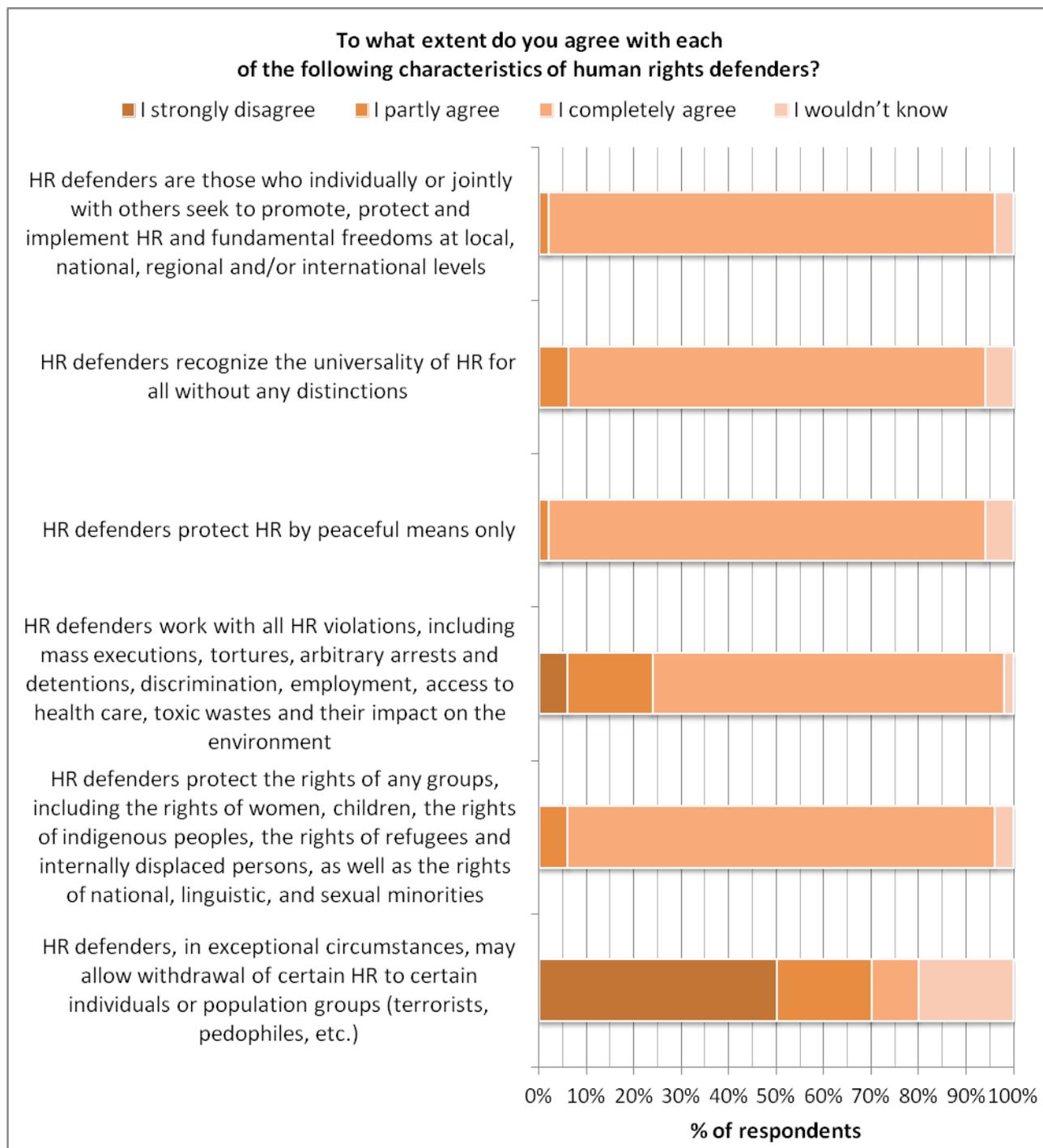
"A human rights defender is not a profession and not some public work, but a condition (aspiration) of soul. If you cannot accept the fact that in the format 'the state — a person' there occur violations of the fundamental human rights and freedoms, and they occur in any countries, it means you are a human rights defender";

"Human rights defenders are those who try to deepen their knowledge of national and international laws to protect human rights and freedoms, those who try to be guided by high moral principles in their activity in everyday life."

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

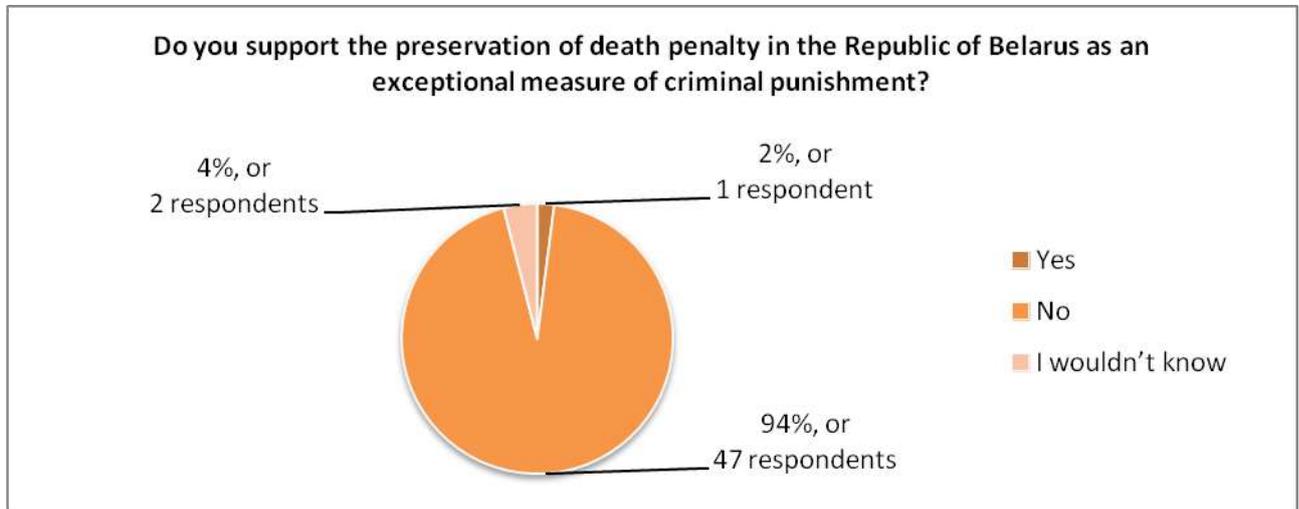
Diagram 16. Distribution of respondents' answers based on the proposed characteristics of the human rights defenders, %



The question of whether participants of the research support the preservation of death penalty in the Republic of Belarus as an exceptional measure of criminal punishment was answered by 47 respondents (94%) as “do not support”; 1 respondent supports and two found it difficult to answer (see Diagram 17).



Diagram 17. Distribution of respondents' answers on conservation in the Republic of Belarus of Death penalty, %, respondents



As it has already been stressed, 96% respondents agree with the following characteristic of human rights defenders — “Human rights defenders protect the rights of any groups”. However, while answering the question of what respondents would do if they were asked to join a campaign to protect the rights of some groups, it was found out that Belarusian human rights defenders are not always unequivocally ready to publicly join such campaigns.

In particular, 10 target groups were proposed for consideration to respondents:

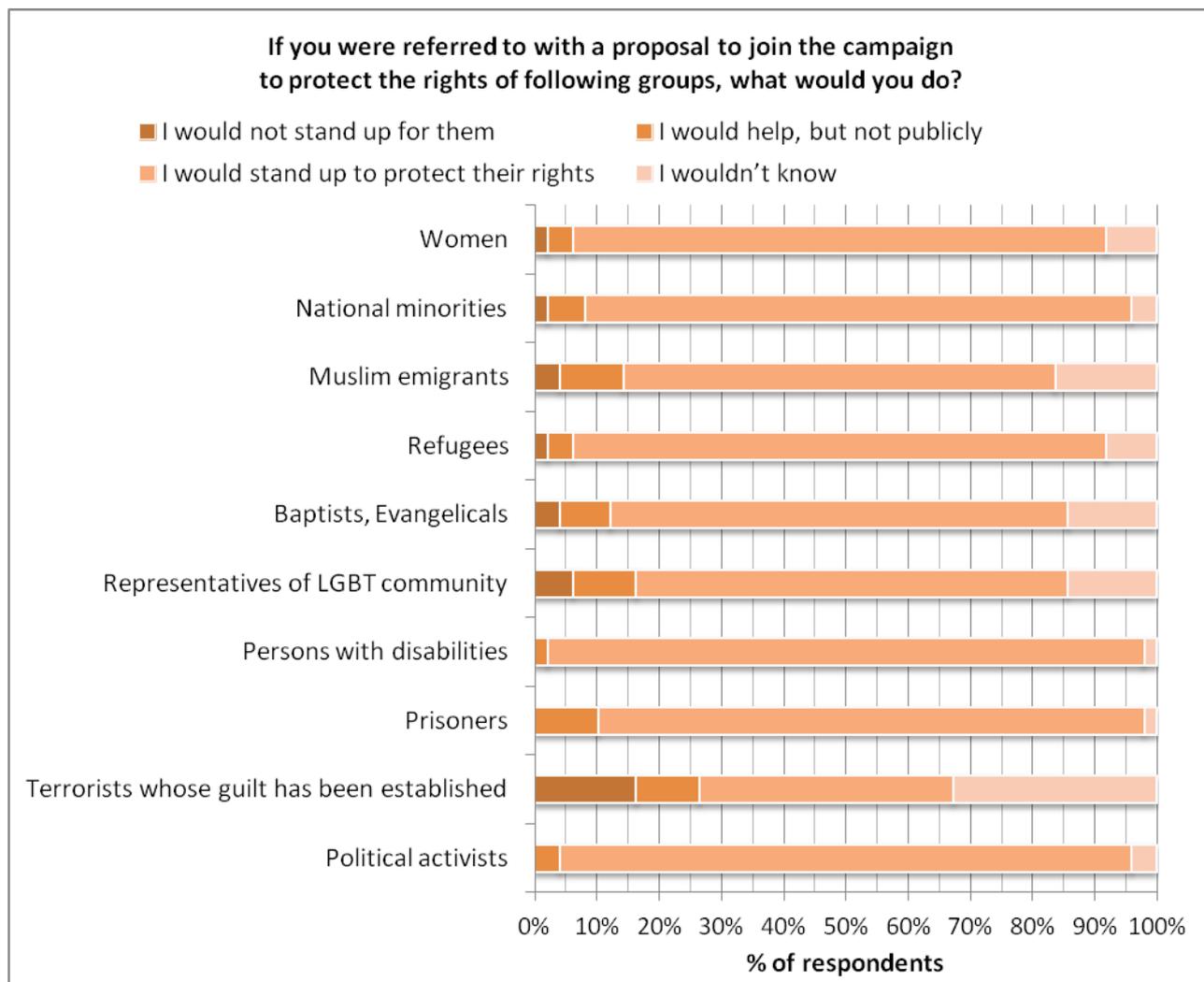
- 1) Women;
- 2) National minorities;
- 3) Muslim emigrants;
- 4) Refugees;
- 5) Baptists, Evangelicals;
- 6) Representatives of LGBT community;
- 7) Persons with disabilities;
- 8) Prisoners;
- 9) Terrorists whose guilt has been established;
- 10) Political activists.

Although the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed their readiness to publicly support the rights of the all mentioned groups, there are certain distinctions in their answers depending on a group, which rights need to be protected (see Diagram 18).

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Diagram 18. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the participation in the campaigns to protect target groups, %



First, for the majority of groups, among participants of the research, there are those who are not ready to support their rights. Their number is small: 1-3 respondents; although when it comes to the protection of rights of terrorists whose guilt has been established, their number increased up to 8. An exception is such groups as political activists, prisoners, and persons with disabilities — among the polled leaders of human rights organizations, nobody answered that they will not join campaigns aimed at protecting the rights of these groups. Also, concerning these groups, the least number of participants of the research found it difficult to answer.

Second, 2-5 respondents are ready to help campaigns protecting the rights of the all mentioned groups, but only not publicly. Most of all respondents (5 respondents) answered so the question concerning the protection of rights of terrorists whose guilt has been established, prisoners, representatives of the LGBT community, and Muslim emigrants.

Third, a big enough share of respondents found it difficult to answer — from 2% to 32%, depending on the group. The least number of those who found it difficult to answer concerns political activists and people with disabilities



(2% each), prisoners and national minorities (4% each). The biggest number of respondents found it difficult to answer what they would do when it comes to the protection of rights of terrorists whose guilt has been established (32%).

Analyzing the answers to this question, it is possible to arrive at two important conclusions.

First, as a whole, Belarusian human rights defenders are ready to join (basically — publicly) any human rights campaigns; however, there are “stress point” — the protection of rights of political activists and prisoners — in comparison with the other groups, here the readiness to operate is higher and the level of uncertainty is less. It can attest the presence of the perception (shared in the community) of acute problems both for the community and the country as a whole. The protection of rights of the other groups (religious communities, sexual and national minorities, refugees, women, etc.) has a little smaller potential of solidarity in the Belarusian human rights community, which may be connected with smaller topicality of these problems.

Second, there is an influence of the human factor that affects Belarusian human rights defenders' impartiality. It is possible to see it thanks to the poles of the axis of one's readiness to join campaigns to protect the rights of persons with disabilities (the maximum value) and terrorists whose guilt has been established (the minimum value). It can attest the great value of human rights defenders' emotional attitude to a potential target group: neutral-positive — to persons with disabilities and contradictory — to terrorists.

Typology of Belarusian human rights defenders groups

Depending on the characteristics of human rights activity shared by respondents and the characteristics of the human rights defenders, all respondents can be divided into three groups we have conditionally named:

- 1) human rights defenders — “**rigorists**”;
- 2) human rights defenders — “**realists**”;
- 3) human rights defenders — “**relativists**”.

“**Rigorists**” strictly adhere to the position of recognizing the underlying principles of human rights activity and the basic characteristics of human rights defenders — they recognize the universality of human rights for all without exceptions, the indivisibility of human rights, the inalienability of human rights, non-violence as a principle (protection by peaceful means only), the non-professional character (anyone — individually or jointly with others — can support human rights), and unequivocally do not support death penalty.

“**Realists**” support the main principles; however, unlike rigorists, concerning separate principles, they can have a not so strict position and agree with them only partially; they can also choose the variant “I find it difficult to answer” in the question of supporting death penalty.

“**Relativists**” may not support or find it difficult to define their position concerning one or several basic principles; they can also support the preservation of death penalty.

Each group includes respondents who gave the following variants of answers to the questions of the questionnaire concerning characteristics of human rights activity, characteristics of human rights defenders, and death penalty support (See Tables 2-4).

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Table 2. Variants of answers to the question: “To what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of human rights activity?” — for each conditional group of human rights defenders

To what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of human rights activity?	Conditional groups of human rights defenders		
	“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”
Human rights activity is the activity of individuals, groups or society’s institutions that promote and protect the universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights activity stands in promoting and protecting civil and political rights, as well as in promoting, protecting and implementing of economic, social and cultural rights	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights activity relates to promoting and protecting the rights of members of all population groups	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights activity does not include activities related to the commission or propaganda of acts of violence	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”

Table 3. Variants of answers to the question: “To what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of human rights defenders?” — for each conditional group of human rights defenders

To what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of human rights defenders?	Conditional groups of human rights defenders		
	“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”
Human rights defenders are those who individually or jointly with others seek to promote, protect and implement human rights and fundamental freedoms at local, national, regional and/or international levels	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights for all without any distinctions	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”



Human rights defenders protect human rights by peaceful means only	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights defenders work with all human rights violations, including mass executions, tortures, arbitrary arrests and detentions, discrimination, employment, access to health care, toxic wastes and their impact on the environment	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”
Human rights defenders protect the rights of any groups, including the rights of women, children, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as the rights of national, linguistic, and sexual minorities	“Completely agree”	“Partially agree”/ “Completely agree”	“Absolutely do not agree”/“I find it difficult to answer”

Table 4. Variants of answers to the question: “Do you support the preservation of death penalty in the Republic of Belarus as an exceptional measure of criminal punishment?” — for each conditional group of human rights defenders

	Conditional groups of human rights defenders		
	“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”
Do you support the preservation of death penalty in the Republic of Belarus as an exceptional measure of criminal punishment?	“No”	“No”/“I find it difficult to answer”	“Yes”/“No”/“I find it difficult to answer”

The distribution of all respondents by conditional groups of human rights defenders is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by conditional groups of human rights defenders, respondents, %

Conditional groups of human rights defenders	Respondents	%
“Rigorists”	23	46
“Rigorists”	18	36
“Rigorists”	9	18
Total	50	100

Thus, practically half of respondents (46%) surely share the basic characteristics of human rights activity, and the overwhelming majority at least partially agrees with them (82%). Simultaneously, it is important to underline that respondents from the same organization can be in different groups, including the situation when one of respondents can be a “rigorist” and the other one — a “relativist”.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

As a whole, such a situation says that, on the one hand, the majority of respondents share the general principles and tenets, but, at the same time, in the sector there are groups with different positions, including diametrically opposed ones (“rigorists” and “relativists”). Some respondents give contradistinct answers to questions about similar characteristics — a respondent can completely agree that “Human rights activity includes the promotion and protection of rights of members of any groups of the population”, but only partially agree that “Human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights for all without any distinctions”. On occasion, respondents’ doubts (the variant “I find it difficult to answer”) in characteristics, which seem indisputable for a human rights defender, such as: “Human rights activity is the activity of individuals, groups, or society’s institutions that promote and protect the universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms”, “Human rights activity does not include activities related to the commission or propaganda of acts of violence”, etc., can be connected respondents’ over-qualification, when they know much more about these principles than the short formulation of the characteristic presents.

Groups of respondents can differ essentially in the question of protecting the rights of separate target groups, especially in the aspect of public actions:

- “Rigorists” are more (than the sample as a whole) inclined to act publicly to protect all the specified groups;
- “Realists” are less willingly (than the two other groups) ready to publicly support Muslim emigrants, representatives of the LGBT community, and terrorists whose guilt has been established; they are also essentially less (than “rigorists”) ready to provide public support to Evangelicals, refugees, and prisoners;
- “Relativists” are ready to a lesser degree than the other groups to support publicly women, national minorities, Evangelicals, persons with disabilities, and political prisoners;
- “Relativists” are ready in a bigger degree than “realists” to support Muslim emigrants, terrorists whose guilt has been established, and LGBT representatives. As a whole, “relativists” are ready less than the other groups and all respondents for public actions in support of any groups (see Table 6 and Diagram 19).

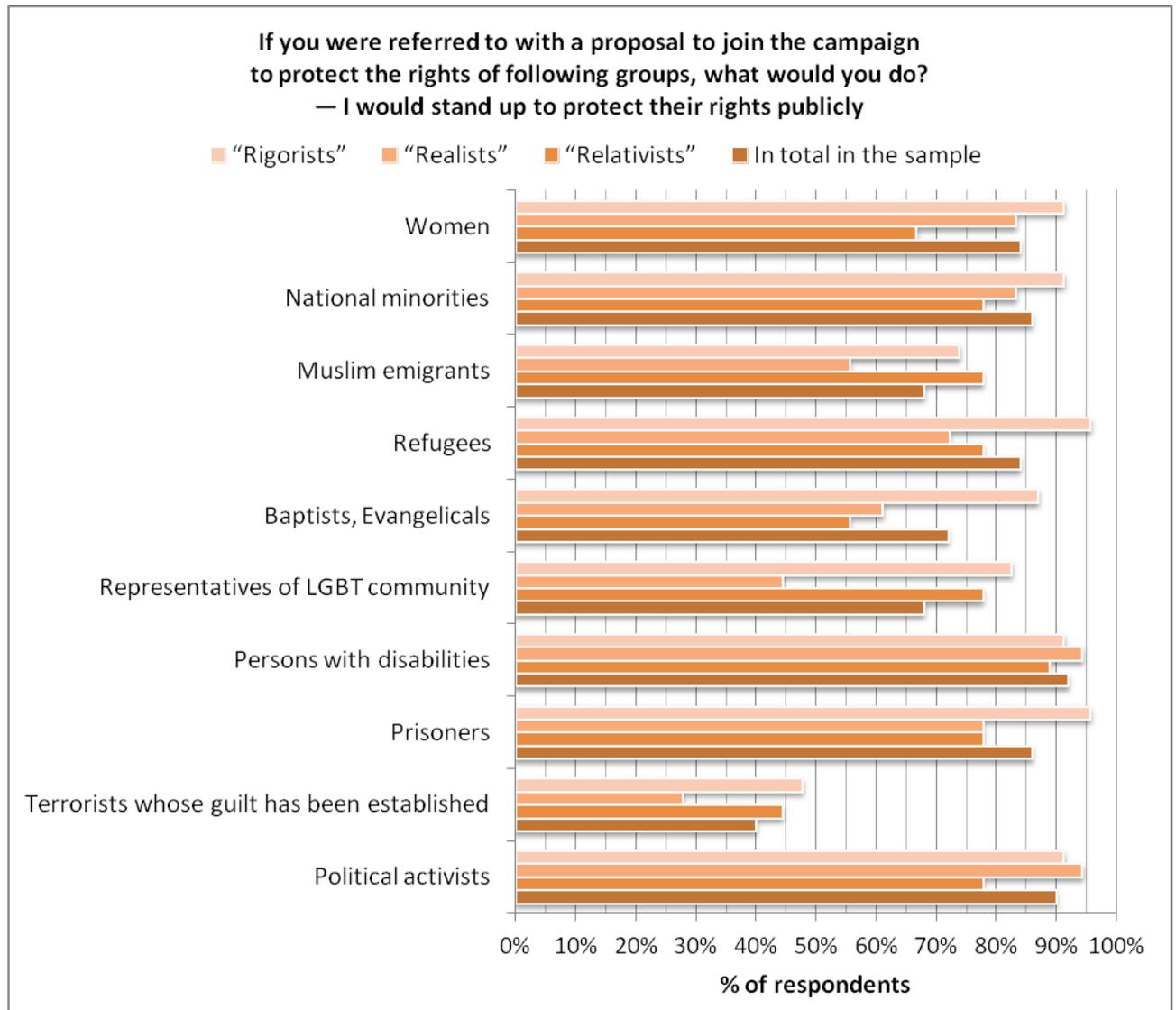
Table 6. Distribution of respondents’ answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders concerning the question “If you were referred to with a proposal to join the campaign to protect the rights of following groups, what would you do?”. The distribution in the answer: “I would stand up to protect their rights publicly”, respondents, %

If you were referred to with a proposal to join the campaign to protect the rights of following groups, what would you do?		I would stand up to protect their rights publicly			
		“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”	In total in the sample
Women	Number	21	15	6	42
	%	91,3	83,3	66,7	84,0
National minorities	Number	21	15	7	43
	%	91,3	83,3	77,8	86,0
Muslim emigrants	Number	17	10	7	34
	%	73,9	55,6	77,8	68,0
Refugees	Number	22	13	7	42
	%	95,7	72,2	77,8	84,0
Baptists, Evangelicals	Number	20	11	5	36
	%	87,0	61,1	55,6	72,0



Representatives of the LGBT community	Number	19	8	7	34
	%	82,6	44,4	77,8	68,0
Persons with disabilities	Number	21	17	8	46
	%	91,3	94,4	88,9	92,0
Prisoners	Number	22	14	7	43
	%	95,7	77,8	77,8	86,0
Terrorists whose guilt has been established	Number	11	5	4	20
	%	47,8	27,8	44,4	40,0
Political activists	Number	21	17	7	45
	%	91,3	94,4	77,8	90,0

Diagram 19. Distribution of respondents' answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders regarding participation in campaigns for the protection of target groups — in the answer: "I would stand up to protect their rights publicly", %



Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

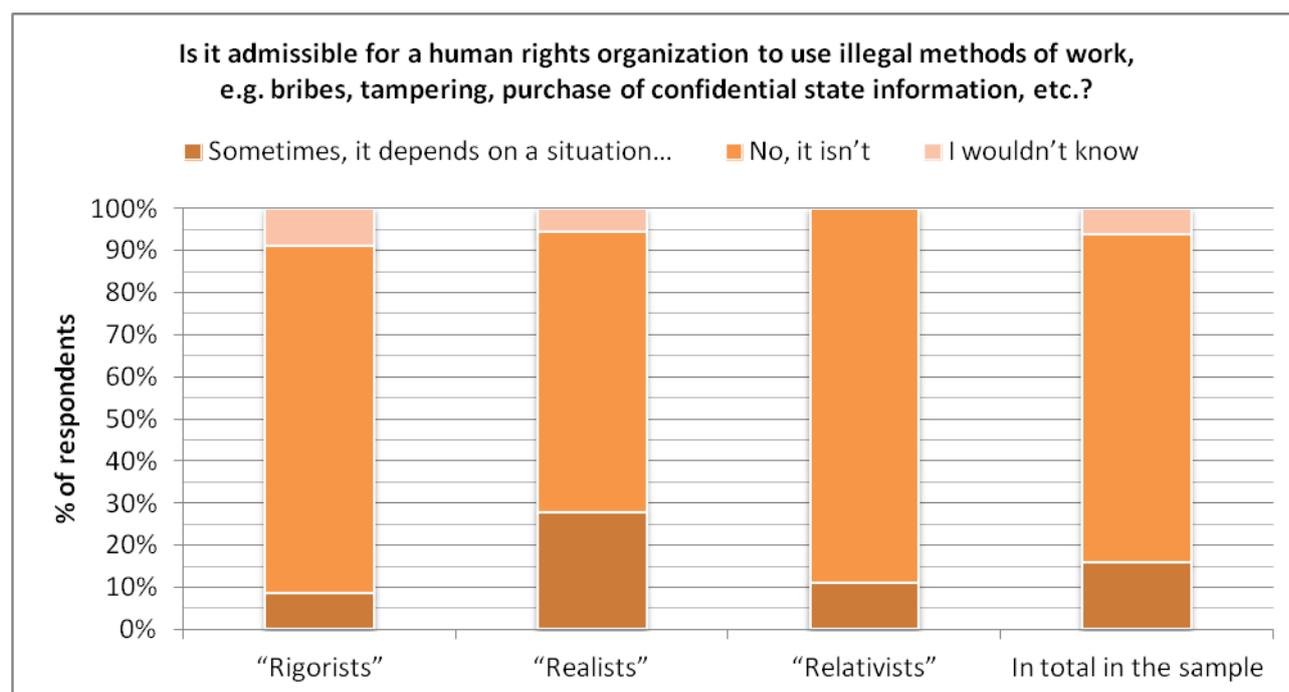
Research report

Groups of “rigorists”, “realists”, and “relativists” also differ as for the use of a possibility of ethically doubtful methods in human rights defenders’ work. Thus, almost a third of realists (5 respondents) allow a possibility of using illegal methods of work (bribes, tampering, purchase of confidential state information, etc.) if it is the only possible way to achieve objects in view. Unlike them, both rigorists and relativists are more likely inclined to refrain from using illegal methods (see Table 7 and Diagram 20).

Table 7. Distribution of respondents’ answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders concerning the possibility of using ethically questionable methods in work, respondents, %

Can a human rights organization use illegal methods of work, e.g. bribes, tampering, purchase of confidential state information, etc.?		“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”	In total in the sample
Sometimes it can; it depends on a situation; e.g. if it is the only possible way to achieve objects in view	Number	2	5	1	8
	%	8,7	27,8	11,1	16,0
No, it cannot	Number	19	12	8	39
	%	82,6	66,7	88,9	78,0
I find it difficult to answer	Number	2	1	0	3
	%	8,7	5,6	0,0	6,0
Total	Number	23	18	9	50
	%	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Diagram 20. Distribution of respondents’ answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders regarding the possibility of using deliberately inaccurate information in the work, %



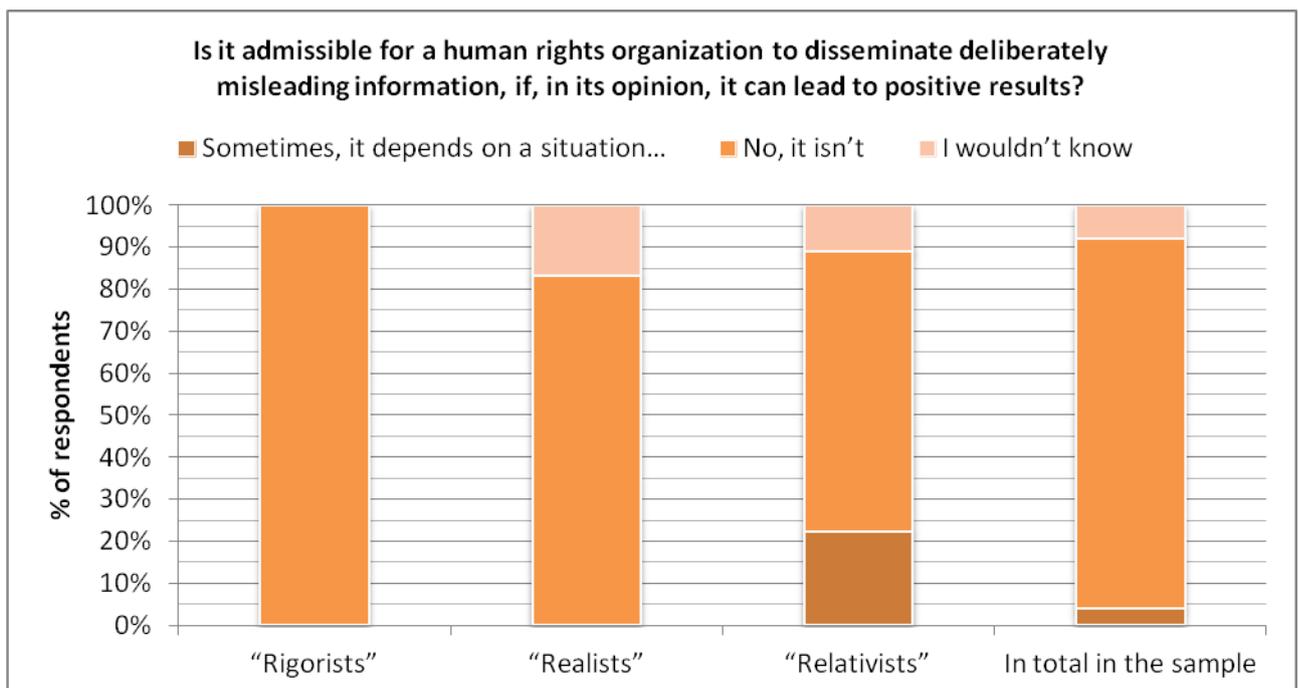


All “rigorists” consider it inadmissible to disseminate deliberately misleading information even if it can lead to positive results. Realists are not so univocal in this question; 3 respondents from this group found it difficult to answer this question. “Relativists” are even less unequivocal as for the possibility of using obviously unveracious information for good purposes; some “relativists” (two respondents out of nine) allow such a possibility; one found it difficult to answer (see Table 8 and Diagram 21).

Table 8. Distribution of respondents’ answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders regarding the possibility of using deliberately misleading information in the work, respondents, %

Is it admissible for a human rights organization to disseminate deliberately misleading information, if, in its opinion, it can lead to positive results?		“Rigorists”	“Realists”	“Relativists”	In total in the sample
Sometimes it can; it depends on a situation; e.g. if it is the only possible way to achieve objects in view	Number	0	0	2	2
	%	0,0	0,0	22,2	4,0
No, it cannot	Number	23	15	6	44
	%	100,0	83,3	66,7	88,0
I find it difficult to answer	Number	0	3	1	4
	%	0,0	16,7	11,1	8,0
Total	Number	23	18	9	50
	%	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Diagram 21. Distribution of respondents’ answers from conditional groups of human rights defenders regarding the possibility of using deliberately misleading information in their work, %



Activity of human rights organizations

Fields of activity of Belarusan human rights defenders' activity

According to respondents' answers, the field of activity of more than 50% organizations of the human rights sector in Belarus includes 8 fundamental human rights and freedoms:

- the right to a fair trial (78% respondents);
- the freedom of expression and access to information (72%);
- the freedom of assembly and association (66%);
- the right to liberty and security of person ("No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile") (62%);
- prohibition of discrimination on any grounds (60%);
- the right to an effective remedy against violations of rights (56%);
- the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (52%);
- the freedom from tortures and ill-treatment (50%).

From a quarter to half of respondents specified that the field of activity of their organizations includes 5 more rights and freedoms:

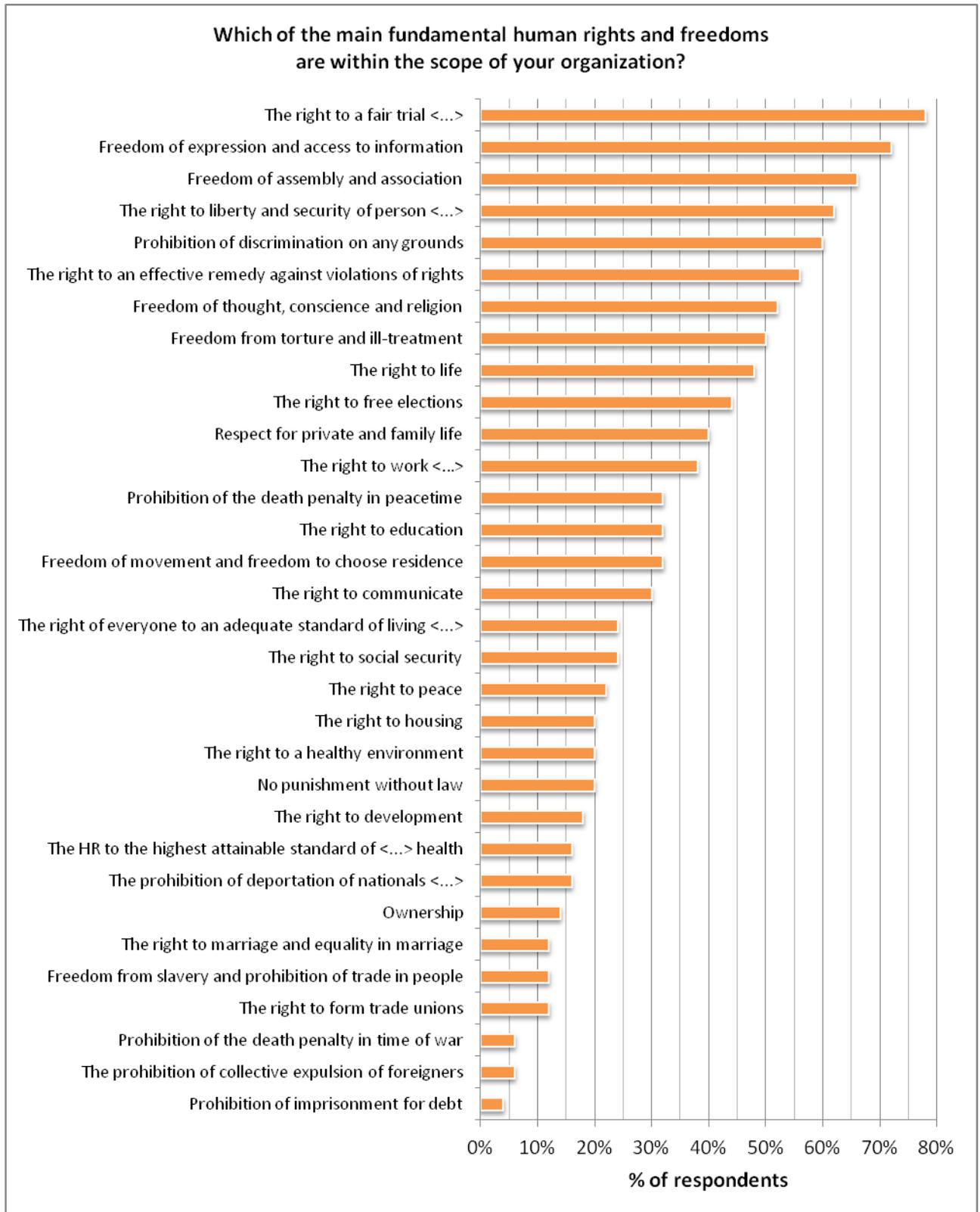
- the right to life (48% respondents);
- the right to free elections (44%);
- respect for private and family life (40%);
- the right to work and the right to fair and favorable working conditions (38%);
- the freedom of movement and the freedom to choose residence (32%);
- the right to education (32%);
- prohibition of death penalty in peacetime (32%);
- the right to communicate (30%) (see Diagram 22).

Also, 3 respondents chose the variant "other", specifying the following:

- *"We advise on questions of advocacy in other areas of human rights; "mobile reaction" — participation in campaigns on other topics in the field of human rights";*
- *"The right to unarmed service";*
- *"The right to participation in decision-making".*



Diagram 22. Human rights and freedoms in the sphere of activity of Belarusian human rights organizations, %



Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

The hypothesis that younger and more experienced organizations have essential differences in their fields of activity is not proved to be true. Profiles of various groups of organizations are similar in many respects. It is possible to say with a big share of conditionality that the freedom of assembly and association and the right to free elections are a prerogative of more skilled organizations, while almost exclusively young organizations are engaged in protection of the right to peace and prohibition of collective expulsion of foreigners. It is necessary to mark that very young organizations (existing less than 3 years) do not practically work with protection of the right to life (only 14% respondents in this group specified that this right is in the field of activity of their organizations, while in other groups — about 50%).

However, it is necessary to underline that a number of spheres is general for groups of organizations regardless of the time of their existence. Thus, for example, the right to effective remedy against violations of rights is mentioned by the overwhelming majority of respondents from groups of the organizations that exist less than 3 years and from 6 to 10 years, while in the groups from 3 to 5 years of existence of organizations and more than 10 years — only about half of organizations. The right to liberty and security of person of person is mentioned most of all by respondents from the organizations that exist less than 3 years and more than 10 years (see Diagram 23).

Diagram 23. Some human rights and freedoms in the sphere of activity of organizations with different life-span, %

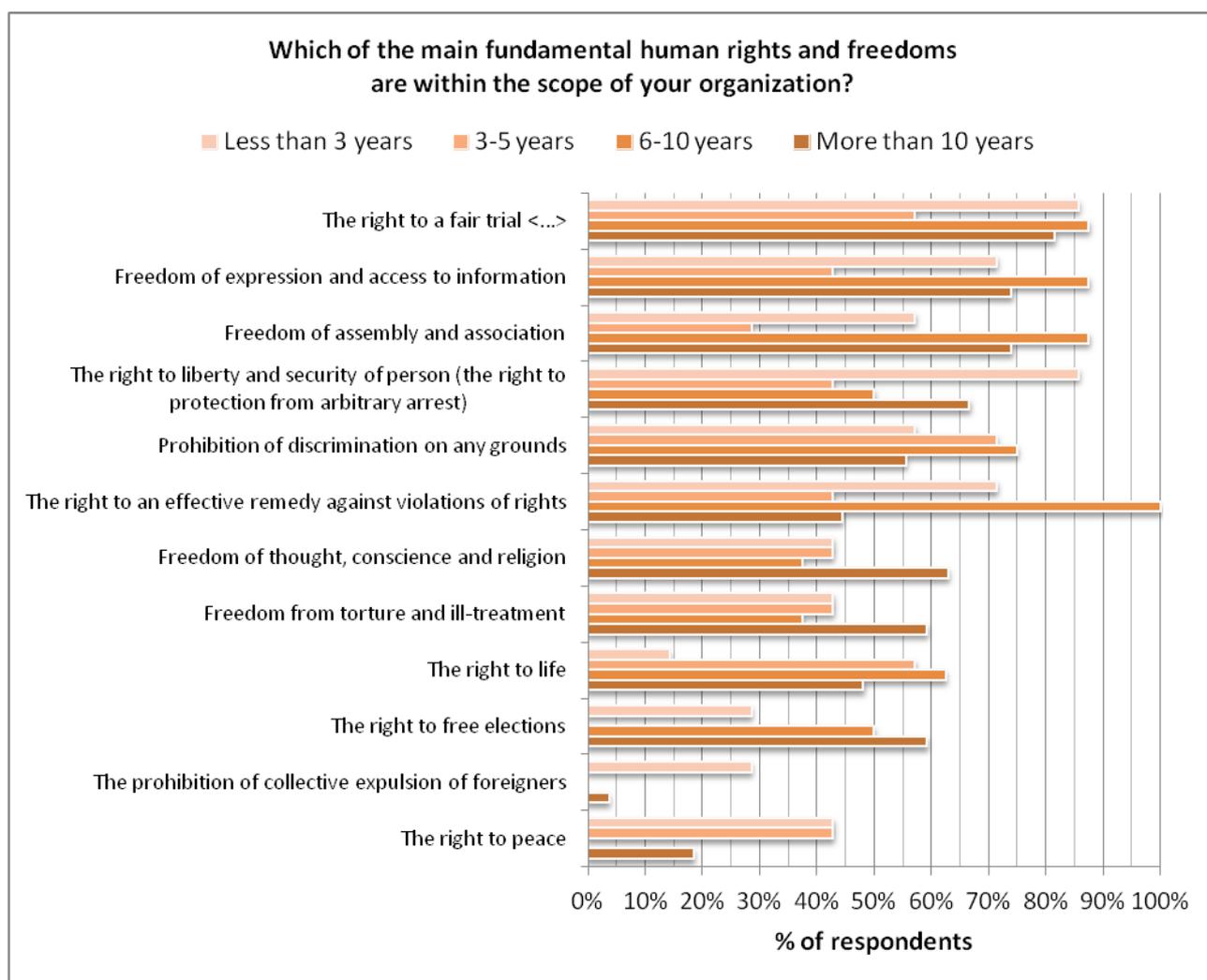
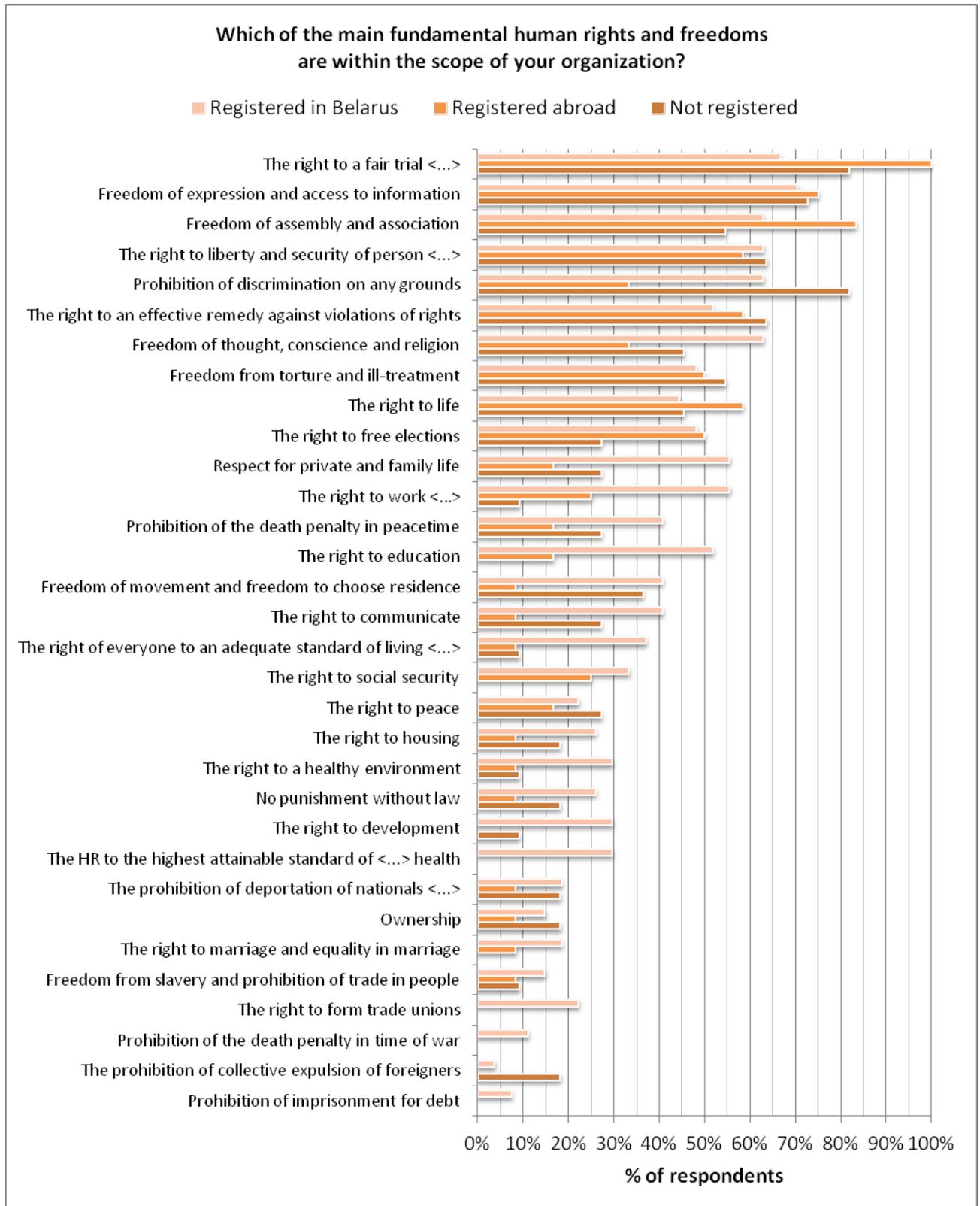




Diagram 24. Human rights and freedoms in the sphere of activity of organizations that have and do not have state registration, %



Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

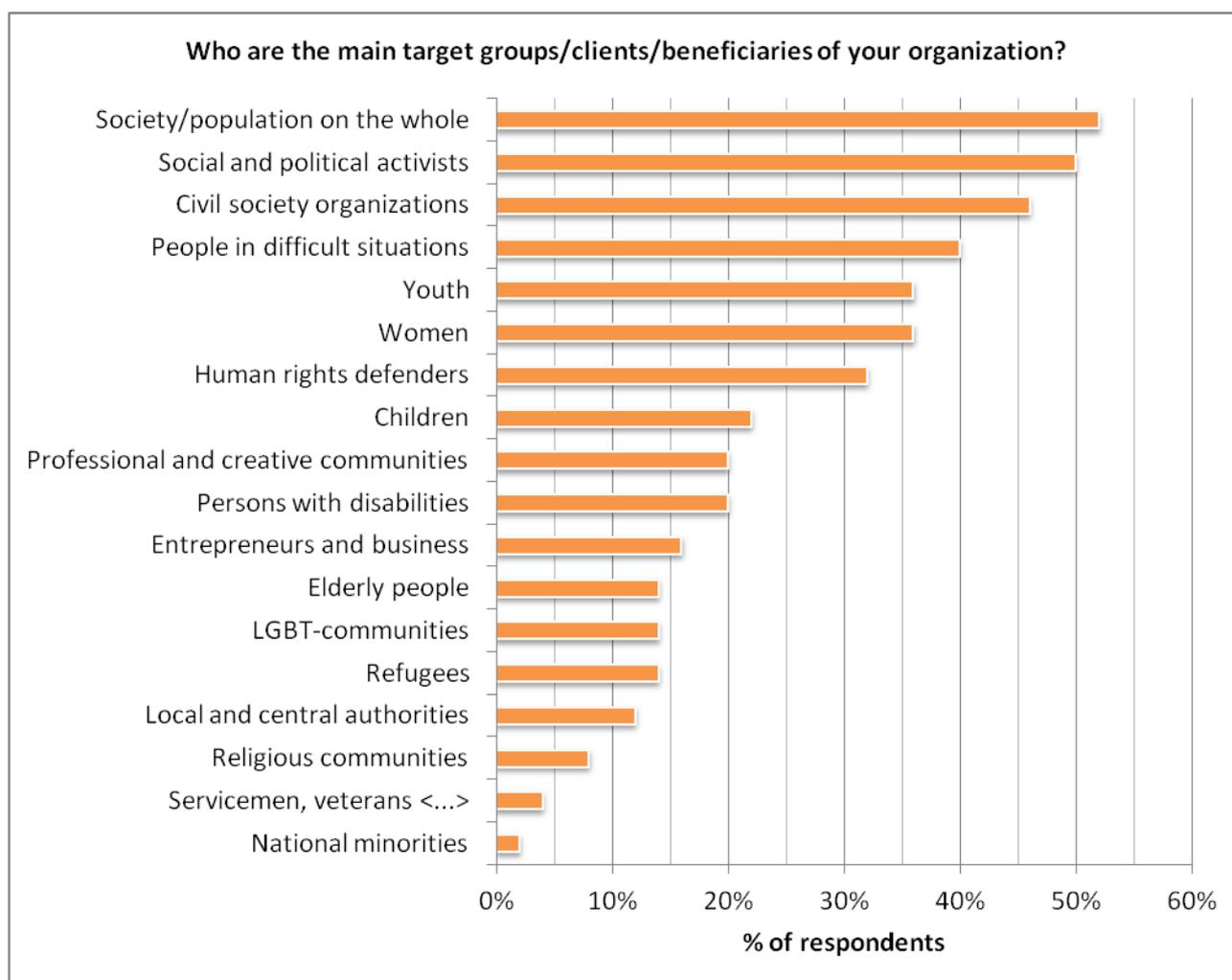
Research report

As for distinctions in the fields of activity of organizations registered in Belarus, registered abroad, and non-registered, there are no obvious contradictions either. The basic confine between the organizations registered in Belarus and the other ones is that the organizations that have not been registered in Belarus have more narrowly focused subjects of activity, which include 10 rights and freedoms (the right to a fair trial, the freedom of expression, the freedom of assembly and association, etc.). The organizations registered in Belarus are engaged not less actively in these spheres, but besides they work with a wide spectrum of other topics, covering various rights and freedoms more (see Diagram 24).

Target groups of Belarusan human rights organizations

As for target groups (clients, beneficiaries) of Belarusan human rights organizations, the human rights sector works with a plethora of categories of the population. According to respondents' answers, any of target groups is not common for all Belarusan human rights sector or at least the majority of organizations. Categories of the population specified by the greatest number of respondents are society/population on the whole (52%), social and political activists (50%), and civil society organizations (46%) (see Diagram 25).

Diagram 25. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding target groups of human rights organizations, %





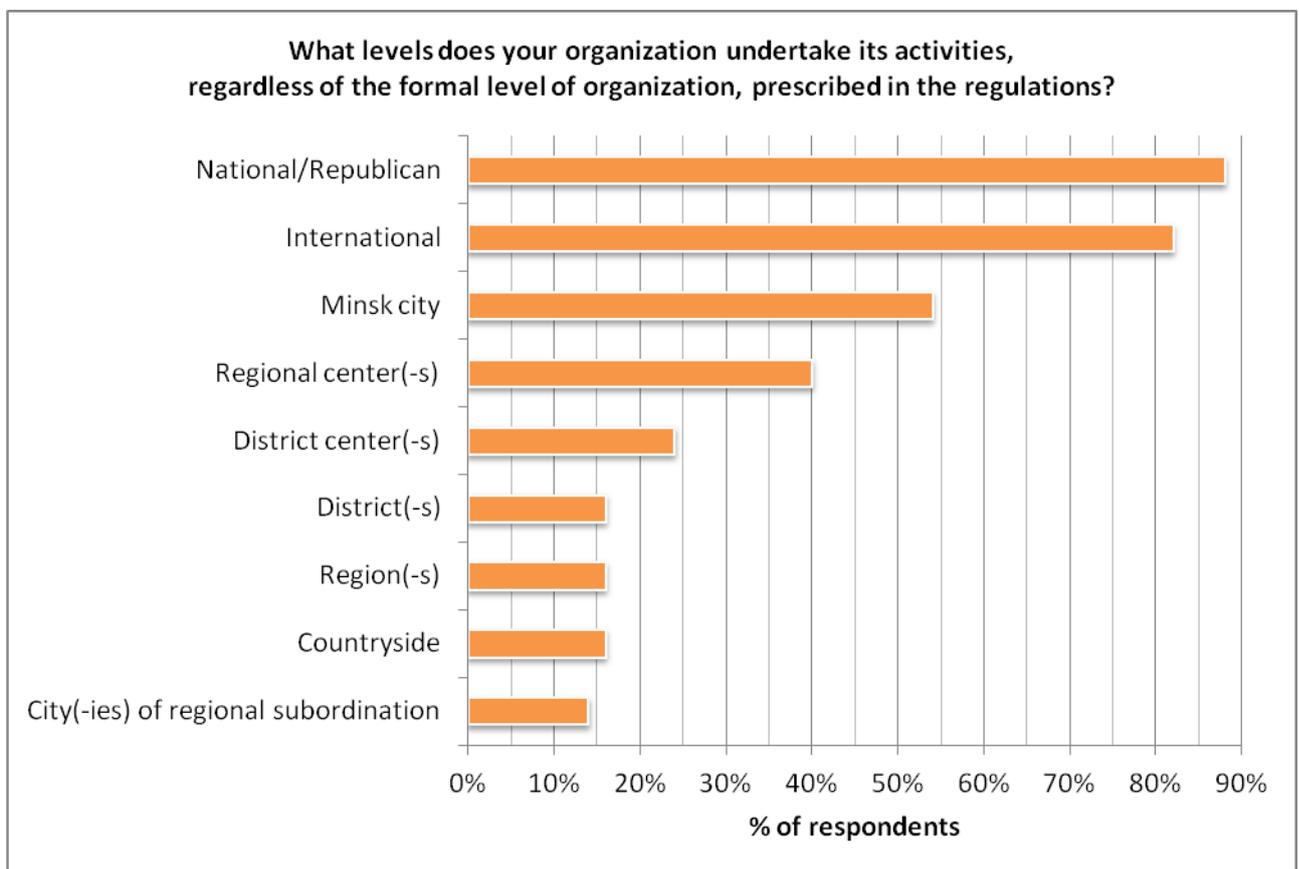
Levels of human rights organizations' activity

Basically, Belarusian human rights organizations work at the level of the Republic and at the international level, as well as at the level of cities. The overwhelming number of respondents specified that their organizations work at the national level (88%); the variant "at the international level" was chosen by 82% respondents.

Cities (Minsk and regional centers) as the level of their organizations' work was mentioned by about half of respondents only: 54% respondents chose the variant "Minsk"; 40% respondents chose "regional centers".

The district centers was marked by 24% respondents; district towns, cities of regional subordination, administrative units of subnational level (regions and districts), rural areas — 16% of respondents respectively, cities of regional subordination — 14% of respondents (see Diagram 26).

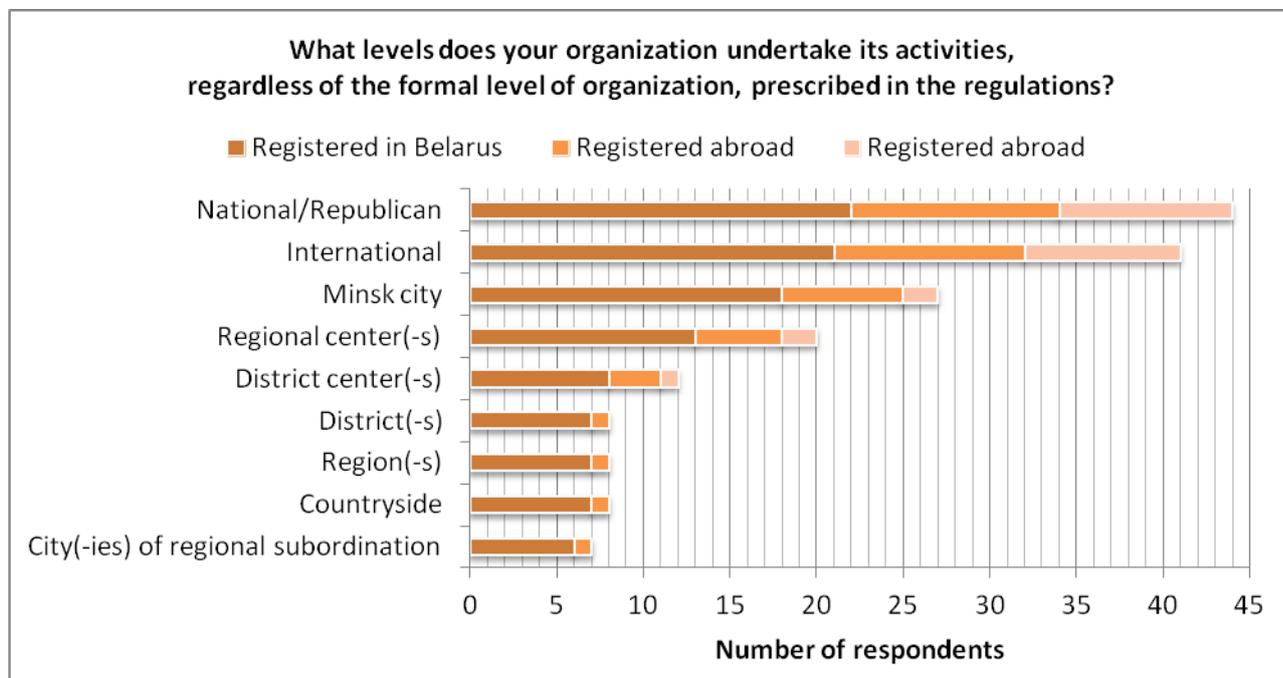
Diagram 26. Distribution of respondents' responses to regional levels of activity of organizations, %



The analysis of respondents' answers revealed a distribution of various types of organizations as for geographical levels of activity. The basic distinction is observed between the profiles of the organizations that work at international and national levels and the organizations working at subnational levels.

Organizations' activity at subnational levels is marked much more by respondents belonging to the organizations registered in Belarus than by those who belong to the organizations that are registered abroad or that have no registration (see Diagram 27).

Diagram 27. Distribution of respondents' answers from organizations that have and do not have state registration, relative to regional levels of organizations' activity, respondents



Also, at subnational levels, young organizations (existing less than 5 years) and organizations with the staff of less than 10 people work less often (see Diagrams 28 and 29).

Diagram 28. Distribution of respondents' answers from organizations with different life expectancy relative to regional levels of organizations' activity, respondents

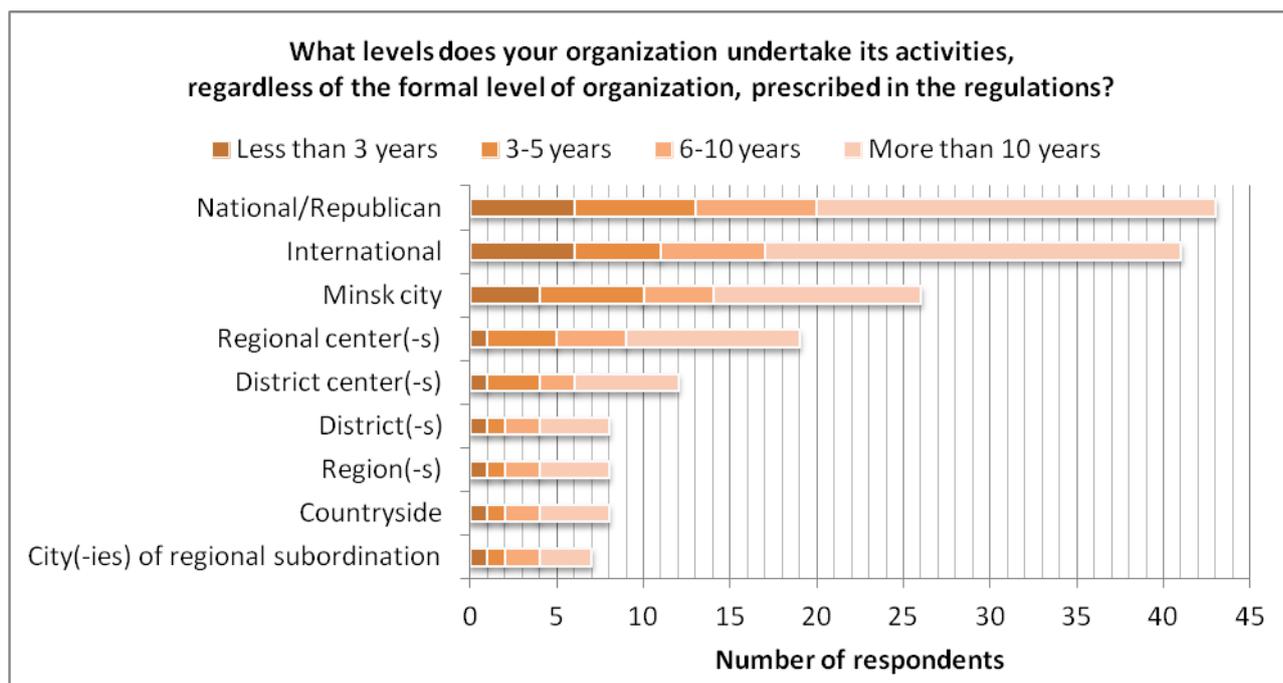
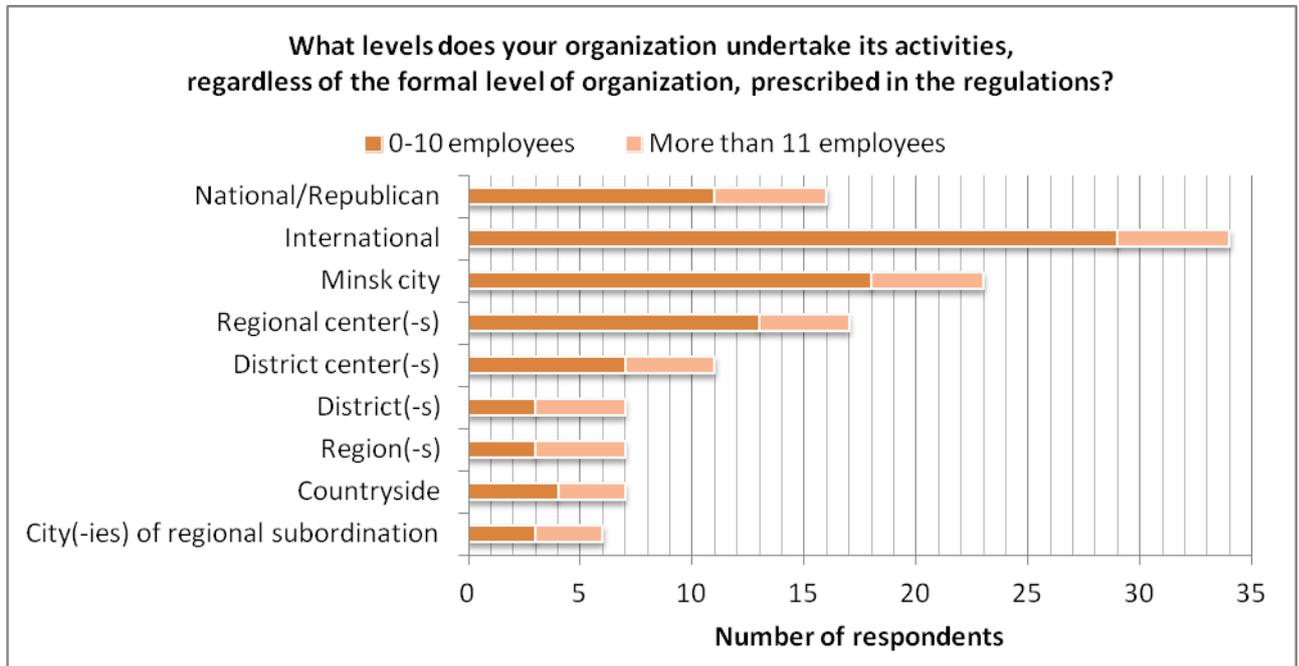




Diagram 29. Distribution of answers of respondents from the organizations with a different quantity of employees concerning regional levels of activity of the organizations, respondents



Management of the organizations

A special question was aimed at revealing a character of management in human rights organizations, how much management is personalized, and what role is played by collegiate bodies.

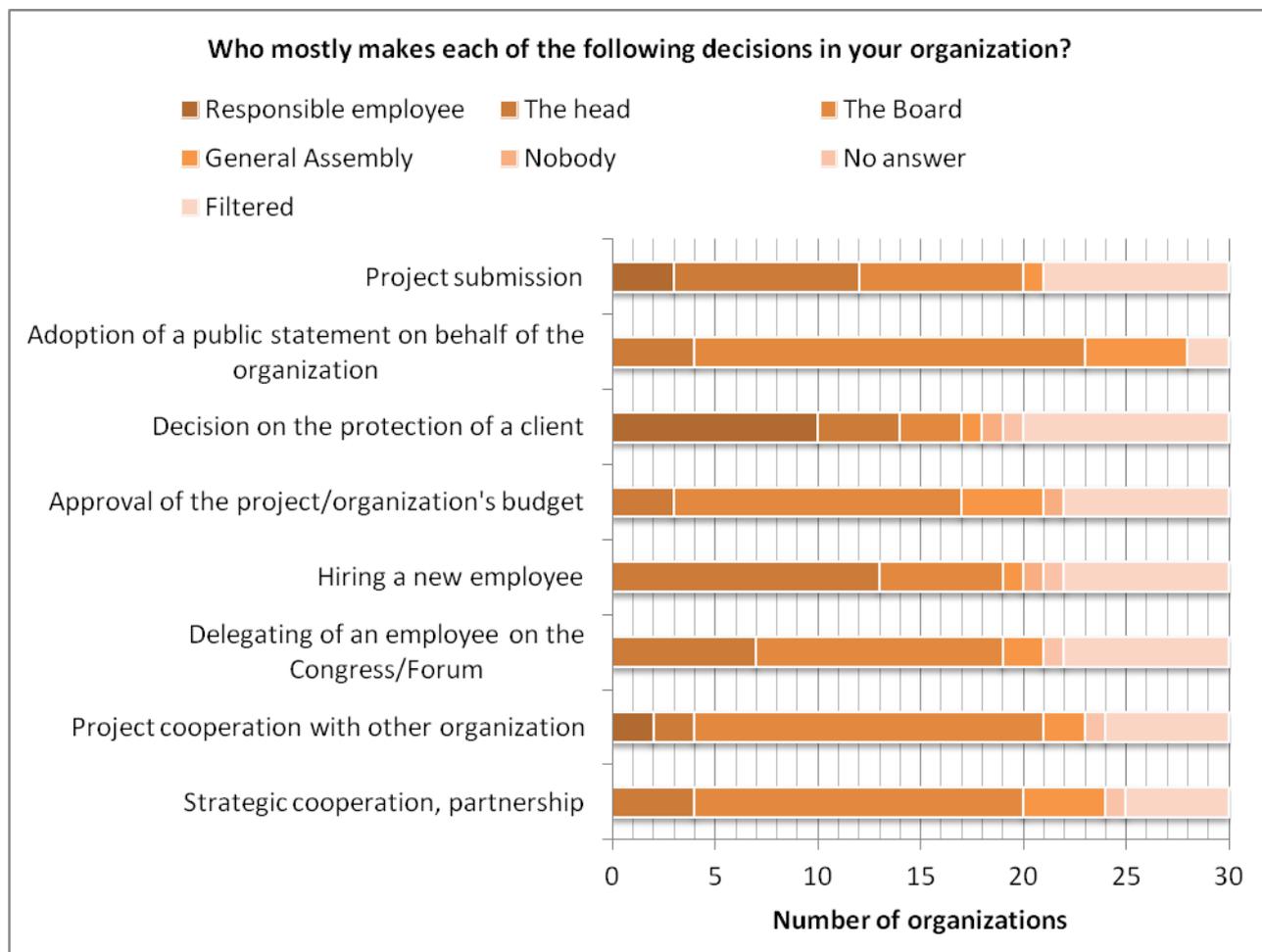
According to respondents' answers, in human rights organizations, decisions are basically made by collegiate bodies, more often — a council. However, there are decisions that have to do with the internal activity of an organization (recruitment of new employees, a decision to protect a client, a project presentation), which are taken individually by the head or a responsible employee.

It is possible to allot four organizations in which the heads has a defining value — respondents from these organizations noticed that the head accepts all types of decisions. In three more organizations — the head accepts half of decisions.

The general meeting is the basic decision-making body in two organizations. Also, the case of one organization is interesting — it demonstrates that one of respondents gave "correct" answers: one of the respondents who represented this organization wrote in all cases that decisions are made by the general meeting; however, the other respondent specified the general meeting only in one case and wrote that other types of decisions are accepted by both employees, the head, and the council; in one case this respondent found it difficult to answer.

With big confidence, it is possible to say that in the majority of human rights organizations the decision to issue a public statement on behalf of the organization is made collegially: in 18 out of 20 organizations represented by two respondents, identical answers were given. As for other types of decisions, the number of the organizations whose respondents provided different answers is from 5 to 10 (see Diagram 30).

Diagram 30. Distribution of organizations by decision-making bodies, frequency

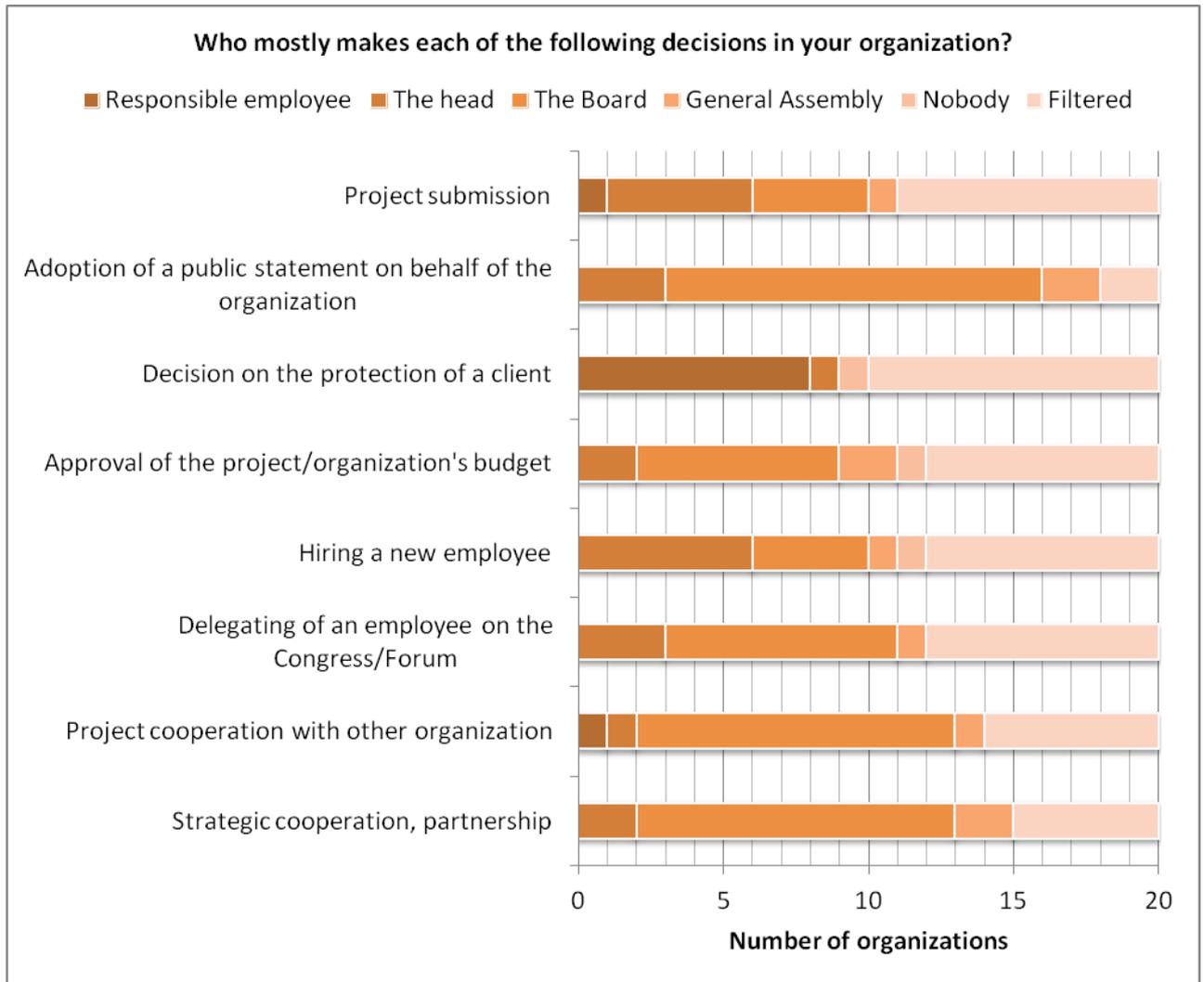


It seemed interesting to us to review separately the organizations that were represented in the research by two respondents and to analyze respondents' coinciding and not coinciding answers. There were 20 such organizations. At least in half of organizations, each question was answered identically by two colleagues. Like in the general totality, decisions, which are important for organizations' internal life, are more often accepted individually — recruitment of new employees (in 6 organizations, this decision is more often made by their heads) and project presentations (in 5 organizations, their heads are responsible for it; in 1 — a responsible employee).

In this subsample, in none of organizations, collegiate bodies do not take part in the solution of the client protection question. In the majority of organizations in this subsample, this decision is accepted by a responsible employee; in one organization — the head. At the same time, in this question, there are most of all organizations (10), in which pairs of respondents gave different answers. The analysis of their answers shows that collegiate bodies are in a small degree involved in the acceptance of this decision — out of these 20 respondents, 12 respondents specified that this decision is accepted individually (a responsible employee or the head); only 5 respondents specified collegiate bodies (the other 3 respondents either passed this question, or chose the variant "I do not know") (see Diagram 31).



Diagram 31. Distribution by decision-making bodies of organizations represented by the pairs of respondents*, frequency



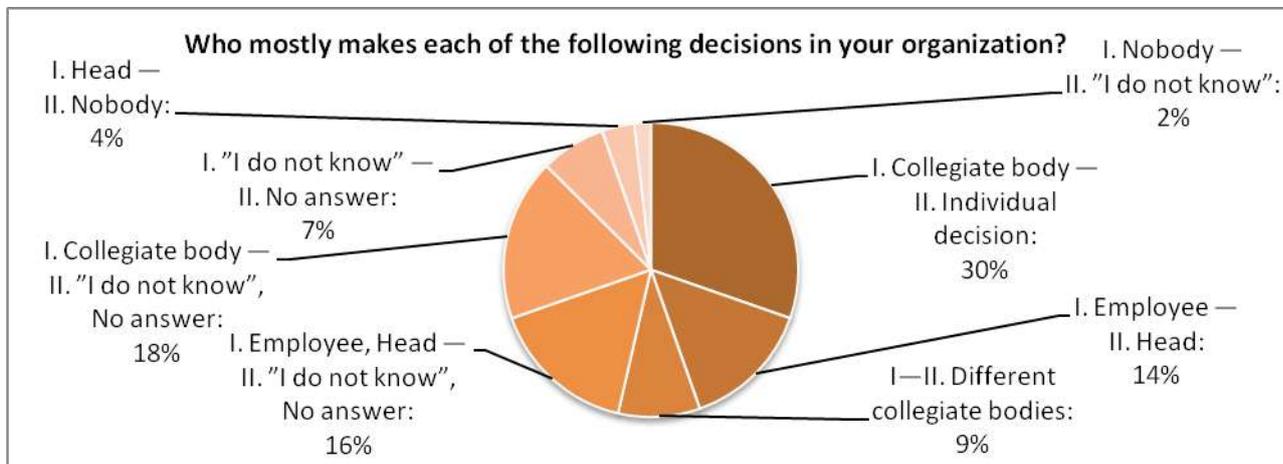
* The subsample of 20 organizations represented in the research by two respondents.

Different answers in pairs of respondents who represent one organization are of special interest. There are 56 pairs of different answers. Only in two organizations of the subsample, pairs of respondents provided all identical answers. More often than not, in a pair, one of respondents specified the head or an employee; the other one specified one of collegiate bodies — the council, the general meeting, the head + active members (such pairs are 30%). In 18% pairs of respondents, one of participants of the research specified one of collegiate bodies (the council, the general meeting, the auditing department), the second one chose the variant “I do not know” or passed this question. In 16% pairs, one respondent wrote that the decision is accepted by the head or an employee, and the other respondent chose the variant “I do not know” or passed the question. In 14% pairs, respondents specified that the decision is accepted individually — either by a responsible employee, or by the head. 9% pairs chose answers from the cluster of collegiate bodies (the council, the general meeting, the head + active members) (see Diagram 32).

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Diagram 32. The distribution of non-coincident responses among the pairs of respondents from same organizations, %



A separate analysis of the organizations, which were represented in the research by one respondent, does not reveal any considerable differences in the character of management (see Diagram 33).

Diagram 33. Distribution by decision-making bodies of organizations represented in the study by single respondents*, frequency



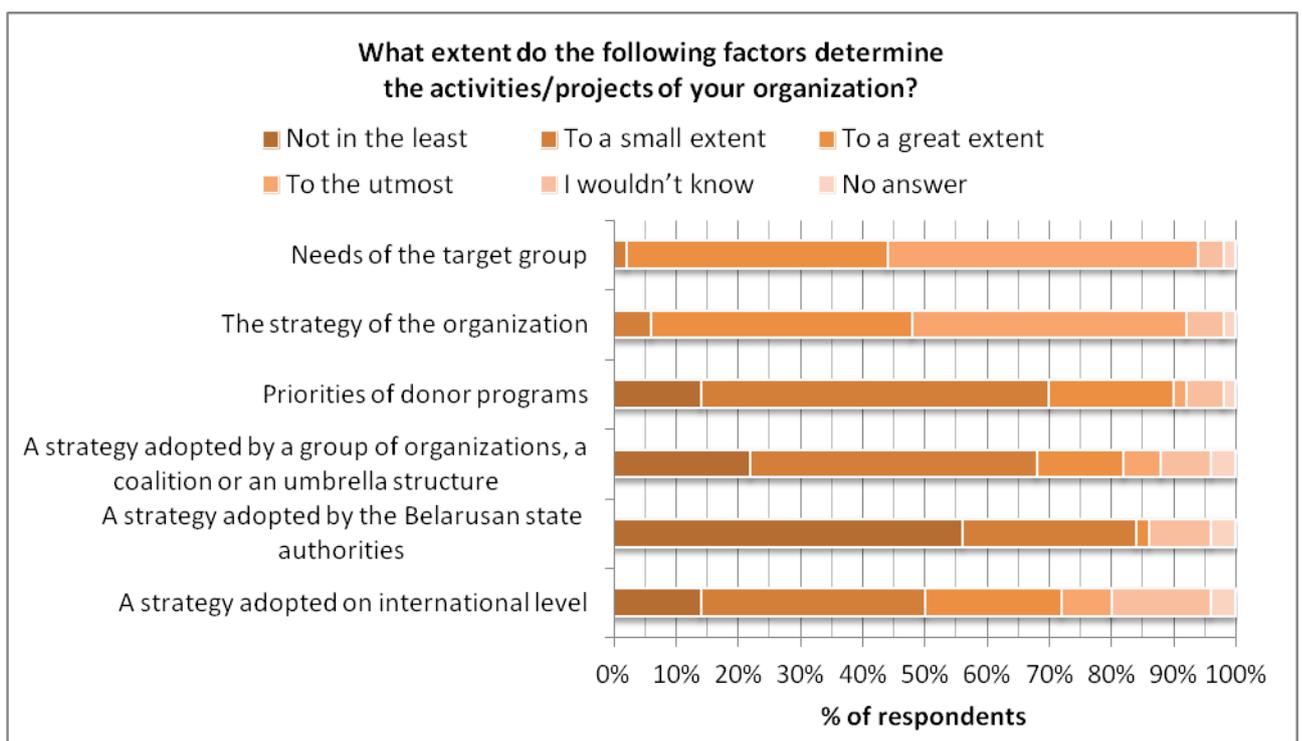
* The subsample of 10 organizations represented in the research by one respondent.



Defining factors of the activity

Defining factors of human rights organizations' activity are needs/requirements of the target group (92% respondents noticed that this factor influences in a big and very big degree) and the organization's strategy (88% noted a big and very big influence of this factor). Other factors in a much smaller degree define organizations' activity. Thus, if we combine the answers "in a big degree" and "in a very big degree", the third factor as for its importance is the strategy accepted at the international level. Then — priorities of donor programs (22%) and the strategy accepted by a group of organizations, a coalition, or an umbrella structure (20%). These factors define organizations' activity in a small degree according to 36%-56%. At the same time, 14%-24% respondents marked that these factors do not influence at all. Strategies accepted by the state structures of Belarus have the least value for Belarusian human rights organizations' activity — more than half of respondents said that they are not defining factors, 28% — that they influence in a small degree, and 2% — that they influence in a big degree (see Diagram 34).

Diagram 34. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the determining factors in the activity of organizations, %



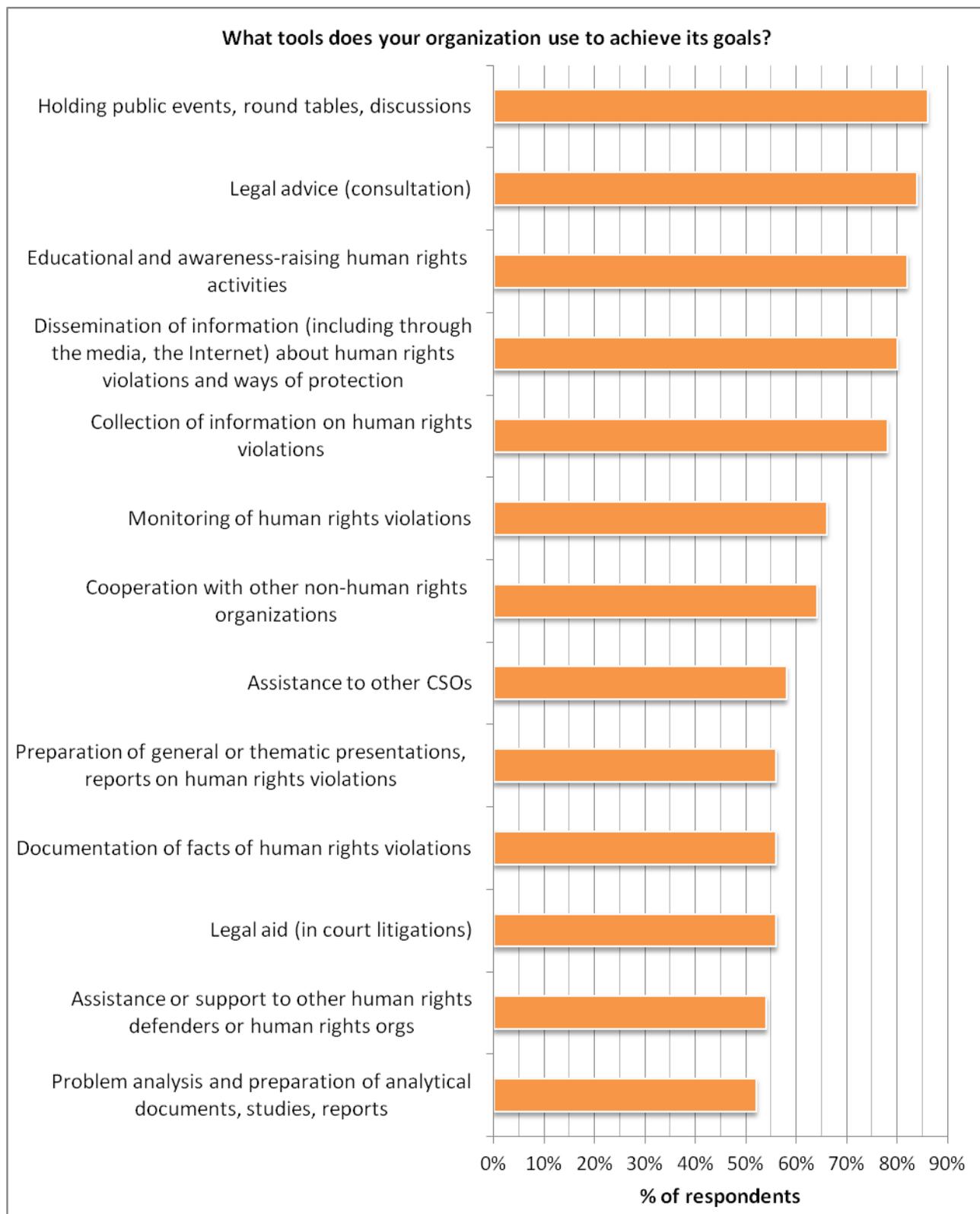
Tools used by human rights organizations

In order to achieve their purposes, the overwhelming majority of human rights organizations carry out public events and actions (this tool was mentioned by 86% respondents), provide legal advice in the form of consultations (84% respondents), carry out educational and awareness-raising events and actions dedicated to human rights (82% respondents), disseminate information on human rights violations and ways of their protection (80% respondents), and collect information on human rights infringements (78% respondents) (see Diagram 35).

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Diagram 35. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the tools used in the activity of organizations, %





It is necessary to mark that in order to achieve their purposes human rights organizations often cooperate with other human rights defenders and public organizations from other sectors. Also, more than half of respondents said that their organizations use such tools as monitoring and documenting the facts of human rights violations, preparation of reports and statements, problem analyses and preparation of analytical documents and researches.

Less used tools are the organization of human rights actions and campaigns, forms of interaction with state structures (development of drafts of normative documents, participation in public, consultative, and expert councils, monitoring of the implementation of the authorities' decisions), investigation of facts of human rights violations, and rendering of not legal (medical, psychological, material) help to victims of human rights violations.

Perceptions of problems and achievements of human rights organizations

Problems of human rights organizations

Answering the open question on what problems their organization faces, respondents (49 participants of the research) have mentioned 124 problems. Having analyzed their answers, we have set 9 problem spheres, the majority of which are common for many organizations of the sector (see Diagram 36).

Two problems are topical for half of human rights organizations — this is financing and interrelationship with the state. Financing is the main problem; respondents mentioned it 31 times, and 16 respondents marked this problem in the first turn. The problem has various aspects — the absence of financing, insufficiency of financing, instability of financing, high expenses (e.g. high rent of the office), and the problem of registering financing.

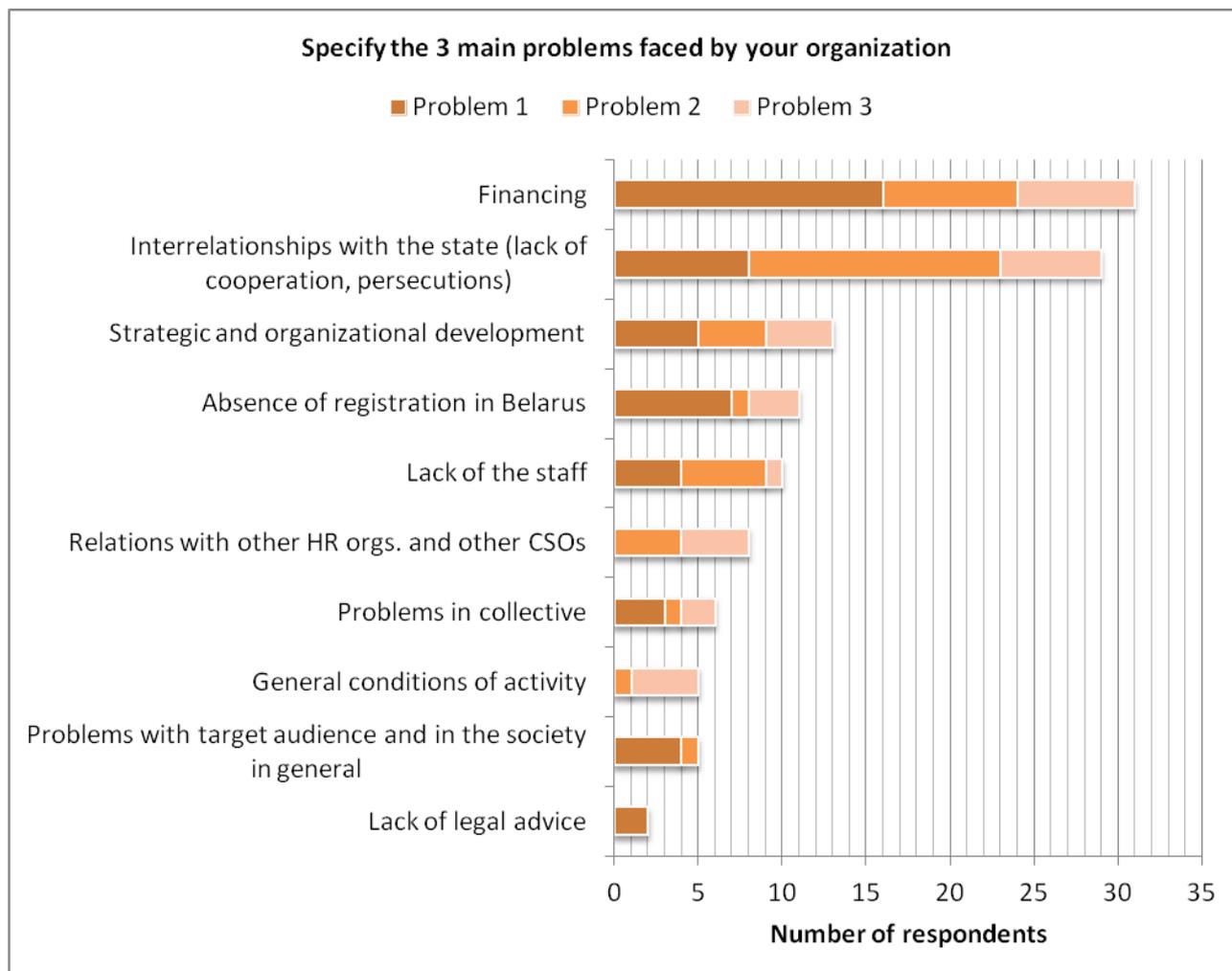
The second problem as for the number of its mentions is various aspects of unsatisfactory interaction with the state (29 mentions); respondents more often marked this problem in the second turn (15 respondents placed this problem on the second place). This problem area includes two big aspects — on the one hand, the unwillingness of the state to cooperate; on the other hand — the pressure on the part of the state. Also, GONGOs and the state policy in the human rights sphere were mentioned.

Other problems matter for a considerably smaller number of organizations. Thus, problems, which we united in the cluster “Strategic and organizational development”, were mentioned only 13 times. These problems include organizational development, the absence of organizations' strategic plan and strategy revision, the crisis of management and continuity of generations, bad coverage of activity in the mass media, the image that has not been changed for 20 years, and the insufficient knowledge of the English language among human rights defenders.

The absence of registration in Belarus is a problem for organizations according to 11 respondents and for the majority of them — it is a paramount problem.

Problems that have to do with the lack of the staff in organizations were mentioned 10 times. Such aspects as want of skilled personnel as a whole, as well as a small number of experts in regions, young qualified personnel, and the lack of volunteers, were stressed. One of respondents said that the problem of the organization is the staff turnover.

Diagram 36. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the main problems of human rights organizations, respondents



Problems concerning cooperation of human rights organizations among themselves and with other public organizations were underlined 8 times. This problem is not paramount. Concrete problems in this area are the consolidation and absence of interaction with other human rights organizations, the unwillingness of big organizations to allow new organizations in the field, tense relations with local partners, and the absence of communication with other civil society organizations.

The most often mentioned problem in collectives is the professional overburning, weariness (4 of 6 mentions).

General conditions of activity include such problems as “the absence of the freedom of thought and access to the mass media”, “the absence of independent courts”, “general political problems in the country”, and “civil society’s weakness”.

Also, the polled human rights defenders mentioned problems of want of solidarity in society; target groups’ disinterest; the population’s legal illiteracy; a lack of legal advice; engagedness; the misunderstanding of values; provocations.



Achievements of human rights organizations

The open question “Specify the 3 major achievements of your organization over the past 3 years” has received 130 answers of participants of the research (48 respondents). 1 respondent said that his/her organization’s achievements do not concern human rights activity; 1 — passed the question.

The most frequently, participants of the research named achievements of their organizations in the sphere of cooperation (with other human rights and not human rights Belarusian organizations, with the state, with international structures). In total, respondents provided 22 answers in this cluster. E.g.:

“Active participation in the activity of the Belarusian National Platform”;

“We develop interaction with the authorities”;

“We build international contacts”;

“A large joint project is implemented”.

Also, several joint actions with other organizations were mentioned.

As for the number of its mentions, the second type of achievements of human rights organizations is changes in the legislation and law enforcement practice (20 mentions in total). It includes not only accepted changes in the legislation, but also the development of specific proposals on changes and the work in the sphere of changing certain branches of the legislation. Also, this group includes *“access to imprisonment places”* and *“repair of the Center of Isolation of Offenders”*.

The third position as for the number of its mentions is the cluster “Organization Development” (16 mentions). 4 mentions concern the working-out of and following to the strategic plan; 2 times — the solid age of an organization (20 years); 2 times — the number of people in an organization; 2 times — the fact that an organization has survived; 1 time — the fact of the creation of this organization was called an achievement; also, management formalization in an organization, Internet resource restoration, training of members of an organization, financial stability and activity professionalization were marked.

Participants of the research said 14 times that an achievement is the improvement of the image of their organizations — trust, respect, and recognition of an organization; wight growth. One of respondents said that an achievement of the organization is that *“the authorities consider them an opponent”*. Also, it includes two mentions of awards (one award was awarded to the head of an organization, the other one — to an organization’s web-site) and the fact that one of heads of an organization received a state post.

Then, respondents believe that important achievements are successes in the work with their target groups (13 mentions). Respondents named help, consultations, training, and recommendations.

Also, respondents believe that their achievements are general improvements in their field of activity (12 mentions): education of a wide range of people, improvement of legal literacy of the target group, work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs on certain problems, attention attraction to the situation with problems of the group at the level of the UN Human Rights Council, growth of the popularity of the Belarusian language in society, and readers’ access to new European literature.

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Less than 10 respondents named achievements from the clusters “Projects” (creation of databases, systems of aid, festivals, start of new initiatives), “Successes in courts” (not-guilty verdicts of Belarusan courts and positive solutions of the Human Rights Committee), “Development of organization activity” (improvement of assistance quality, development of new topics, etc.), “Analytics”, and “Campaigns and actions” (see Diagram 37).

Diagram 37. Distribution of respondents' answers on clusters relative to the main achievements of human rights organizations, respondents



Achievements of civil society organizations in the perceptions of human rights defenders

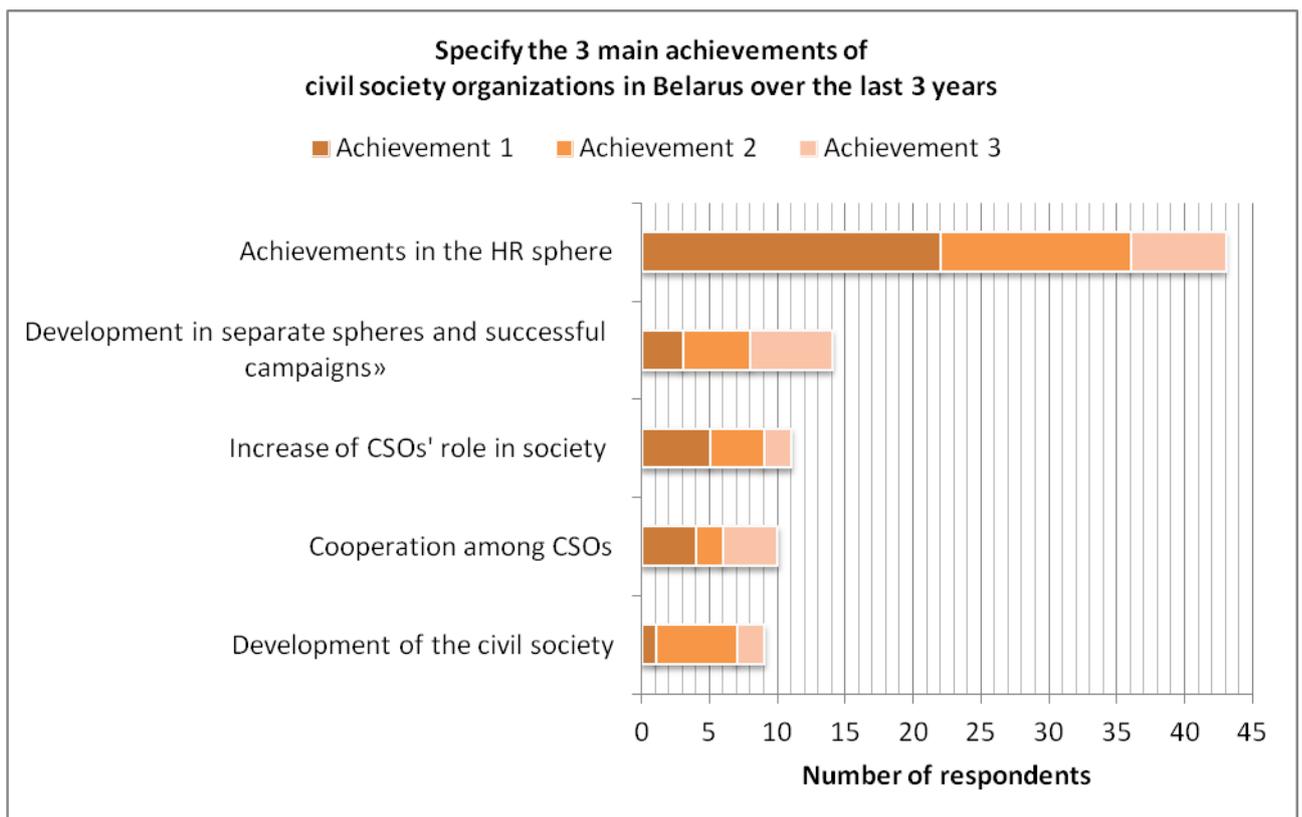
The open question on civil society's achievements for the last 3 years was answered only by 36 participants of the research, who provided in total 88 answers (1 answer cannot be interpreted — “the big process”). 7 respondents passed this question; 7 respondents noticed that it was difficult to answer. It means that leaders and activists of human rights organizations understand to a lesser degree the activity of not human rights CSOs in comparison with the activity in the human rights sector. The analysis of answers confirms this thought.



First of all, it is necessary to say that participants of the research most often think that civil society’s achievements are campaigns in the field of human rights protection — release of political prisoners (12 mentions), help to those who are repressed and the struggle against repressions (6 mentions), Universal Periodic Review (4 mentions), elections (campaign for free elections, monitoring of elections, progress of the electoral legislation — 4 mentions), death penalty (3 mentions), civic unarmed service, UN Human Rights Commission and the UN Special Rapporteur (2 mentions each). Also, respondents said that civil society’s achievements are human rights organizations’ cooperation (the 2nd All-Belarusan Human Rights Forum, the beginning of dialogue with human rights organizations) and the strengthening of human rights organizations’ role in the eyes of society and the state. In total, respondents named achievements in the sphere of human rights and human rights activity 43 times. Thus, it is possible to say that leaders of human rights organizations consider achievements in the sphere of human rights protection to be the main achievements of Belarusian civil society.

Civil society’s achievements beyond the human rights protection sphere were mentioned 45 times. Answers were distributed among 4 almost equal clusters (See Diagram 38).

Diagram 38. Distribution of respondents’ answers on clusters relative to the major achievements of civil society organizations, respondents



“Development in separate spheres and successful campaigns” unites such answers as campaigns to protect wetlands, cultural campaigns (Day of Vyshyvankas (Belarusian traditional embroidered shirts), Belarusian language courses, etc.), the campaign against Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code of Belarus, the *META* festival, to cancel the decree on “*serfdom*” (at woodworking enterprises). The areas, in which participants noted some progress, are cultural projects, national consciousness, educational activity, and environmental problems.

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

The cluster "Increase of civil society organizations' role in society as a whole" includes such achievements of civil society as the increase of visibility of organizations, the strengthening of public organizations' role in the solution of problems, coverage of a wider audience, expansion of the number of followers, etc.

"Interaction between CSOs" includes 4 mentions of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership and the activity of the EaP CSF National Platform, as well as such phrases as:

"Reaching out beyond the borders of our inner circle";

"Parochialism is gradually disappearing; organizations unite in coalitions, groups of interests".

"Development of civil society" means *"old NGOs have survived"*, professionalization, qualitative expert work, and development of crowdfunding.

Work with public opinion

Almost all polled leaders and activists consider it necessary to inform Belarusan society on the activity of their organizations. 47 participants of the research answered in the positive the question of whether they consider it necessary to inform society and 3 participants of the research found it difficult to answer.

The overwhelming majority of participants of the research (96%) marked that the mass media (interviews and articles) are used to inform society on their organizations' activity. Also, social networks (78% respondents said they are in social networks) and organizations' web-sites (70% respondents said that regular updates of information on their organizations' pages are a way of informing) are very often used for this purpose. One more way used quite often by human rights organizations is newsletters and mass mailing (this variant was chosen by 64% respondents).

To inform society on their activity, human rights organizations use rather seldom meetings with citizens (42% respondents specified this variant) and presentations during exhibitions and fairs of civil society (38%).

Also, respondents consider the organization of festivals and literary awards, as well as just events and actions, to be ways of informing society (see Diagram 39).

6 respondents specified other reasons:

"The absence of registration in Belarus, otherwise it would be "There is no such need, all the information is on our website and in the media";

"The year has not elapsed yet for the report";

"We are only going to start doing it next year in the needed volume";

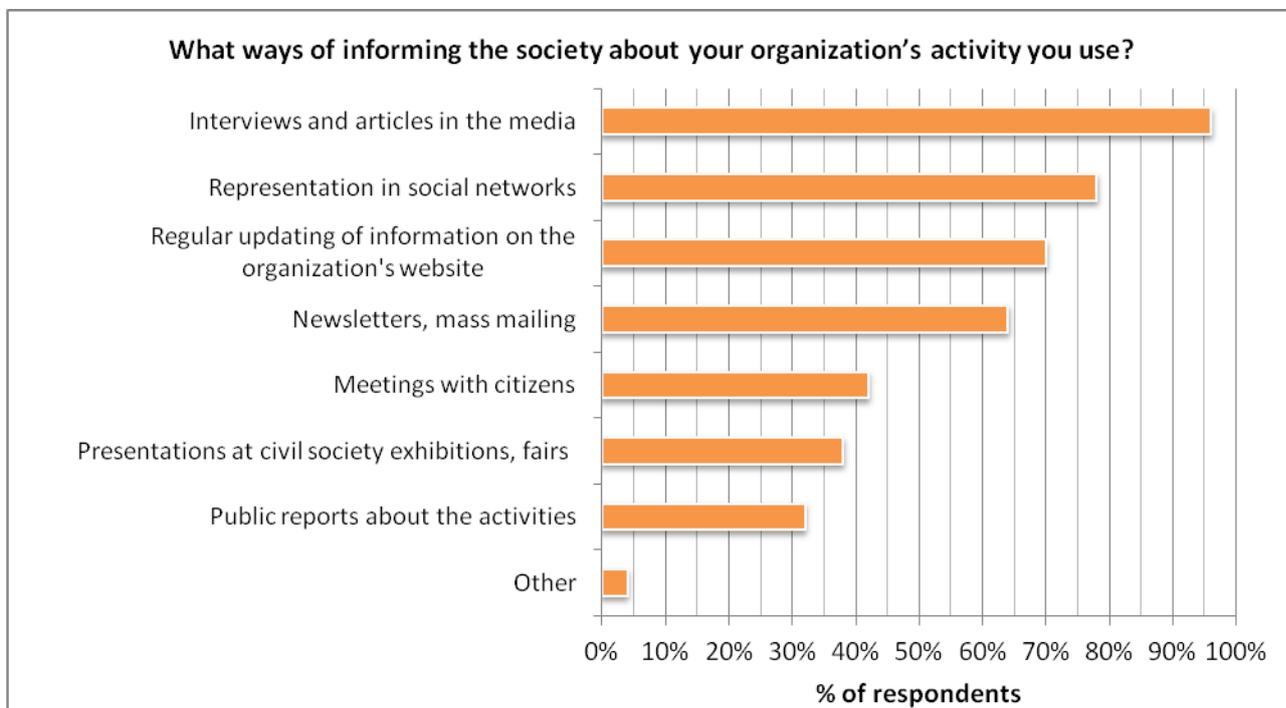
"A small period since the beginning of our work";

"We do not publish any financial information";

"There is no possibility even through the mass media (they refuse to publish)".

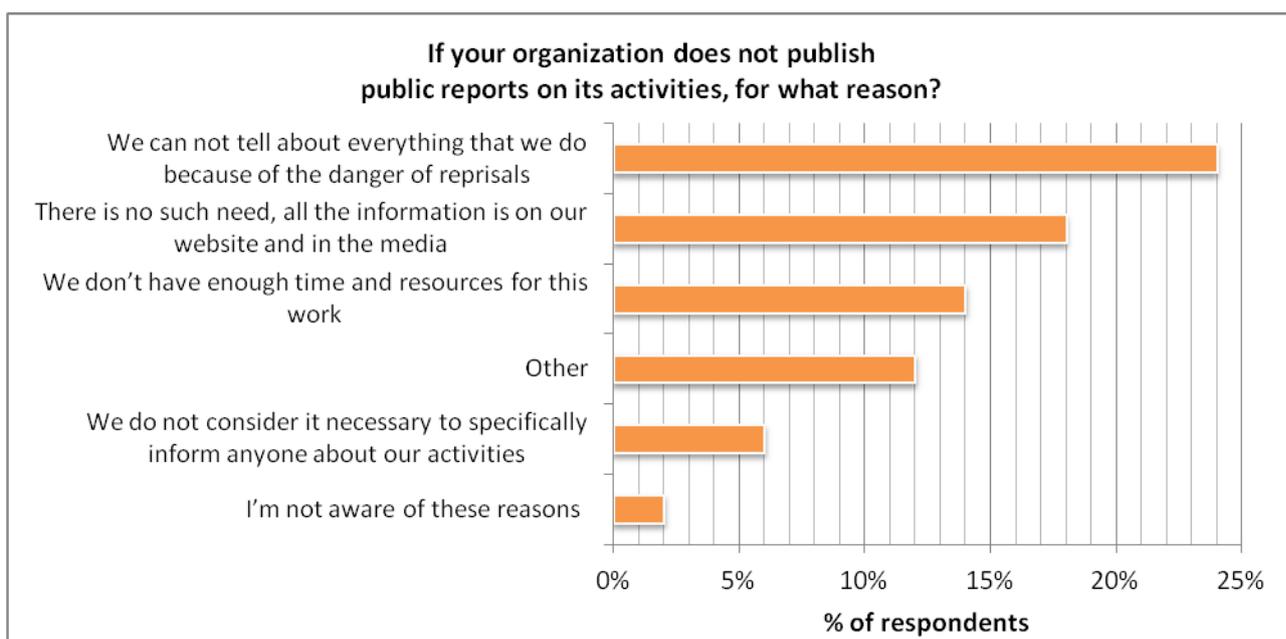


Diagram 39. Distribution of respondents' answers on ways to inform the public about the activity of human rights organizations, %



Some respondents said that they do not consider it necessary to specially inform anyone on their activity (3 participants of the research). 1 person specified that he/she is not informed on the reasons why the public report is not published (see Diagram 40).

Diagram 40. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the reasons why human rights organizations do not publish reports on their activities, %



Cooperation in the Belarusan human rights organizations sector

Perceptions of the cooperation purposes

According to respondents, the purposes the achievement of which requires cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations are very diverse. As for their popularity, they can be divided into 3 clusters.

The first cluster has such a goal as impact on the state policy in the field of human rights. This variant of the answer was indicated by the overwhelming majority of respondents (41 respondents, or 82%).

The second cluster (answers chosen by 25-30 respondents, 40-50%) includes the following purposes:

- changing the legislation;
- implementing joint campaigns to protect human rights;
- working in the framework of international human rights mechanisms;
- improving the conditions of activity for civil society organizations in Belarus;
- representing the interests of human rights organizations in the dialogue with the Belarusan authorities;
- promoting and defending the rights and interests of target groups;

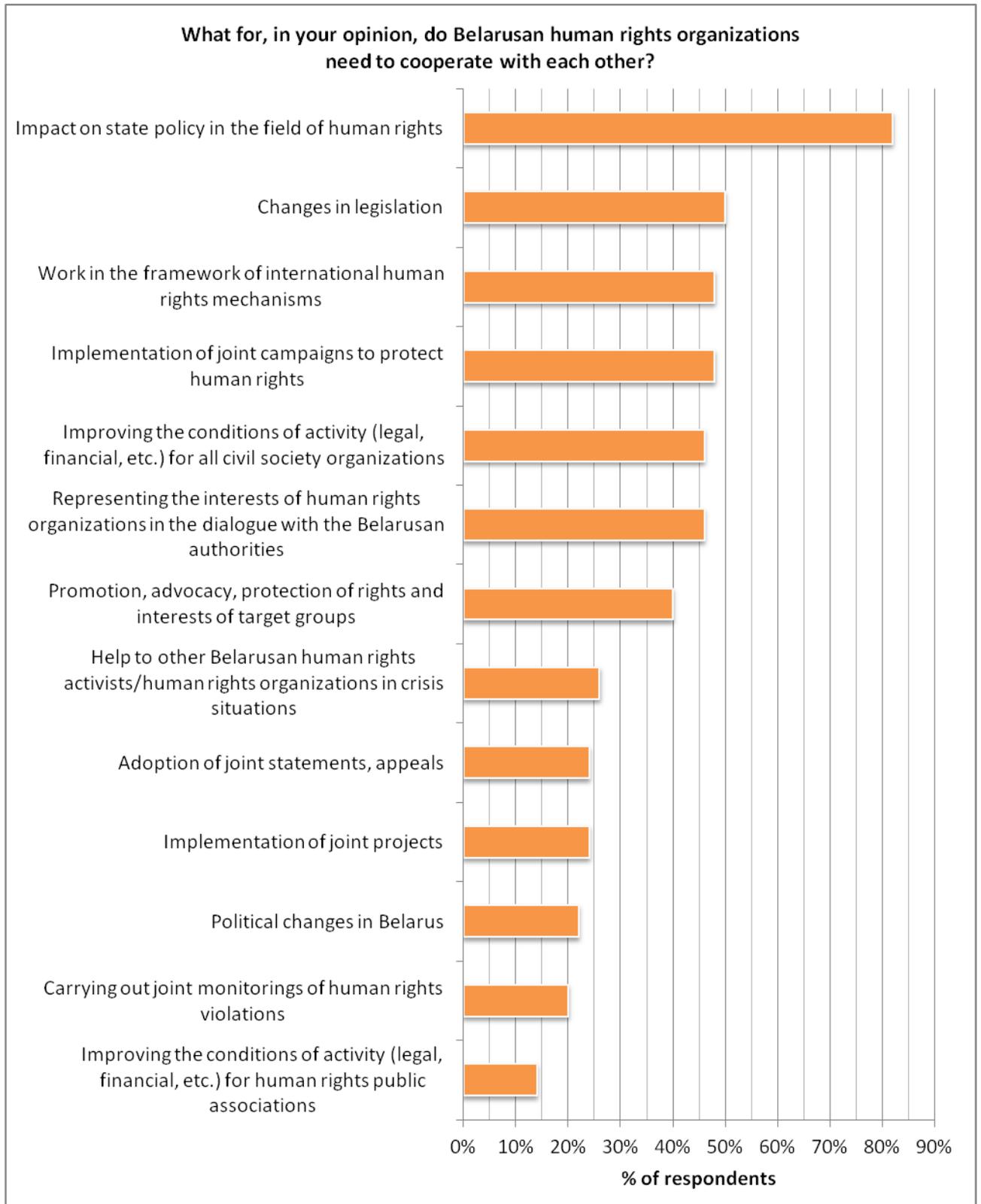
The third cluster (answers chosen by 7-13 respondents, 14-26%) includes the purposes of:

- helping other human rights defenders in crisis situations;
- adoption of joint statements;
- implementation of joint projects;
- political changes in Belarus;
- carrying out joint monitoring of human rights violations;
- improving the conditions of activity for human rights organizations in Belarus.

None of participants of the research thinks that cooperation is not necessary for Belarusan human rights organizations (see Diagram 41).



Diagram 41. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the objectives of cooperation between human rights organizations, %



Perceptions of strategically important topics and areas of activity

Short-term prospect

Respondents' understanding (perceptions) of topics and fields of activity that are important for Belarusan human rights defenders in the short run (3-5 years) are very diverse; the majority of them are mentioned only once. The open question received in total 126 answers of participants of the research. There are no topics that were named by everyone, by the overwhelming majority, or at least by half of respondents. Only 3 spheres were mentioned by more than 10 respondents:

- Freedom of peaceful meetings and associations (17 mentions);
- Death penalty (16 mentions);
- Right to a fair trial (11 mentions).

The following topics were named 4-7 times:

- Freedom to express thoughts and access to information;
- Discrimination;
- Right to liberty and security of person; groundless pretrial detention;
- Fair elections;
- Education and awareness-raising on the topic of human rights activity (see Diagram 42).

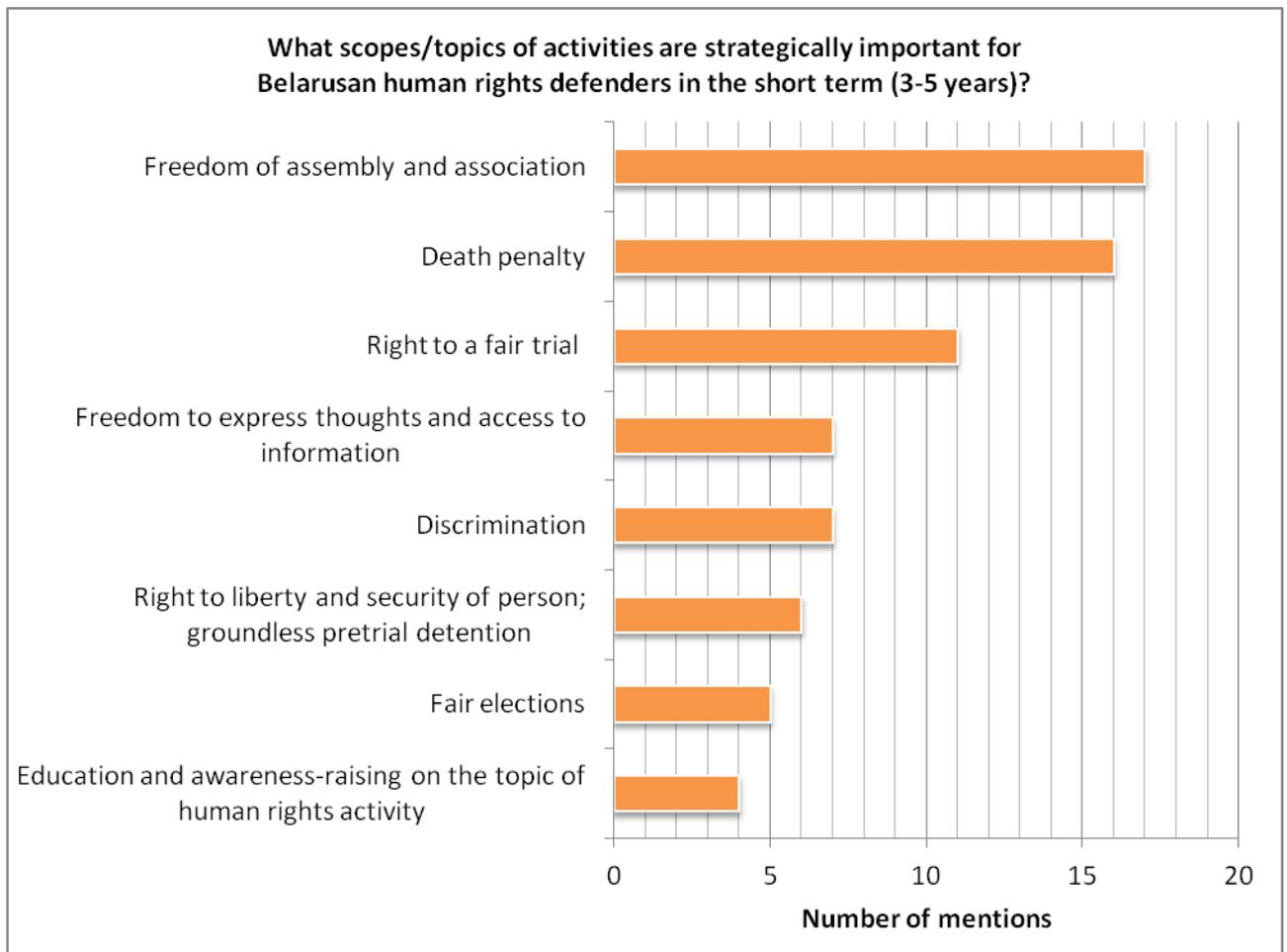
The topics mentioned by less than four respondents can be divided into groups:

- Concrete legal spheres (digital freedom, the freedom of religion, freedom from tortures, rights of refugees and migrants, the right to healthy environment, etc.). In total — more than 20 topics;
- Conditions of activity of human rights organizations and civil society organizations as a whole (administrative and criminal prosecution of activists, financing);
- Development of Belarusan human rights organizations (*“preparation of qualified personnel and in general — infrastructural projects”, “search for new tools and methods to be heard by both authorities and society”*);
- Coordination of activity and cooperation of Belarusan human rights defenders (*“coordination of actions at national and international levels”, “development of viable strategy of the human rights movement”, “working-out of a joint strategy to use international and internal mechanisms of human rights defense”, “organization of joint round tables”*);
- Reforms in the sector of Belarusan human rights organizations (*“development of young human rights initiatives (without big organizations)”*);



- Lobbying and advocacy (“advocacy of human rights at national and international levels”, “international lobbying”);
- Development of dialogue with the government;
- Activity proceeding from the current conditions: for example, right now it is the decree on the so-called “social parasites” [“darmajed” — in Belarusian; “tuneyadets” — in Russian].

Diagram 42. Distribution of respondents’ answers on clusters of strategically important spheres/activity topics for Belarusian human rights defenders in the short term prospect, frequency



Long-term prospect

Respondents mentioned 117 topics of activity, which, in their opinion, have strategic importance for Belarusian human rights defenders in the long run (5-10 years). 6 respondents found it difficult to name such topics.

The most frequently, participants of the research mentioned separate rights as strategically important spheres in the long-term prospect: in total — half of answers are in this category. E.g. the right to free elections (15 mentions), the right to a fair trial (8 mentions), the freedom of assembly and associations (7 mentions),

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

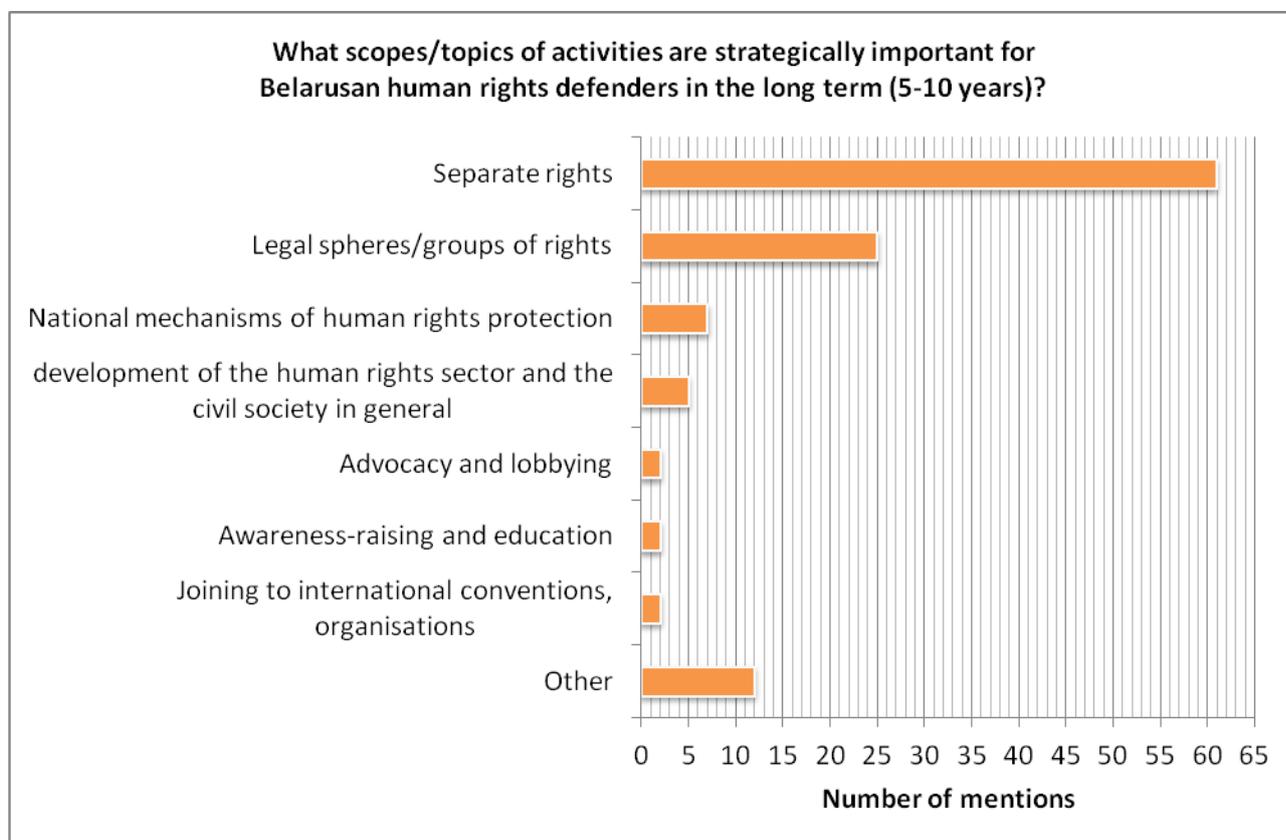
prohibition of discrimination on any grounds (6 mentions), abolition of death penalty (4 mentions), as well as the freedom of speech and access to information, the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, the right to labor, the right to clean and healthy environment, the freedom from tortures, the right to decent life, the right to peace, etc.

Less often did respondents mention not concrete rights, but wider legal spheres or groups of rights — civil and political rights, economic and political rights, the introduction of international norms into national laws, business and human rights, the rights of the “3rd generation”, “*Power of Law, only Law, instead of decrees, orders, and instructions*”, the reform of the judicial system, the reform of the electoral sphere, political reforms and democratization, etc.

Seven respondents named strategically important the sphere of national mechanisms of human rights protection (constitutional reforms, the institution of the ombudsman). Five respondents specified that in the long run the development of the human rights sector is strategically important — “*the uniting of human rights organizations as for spheres of their joint activity*”, “*the widening of a circle of human rights organizations*”, “*development strategy*”, “*human rights movement advancement*”, as well as the development of civil society as a whole (“*to increase the potential of civil society*”).

Two respondents named strategically important awareness-raising and education, advocacy and lobbying, joining to international conventions (“*Belarus to join the European Convention*”) and organizations (“*to join the Council of Europe*”) (see Diagram 43).

Diagram 43. Distribution of answers of respondents on clusters of strategically important spheres/topics of activity for the Belarusan human rights defenders in long-term prospect, frequency





Besides, respondents mentioned 12 more spheres/topics that are difficult to classify:

“Unification of the national legislation”;

“Protection of the afflicted”;

“To inform the public on the human rights violations”;

“Monitoring of the country’s implementation of ratified conventions”;

“Skill conversion of employees of the law-enforcement and penitentiary system”;

“Support to those who struggle”;

“Philosophy of human rights”;

“HR based approach”;

“Introduction of an approach based on human rights into organizations’ activity”;

“Protection of human rights at national and international levels”;

“Control over state organs”;

“To address to international organizations to protect rights”.

Rights and freedoms that require human rights defenders’ joint efforts in order to protect them

In the Belarusian human rights community, there is no consensus of what rights, which need protection, require joint efforts of human rights defenders.

Thus, most participants of the research specified the protection of the right to a fair trial — 56% respondents; this opinion is common only for half of leaders of organizations in this sector.

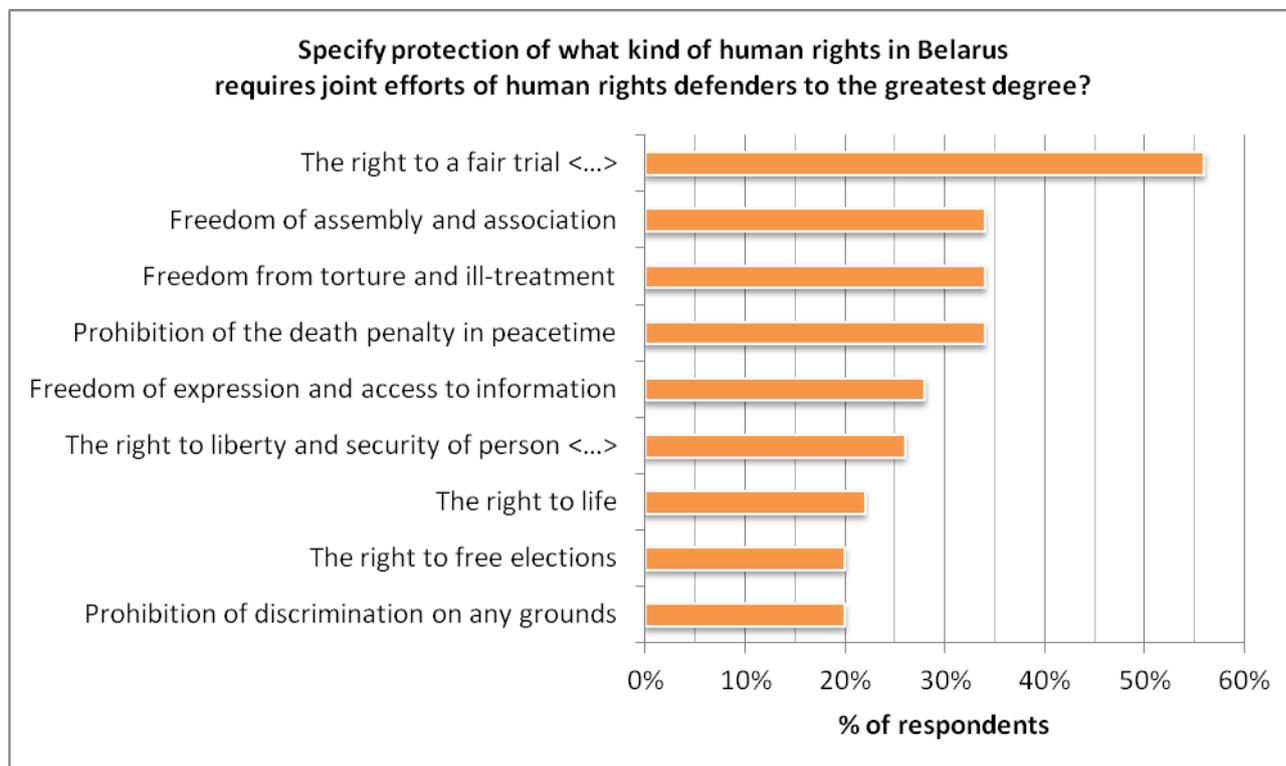
Besides, respondents mentioned 8 more rights, which, in their opinion, require joint efforts of human rights defenders in order to protect them.

A third of respondents believe that human rights defenders’ joint efforts should be aimed at protecting three more rights: the freedom of assembly and associations, the freedom from tortures and cruel treatment, and prohibition of death penalty in peace time.

A little less participants of the research consider that joint efforts of human rights defenders are needed to protect the freedom of expression and access to information (28%), the right to liberty and security of person (26%), the right to life (22%), the right to free elections and the freedom from discrimination on any grounds (20% each) (see Diagram 44).

However, it is necessary to notice that the group of these 9 rights is obviously priority for the sector — other rights (the question offered to choose from 32 various rights and freedoms) were named 3 and less times.

Diagram 44. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning some rights which protection in the greatest degree demands human rights defenders' joint efforts, %



Factors that conduce to and encumber cooperation between human rights organizations

Stimuli to cooperation

According to the overwhelming majority of respondents, cooperation between organizations of this sector is promoted by mutual trust — this variant was chosen by 38 respondents (76%). Also, more than half of respondents believe that such factors as concurrence of strategic targets of organizations and good personal relations between leaders and activists of different organizations spur cooperation. Positive factors specified by the least number of respondents are the absence of reasons for rivalry, the presence of organizations-leaders, and the presence of free resources in organizations. 1 participant of the research found it difficult to answer (see Diagram 45).

Also, respondents mentioned four more factors:

“Trust comes during teamwork and it is built on mutual respect”;

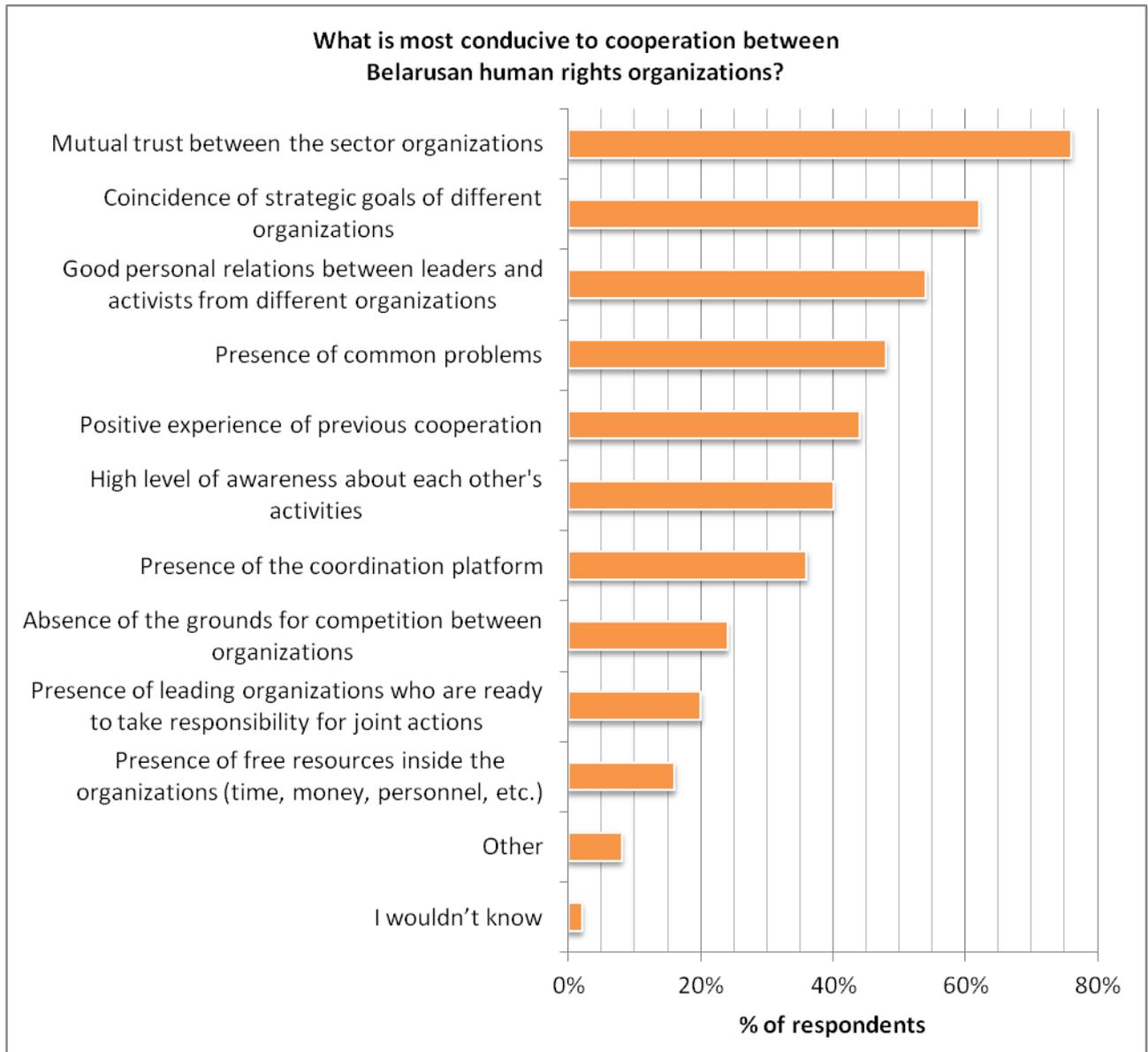
“Concrete work to protect the rights”;

“Right now nothing conduce to it; it is possible to mention solitary instances”;

“Donors’ conditions”.



Diagram 45. Distribution of answers of respondents proceeding from representations about the factors promoting cooperation of the human rights organizations, %



Obstacles to cooperation

Respondents' opinions on factors that hinder cooperation between organizations are more diverse; none of factors is significant for the majority of respondents. More often than not, participants of the research mentioned such factors as engrossment in affairs of one's own organization (52%), competition for foreign funding (44%), and discrepancy of the strategic goals of different organizations (42%).

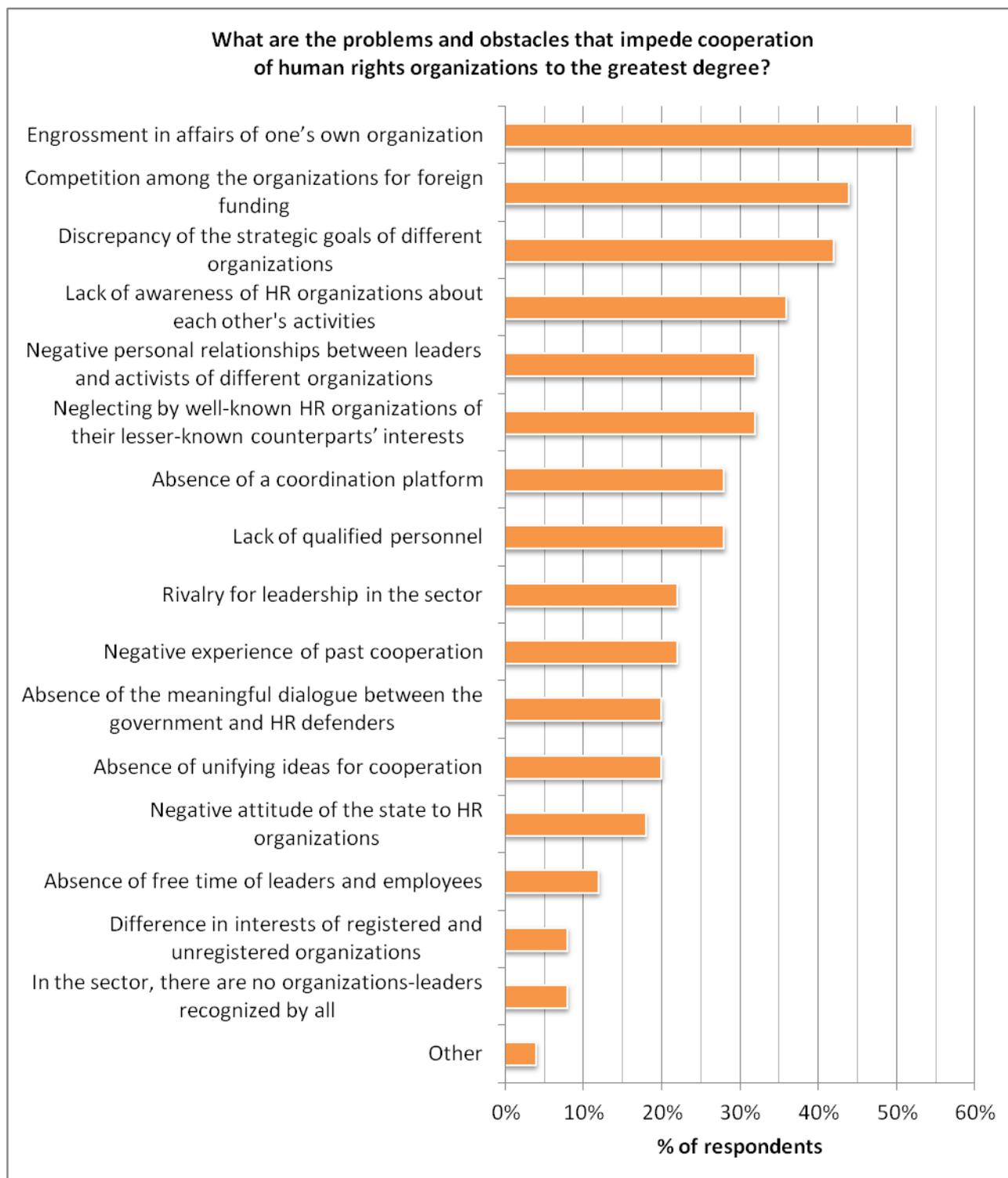
A third of respondents (32%) specified that an obstacle to cooperation is that well-known organizations ignore interests of their less known colleagues. At the same time, the difference in interests of registered and non-registered organizations was noted only by 8% respondents; it is one of the least mentioned factors.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

The least respondents chose such answers as leaders and employees have no free time and in the sector, there are no organizations-leaders recognized by all (see Diagram 46).

Diagram 46. Distribution of answers of respondents proceeding from representations about the factors interfering cooperation of the human rights organizations, %





Besides, respondents named two more factors:

“A deep discrepancy of perceptions of effective tactics of work. Considering the fact that under our conditions no tactics is 100% effective, it provides space for antipodal opinions”;

“The fact that we know nothing about each other’s projects; closeness of human rights organizations”.

Some analytical conclusions on the factors influencing cooperation

Analyzing the factors that conduce to and encumber cooperation between human rights organizations, it is possible to notice some aspects.

First, trust and good personal relations between leaders and activists can be called one of cornerstones cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations is built on. It is proved by the fact that these factors are among the three ones that were mentioned by the biggest number of respondents; the factor of mutual trust is the only factor the majority of respondents have a consolidated opinion on. Also, it is possible to assume that in the sector there is no acute problem of trust; mutual relations of the majority of leaders and activists are characterized as good because the factor of bad mutual relations as an obstacle to cooperation is significant only for a third of respondents.

Second, the factor of concurrence/nonconcurrence of strategic targets of organizations is very important (62% respondents mentioned its positive influence on cooperation and 42% respondents specified its negative influence). Comparing the answers concerning this factor, it is possible to conclude that in the human rights sector there is a group of organizations rallied round their common strategic targets. The organizations that do not share the perceptions of this group’s strategic targets have essential difficulties in building cooperation.

Third, it is possible to say that the factor of leadership in the sector is not topical for cooperation development. The variants of answers that have to do with leadership are marked by rather a small number of respondents, just as in the question on stimuli to cooperation and in the question on obstacles. Also, the influence of the factor of the presence or absence of a coordinating platform on cooperation is marked rarely.

At last, it is interesting that the factor of the state’s attitude towards human rights defenders, according to the majority of respondents, is not significant.

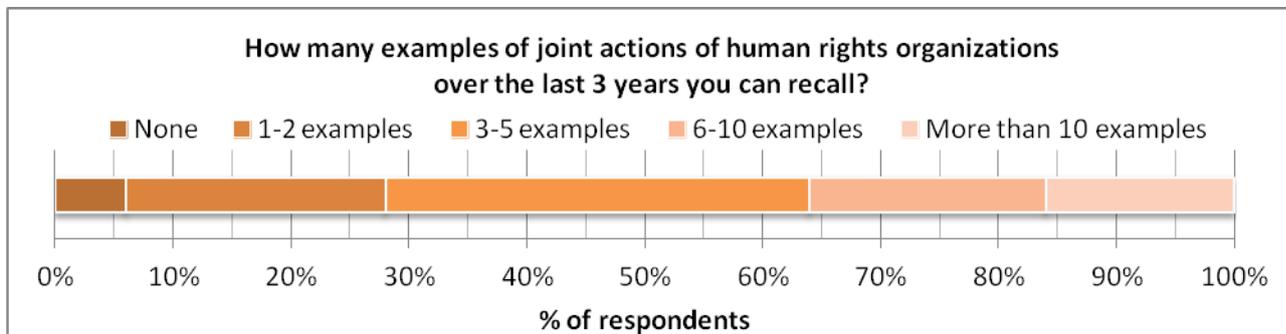
Evaluation of some forms of cooperation between human rights organizations

Examples of joint actions of organizations of the human rights sector

It is possible to say that cooperation between organizations is intensive; leaders and activists are well informed on joint projects. It is possible to say so thanks to the answers to the question “How many examples of joint actions of human rights organizations over the last 3 years can you recall?”, as well as thanks to the number of examples of joint actions mentioned by respondents.

Only 3 respondents said that they could not remember any example of joint actions. The biggest number of respondents noticed that they could remember 3-5 examples, 20% — 6-10 examples, and 16% — more than 10 examples of joint actions of human rights defenders (see Diagram 47).

Diagram 47. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the intensity of joint actions of human rights organizations, %



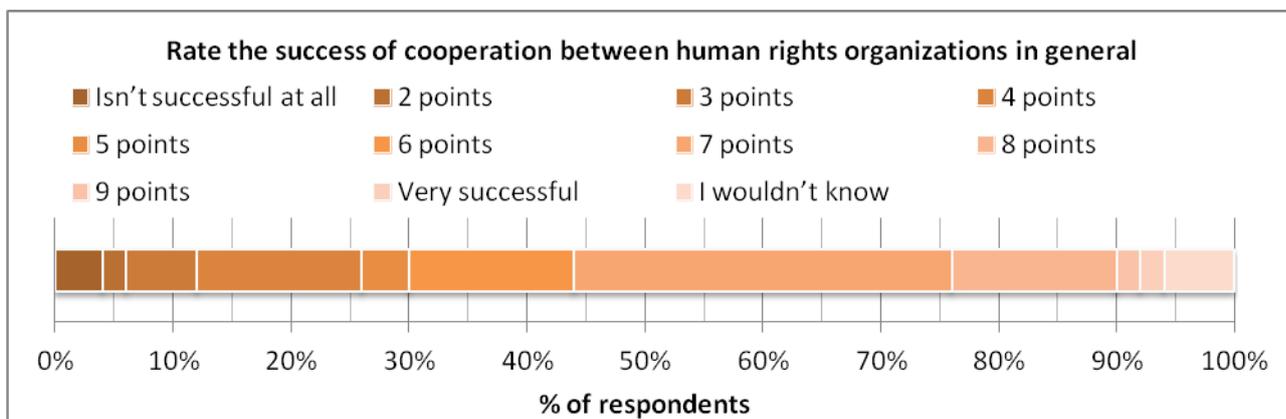
When we asked them to name examples of such joint actions, 3 respondents answered that there were no such examples, 5 more — that they could not remember any. However, 28 respondents named 5 examples each. In total, participants of the research named 52 examples of joint actions — out of which 19 actions were mentioned by more than one respondent.

As for the number of mentions, the unequivocal leaders are the campaign against death penalty and the work within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review — they were named 18 times each, while other joint actions and campaigns were mentioned less than 10 times. Among other examples, it is possible to name the campaign “Human rights defenders for free elections” (8 mentions), recognition of prisoners of conscience to be political prisoners (7 mentions), summer human rights schools, and the activity of the Human Rights House (6 mentions each), aid to the repressed and the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights (5 mentions each).

Evaluations of successfulness of this cooperation

Respondents evaluate very highly the successfulness of cooperation between human rights organizations — more than 60% participants of the research evaluated the successfulness of cooperation from 6 and above on a 10-mark scale. The biggest number of respondents evaluated the successfulness of cooperation as 7 (32%). A third of respondents (30%) evaluated the successfulness of cooperation as 5 points and lower on a 10-mark scale; 4% participants of the research believe that this cooperation is “absolutely unsuccessful” (see Diagram 48).

Diagram 48. Distribution of answers of respondents proceeding from an evaluation of success of cooperation of the human rights organizations, %

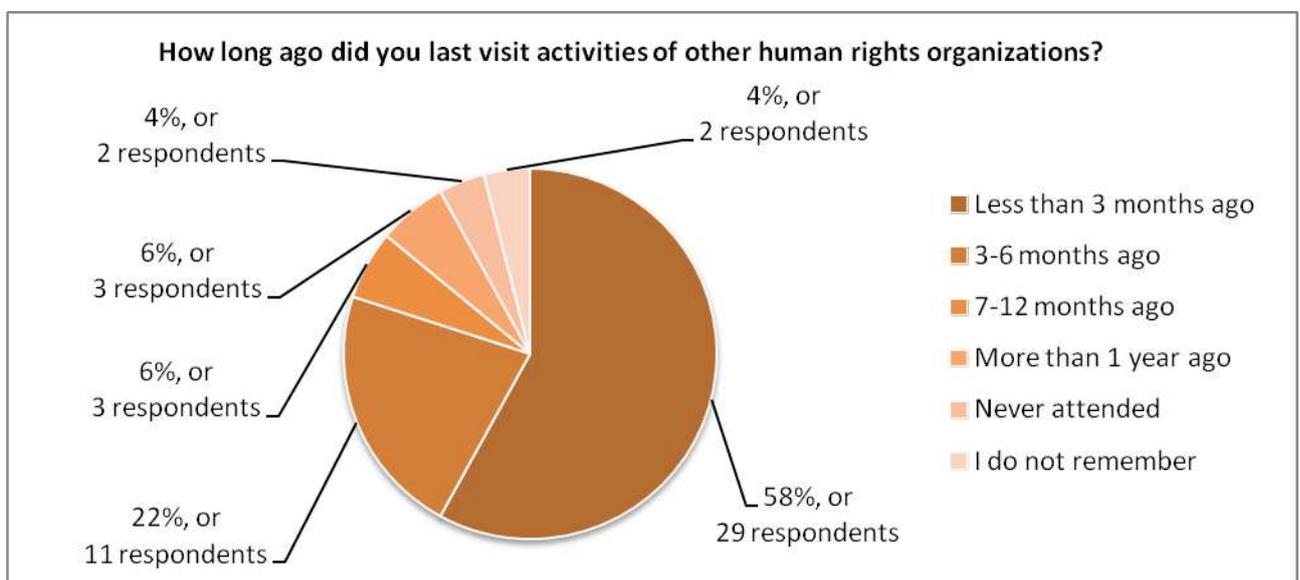




Intensity of mutual visiting of actions

Communication between organizations in this sector is at quite a high level. It is proved by the answers to the questions concerning the visiting of actions organized by other organizations. Thus, 45 respondents out of 50 answered that they visit actions of other organizations. Also, it is possible to say that leaders of human rights organizations often visit actions of their colleagues — the majority of participants of the research said that the last time they visited such actions less than half a year ago; the most part of respondents specified the time period as “less than 3 months ago” (see Diagram 49).

Diagram 49. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning intensity of mutual visiting of actions, %, respondents



Mutual aid of human rights organizations

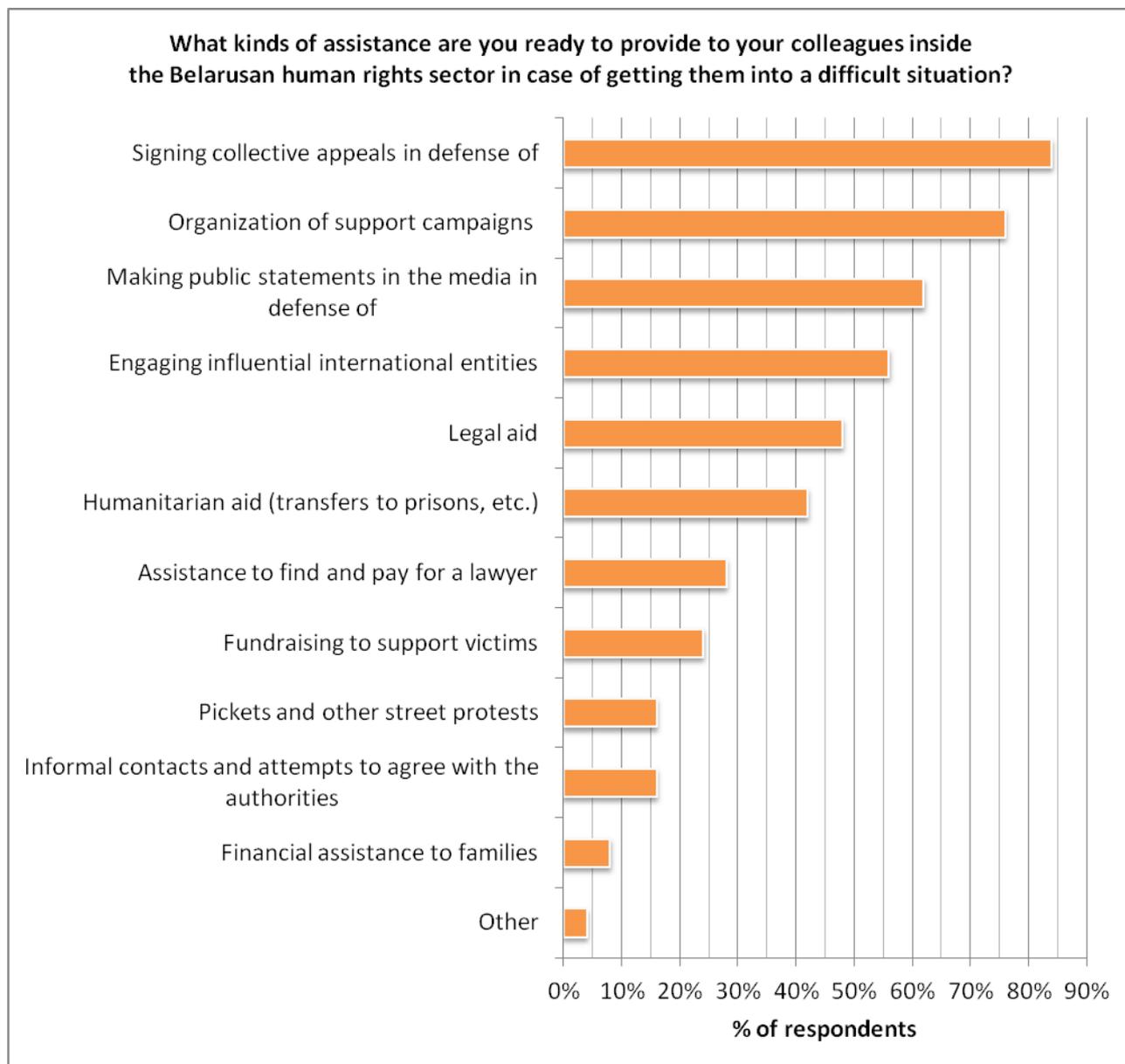
If human rights defenders happen to be in a difficult situation (a conflict with the state, pressure upon human rights defenders, discrimination because of human rights activity, etc.), leaders of human rights organizations are ready to help in the form of signing collective appeals (84%) and organizing support campaigns (76%). A bit less often did participants of the research mark their readiness to make public statements in the mass media (62%) and to engage international influential entities (56%). More than 40% respondents noticed that they are ready to render legal aid (48%) and to provide humanitarian help (packages to prisons, etc.) (42%). It is possible to pay attention to the fact that a number of respondents (16%, 8 respondents) specified their readiness for informal contacts and attempts to agree with the authorities (see Diagram 50).

Also, two respondents named their own kinds of help they are ready to render:

“Monitoring of violations”;

“Legal aid in the segment of economic rights”.

Diagram 50. Distribution of respondents' answers on forms of mutual assistance of human rights defenders in a difficult situation, %

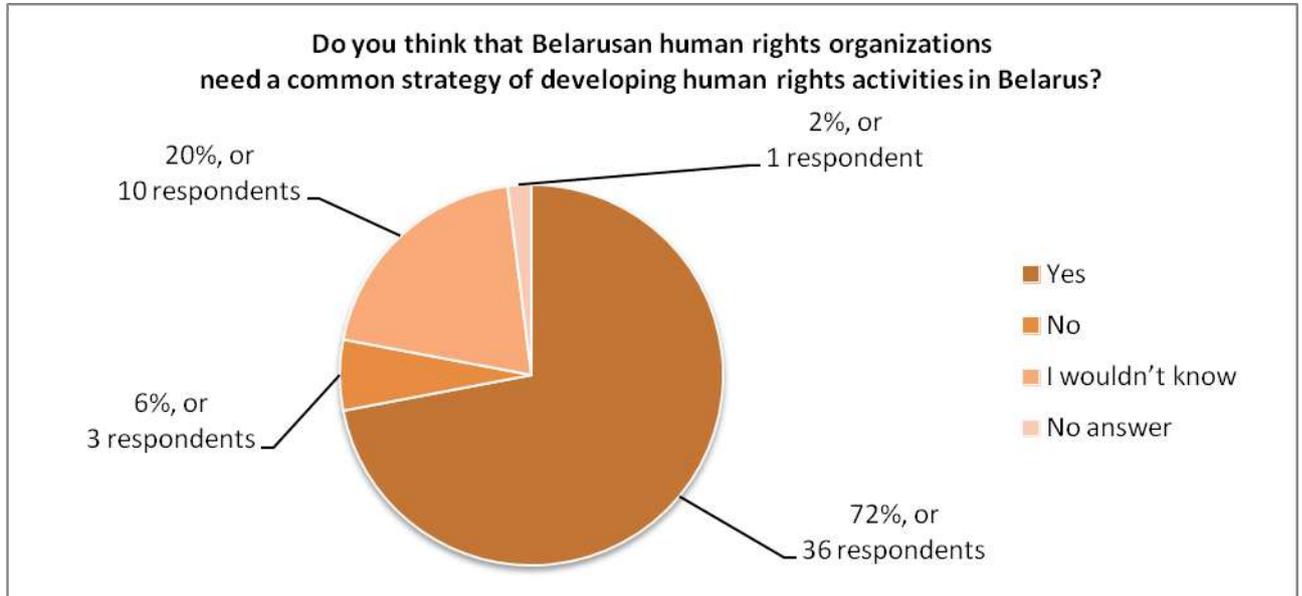


Attitude to the common strategy of developing human rights activity in Belarus

The overwhelming majority of respondents (72%) are convinced that human rights organizations need a common strategy of developing their activity in Belarus. The number of those who find it difficult to answer this question is considerable enough (20%). Respondents who believe that no common strategy is needed are in the minority (6%) (see Diagram 51).



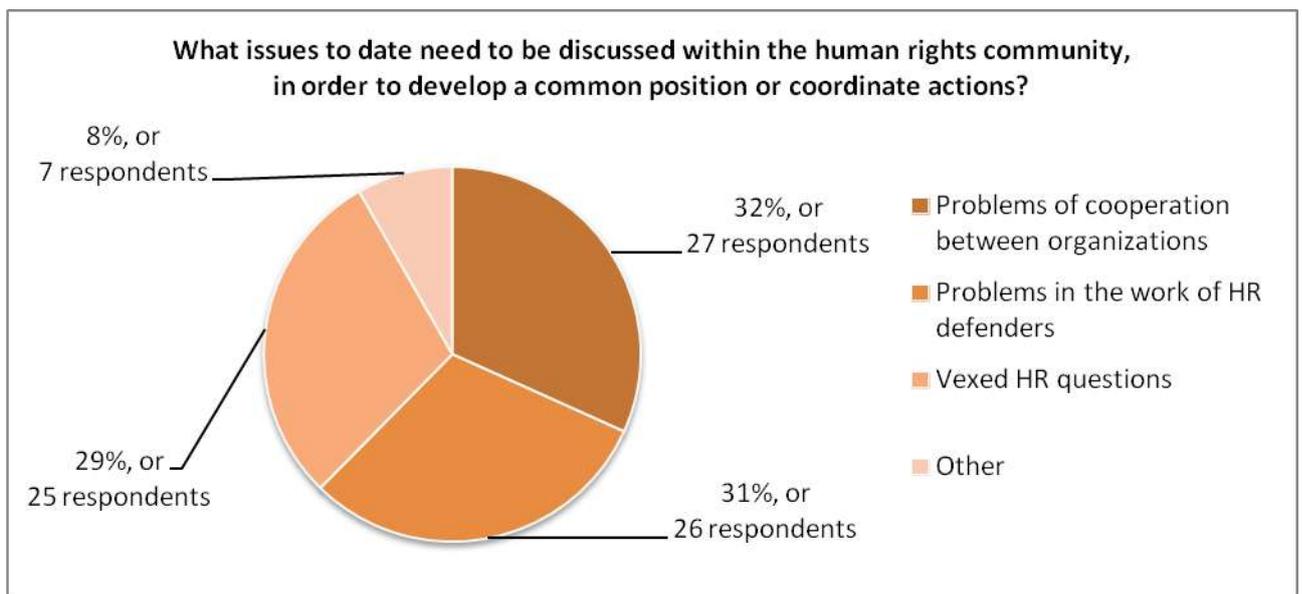
Diagram 51. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the need for human rights organizations to have an overall strategy for the development of human rights activities, %, respondents



35 participants of the research named in total 91 problem spheres, which, in their opinion, require joint discussions inside the human rights community so as to develop a common position or to coordinate actions. However, 30% respondents (15 respondents) found it difficult to answer.

In the formulation of the question, respondents were offered three clusters of issues — problems of cooperation between organizations, problems in human rights defenders' work, and vexed questions on human rights questions. Participants' answers cover these clusters approximately equally (See Diagram 52).

Diagram 52. Distribution of answers of respondents on clusters of problems for discussion within the human rights community, %, respondents



Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

In the cluster **“Problems of cooperation between organizations”**, more often than not, participants of the research mentioned problems that have to do with the general strategy of human rights organizations and consolidation inside the sector:

“To develop a strategy of actions for the present and the future”;

“To coordinate activity”;

“To discuss common priority questions, the general strategy; to define a common plan and a role of everyone”;

“A general (living) strategy; more attempts to deepen cooperation”;

“Positioning, solidary actions, fundraising, professional training”;

“Representation on behalf of the sector”;

“To create a coordinating platform, to develop uniting ideas and programs of joint activity”.

Also, respondents often named problems of today's cooperation:

“More personal contacts not only at the management level”;

“To have dialogue on (not to slur over) vexed questions, the center vs. regions, old organizations vs. new ones”;

“Ignoring by well-known human rights organizations of interests of their less known colleagues; absence of cooperation”;

“Contention; ungrounded obsession with oneself”;

“Problems of cooperation between organizations”;

“Cooperation is based on personal contacts instead of the interests of activity”.

According to a number of respondents, the topic for a joint discussion is the difference of approaches and the problem of the different understanding of human rights activity, the question of ethics of human rights activity:

“Inadequacy of actions; distinctions (contradictions) in the understanding of the ultimate goals of human rights activity”;

“Different purposes of activity and human rights protected by organizations”;

“Subjects of the human rights community have to understand what human rights activity is”;

“Coordination of approaches”;

“Topics for joint work”;

“To work out a Code of Ethics”.



Other topics mentioned by participants of the research in this cluster:

“The question of regranting inside the human rights community”;

“The community’s interests are higher than organizations’ interests”;

“How to make cooperation more effective, productive, and successful?;

“Human rights infringements monitoring”;

“Opaque character of human rights organizations’ activity”;

“Preparation of periodic reports for UN committees; work with international institutions”.

One respondent marked that *“it seems to me this problem is not so acute”*. Another one — that it is difficult to name problems in this sphere.

In the cluster **“Problems in human rights defenders’ work”** the basic problem is probably pressure on the part of the state — both direct, in the form of repressions or threats of prosecutions, and indirect, expressed in the unstable position of human rights organizations, civil society organizations and their employees, as a whole:

“Freedom of associations (registration, acquisition of financing), employees’ social security”;

“Pressure on the part of the state”;

“Strong pressure even on the part of society”;

“Negative on the part of the state, risk of prosecution”;

“Prosecution and discrimination because of activity and expansion of possibilities for monitoring and protection of individuals in courts”;

“Human rights defenders and NGOs as a whole are in a ghetto”;

“Obstacles from the authorities, the problem with the official registration”;

“Financing, changes of legislative conditions of activity of organizations”.

For human rights defenders, the question of cooperation with the state (legitimacy of human rights defenders’ cooperation with the state and the actual possibility to cooperate) is still topical:

“The official status of human rights defenders in Belarus”;

“The question of the general strategy of interaction with the state”;

“To separate political and human rights defender positions”;

“The attitude towards cooperation with the state”;

“The absence of a possibility of dialogue with the state”;

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

“Work with the state”;

“Self-regulation, interaction with the authorities”;

“Cooperation with the authorities”;

“The status of the human rights defender: what is it?”.

Also, the staff deficit problem, the absence of a common platform, and some others were mentioned:

“Overall picture of educational events and actions”;

“Joint clear public evaluations and statements”;

“Absence of a common platform for joint actions”;

“Advancement of the declaration on human rights defenders; who are human rights defenders (basic ethical principles)”;

“To work out and accept ethical rules of Belarusan human rights defenders' activity”;

“Purposes and results of work, society's and target groups' feedback”.

Also, one respondent specified that it is difficult to name problems in this sphere.

In the cluster **“Vexed questions on problems of human rights”**, respondents basically underlined concrete rights or spheres, violations in which require attention:

“Interaction on the solution of the question of political disappearances in Belarus”;

“Discrimination question”;

“Discrimination of those who belong to independent trade unions”;

“Discrimination, tortures”;

“Access to personal data”;

“Access to fair justice, policemen's lawlessness”;

“Do I have the right to be right? (Why does the guarantor of the constitution, rights and freedoms, infringe them with impunity? What is the root of all evil?)”;

“Nondiscrimination”;

“Joint position on sanctions, the UN Special Rapporteur, and political prisoners”;

“Abolition of capital punishment”;

“Absence of independent courts and free elections; pressure of the state in all spheres”;



“Infringements of fundamental rights and freedoms”;

“Arbitrary arrests”;

“Different criteria and standards of defining political prisoners”;

“Freedom of associations and meetings, freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial, moratorium on/abolition of capital punishment”;

“Freedom of associations”;

“System infringements of human rights in Belarus”;

“Death penalty, tortures and inhuman treatment of prisoners”;

“Litigations with breaches of the law”.

However, some participants of the research paid attention to other aspects:

“Interaction with the authorities, human rights activity and politics”;

“Value of human rights is being dumped by organizations”;

“Belarusan authorities’ negative attitude to human rights organizations”;

“Discussion of all spectrum of human rights protection tools and their efficiency”;

“Today’s human rights agenda — a priority problem”.

A number of respondents formulated problems they consider topical for a joint discussion, out of the clusters suggested by researchers (cluster **“Other”**):

“Information on activity”;

“Consolidation of the Belarusan human rights community”;

“Is it possible to raise our efficiency?”;

“National plan of human rights activity, participation of human rights organizations in the human rights dialogue”;

“In spite of the fact that human rights organizations have different experience of cooperation, it is necessary to reconsider questions of the general strategy, a circle of cooperating organizations, topics, methods, etc.”;

“Cancellation of the contract system in Belarus”;

“Standards of activity (professionalism)”.

Structure of network interactions in the sector of human rights organizations

During the poll, respondents were asked a question concerning the intensity of their interaction with other organizations of the human rights sector. Respondents could designate the frequency of cooperation (the answer variants: “never cooperated”, “sometimes cooperated”, “frequently cooperated”), as well as characterize their cooperation experience as positive, neutral, or negative. As respondents' answers from one and the same organization could differ, the degree (index) of coherence was an average value (e.g. if one respondent marked “never cooperated” (value — 0) and the other one — “sometimes cooperated” (value — “1”), the coherence index was “0,5”). These data allow us to build a structure of network interactions of organizations of the human rights sector.

Network general characteristic

The network of interactions can be characterized as dense enough; organizations are connected with each other quite well (the measure of the network density is $D = 0,60$; 466 connections out of 780 possible ones). Relations can be described as a concentric structure of connections with an accurate central kernel (see Figure 1).

It is possible to see:

- a) The accurate kernel of the network of 12 organizations connected among themselves more tightly, with the domination of mutually inverse connections (dark blue color). This kernel includes: 1) HR Center *Viasna*; 2) *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (NGO *BHC*); 3) *Assembly of NGOs*; 4) *HRH Belarus*; 5) *Committee Solidarnasc*; 6) *Belarusian Association of Journalists* (NGO *BAJ*); 7) *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities* (*ORPD*); 8) *Legal Transformation Center* (*Lawtrend*); 9) *REP Trade Union*; 10) *Institution Belarusian Documentation Center* (Institution *BDC*); 11) *NGO Legal Initiative*; 12) *Institution Civil Verdict League*;
- b) 14 organizations with less tight connections with the sector's “kernel”, substantially connected by unidirectional connections (red color), less tight connections among themselves: 1) HR Center *Identity*; 2) *Initiative Human Constanta*; 3) *Belarusian Language Society* (NGO *BLS*); 4) *Homel Centre for Strategic Litigation* (*Homel CSL*); 5) *YHRG-Belarus*; 6) *YHRG Students' Council*; 7) HR Center *Legal Assistance to Population*; 8) *Green Alliance*; 9) *Initiative FORB*; 10) *Institution Region 119*; 11) *Mogilev Human Rights Center* (*Mahilioŭ HRC*); 12) The group of relatives of convicted persons/*Initiative For Fair Trial in Belarus*; 13) *Initiative Against Lawlessness in the Courts and Prosecutor's Office*; 14) *NGO Center for Human Rights*;
- c) The “close periphery” of 8 organizations: 1) *NGO VIT*; 2) *NGO Ecohome*; 3) *Center for Development of Students' Initiatives* (*CDSI*); 4) *Belarusian PEN Centre*; 5) *Conscript's Rights Office*; 6) *NGO Zvyano* [in English — *Link*]; 7) *Human Rights Alliance*; 8) *Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions* (*BKDP*), which are less connected with the center and “intermediate” organizations and which are almost not connected among themselves, with the domination of unidirectional connections;
- d) The “far periphery” of 6 organizations, basically of not human rights character, which have one connection each: 1) *Initiative MAKEOUT*; 2) *Belarusian Writers' Union* (*BWU*); 3) *Initiative Human Rights Defenders against Torture*; 4) *NGO Mother's Movement 328*; 5) *Initiative Rights Directors* [in Belarusian — *Praŭnyja Dyrektary*]; 6) *EuroBelarus International Consortium*.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

- 1) *Human Rights Alliance* — Initiative Against Lawlessness in the Courts and Prosecutor's Office;
- 2) The group of relatives of convicted persons/Initiative For Fair Trial in Belarus — Institution Region 119;
- 3) NGO VIT — NGO Ecohome;
- 4) *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)* — *Green Alliance* — Initiative FORB — Initiative Human Constanta;
- 5) HR Center Identity — YHRG Students' Council — YHRG-Belarus — Center for Development of Students' Initiatives (CDSI).

The close arrangement of these organizations in the space of connections is explained by the similarity of the structure of their relations with other organizations of the network (who cooperates with them, who they cooperate with, the intensity of this cooperation). The objective closeness of the spatial arrangement can be connected with the located nearby organizations' common characteristics (the common subjects of activity, joint target groups, similar strategies of cooperation, etc.). These groups' closeness can be explained by:

- 1) the common subjects of activity: *Human Rights Alliance* — *Against Lawlessness in Courts and Prosecutor's Office Initiative*;
- 2) the common target group (prisoners): The group of relatives of convicted persons/Initiative For Fair Trial in Belarus — Institution Region 119;
- 3) their not entirely human rights character; the organizations have a human rights component, but are not only human rights defending: NGO VIT — NGO Ecohome;
- 4) are aimed at separate groups of rights: *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)* — *Green Alliance* — Initiative FORB — Initiative Human Constanta;
- 5) the common target group (youth): HR Center Identity — YHRG Students' Council — YHRG-Belarus — Center for Development of Students' Initiatives (CDSI).

Centrality of the network (organizations' relative influence measures)

The number of connections of each organization makes it possible to define a relative measure of influentialness of separate organizations in the network (see Figure 1; the more the size of a knot is, the more relative influence of an organization in the network is). Depending on the number of connections (centrality as for the degree), the organizations can be arranged as follows:

- 1) HR Center Viasna (32 connections);
- 2) *Belarusian Helsinki Committee (NGO BHC)*, *Assembly of NGOs*, *Belarusian Association of Journalists (NGO BAJ)*, *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)* (30 connections);
- 3) *HRH Belarus* (29 connections);
- 4) *Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)* (28 connections);
- 5) *Committee Solidarnasc* (26 connections);
- 6) *Institution Belarusian Documentation Center (Institution BDC)* (23 connections);
- 7) *REP Trade Union*, *NGO Legal Initiative*, *Institution Civil Verdict League* (22 connections).

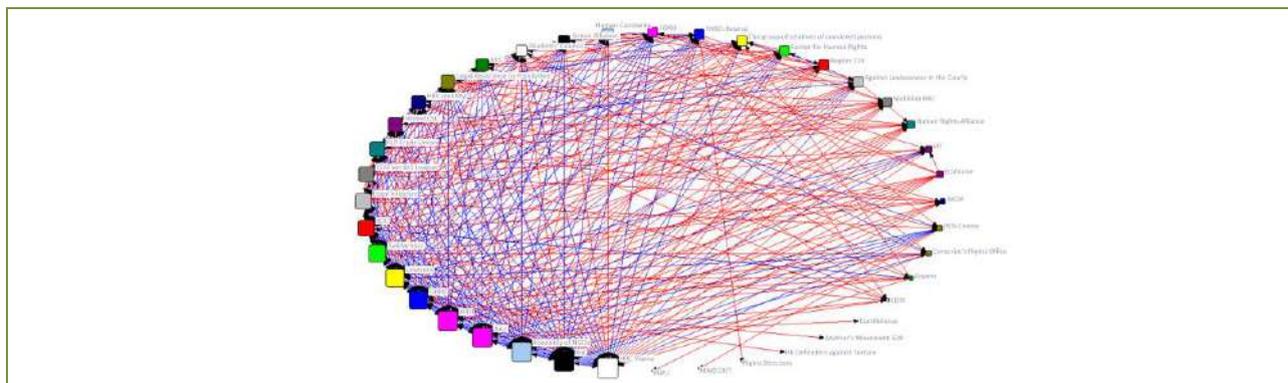


The influentialness of a knot in the network (in this case — the influentialness of a separate organization) is also characterized by the measure of centrality of one's own vector (*Eigenvector centrality*). The measure of centrality of one's own vector is calculated as a contribution of various connections to the influentialness of a knot: the more it is connected with other influential knots (knots with a considerable number of connections), the more its own influence in the network is; its connections with knots with a smaller number of connections contribute less to its influence.

The most influential subjects in the network “kernel” are (as for the degree of decreasing their influence):

- 1) HR Center *Viasna*;
- 2) *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (NGO *BHC*);
- 3) *Assembly of NGOs*;
- 4) *Belarusian Association of Journalists* (NGO *BAJ*);
- 5) *HRH Belarus*;
- 6) *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities* (*ORPD*);
- 7) *Legal Transformation Center* (*Lawtrend*) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Influentialness of network organizations: a measure of centrality of one's own vector (*Eigenvector centrality*)*



* See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic03-en.png>.

A separate characteristic of network relations is the centrality of a knot as for betweenness (*Betweenness centrality*)*. It is presupposed that the information spreads in the network in the shortest way, i.e. in the elementary network $A-B-C$ (where B is connected with A and C , but A and C are not connected with each other), the information from B will go faster to A and C (one step) than from A to C (two steps). In this case, B will be an intermediary that transfers the information from A to C . In a sense, knots with high betweenness centrality are basic “communicators” and “intermediaries” in relations between participants of a network. In our case, the most significant “intermediaries” in the network are (as for the degree of decreasing their influence):

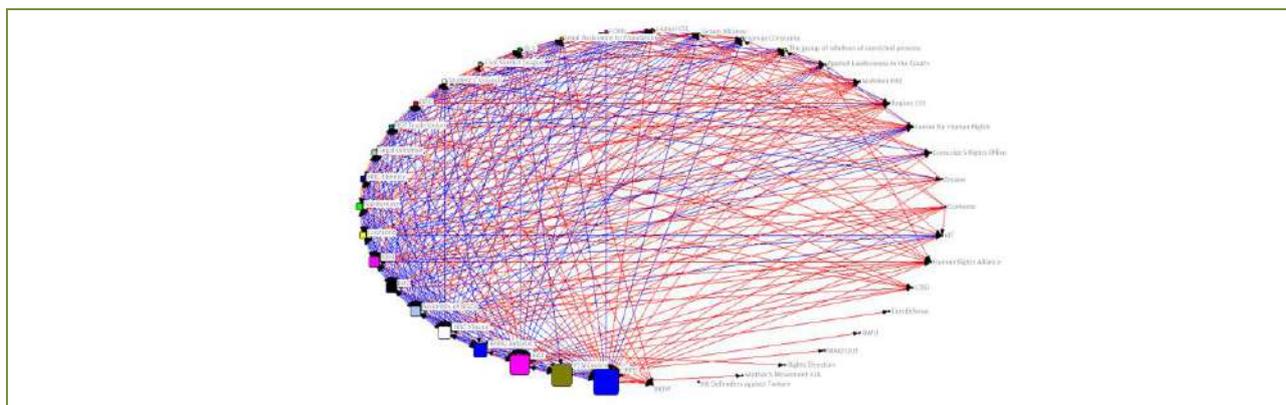
* Betweenness Centrality is equal to the number of the shortest ways from all knots to all other knots, which pass through this knot. A knot with a high degree of Betweenness Centrality is of big importance when something is transferred in a network in view of the assumption that it is transferred in the shortest way.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

- 1) *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)*;
- 2) *Belarusian PEN Centre*;
- 3) *Belarusian Association of Journalists (NGO BAJ)*;
- 4) *YHRG-Belarus*;
- 5) *HR Center Viasna* (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Basic communicators and intermediaries in the network: the centrality of a knot as for betweenness (*Betweenness centrality*)*

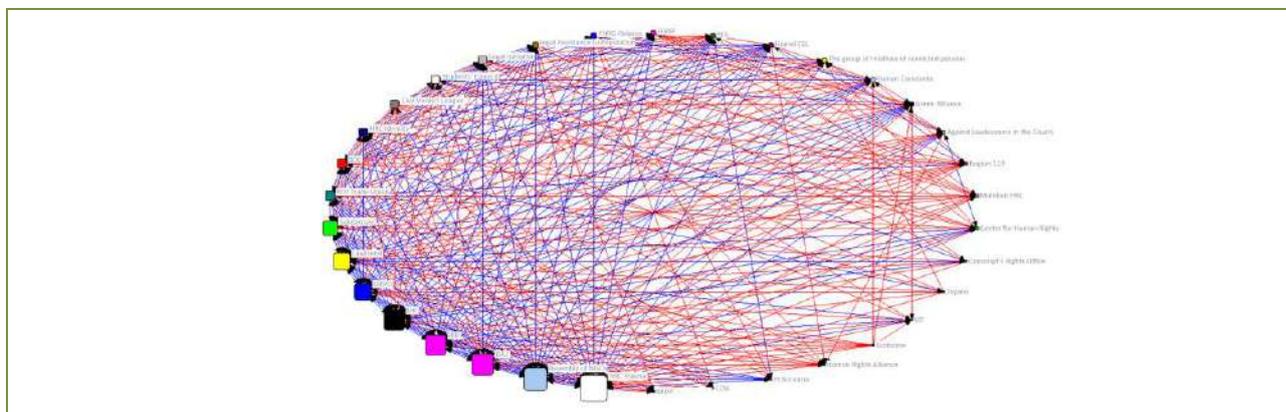


* See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic04-en.png>.

The presence of the organizations that are far from the center — the *Belarusian PEN Center* and the *YHRG-Belarus* — as intermediaries is explained by their connections with the close and far periphery of the network, which will receive the information from these organizations faster than from others.

If to exclude the peripheral organizations with one connection from the network, the picture will change (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. The basic communicators and intermediaries in the network (*Betweenness Centrality*), except for the periphery*



* See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic05-en.png>.



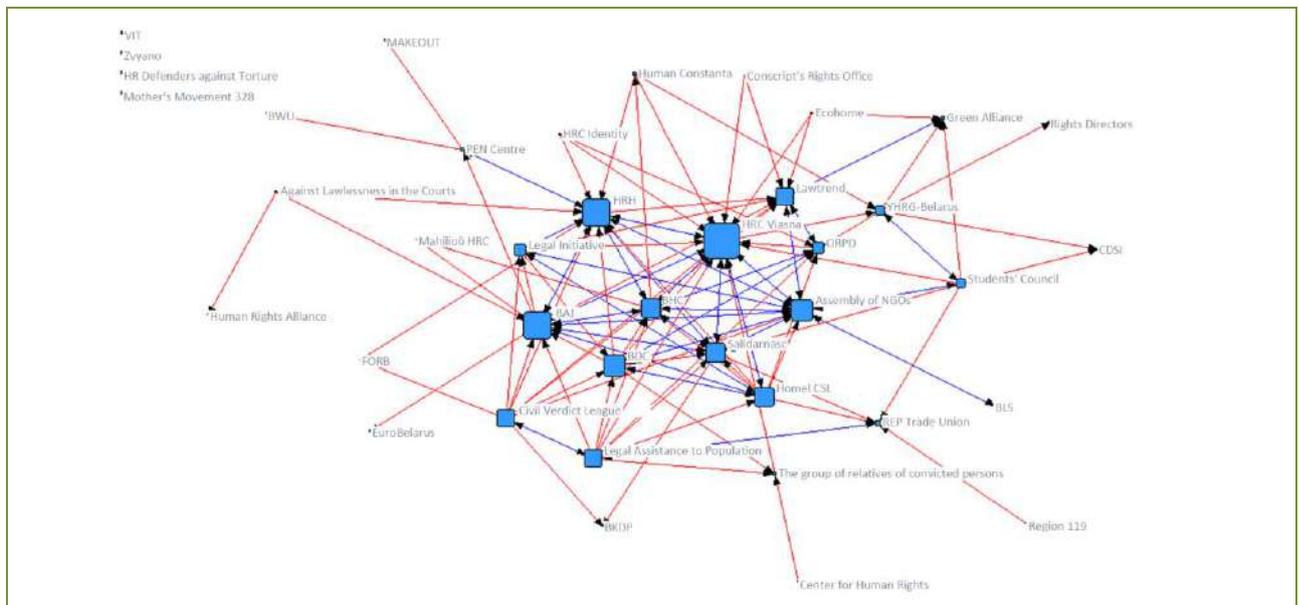
In this case, the most significant “intermediaries” in the network, where there are basically only human rights organizations left, are (as for the degree of decreasing their influence):

- 1) HR Center *Viasna*;
- 2) *Assembly of NGOs*;
- 3) *Belarusian Association of Journalists* (NGO *BAJ*);
- 4) *HRH Belarus*;
- 5) *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (NGO *BHC*).

Frequency of contacts

The strongest connections (often cooperated within three years) among themselves belong to the organizations from the network kernel: HR Center *Viasna*, *HRH Belarus*, *Belarusian Association of Journalists* (NGO *BAJ*), *Assembly of NGOs*, *Legal Transformation Center* (*Lawtrend*), *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (NGO *BHC*), *Institution Belarusian Documentation Center* (*Institution BDC*), *Committee Solidarnasc*, *Homel Centre for Strategic Litigation* (*Homel CSL*), as well as *Institution Civil Verdict League*, *HR Center Legal Assistance to Population*, and *NGO Legal Initiative*, which are less tightly connected with the others by more often unidirectional connections. Frequent connections are 30% of all interactions, which almost all organizations, but with different intensities, are included in (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Often cooperated during three years; the knot size shows relative weight in frequent interactions*



* Index of connections 1,5-2,0.

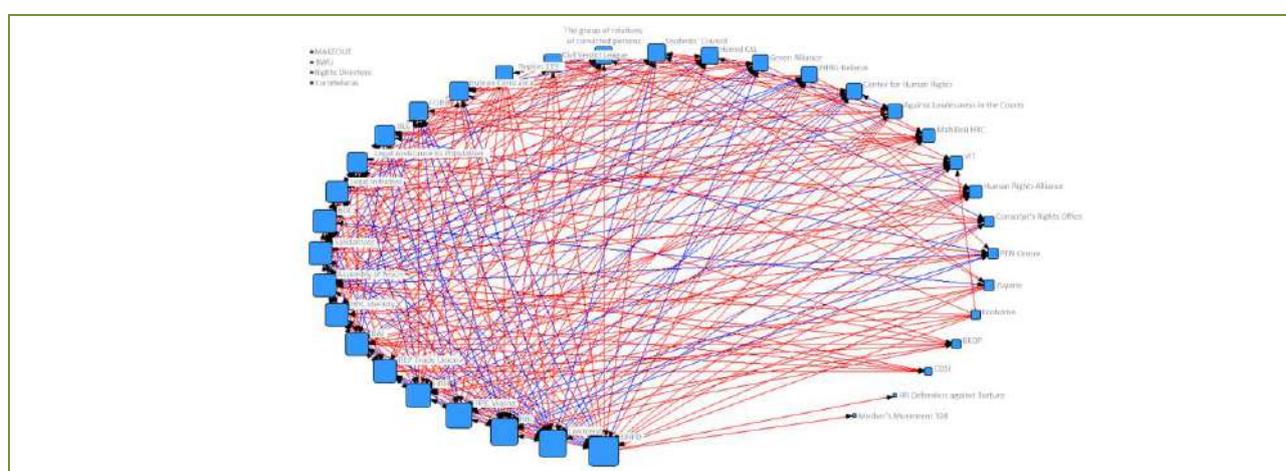
See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic06-en.png>.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Less frequent interactions (sometimes cooperated within three years) are 70% of all cases of cooperation. Less frequent interactions (weak connections) during the latest three years are most of all between: *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)*, *Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)*, *Belarusian Helsinki Committee (NGO BHC)*, *HR Center Viasna*, *HRH Belarus*, *REP Trade Union*, *Belarusian Association of Journalists (NGO BAJ)*. Initiators of these contacts were more often other organizations; in less frequent contacts, unidirectional connections dominate as a whole. The organizations from the network kernel (*Belarusian Helsinki Committee (NGO BHC)*, *Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)*, *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)*, *HR Center Viasna*, *HRH Belarus*, and others) are connected among themselves by strong connections and often cooperate, whereas with other organizations they support contacts from time to time (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Less frequent interaction during three years*



* Index of connections — 1 and 0,5.

See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic07-en.png>.

The interaction experience characteristic

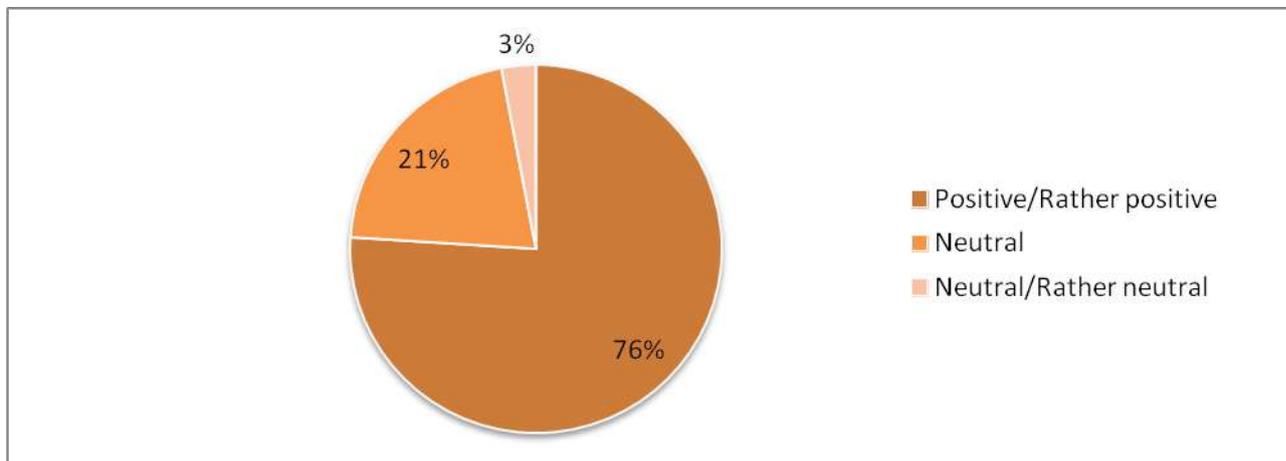
Respondents evaluated the experience of interaction (positive, neutral, negative) in 452 cases of cooperation* (out of 466 marked interactions); in 14 cases, respondents did not provide their evaluations. In a number of other cases, respondents evaluated cooperation experiences, simultaneously noticing that there was no cooperation within three years, or left no marks concerning interaction. These cases of the evaluation of nonexistent interactions are not displayed in the overall picture of evaluations of cooperation.

Out of 452 characterized cases of cooperation: positive or rather positive — 342 cases; neutral — 95 cases; negative or rather negative — 15 cases (see Diagram 53).

* A case of cooperation or contact was considered a respondent's mark on cooperation ("sometimes cooperated" or "often cooperated") in the answer to the questionnaire question "Please, evaluate the intensity and experience of your organization's cooperation with each of the listed organizations during the latest 3 years".



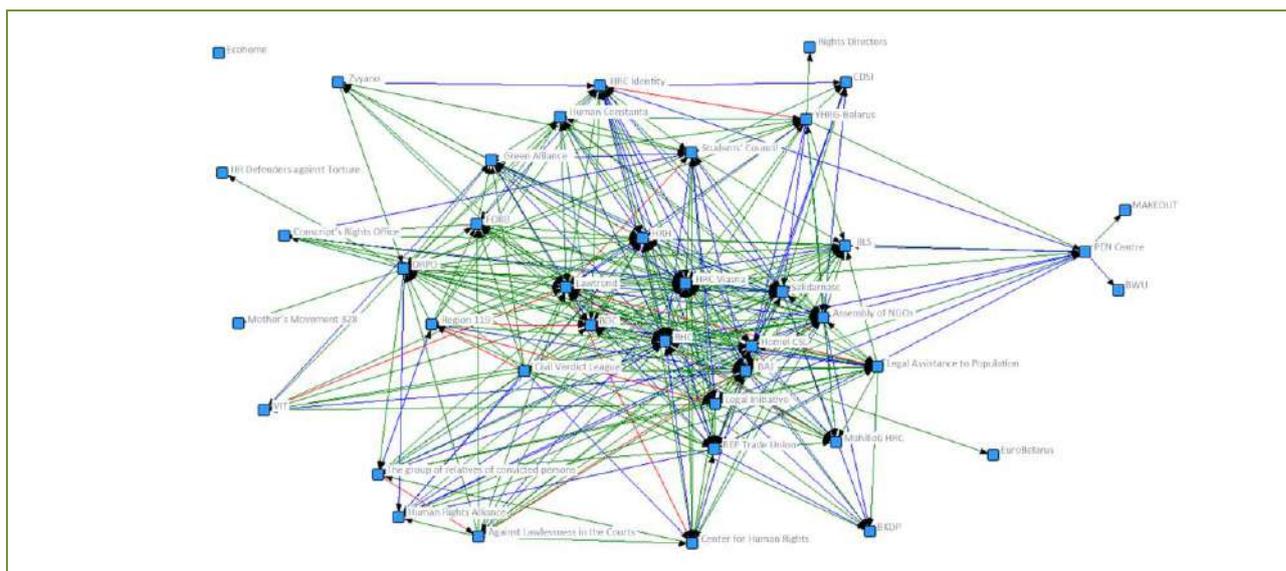
Diagram 53. Distribution of respondents' answers on the characteristics of the cooperation experience between organizations, %



Thus, it is possible to say that cooperation between organizations is characterized mainly as positive (76% of all interactions) or neutral (21% of all interactions); negative experience of cooperation is only in 3% cases.

The number of positively characterized contacts with a separate organization can be considered to be its positive rating (or as some kind of an absolute measure of its reputation). In the network of human rights organizations, the best reputation among colleagues belongs to (descending): HR Center *Viasna*, *HRH Belarus*, *Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)*, *Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ORPD)*, *Belarusian Association of Journalists (NGO BAJ)* (see Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8. Cooperation experience (all connections): spatial relations between the network organizations (*Non-metric multidimensional scaling*)*



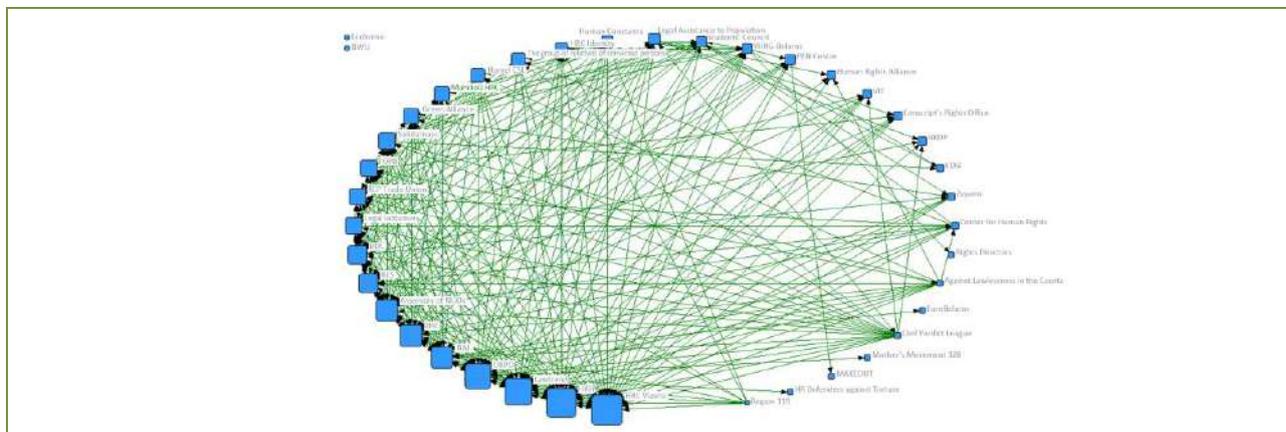
* Green — positive and rather positive interactions; blue — neutral; red — negative and rather negative.

See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic08-en.png>.

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

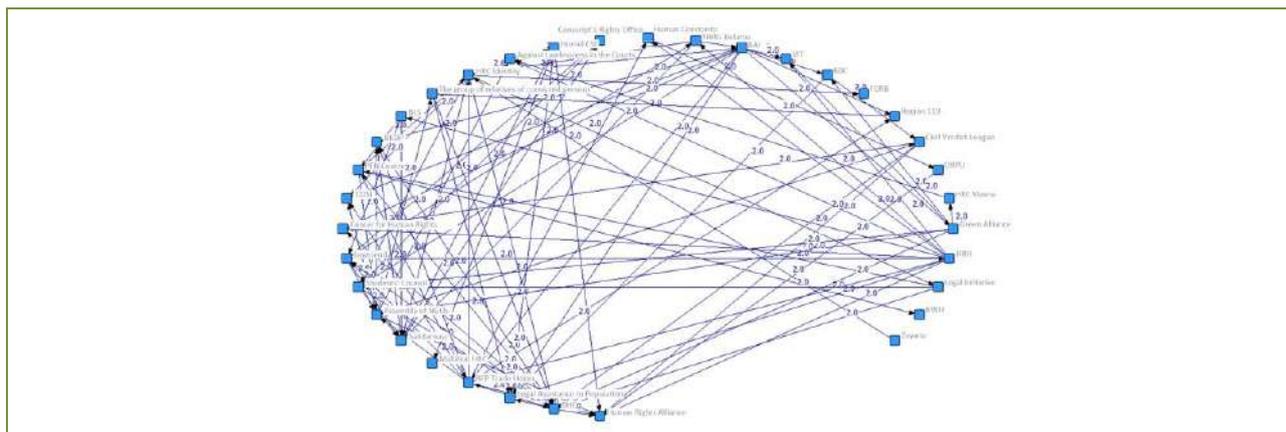
Figure 9. Positive and rather positive experience of cooperation: the knot size depends on the number of incoming connections (*Indegree*)*



* See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic09-en.png>.

The leaders of neutral incoming interactions are: *Human Rights Alliance*, *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (NGO *BHC*), *HR Center Legal Assistance to Population*, *REP Trade Union*, *Mogilev Human Rights Center* (*Mahilioŭ HRC*) (see Figure 10). Here, it is interesting to mark the *Belarusian Helsinki Committee's* position, which is among the leaders as for the number of common connections, but (unlike the other leaders of connections) the cooperation with the NGO *BHC* is characterized as positively neutral (about a third of incoming interactions with the NGO *BHC* is evaluated as neutral ones). Incoming interactions with the other leaders of connections are evaluated only as positive ones, except for a very small amount of neutral connections.

Figure 10. Neutral experience of cooperation: knots are located according to the number of incoming connections (*Indegree*)*



* See the pixel-peepable figure — in **Annex 3** or by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic10-en.png>.

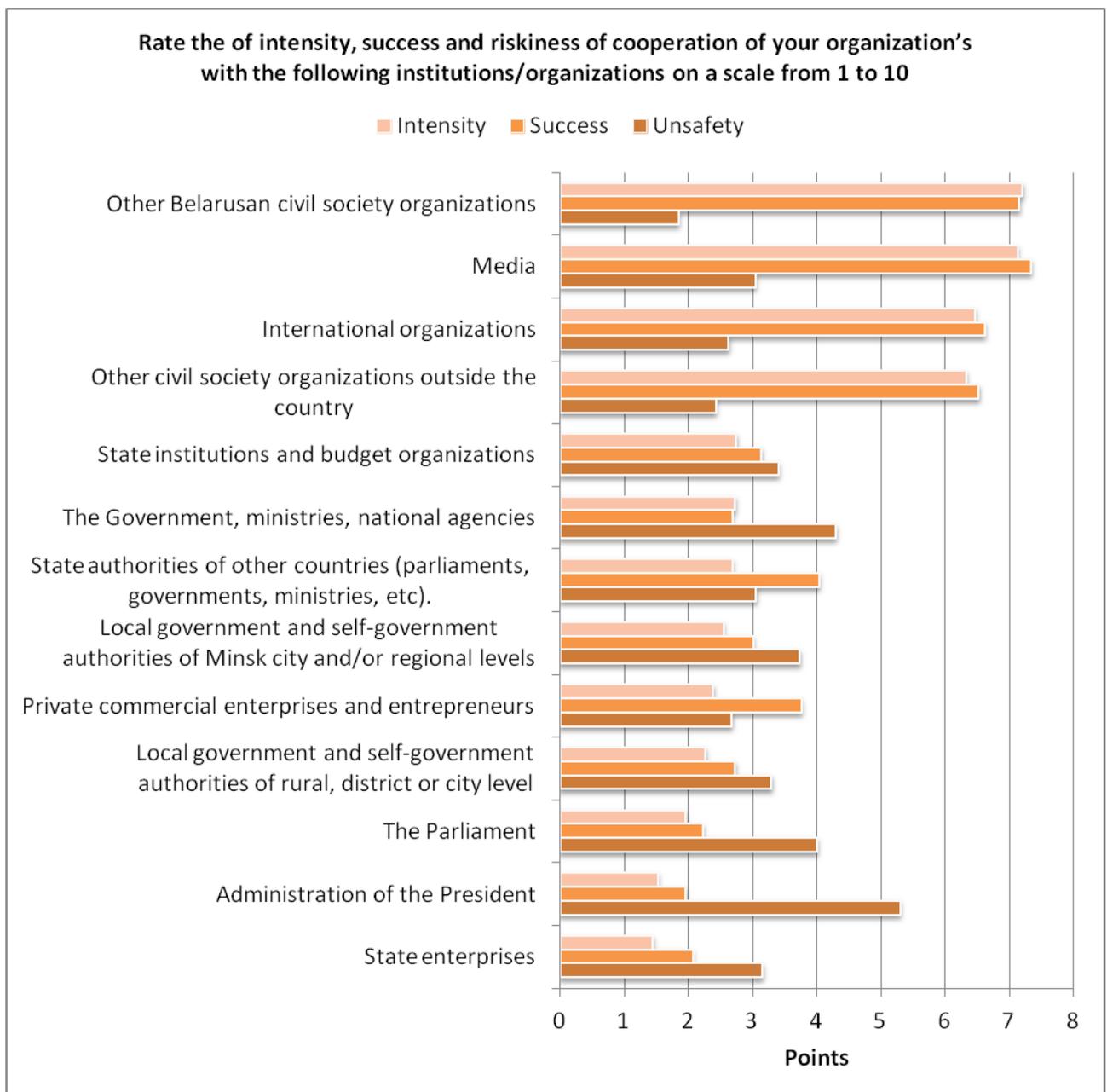
The number of cases of interaction, which cooperation experience is evaluated negatively, is inconspicuous — they do not play any role in the total number of contacts (15 cases; 3% out of the total of connections).



Intensity, successfulness, and riskiness of cooperation between human rights organizations and various subjects

Human rights organizations have the closest cooperation with other civil society organizations in Belarus and the mass media (the average evaluation is above 7/10), as well as with international organizations and other civil society organizations outside of Belarus (the average evaluation is above 6/10). Respondents evaluated the cooperation with these subjects as the most successful and the least risky (see Diagram 54).

Diagram 54. Evaluation of intensity, success and riskiness of cooperation of human rights organizations with different actors, points



Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Respondents evaluated much more lowly the intensity of their organizations' cooperation with other types of subjects (Belarusan and international legislative and executive powers, Belarusan official bodies, state-run and private enterprises) — on the average it is lower than 3/10. Human rights organisations' cooperation with other countries' state structures (parliaments, governments, ministries, etc.) and Belarusan private businesses is evaluated as more successful.

Leaders of human rights organizations evaluated their cooperation with the Presidential Administration (5,3/10), the state structures of Belarus (the government, ministries, republican departments) — 4,3/10, and the Parliament (4/10) as the most risky.

As a rule, respondents evaluate highly the successfulness of their cooperation with the subjects with which they intensively cooperate; the interaction with these subjects receives low evaluations of risk. However, it is possible to mention such subjects as official bodies and budgetary organizations, state structures of other countries, local authorities and self-government of various levels and private business where evaluations are balanced enough.

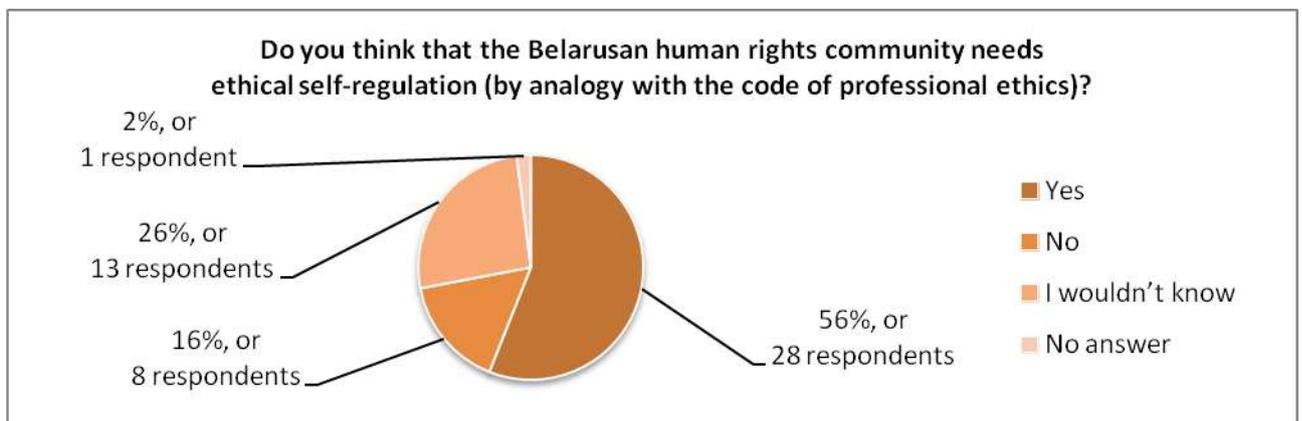


Ethics of the human rights defender as viewed by leaders of Belarusian human rights organizations

Attitude to the necessity of ethical self-regulation for the human rights community

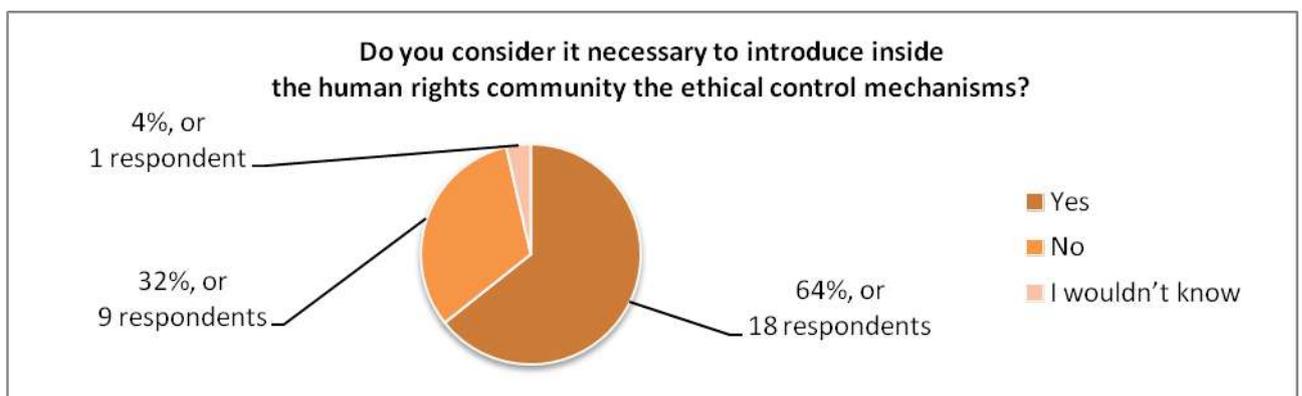
Among the polled leaders and activists of Belarusian human rights organizations, the attitude to the necessity of ethical self-regulation is amphibolous — although 56% respondents believe that it is a necessary thing. The thing is that in the polled group there is a very big share of those who has no formed opinion: 26% respondents found it difficult to answer this question. Also, there is a rather big share of those who think that ethical self-regulation is not needed — 16% (see Diagram 55).

Diagram 55. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the need for ethical self-regulation for the human rights community, %, respondents



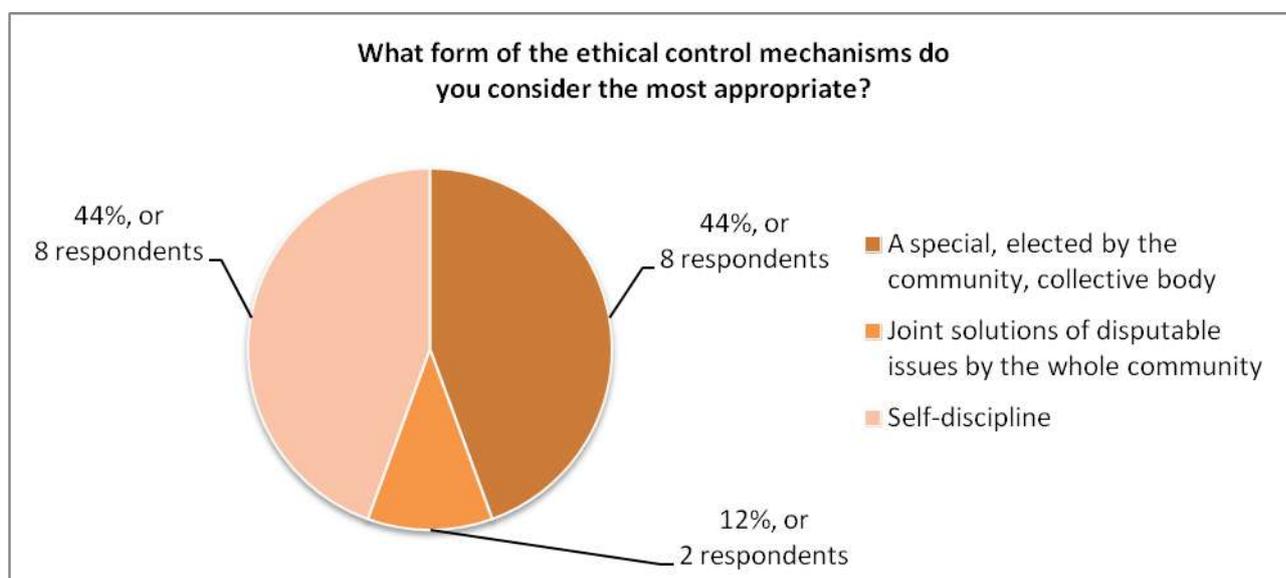
Among those who support the introduction of ethical self-regulation in the human rights community, two thirds of respondents (18 respondents) believe that mechanisms of controlling the performance of ethical standards are necessary, too. One third of participants of the research (9 respondents) think that such control mechanisms are not needed (see Diagram 56).

Diagram 56. Distribution of answers of respondents who supported the introduction of ethical self-regulation in the human rights community regarding the need for a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of ethical standards, %, respondents



The polled group has no common opinion on what mechanisms should control the performance of ethical standards. The identical number of respondents (8 respondents) prefers the mechanism of a special collegial body elected by the community and the self-discipline mechanism ("All who accepted principles of ethical self-regulation will endeavor to adhere to them"). The variant to consider disputable ethical questions by the whole community is the least preferable. The variant of introducing an individual position (a representative, expert on ethics) was chosen by no one (see Diagram 57).

Diagram 57. Distribution of answers of respondents who supported the introduction of ethical self-regulation in the human rights community, regarding the preferred mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of ethical standards, %, respondents



Perceptions of mechanisms of settlement of conflicts, arising in connection with the human rights ethics' issues

In order to solve conflict situations between human rights organizations, which have to do with human rights ethics, respondents prefer to address to the human rights community or an authoritative intermediary. These variants were chosen by the overwhelming majority of respondents; the parity between them is almost identical: the variant of addressing to the community was chosen by 22 respondents; the intermediary variant — by 19 participants of the research (see Diagram 58).

Also, respondents offered their own four variants:

"Bilateral negotiations of conflicting parties, self-regulation";

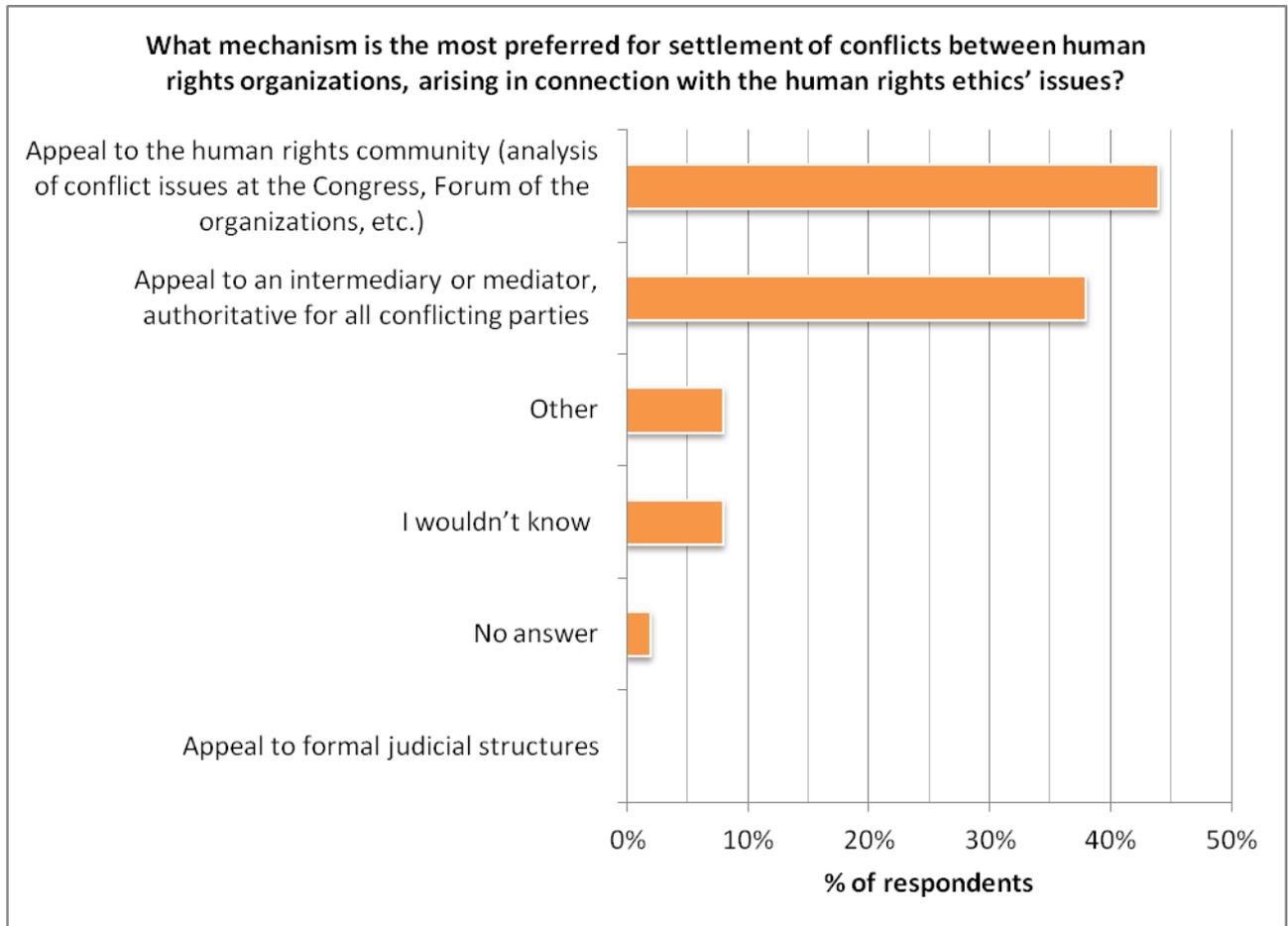
"Ethics commission elected during a human rights forum;

"No one can solve conflicts; ethics helps to avoid conflicts or to draw conclusions as a result";

"Appeal to a special collegial body created for such cases".



Diagram 58. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding preferred mechanisms for solving ethical conflicts between human rights organizations, %



In case of a conflict situation between separate human rights defenders, which has to do with human rights ethics, respondents have a more consolidated opinion: 52% respondents believe that the preferable mechanism of solving such a situation is to address to an intermediary who is considered authoritative by all conflicting parties. 20% respondents think that such conflicts should be solved by the whole community. A considerable number of respondents (8 respondents) found it difficult to choose a preferable mechanism of solving such situations (see Diagram 59).

Other variants suggested by participants of the research are similar to the variants of solving conflict situations between organizations:

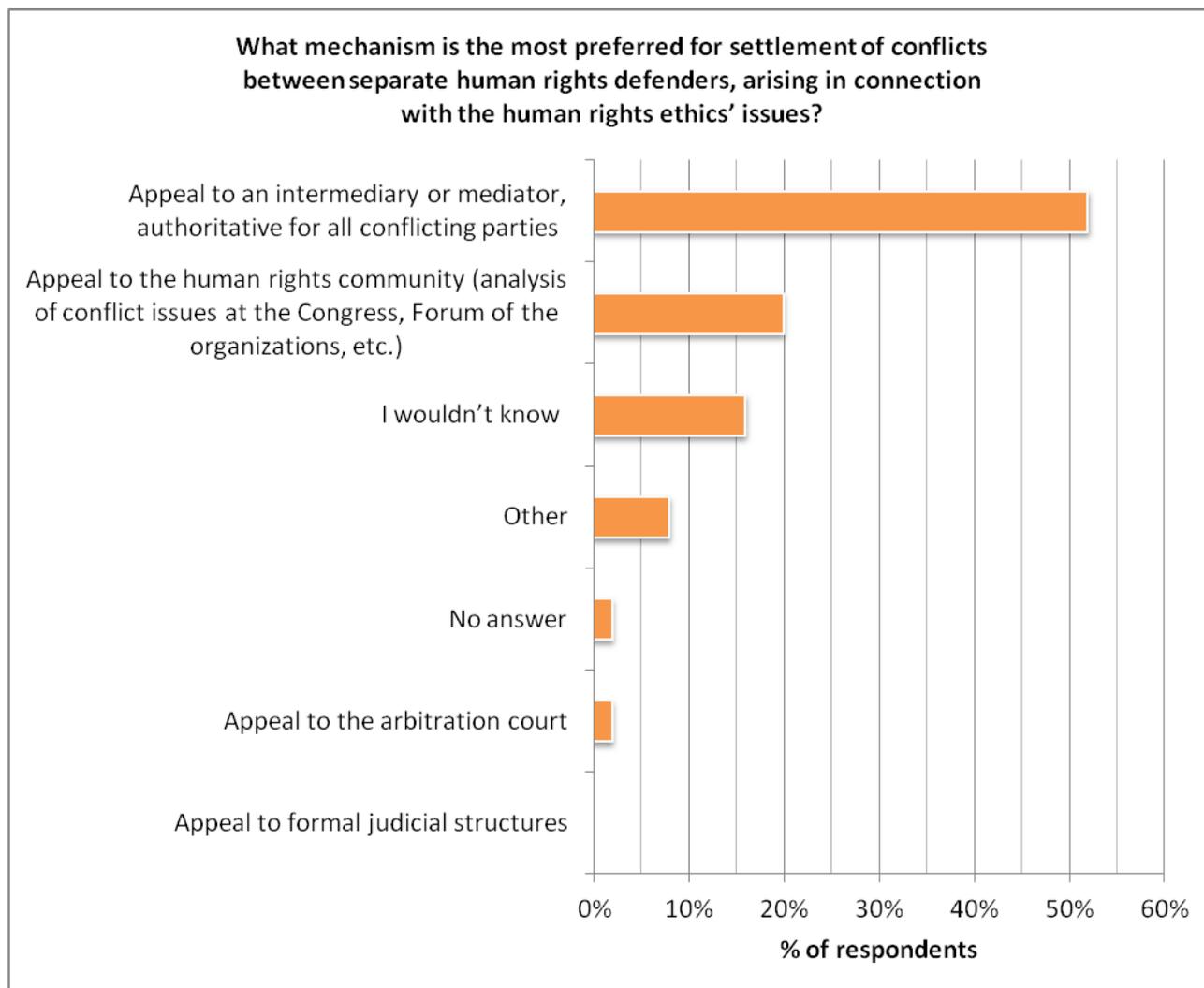
“Depending on a situation, to address to an intermediary or the community”;

“Ethics commission elected during a human rights forum”;

“No one can solve conflicts; ethics helps to avoid conflicts or to draw conclusions as a result”;

“Appeal to a special collegial body created for such cases”.

Diagram 59. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding preferred mechanisms for solving ethical conflicts between individual human rights defenders, %



In a situation if a member of an organization used considerable financial assets of this organization for his/her own needs, the mechanism preferred most of all by the polled leaders of human rights organizations is to publicly bring up the question of expelling this person before the authorized body of the organization (40% respondents). The second popular mechanism is to push for expelling this person, not publishing the information on what this person did; this variant of the answer was chosen by 18% respondents. 6 respondents (12%) specified that they would initiate a public hearing; 6 more — that they do not know how they would behave in such a situation (see Diagram 60).

5 respondents offered their own mechanisms of actions:

"It all depends on a situation; most possibly, I would inform the leadership or initiate an internal investigation";

"First of all, a conversation with an attempt to find out the reasons (sudden illness, lawyer's services)";



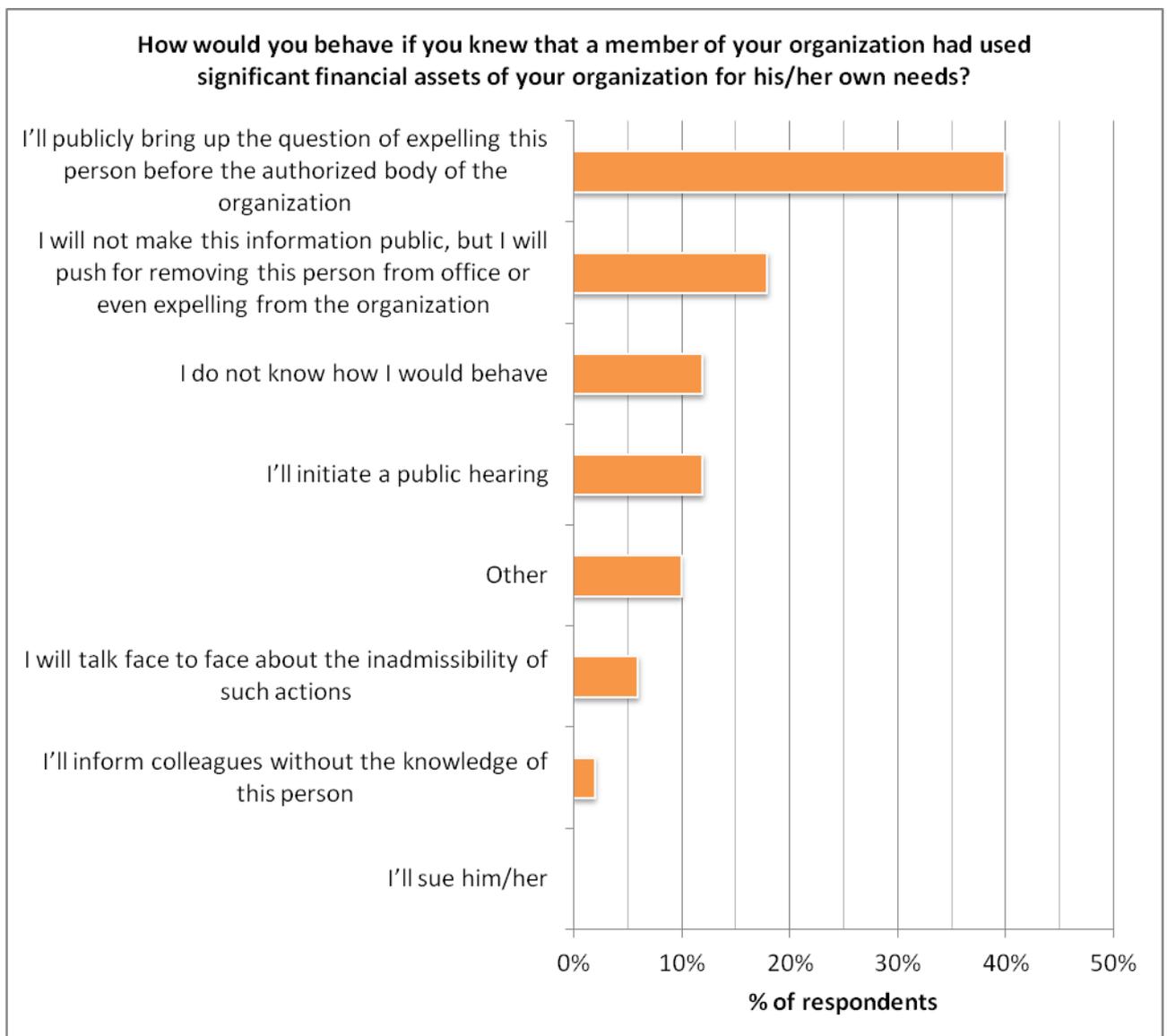
“I will inform donors, as well as representatives of other organizations and colleagues in private capacity”;

“First, a confidential conversation; then — I will openly bring up the question of expelling before the authorized organ of the organization (if the situation is not rectified)”;

“Such a situation is hardly possible in our organization, but if there is, we shall solve it inside the collective”.

It is remarkable that in order to solve the offered situations respondents do not consider at all the variant of addressing to the official judicial structures.

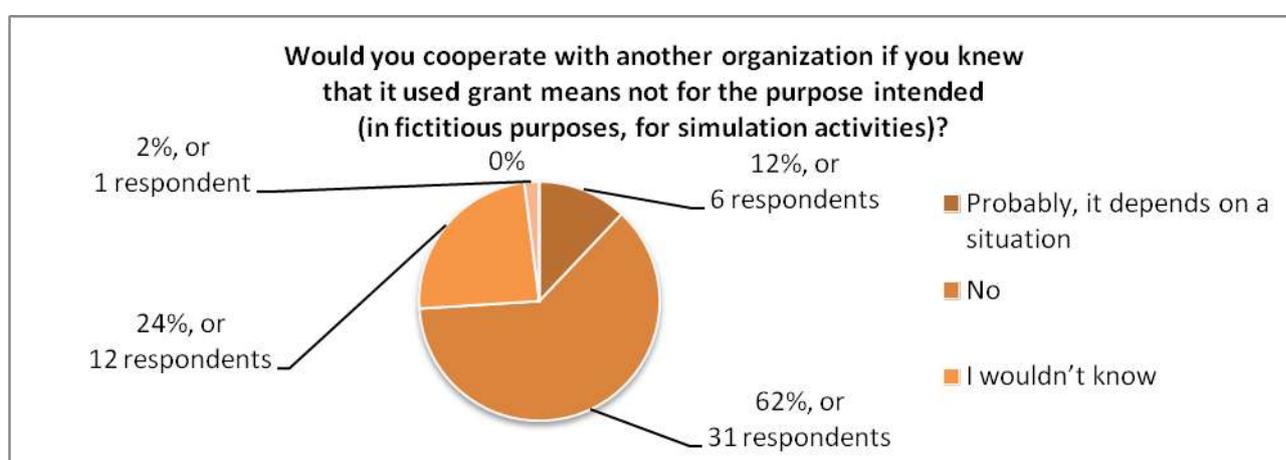
Diagram 60. Distribution of answers of respondents regarding actions in case of occurrence of a situation of use by a member of the organization of financial resources for personal needs, %



Perceptions of admissibility of some actions for human rights defenders and human rights organizations

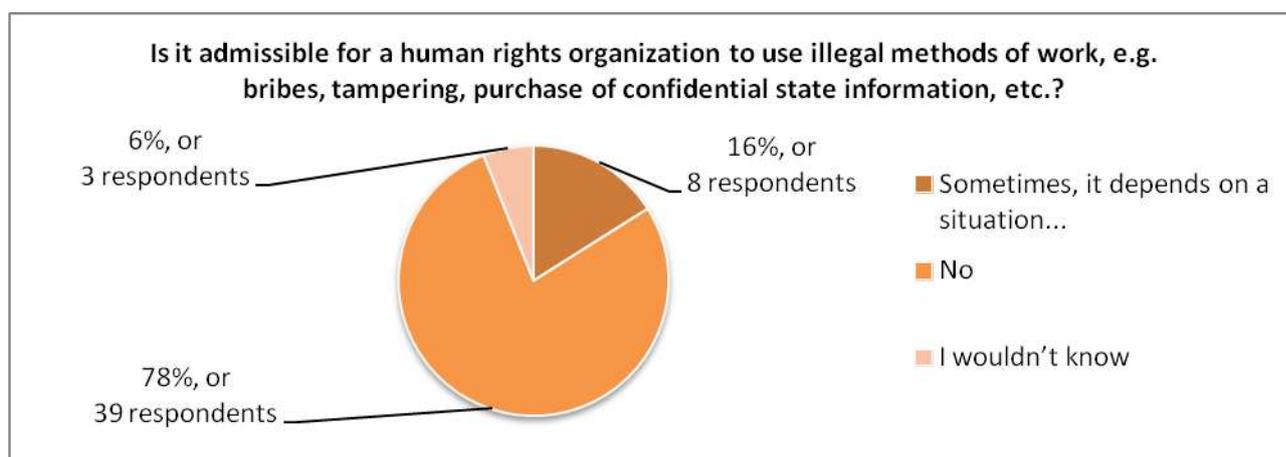
According to 62% respondents, the organization's use of grant means not for the purpose intended (fictitious purposes, simulation of activities) is the basis not to cooperate with it. However, a very big share of participants of the research has no accurate position on this question — almost 40% respondents; 24% respondents found it difficult to answer and 12% chose the variant "probably, it depends on a situation" (see Diagram 61).

Diagram 61. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the possibility of cooperation with an organization using grant funds for other purposes, %, respondents



The point of view of the overwhelming majority of the polled leaders and activists of human rights organizations (78%) is that human rights defenders cannot use illegal methods of work (e.g. bribes, tampering, purchase of confidential state information, etc.) (see Diagram 62).

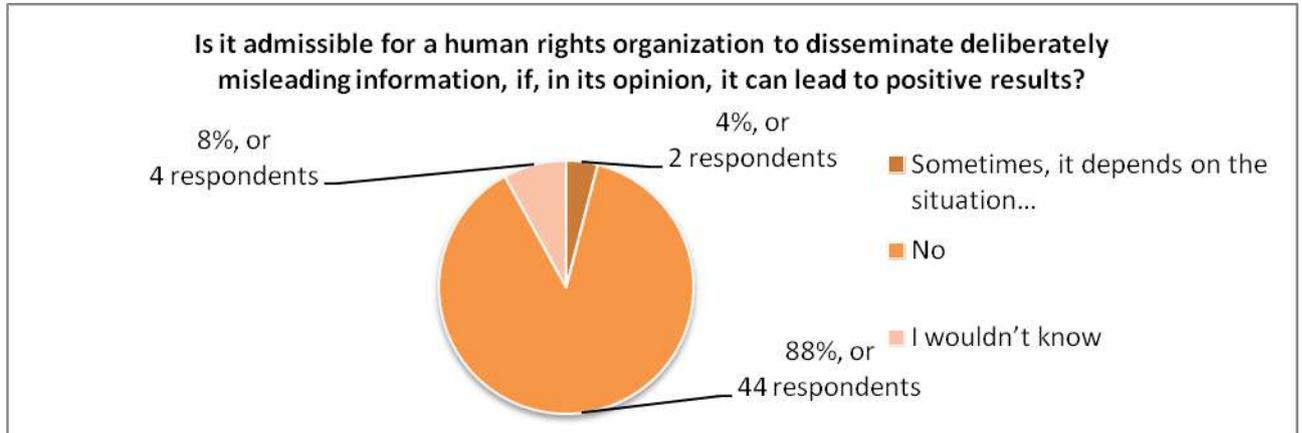
Diagram 62. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the possibility of using illegal work methods by a human rights organization, %, respondents



According to 88% participants of the research, the dissemination of deliberately misleading information is inadmissible as well (see Diagram 63).

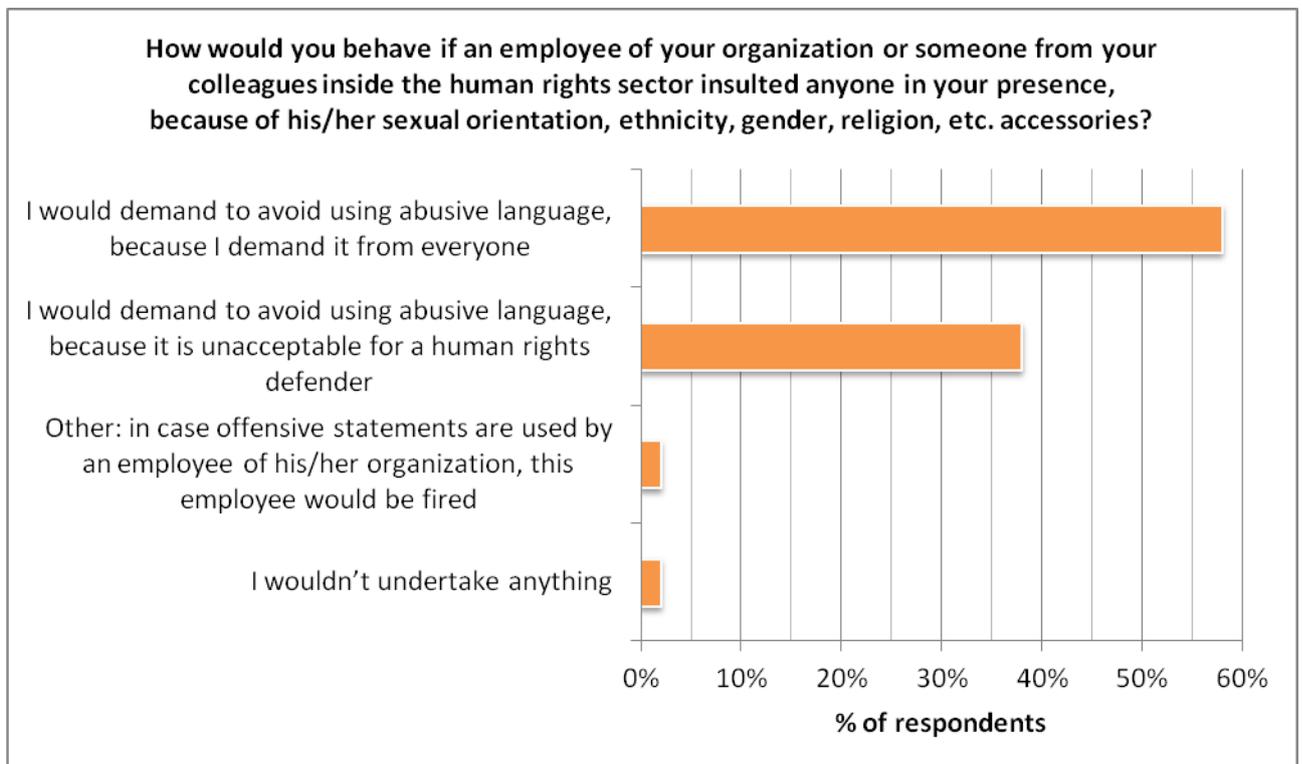


Diagram 63. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning an opportunity of dissemination by the human rights organization of the deliberately misleading information, %, respondents



As for hate speech, 58% respondents consider it inadmissible to use it in principle, without laying any special claim to human rights defenders. 38% participants of the research underlined that they consider the use of offensive statements inadmissible for human rights defenders in particular. 1 respondent has a very radical position on this question: in case offensive statements are used by an employee of his/her organization, this employee would be fired. Only 1 respondent would do nothing if he/she faced the use of hate language by a human rights defender (see Diagram 64).

Diagram 64. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning actions in case of collision with a situation of use by the employee of the human rights organization of a hate language, %

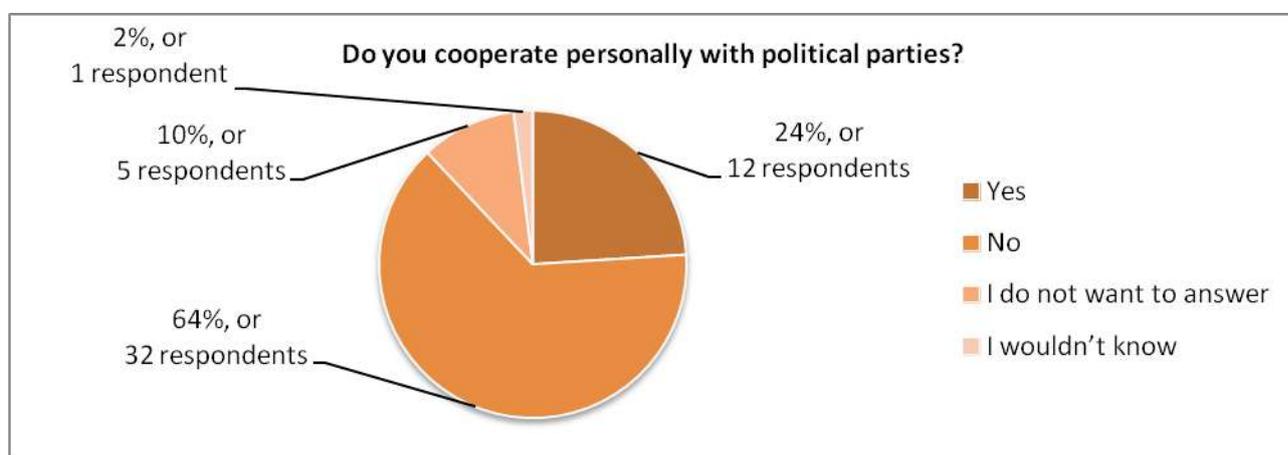


Perceptions of admissibility of cooperation with political subjects for human rights defenders

Cooperation with political parties

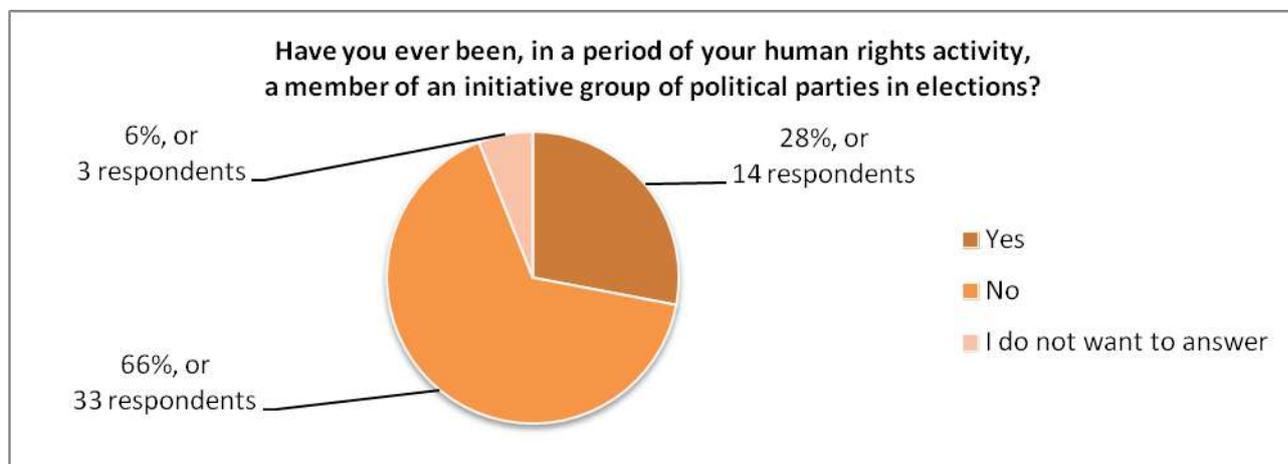
Among the polled leaders and activists of Belarusan human rights organizations, 24% respondents (12 respondents) specified that they personally cooperate with political parties. 10% respondents (5 respondents) did not wish to answer this question; 1 respondent found it difficult to answer. The majority of the polled human rights defenders (64%, 32 respondents) noticed that they do not cooperate with political parties (see Diagram 65).

Diagram 65. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning cooperation with political parties, %, respondents



Also, more than half of respondents (66%) marked that in their human rights activity they were not participants of initiative groups of any political party during elections, while 28% polled leaders of human rights organizations took part in initiative groups. 3 respondents specified that they do not want to answer this question (see Diagram 66).

Diagram 66. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding participation in initiative groups of political parties in the period of human rights activity, %, respondents

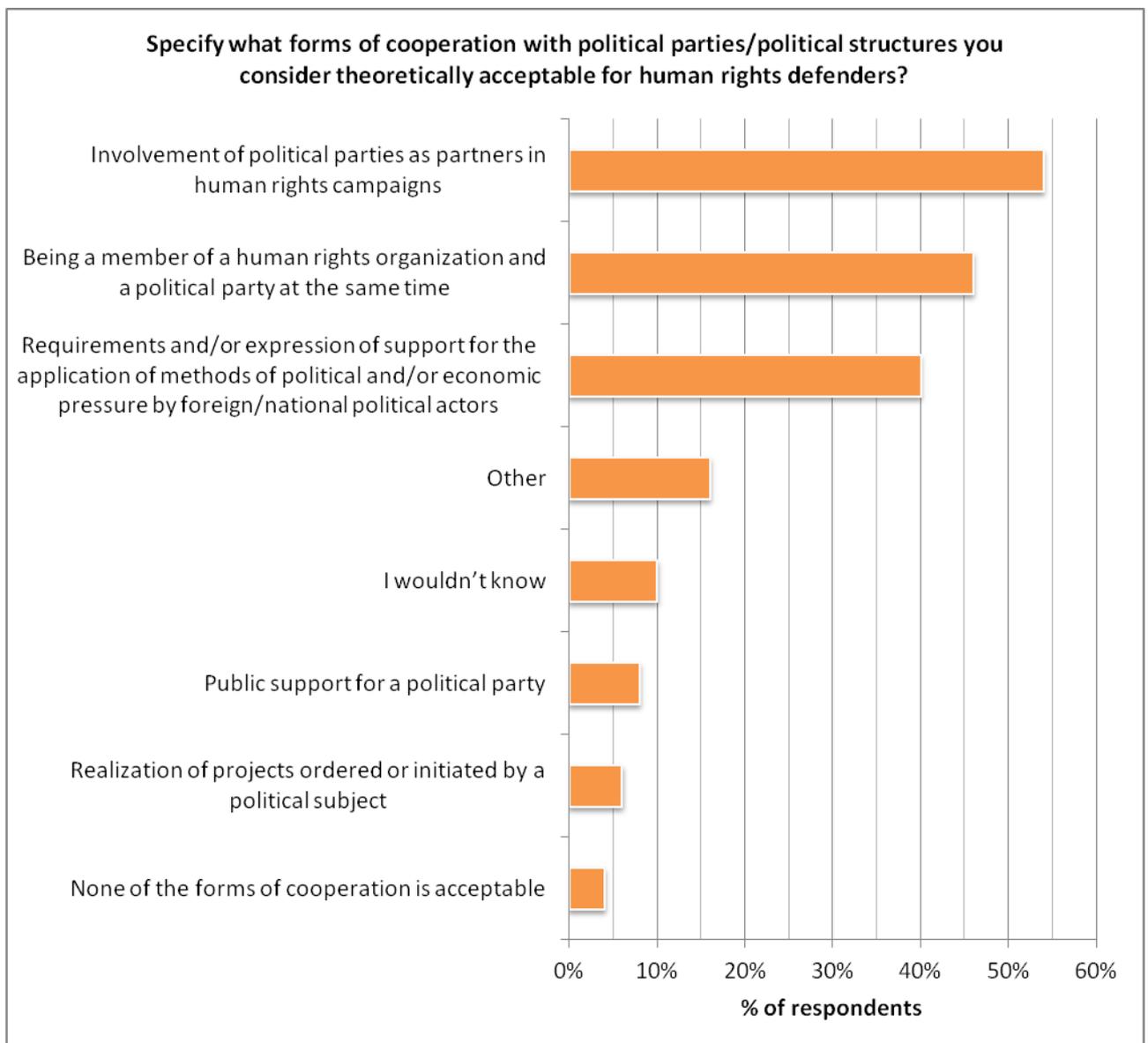




In the polled group, the opinion that human rights defenders' cooperation with political parties and structures is essentially inadmissible is marginal — only 3 respondents specified that, in their opinion, such cooperation is inadmissible in any form. 5 more respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

Most of all leaders of human rights organizations consider it admissible for human rights defenders to have such a form of cooperation with political parties as their involvement as partners in human rights campaigns — this variant was chosen by 54% respondents. 46% respondents consider it admissible to have simultaneous membership in a human rights organization and in a political party. 40% participants of the research specified that they consider it admissible to demand and express support to the use of political and economic sanctions. 4 respondents consider it admissible for human rights defenders to publicly express support to a political party and 3 respondents — to implement projects ordered or initiated by a political subject (see Diagram 67).

Diagram 67. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning forms of cooperation with political parties acceptable for human rights defenders, %



Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Also, respondents mentioned the following forms of cooperation they consider admissible:

“To attract political parties to solve human rights protection problems”;

“To inform political subjects on the situation with human rights so as to form their position”;

“Consultations”;

“Lobbying of changes in the legislation”;

“Within the scope of public interests protection campaigns, it is possible to use as a strategy the equipollent or more influential subjects' pressure on those who make decisions”;

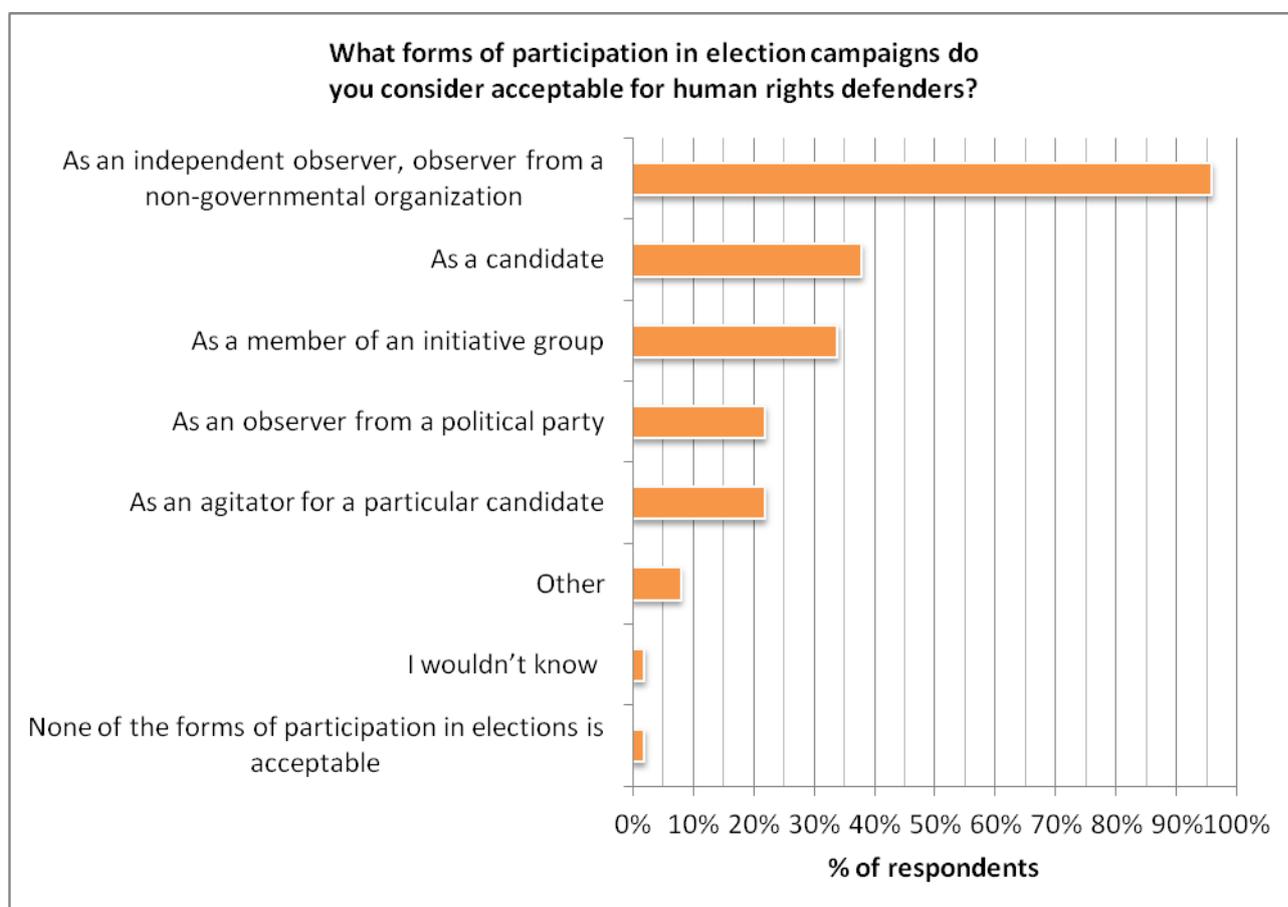
“To render human rights aid to members of parties”;

“Various kinds of support when representatives of these groups become victims of repressions; general protection of their rights, but not cooperation per se”;

“Expert support”.

Almost all respondents think that for human rights defenders it is admissible to take part in election campaigns as independent observers, observers from non-governmental organizations — this variant was specified by 96% respondents (see Diagram 68).

Diagram 68. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the form of participation in election campaigns admissible for human rights defenders, %





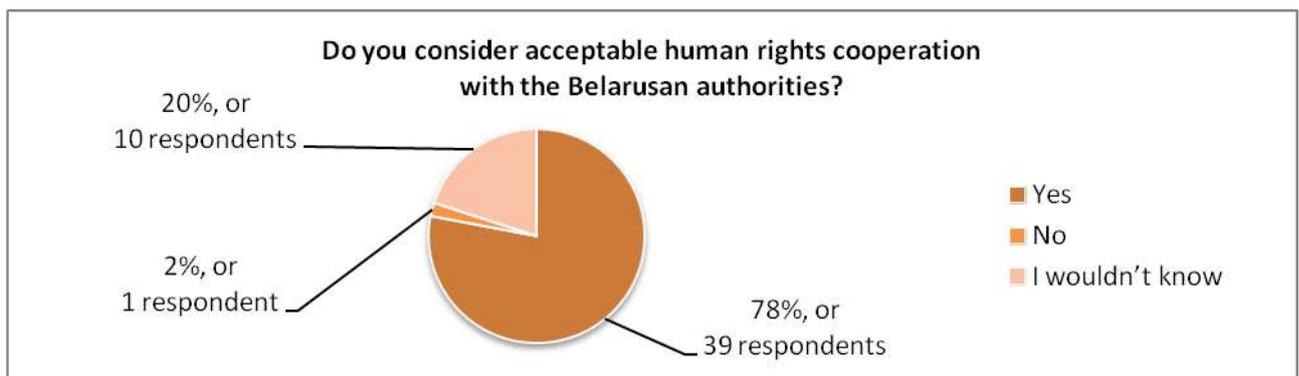
A considerably smaller number of the polled leaders of human rights organizations considered other forms of participating in election campaigns to be admissible — participation as a candidate (38%), as a member of an initiative group (34%), as an observer from a political party (22%), as an agitator for a particular candidate (22%). One of participants of the research believes it admissible to participate as an authorized representative and one — to use a campaign to disseminate ideas.

1 respondent found it difficult to specify admissible forms of participation. 1 respondent noticed that none of forms of participating in election campaigns is admissible for human rights defenders. Also, 1 respondent said that participation in an election campaign in any of the proposed qualities “means a suspension of a human rights defender’s activity”.

Cooperation with the Belarusian authorities

78% respondents believe that for human rights defenders it is admissible to cooperate with the Belarusian authorities. Only 1 respondent thinks that it is inadmissible. A share of leaders of human rights organizations who found it difficult to answer is rather high — 20% (see Diagram 69).

Diagram 69. Distribution of respondents’ answers regarding the admissibility of cooperation of human rights organizations with Belarusian authorities, %, respondents



More than half of participants of the research think that almost all forms of cooperation with the Belarusian authorities are admissible in any situation: official correspondence (88%), joint participation in platforms initiated by third parties (72%), participation in the collecting of legislation perfection proposals, which was announced by the authorities (76%), participation in public hearings, which representatives of the authorities take part in (66%) and organized by the authorities (60%).

More questionable forms of cooperation include informal negotiations with officials and participation in public councils under government bodies. Participants of the research more often allow a selective use of these forms of cooperation depending on a situation (52% respondents evaluated the admissibility of their use in this way). Only 42% respondents consider it admissible to participate in public councils and 28% respondents — informal negotiations with officials in any situation.

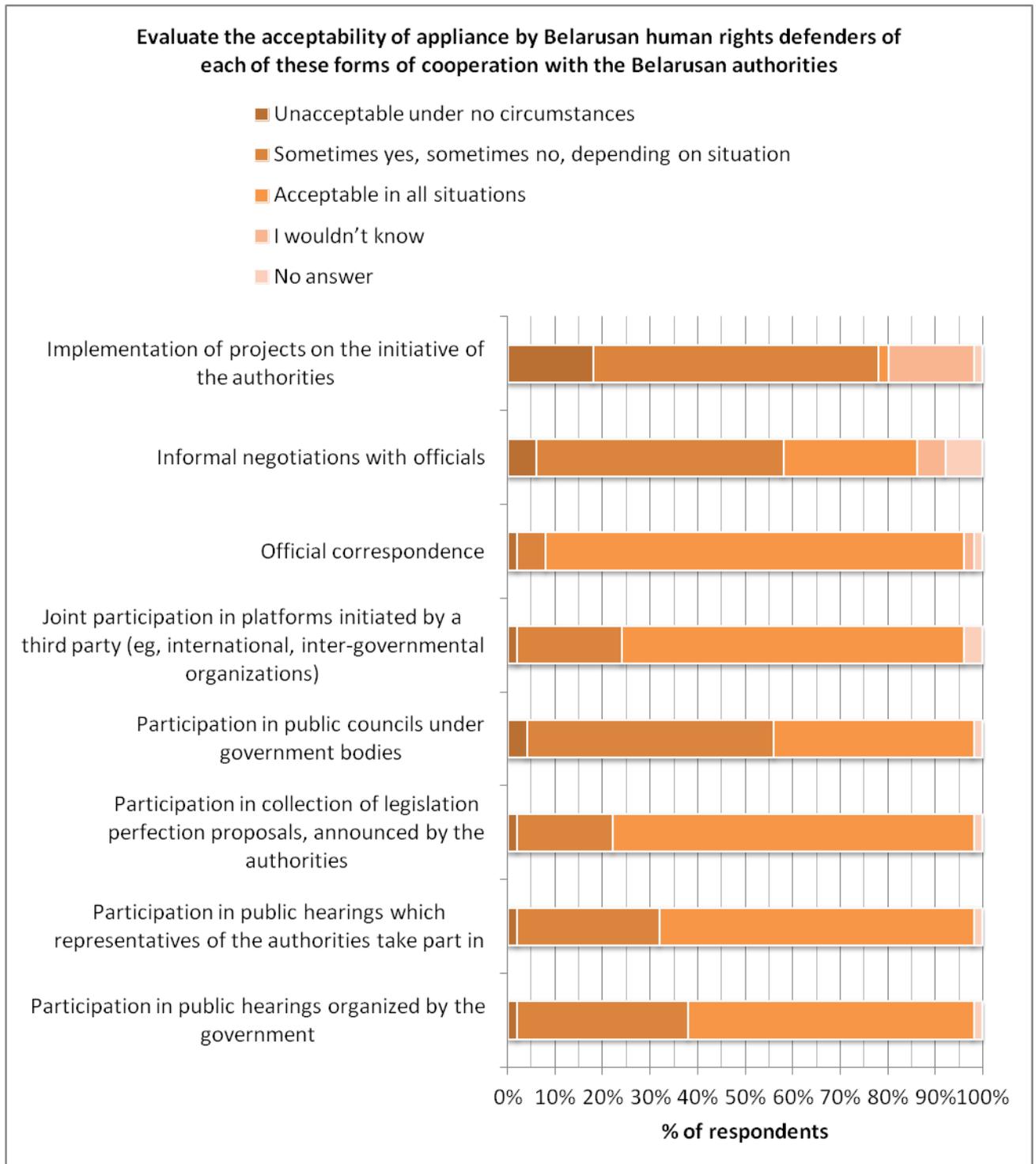
Participants of the research consider it least admissible to implement projects on the initiative of the authorities. Only 2% respondents (1 person) consider it admissible in any situation. 60% respondents evaluate the admissibility depending on a situation. The greatest number of respondents, in comparison with other forms of cooperation, considers it inadmissible to implement orders initiated by the authorities (18%); also, the greatest number of respondents found it difficult to evaluate the admissibility of the use of this form (18%).

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

One of participants of the research thinks that such a form of cooperation as participation in educational events and actions is sometimes admissible (see Diagram 70).

Diagram 70. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning admissibility of use by human rights defenders of some forms of cooperation with the Belarus authorities, %

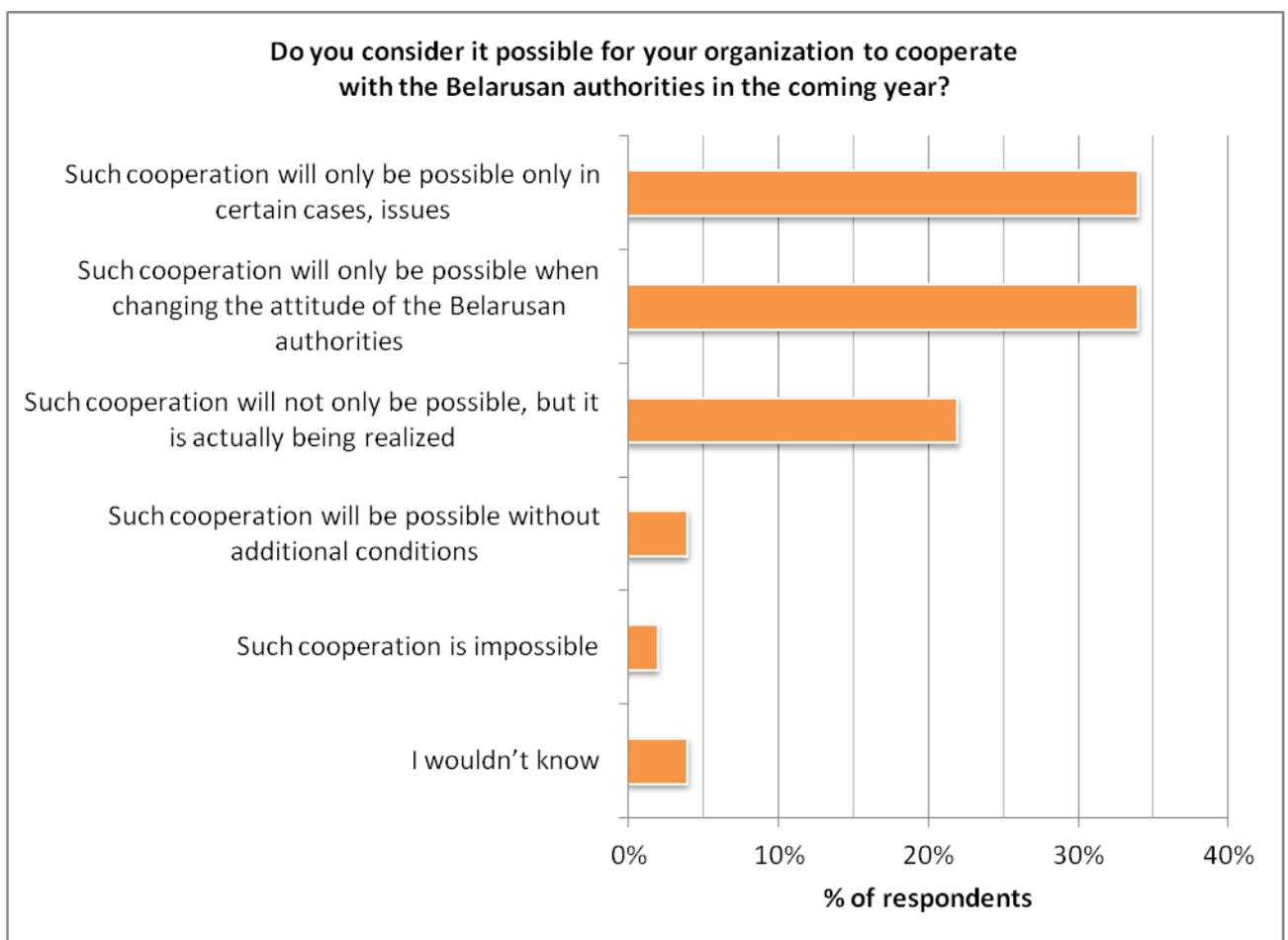




Two thirds of respondents specified that next year their cooperation with the Belarusian authorities will be possible under certain conditions. 34% noticed that cooperation will be possible in certain cases and 34% respondents specified that a condition for cooperation is the change of the authorities' attitude. A third of respondents believe that cooperation is possible without additional conditions (4%) or that it is already being carried out (22%).

One respondent consistently adheres to the position of inadmissibility and impossibility of cooperation with the Belarusian authorities. 2 participants of the research found it difficult to answer this question (see Diagram 71).

Diagram 71. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning an opportunity of cooperation of the human rights organizations with the Belarus authorities in the nearest year, %

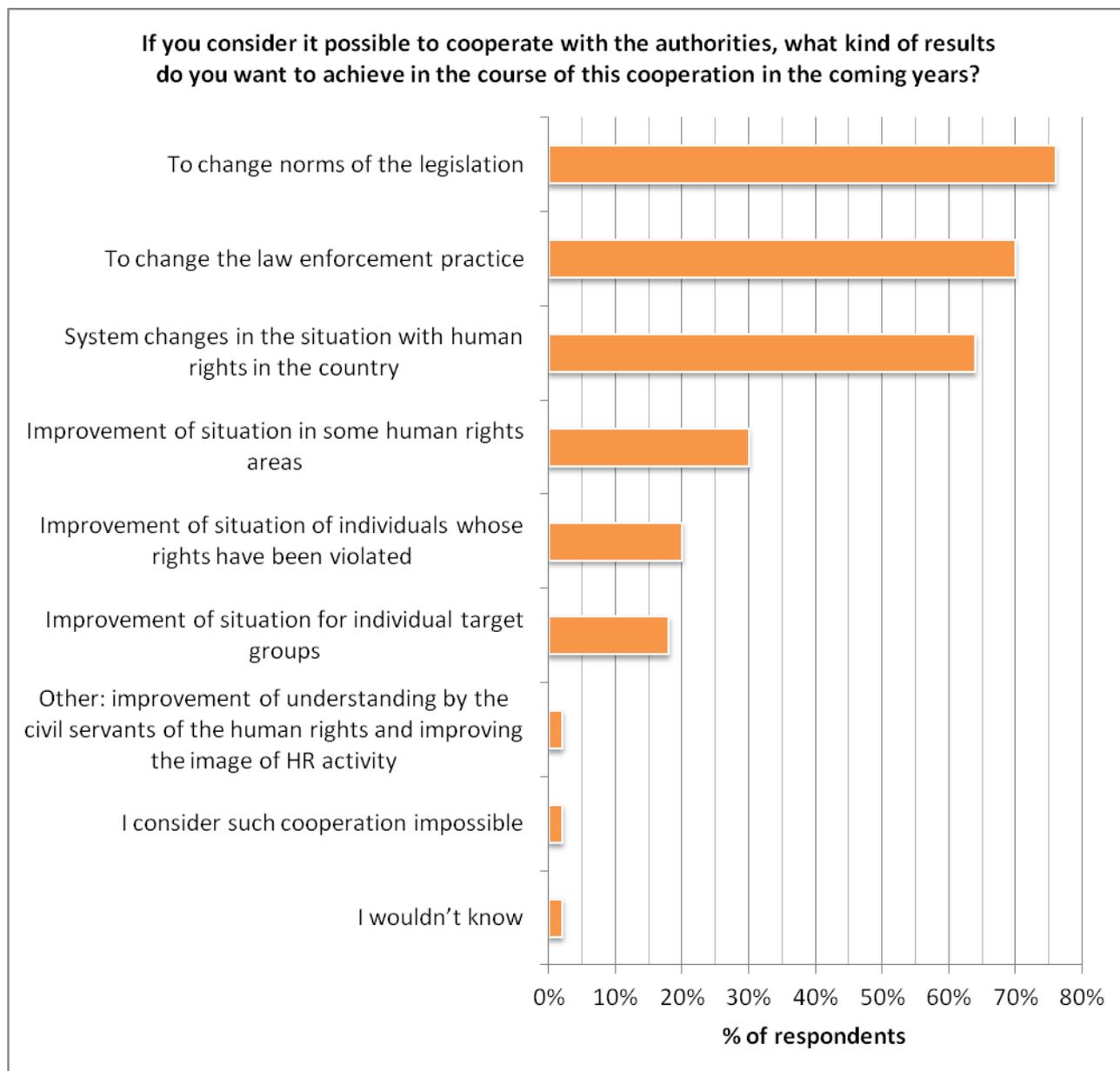


More often than not, the polled leaders of human rights organizations underlined that results of cooperation with the Belarusian authorities, which they would like to achieve, have a general character — to change norms of the legislation (76%), to change the law enforcement practice (70%), and system changes in the situation with human rights in the country (64%). The results connected with pinpoint improvements are the purpose of cooperation with the authorities much less often: the situation improvement in separate spheres of human rights was specified only by 30% respondents, the situation improvement for separate people whose rights have been violated- 20%, the situation improvement for individual target groups — 18% (see Diagram 72).

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

Diagram 72. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning desirable results of cooperation of the human rights organizations with the Belarus authorities, %





Strategic development

Mission of human rights organizations

49 respondents answered the open question on missions of organizations; however, two did not give substantial answers, but referred to the charter or web-site; 1 respondent passed the question. In general, the results of the research allow us to analyze missions of 29 organizations.

As for the types of missions, in the human rights community, it is possible to mention several groups of organizations:

- Organizations, which mission and main objective of activity is concentrated on a concrete target group (7 organizations).

The organizations in this group named the following target groups: NGOs, the human rights community, the literary community, LGBT, persons with disabilities, draftees, and students. Respondents' answers include most often such formulations as *"the formation of the community"*, *"support to joint actions"*, *"the creation of favorable conditions"*, *"so that the target group could use all completeness of human rights"*, and *"the formation of a new generation"*.

- Organizations, which mission is to develop civil activism (2 organizations).

Leaders of these organizations formulate their mission as follows: *"contribution to the formation of the active citizen through educational activity"*, *"to involve citizens of Belarus in activism and in helping other citizens"*.

- Organizations, which activity is aimed at society as a whole (3 organizations).

These are the organizations interested in forming civil society in Belarus, a society that will respect human rights and will be aware of fundamental rights and freedoms and of how to protect them. Representatives of these organizations formulate their mission as follows: *"restoration of infringed rights with the use of all lawful methods and the formation of civil society with the help of joint actions; only actions can change a person"*, *"assistance to the construction in Belarus of a society that respects human rights"*.

- Organizations, which mission is aimed at protecting the concrete right and developing a certain sphere (6 organizations).

There are 6 organizations, which object of care are: *"the real state status of the Belarusan language"*, *"to expand the space of the freedom of speech by supporting quality journalism and distributing truthful information"*, *"the implementation of the right to the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion"*, *"independent fair court in Belarus"*, *"propaganda of the ideas of sustainable development and an ecologically expedient way of life"*, and *"the implementation of Belarus' de facto international obligations"*.

- Organizations that protect human rights in Belarus in general (6 organizations).

This group consists of 6 organizations that formulate their mission as follows — to assist the observance of human rights and the legal reform in Belarus, to protect citizens' rights and legitimate interests, to search for answers to contemporary challenges for human rights in Belarus, to participate in the formulation of the new human rights agenda, and to advance the values of nondiscrimination and solidarity.

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

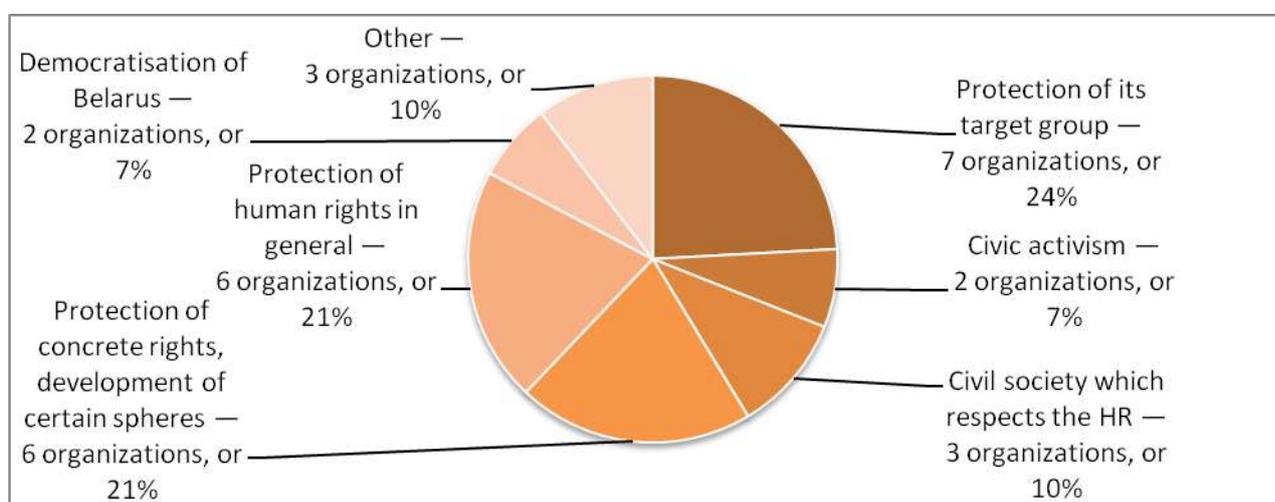
Research report

- Organizations, which mission has to do with the democratization of Belarus (2 organizations).

In this group, there are two organizations, which overall objectives are: *“assistance to the construction of a lawful state in Belarus; increase of legal culture and protection of human rights”* and *“support to the development of democracy in Belarus, Lithuania, and other countries through mechanisms of the rule of law, activation of citizens, and protection of their rights and freedoms”*.

Three organizations are not in these clusters. One of them sees its mission and overall objective in the documenting of infringements of human rights. The second organization's purpose is to influence the public-political life of the country. At last, the leader of the third organization answered that at the moment the organization's overall objective is *“survival; activity on the territory of Belarus is outside the law and it is difficult to speak about any strategic development”* (see Diagram 73).

Diagram 73. Distribution of organizations by mission type, frequency, %



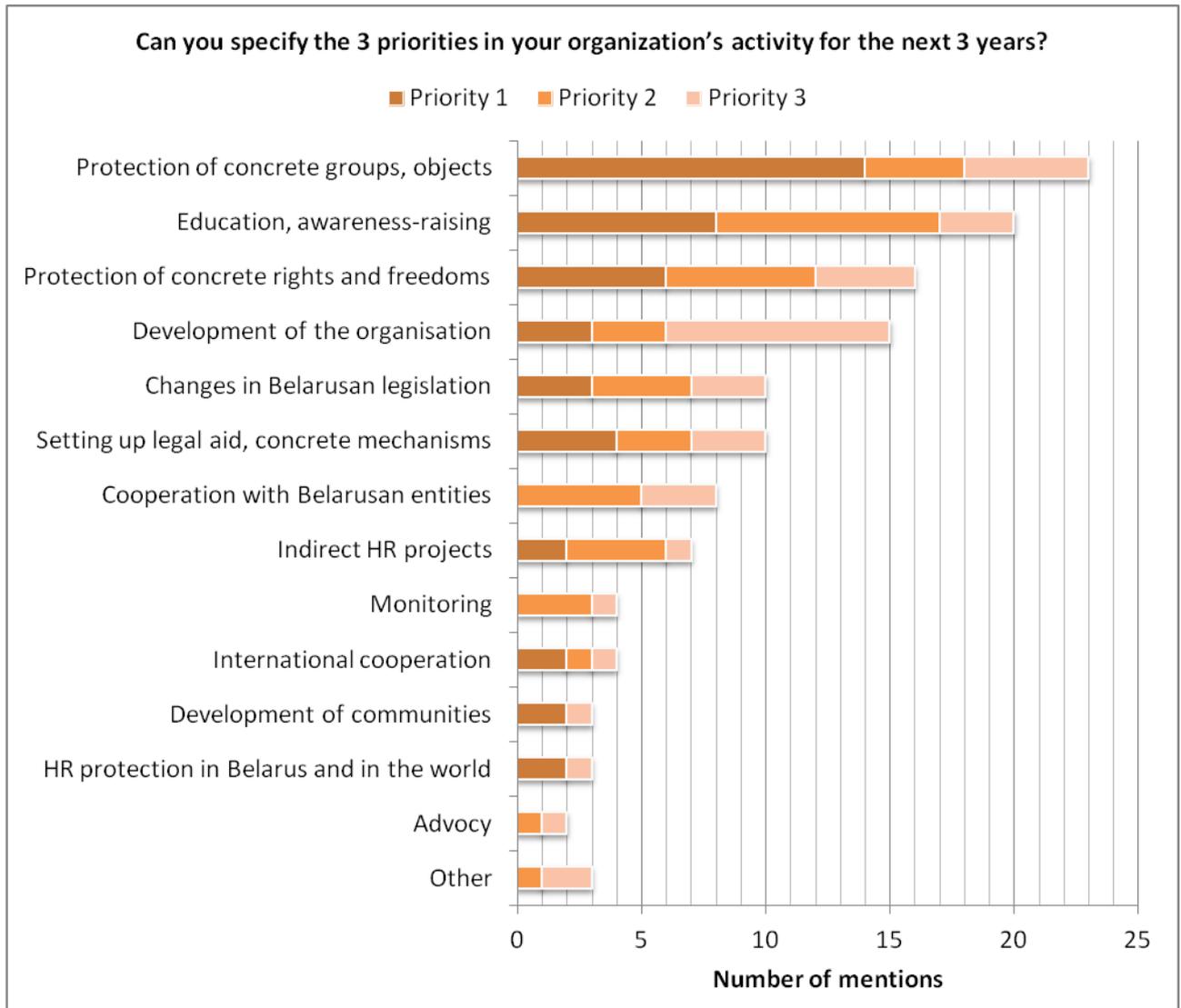
Priorities of activity of human rights organizations

The overwhelming majority of participants of the research named 3 priorities of activity of their organizations (76%). 6 respondents (12%) named only 2 priorities; 2 respondents — only 1 priority (4%). Among participants of the research, 46 respondents named in total 128 priorities of activity of human rights organizations; 3 respondents found it difficult to answer the question on priorities of organizations' activity and 1 passed the question (see Diagram 74).

More often than not, the polled leaders said that the priority of human rights organizations is to protect certain groups of the population or objects — participants of the research provided 23 answers in this cluster and, basically, such priorities were named in the first turn. There are such groups as victims of repressions, students (including the expelled ones), persons with disabilities, refugees and migrants, LGBT, journalists, workers, socially not protected people (e.g. single mothers), draftees, prisoners, human rights defenders, as well as members of organizations and objects of nature. Because of a big variety of target groups and the specificity of the activity aimed at protecting their rights (e.g. de-institutionalization in the sphere of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, education abroad as a way to help expelled students, participation in the work of army conscription commissions), such statement of priorities weakens the potential of strategic cooperation in the sector.



Diagram 74. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning priorities in activity of the human rights organizations for the near future, %



The second most mentioned priority of activity is education and educational activity. This priority was named 20 times. Basically, participants of the research put the priority of educating the population as a whole in the sphere of human rights. Training of target groups and concrete topics were named quite seldom.

The third group of priorities as for the number of their mentions is protection of concrete rights and freedoms (16 mentions). The polled leaders of human rights organizations most often said that their priority is to protect the freedom of associations, protection against discrimination and abolition of capital punishment. Also, the freedom of information and privacy (protection from outing), digital freedoms, advancement of mechanisms of participation of the public in decision-making, and protection of infringed rights were mentioned.

The fourth group of priorities (15 mentions) are various aspects of development of their organizations, including organizational development, fundraising and financial stability, growth of a number of members and expansion of geography of working formations, working-out of a strategy of their activity, professional growth of employees,

legitimate change of power in their organizations, and the informing of society on their work. Priorities from this group were named most often in the third turn.

Other groups of priorities were mentioned 10 and less times and there is a thematic variety there as well. Thus, priorities on modifications in the Belarusan legislation, as a rule, are closely connected with subjects of activity of an organization: changes of the legislation in the sphere of the freedom of religion, the ratification of the convention on the rights of the persons with disabilities, changes of the law on the unarmed service, the Aarhus Convention. The projects indirectly connected with human rights activity are: the opening of a national university with the Belarusan language of education, antinuclear campaigns, the implementation of cultural projects, the development of volunteering, etc.

Thus, from the point of view of priorities of activity, rather a high potential of cooperation between human rights organizations is in the field of education in the sphere of human rights; also, it is possible to pay attention to the organization of legal aid.

Strategic planning

The analysis of answers of leaders of human rights organizations shows that almost half of organizations of the sector (13 organizations) had sessions on strategic planning a long time ago (before 2014) or did not have them at all and only 8 organizations carried out strategic planning sessions recently — within the latest three years (the last session was organized in four of these eight organizations in 2016).

Among the organizations, where pairs of respondents gave different answers (the subsample consists of 9 organizations — they are marked on the diagram as “filtered”), leaders of 4 organizations specified that the last session on strategic planning was in 2016/2015. In 2 organizations, one of respondents said that the last session was in 2015/2016 and the other one found it difficult to answer; in 1 organization, one of leaders wrote 2015, while the other one said there were no such sessions. At last, in one pair, respondents specified that the last session was prior to 2014 and “never”, and in one more pair — participants of the research gave the answers “such sessions were not organized” and “I find it difficult to answer”. Thus, it is possible to add 5 more organizations to the number of those that had sessions on strategic planning recently (in 2015-2016) and 2 more organizations to those that had such sessions long ago or never had them (see Diagram 75).

Diagram 75. Distribution of organizations by the period of the last session on strategic planning, frequency





The question of whether organizations have a strategic plan of activity was answered by respondents in almost half of organizations (13 organizations, 44%) in the positive; in 6 organizations (20%) — respondents answered that there is no strategic plan; in 1 organization -respondents are not informed on this question (it is marked on the diagram 76 as “unknown”). The respondents representing 10 organizations gave inconsistent answers (they are marked on the diagram 76 as “filtered”), among them in half of pairs one of participants of the research chose the answer “I do not know” (see Diagram 76).

Diagram 76. Distribution of organizations by the presence/absence of a strategic activity plan, %, frequency



Among the organizations that have a strategic plan of activity (coinciding answers in pairs or an organization is represented by one respondent — 13 organizations in total), the majority follows this plan (11 organizations, 69%); respondents in two organizations underlined that they do not manage to follow the strategic plan and two pairs of respondents provided different answers (in both pairs, one of respondents noticed that they follow the plan and the other ones found it difficult to answer) (see Diagram 77).

Diagram 77. Distribution of organizations having a strategic plan for the implementation of the activity plan, %, frequency



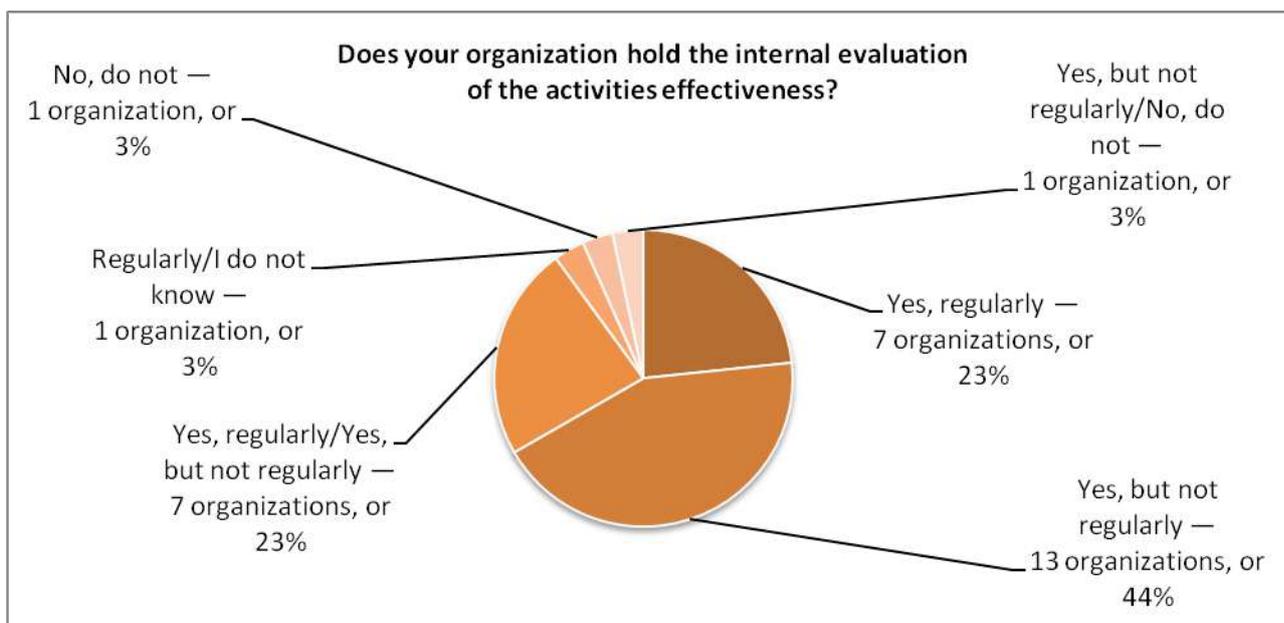
As for an internal evaluation of the activities effectiveness, practically in all organizations, this evaluation is carried out, but more often than not it is irregular (13 organizations of the sector have this evaluation irregularly; 7 — regularly); in 8 more organizations, the evaluation is carried out, but participants of the research have different opinions concerning its regularity (one specified that the evaluation is done regularly, the other ones —

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

irregularly or “I do not know”). Representatives of only 1 organization noticed that in this organization there is no internal evaluation of the activities effectiveness; in 1 more organization, one of respondents said it is irregular, while the other one noticed that the evaluation is not carried out (see Diagram 78).

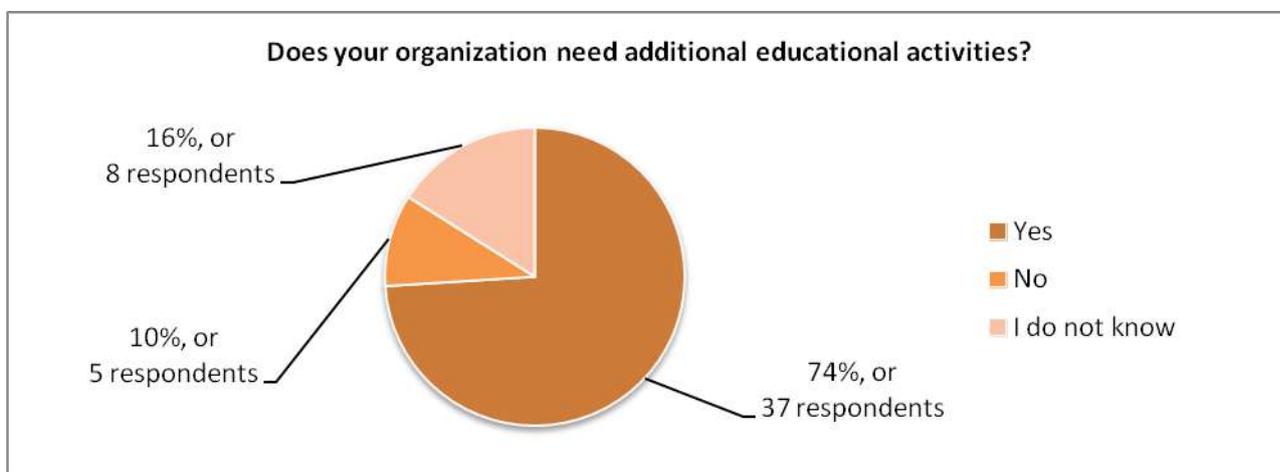
Diagram 78. Distribution of the organizations concerning performance of procedure of internal evaluation of the activities effectiveness, frequency



Evaluations of human rights organizations' need of educational events and actions

The overwhelming majority of respondents marked that their organizations need additional educational actions. 10% of the polled leaders (5 respondents) specified that their organizations do not need additional educational actions and 16% participants of the research found it difficult to answer (see Diagram 79).

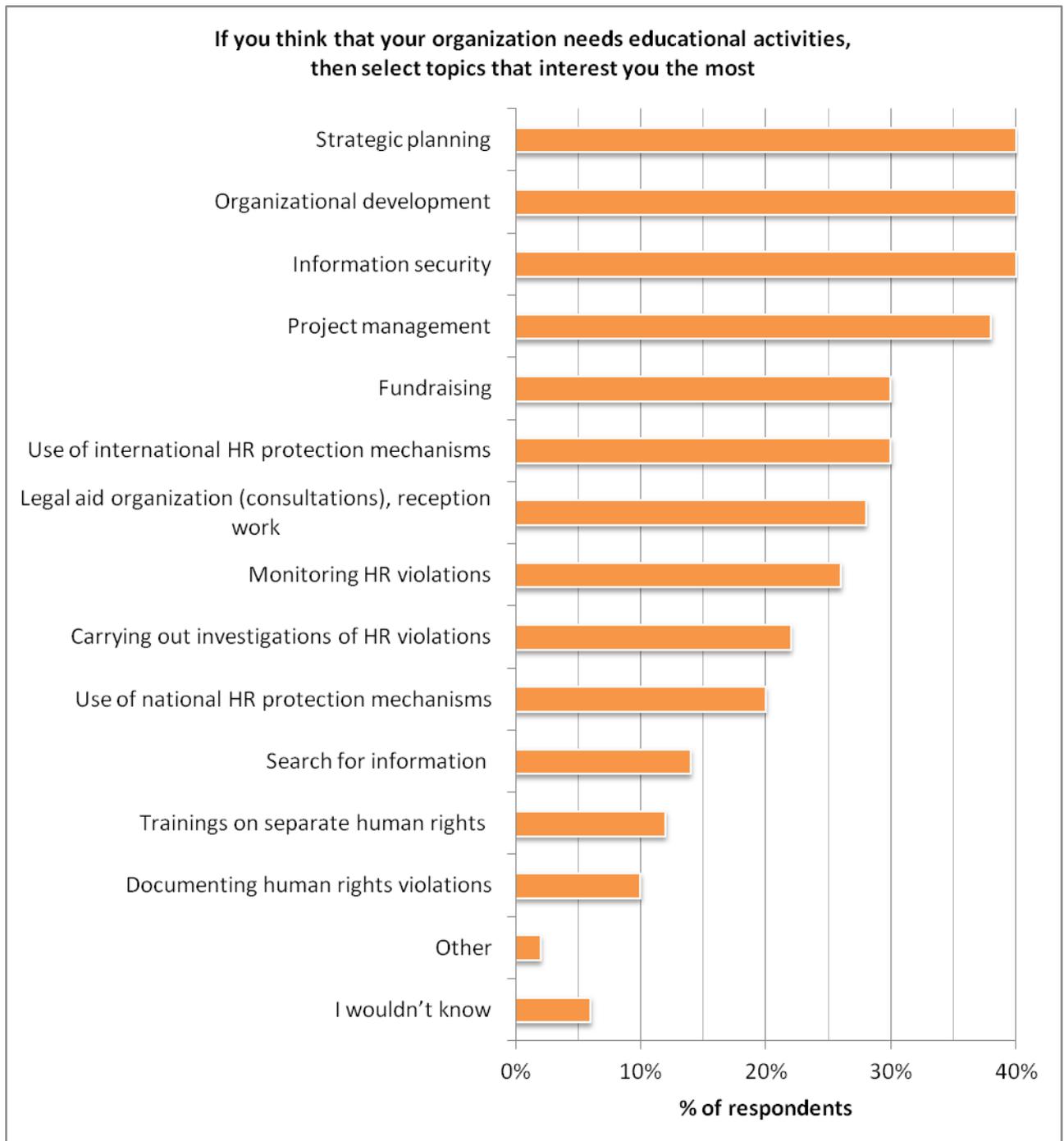
Diagram 79. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding the need for additional educational activities, %, respondents





The most vital topics of educational events and actions for human rights organizations are: strategic planning, organizational development, information security, and project management (38-40% of the polled leaders of human rights organizations chose these variants). The least interest is in the documenting of human rights violations, trainings on separate human rights, and searches for information (less than 15% respondents) (see Diagram 80).

Diagram 80. Distribution of respondents' answers regarding topics for educational activities, %



Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Human rights trainings that participants of the research are interested in are:

“Bankwatch”;

“Education of members of the organization in the field of copyrights”;

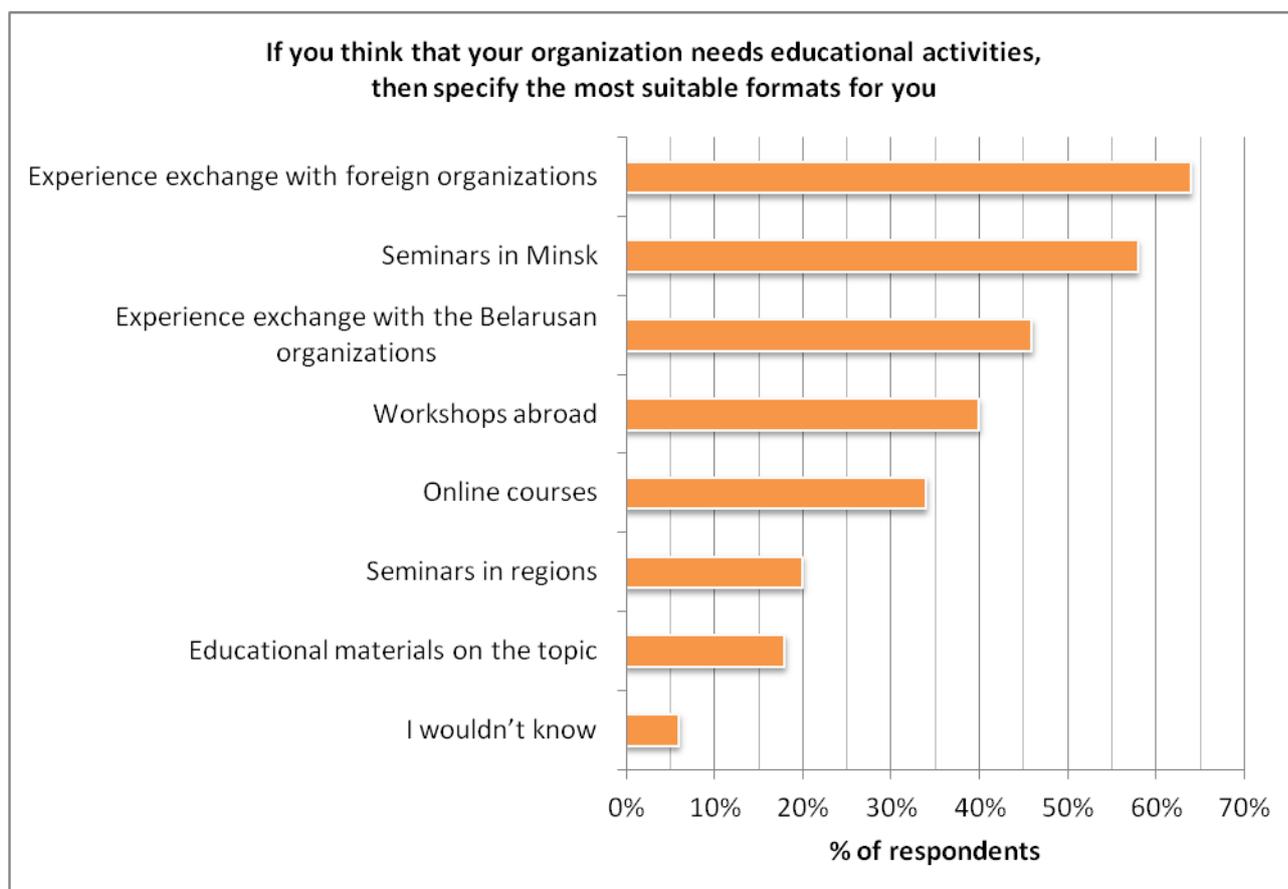
“Right to the freedom of expression and protest”.

One respondent chose the variant “other”, specifying the following:

“Educational actions on human rights protection mechanisms and on separate human rights are necessary for separate volunteers and employees of the organization”.

Leaders of human rights organizations are most of all interested in exchanging experiences with foreign organizations — this variant was chosen by 64% respondents. The second most required form of educational actions among participants of the research is seminars in Minsk (58% respondents). Exchanges of experiences with Belarusian organizations are interesting to a smaller number of respondents (46%); the polled group is even less interested in seminars abroad (40%). Online courses, seminars in regions, and educational materials are the least required forms among leaders of human rights organizations (less than 35%) (see Diagram 81).

Diagram 81. Distribution of answers of respondents concerning forms of educational activities, %





About authors

Alena Zuikova is an analyst of the Centre for European Transformation, Master of Political Science. MA in Political Science (European Affairs) at Institute of Political Studies of Lille, France (Sciences Po — Institut d'Études Politiques de Lille). The focus of research interests: European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, EU policies towards Belarus, EU development policy, civil society, CSOs' role in democratisation processes in Belarus.

Andrei Yahorau is the director of the Centre for European transformation (CET), Master of Political Science. He graduated from Belarusian State University, department of political science, and holds a master's degree in political science. He has been working in the political research area since 2001. The focus of research interests: transformation of the former Soviet Union space, civil society, political transformations in Belarus and the Eastern Partnership region, European studies.

Aksana Shelest is a senior analyst of the Center for European Transformation, PhD in sociology. She graduated from the Sociology Department of Belarusian State University and did her postgraduate studies in the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, where she later worked as the head of the sector of operational research methods and practices, as an academic secretary, and as the head of the department of sociological studies techniques. She is an expert of the analytical group of the Humanitarian Techniques Agency.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of the organizations that have taken part in this research

1. **Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus** (*Assembly of NGOs*)
2. **Association of Environmental NGOs of Belarus “Green Alliance”**
3. **Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House** (*HRH Belarus*)
4. **Belarusian Human Rights Center “Identity”** (*HR Center Identity*)
5. **Belarusian Trade Union of Workers of Radio Electronic Industry** (*REP Trade Union*)
6. **Civil Initiative “Against Lawlessness in the Courts and Prosecutor’s Office”**
7. **Committee for the Protection of the Repressed “Salidarnasc”** (*Committee Salidarnasc*)
8. **Educational and Human Rights Institution “Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities”** (*ORPD*)
9. **Educational and Social Public Association “Zvyano”** [in English — “Link”] (*NGO Zvyano*)
10. **Educational Institution “Conscript’s Rights Office”**
11. **Educational Institution “Legal Transformation Center”** (*Lawtrend*)
12. **Expert-Legal Association “Initiative FORB”**
13. **Grodno Regional Public Association of Young Scientists “VIT”** (*NGO VIT*)
14. **Homel Centre for Strategic Litigation** (*Homel CSL*)
15. **Human Rights Center “Legal Assistance to Population”** (*HR Center Legal Assistance to Population*)
16. **Human Rights Center “Viasna”** (*HR Center Viasna*)
17. **Human Rights Initiative “Human Constanta”** (*Initiative Human Constanta*)
18. **Private Information and Consulting Institution “Region 119”** (*Institution Region 119*)
19. **Public Association “Belarusian Association of Journalists”** (*NGO BAJ*)
20. **Public Association “Center for Human Rights”** (*NGO Center for Human Rights*)
21. **Public Association “Ecohome”** (*NGO Ecohome*)
22. **Public Association “Francysk Skaryna Belarusian Language Society”** (*NGO BLS*)
23. **Public Institution “Belarusian Documentation Center”** (*Institution BDC*)



24. **Public Institution “League for Democracy Development “Civil Verdict”** (Institution *Civil Verdict League*)
25. **Republican Human Rights Public Association “Belarusian Helsinki Committee”** (NGO *BHC*)
26. **Republican Public Association “Belarusian PEN Centre”**
27. **Republican Public Association “Legal Initiative”** (NGO *Legal Initiative*)
28. **The group of relatives of convicted persons, victims of lawlessness in the courts and prosecutor’s office/Initiative “For Fair Trial in Belarus”**
29. **Youth Human Rights Group — Belarus** (*YHRG-Belarus*)
30. **Youth Trade Union Group “Students’ Council”** (*YHRG Students’ Council*)

Annex 2. A sample of the questionnaire for the participants of this research

Hello! Thank you for providing your consent to participate in our research. The research is conducted by *the Centre for European Transformation* at the initiative of *The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House* in order to determine the development priorities of the Belarusian human rights community on the grounds of vision of the main problems in the sphere of protection of the human rights in Belarus.

The research is anonymous, all materials on the results of the research will be used only in generalized form, any information that can identify you personally, including filled surveys, will not be published or sent to the customer of the research.

To take part in the research, you should do just few things:

- It is necessary to read carefully the survey and all the answer options. Choose the option that reflects your personal opinion or describes your situation, and circle the answer.
- If none of the options suits you, write your answer in the free line.
- In some questions, you can choose several answers, so please read carefully explanatory notes to the survey.
- If there is something from the written below you do not understand, or that causes doubts, seek clarification from the interviewer.
- Please try not to skip questions! Quality of the results of the research depends on the completeness of the received information.

Thank you in advance for your attentive and serious attitude to the research!

First of all, let's get acquainted. Please enter some data about you:

1. **Name of the organization:** _____

2. **Position (position occupied):** _____

3. **Is the working place in the organization your primary place of employment?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

4. **How many years have you been working in this organization? (exactly or approximately):** _____ years

5. **Age:** _____ years

6. **Education (please, select only 1 answer option):**

- 1. Primary, incomplete secondary education
- 2. General secondary education
- 3. Vocational school
- 4. Incomplete higher education
- 5. University degree
- 6. Post-graduate degree



Let's talk about your understanding of the human rights activity:

7. How long have you been working in the human rights field?

- 1. Less than 1 year
- 2. 1-3 years
- 3. 4-5 years
- 4. 6-10 years
- 5. More than 10 years

8. Do you consider yourself personally a human rights defender?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I wouldn't know

9. Mark, please, to what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of the human rights activity?
(please, give 1 answer in each line):

	Characteristic	I strongly disagree	I partly agree	I completely agree	I wouldn't know
1.	Human rights activity is the activity of individuals, groups or society's institutions that promote and protect the universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.	1	2	3	4
2.	Human rights activity stands in promoting and protecting civil and political rights, as well as in promoting, protecting and implementing of economic, social and cultural rights.	1	2	3	4
3.	Human rights activity relates to promoting and protecting the rights of members of all population groups.	1	2	3	4
4.	Human rights activity does not include activities related to the commission or propaganda of acts of violence.	1	2	3	4
5.	Human rights activity is aimed at protecting the rights of an individual citizen from the encroachments of the state, but does not apply to the relationship between citizens.	1	2	3	4
6.	Human rights activity is social in nature and does not extend to activities of state officials, civil servants and members of the business sector.	1	2	3	4
7.	Human rights activity is carried out by human rights organizations or separate human rights defenders on the basis of special knowledge and qualification standards.	1	2	3	4

10. Do you consider it necessary to add any important, from your point of view, characteristics of the human rights activity?

- 1. Yes (specify, please): _____
- 2. No

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

11. Mark, please, to what extent do you agree with each of the following characteristics of human rights defenders?
(please, give 1 answer in each line):

	Characteristic	I strongly disagree	I partly agree	I completely agree	I wouldn't know
1.	Human rights defenders are those who individually or jointly with others seek to promote, protect and implement human rights and fundamental freedoms at local, national, regional and/or international levels.	1	2	3	4
2.	Human rights defenders recognize the universality of human rights for all without any distinctions.	1	2	3	4
3.	Human rights defenders protect human rights by peaceful means only.	1	2	3	4
4.	Human rights defenders work with all human rights violations, including mass executions, tortures, arbitrary arrests and detentions, discrimination, employment, access to health care, toxic wastes and their impact on the environment.	1	2	3	4
5.	Human rights defenders protect the rights of any groups, including the rights of women, children, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as the rights of national, linguistic, and sexual minorities.	1	2	3	4
6.	Human rights defenders, in exceptional circumstances, may allow withdrawal of certain human rights to certain individuals or population groups (terrorists, pedophiles, etc.).	1	2	3	4

12. Do you consider necessary to add any important characteristics of human rights defenders, from your point of view?

1. Yes (specify, please): _____
2. No

13. If you were referred to with a proposal to join the campaign to protect the rights of following groups, what would you do? (please, give 1 answer in each line):

		I would not stand up for them	I would help, but not publicly	I would stand up to protect their rights	I wouldn't know
1.	Women	1	2	3	4
2.	National minorities	1	2	3	4
3.	Muslim emigrants	1	2	3	4
4.	Refugees	1	2	3	4
5.	Baptists, Evangelicals	1	2	3	4
6.	Representatives of LGBT community	1	2	3	4
7.	Persons with disabilities	1	2	3	4
8.	Prisoners	1	2	3	4
9.	Terrorists whose guilt has been established	1	2	3	4
10.	Political activists	1	2	3	4



14. Do you support the preservation of death penalty in the Republic of Belarus as an exceptional measure of criminal punishment?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I wouldn't know

Let's talk about cooperation in the Belarusian human rights sector:

15. What for, in your opinion, do Belarusian human rights organizations need to cooperate with each other? (please, select no more than 5 answer options):

1. Impact on state policy in the field of human rights
2. Changes in legislation
3. Political changes in Belarus
4. Representing the interests of human rights organizations in the dialogue with the Belarusian authorities
5. Improving the conditions of activity (legal, financial, etc.) for human rights public associations
6. Improving the conditions of activity (legal, financial, etc.) for all civil society organizations
7. Promotion, advocacy, protection of rights and interests of target groups
8. Help to other Belarusian human rights activists/human rights organizations in crisis situations
9. Implementation of joint projects
10. Implementation of joint campaigns to protect human rights
11. Carrying out joint monitorings of human rights violations
12. Adoption of joint statements, appeals
13. Work in the framework of international human rights mechanisms
14. Other (specify, please): _____
15. Human rights organizations do not need cooperation

16. Please, specify what, in your opinion, is most conducive to cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations? (please, select no more than 5 answer options, which are the most important factors):

1. Mutual trust between the sector organizations
2. High level of awareness about each other's activities
3. Presence of the coordination platform
4. Presence of common problems
5. Presence of leading organizations who are ready to take responsibility for joint actions
6. Presence of free resources inside the organizations (time, money, personnel, etc.)
7. Absence of the grounds for competition between organizations
8. Positive experience of previous cooperation
9. Coincidence of strategic goals of different organizations
10. Good personal relations between leaders and activists from different organizations
11. Other (specify, please): _____
12. Nothing promotes cooperation
13. I wouldn't know

17. Please, specify how many examples of joint actions of human rights organizations over the last 3 years you can recall?

- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------------|
| 1. None | 3. 3-5 | 5. More than 10 |
| 2. 1-2 | 4. 6-10 | |

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

18. Please, name the 5 most successful examples of cooperation between human rights organizations over the last 5 years (joint actions, campaigns, projects, etc.):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. I can not recall
7. There were no such examples

19. Please, rate the success of cooperation between human rights organizations in general, on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" is "Isn't successful at all" and "10" is "Very successful":

Isn't successful at all									Very successful	I wouldn't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0

20. Please, specify protection of what kind of human rights in Belarus requires joint efforts of human rights defenders to the greatest degree? (please, select no more than 3 answer options):

1. The right to life
2. Prohibition of the death penalty in peacetime
3. Prohibition of the death penalty in time of war
4. Freedom from torture and ill-treatment
5. Freedom from slavery and prohibition of trade in people
6. The right to liberty and security of person (the right to protection from arbitrary arrest)
7. The right to a fair trial (the right to access to justice, procedural law, the right to counsel and legal aid, the right to conduct the process in his/her own language or with an interpreter, the right to execution of court decisions, etc.)
8. No punishment without law
9. Respect for private and family life
10. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
11. Freedom of expression and access to information
12. Freedom of assembly and association
13. The right to marriage and equality in marriage
14. The right to an effective remedy against violations of rights
15. Prohibition of discrimination on any grounds
16. Ownership
17. The right to education
18. The right to free elections
19. Prohibition of imprisonment for debt
20. Freedom of movement and freedom to choose residence
21. The prohibition of deportation of nationals from the country
22. The prohibition of collective expulsion of foreigners
23. The right to housing
24. The right to work and the right to just and favorable working conditions
25. The right to form trade unions
26. The right to social security
27. The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for him-/herself and his/her family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions
28. The human right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
29. The right to peace
30. The right to development



- 31. The right to a healthy environment
- 32. The right to communicate
- 33. Other (*specify, please*): _____
- 34. None of the abovementioned does requires joint efforts of human rights defenders
- 35. I wouldn't know

21. Please, specify what scopes/topics of activities, in your opinion, are strategically important for the Belarusian human rights defenders in the short term (3-5 years)? (name, please, no more than 3 scopes/topics):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. I can not specify

22. In your opinion, what scopes/topics of activities are strategically important for Belarusian human rights defenders in the long term (5-10 years)? (name, please, no more than 3 scopes/topics):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. I wouldn't know

23. Please, rate the intensity and the experience of cooperation of your organization with each of the organizations, listed below, in the past 3 years (if you consider it necessary, you can specify in the free lines up to 3 Belarusian human rights organizations, which are not listed):

	Organization	Intensity of cooperation			Cooperation experience		
		Never cooperated	Sometimes cooperated	Frequently cooperated	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Assembly of NGOs	1	2	3	A	B	C
2.	Association of Environmental NGOs of Belarus "Green Alliance"	1	2	3	A	B	C
3.	Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House	1	2	3	A	B	C
4.	Belarusian Human Rights Center "Identity"	1	2	3	A	B	C
5.	Belarusian Trade Union of Workers of Radio Electronic Industry (REP Trade Union)	1	2	3	A	B	C
6.	Center for Development of Students' Initiatives	1	2	3	A	B	C
7.	Civil Campaign "For Alternative Civil Service in Belarus"/The Educational Institution "Conscript's Rights Office"	1	2	3	A	B	C
8.	Civil Initiative "Against Lawlessness in the Courts and Prosecutor's Office"	1	2	3	A	B	C
9.	Committee for the Protection of the Repressed "Solidarnasc"	1	2	3	A	B	C
10.	Educational and Human Rights Institution "Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities"	1	2	3	A	B	C
11.	Educational and Social Public Association "Zvyano"	1	2	3	A	B	C
12.	Educational Institution "Legal Transformation Center" (Lawtrend)	1	2	3	A	B	C
13.	Expert-Legal Association "Initiative FORB" (previously, The Initiative "For Freedom of Religion")	1	2	3	A	B	C

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

14.	Grodno Regional Public Association of Young Scientists "VIT"	1	2	3	A	B	C
15.	Homel Centre for Strategic Litigation	1	2	3	A	B	C
16.	Human Rights Alliance	1	2	3	A	B	C
17.	Human Rights Center "Legal Assistance to Population"	1	2	3	A	B	C
18.	Human Rights Center "Viasna"	1	2	3	A	B	C
19.	Human Rights Initiative "Human Constanta"	1	2	3	A	B	C
20.	Private Information and Consulting Institution "Region 119" (previously, The Human Rights Institution "Platform Innovation")	1	2	3	A	B	C
21.	Public Association "Belarusian Association of Journalists"	1	2	3	A	B	C
22.	Public Association "Center for Human Rights"	1	2	3	A	B	C
23.	Public Association "Francysk Skaryna Belarusian Language Society"	1	2	3	A	B	C
24.	Public Association "Mogilev Human Rights Center"	1	2	3	A	B	C
25.	Public Institution "Belarusian Documentation Center"	1	2	3	A	B	C
26.	Public Institution "League for Democracy Development "Civil Verdict"	1	2	3	A	B	C
27.	Republican Human Rights Public Association "Belarusian Helsinki Committee"	1	2	3	A	B	C
28.	Republican Public Association "Belarusian PEN Centre"	1	2	3	A	B	C
29.	Republican Public Association "Legal Initiative"	1	2	3	A	B	C
30.	The group of relatives of convicted persons, victims of lawlessness in the courts and prosecutor's office	1	2	3	A	B	C
31.	Trade Union Association "Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions"	1	2	3	A	B	C
32.	Youth Human Rights Group — Belarus	1	2	3	A	B	C
33.	Youth Trade Union Group "Students' Council"	1	2	3	A	B	C
34.	Another human rights organization 1 (<i>specify, please</i>): _____	1	2	3	A	B	C
35.	Another human rights organization 2 (<i>specify, please</i>): _____	1	2	3	A	B	C
36.	Another human rights organization 3 (<i>specify, please</i>): _____	1	2	3	A	B	C

24. Are there any organizations inside the Belarusian human rights sector which your organization would not cooperate with in any circumstances?

1. Yes (*specify them, please*): _____
2. No
3. I wouldn't know

25. What are the problems and obstacles, in your opinion, that impede cooperation of human rights organizations to the greatest degree? (*please, select no more than 5 options, which are the most important, in your opinion*):

1. Engrossment in affairs of one's own organization
2. Neglecting by well-known human rights organizations of their lesser-known counterparts' interests
3. Competition among the organizations for foreign funding
4. Negative attitude of the state to human rights organizations
5. Negative personal relationships between leaders and activists of different organizations
6. Negative experience of past cooperation
7. Discrepancy of the strategic goals of different organizations
8. Lack of qualified personnel
9. In the sector, there are no organizations-leaders recognized by all
10. Absence of a coordination platform
11. Absence of unifying ideas for cooperation



12. Absence of the meaningful dialogue between the government and human rights defenders
13. Absence of free time of leaders and employees
14. Lack of awareness of human rights organizations about each other's activities
15. Difference in interests of registered and unregistered organizations
16. Rivalry for leadership in the sector
17. Other (*specify, please*): _____
18. Nothing impedes cooperation
19. I wouldn't know

26. Do you visit activities of other human rights organizations?

1. Yes
2. No

27. Please, indicate how long ago did you last visit activities of other human rights organizations?

1. Less than 3 months ago
2. 3-6 months ago
3. 7-12 months ago
4. More than 1 year ago
5. Never attended
6. I do not remember

28. Please, specify what kinds of assistance are you ready to provide to your colleagues inside the Belarusian human rights sector in case of getting them into a difficult situation (conflicts with the state, pressure on human rights activists, discrimination due to human rights activities, etc.)? (*please, select no more than 5 answer options*):

1. Humanitarian aid (transfers to prisons, etc.)
2. Informal contacts and attempts to agree with the authorities
3. Organization of support campaigns
4. Pickets and other street protests
5. Signing collective appeals in defense of
6. Assistance to find and pay for a lawyer
7. Engaging influential international entities
8. Making public statements in the media in defense of
9. Fundraising to support victims
10. Financial assistance to families
11. Legal aid
12. Other (*specify, please*): _____
13. I'm not ready to provide any assistance

29. Do you think that Belarusian human rights organizations need a common strategy of developing human rights activities in Belarus?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I wouldn't know

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

30. In your opinion, what issues to date need to be discussed within the human rights community, in order to develop a common position or coordinate actions?

1. Problems of cooperation between organizations (*specify, please*): _____
2. Problems in the work of human rights defenders (*specify, please*): _____
3. Vexed human rights questions (*specify, please*): _____
4. Other (*specify, please*): _____
5. There are no issues that require common discussion
6. I wouldn't know

Let's talk about relationships between human rights defenders and political actors (political parties, government):

31. Do you cooperate personally with political parties?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not want to answer

32. Have you ever been, in a period of your human rights activity, a member of an initiative group of political parties in elections?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not want to answer

33. Please, specify what forms of cooperation with political parties/political structures you consider theoretically acceptable for human rights defenders? (*please, mark all possible options*):

1. Public support for a political party
2. Being a member of a human rights organization and a political party at the same time
3. Involvement of political parties as partners in human rights campaigns
4. Realization of projects ordered or initiated by a political subject
5. Requirements and/or expression of support for the application of methods of political and/or economic pressure by foreign/national political actors (imposition of sanctions against certain persons and entities)
6. Other (*specify, please*): _____
7. None of the forms of cooperation is acceptable
8. I wouldn't know

34. What forms of participation in election campaigns do you consider acceptable for human rights defenders? (*please, mark all possible options*):

1. As a candidate
2. As a member of an initiative group
3. As an agitator for a particular candidate
4. As an independent observer, observer from a non-governmental organization
5. As an observer from a political party
6. Other (*specify, please*): _____
7. None of the forms of participation in elections is acceptable
8. I wouldn't know



35. Do you consider acceptable human rights cooperation with the Belarusian authorities?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I wouldn't know

36. Please evaluate the acceptability of appliance by Belarusian human rights defenders of each of these forms of cooperation with the Belarusian authorities (please, give 1 answer in each line):

	Forms of cooperation	Unacceptable under no circumstances	Sometimes yes, sometimes no, depending on situation	Acceptable in all situations	I wouldn't know
1.	Informal negotiations with officials	1	2	3	4
2.	Official correspondence	1	2	3	4
3.	Participation in public hearings organized by the government	1	2	3	4
4.	Participation in public hearings which representatives of the authorities take part in	1	2	3	4
5.	Participation in public councils under government bodies	1	2	3	4
6.	Joint participation in platforms initiated by a third party (eg, international, inter-governmental organizations)	1	2	3	4
7.	Participation in collection of legislation perfection proposals, announced by the authorities	1	2	3	4
8.	Implementation of projects on the initiative of the authorities	1	2	3	4
9.	Other (specify, please): _____	1	2	3	4

37. Do you consider it possible for your organization to cooperate with the Belarusian authorities in the coming year? (please, select only 1 answer option):

- 1. Such cooperation is impossible
- 2. Such cooperation will only be possible when changing the attitude of the Belarusian authorities
- 3. Such cooperation will only be possible only in certain cases, issues
- 4. Such cooperation will be possible without additional conditions
- 5. Such cooperation will not only be possible, but it is actually being realized
- 6. I wouldn't know

38. If you consider it possible to cooperate with the authorities, what kind of results do you want to achieve in the course of this cooperation in the coming years? (mark, please, no more than 3 options):

- 1. Improvement of situation of individuals whose rights have been violated
- 2. Improvement of situation for individual target groups
- 3. Improvement of situation in some human rights areas
- 4. To change norms of the legislation
- 5. To change the law enforcement practice
- 6. System changes in the situation with human rights in the country
- 7. Other (specify, please): _____
- 8. I wouldn't know
- 9. I consider such cooperation impossible

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

Let's talk about the ethics of a human rights defender and ethical self-regulation of the human rights community:

39. Do you think that the Belarusian human rights community needs ethical self-regulation (by analogy with the code of professional ethics)?

1. Yes (→ go to question 40)
2. No (→ go to question 42)
3. I wouldn't know (→ go to question 42)

40. Do you consider it necessary to introduce inside the human rights community the ethical control mechanisms?

1. Yes (→ go to question 41)
2. No (→ go to question 42)
3. I wouldn't know (→ go to question 42)

41. What form of the ethical control mechanisms do you consider the most appropriate? (please, select only 1 answer option):

1. A representative (expert) on ethics
2. A special, elected by the community, collective body (committee, group, etc.)
3. Joint solutions of disputable issues by the whole community (in the form of e-voting, at the Congress, Forum of the organizations, etc.)
4. All those who accepted the established principles of ethical self-regulation, will endeavor to adhere to them in their activities on their free will
5. Other (specify, please): _____
6. I wouldn't know

42. What mechanism, in your opinion, is the most preferred for settlement of conflicts between human rights organizations, arising in connection with the human rights ethics' issues? (please, select only 1 answer option):

1. Appeal to formal judicial structures
2. Appeal to the arbitration court
3. Appeal to an intermediary or mediator, authoritative for all conflicting parties
4. Appeal to the human rights community (analysis of conflict issues at the Congress, Forum of the organizations, etc.)
5. Other (specify, please): _____
6. I wouldn't know

43. What mechanism, in your opinion, is the most preferred for settlement of conflicts between separate human rights defenders, arising in connection with the human rights ethics' issues? (please, select only 1 answer option):

1. Appeal to formal judicial structures
2. Appeal to the arbitration court
3. Appeal to an intermediary or mediator, authoritative for all conflicting parties
4. Appeal to the human rights community (analysis of conflict issues at the Congress, Forum of the organizations, etc.)
5. Other (specify, please): _____
6. I wouldn't know

44. How would you behave if you knew that a member of your organization had used significant financial assets of your organization for his/her own needs? (please, select only 1 answer option):

1. I'll sue him/her
2. I'll initiate a public hearing
3. I'll publicly bring up the question of expelling this person before the authorized body of the organization



4. I'll inform colleagues without the knowledge of this person
5. I will not make this information public, but I will push for removing this person from office or even expelling from the organization
6. I will talk face to face about the inadmissibility of such actions
7. I will do nothing
8. Other (*specify, please*): _____
9. I do not know how I would behave

45. Would you cooperate with another organization if you knew that it used grant means not for the purpose intended (in fictitious purposes, for simulation activities)? (*please, select only 1 answer option*):

1. Yes
2. Probably, it depends on a situation
3. No
4. I wouldn't know

46. Is it admissible for a human rights organization to use illegal methods of work, e.g. bribes, tampering, purchase of confidential state information, etc.? (*please, select only 1 answer option*):

1. Yes, it is
2. Sometimes, it depends on a situation, for example, if it is the only way to achieve objectives in view
3. No, it isn't
4. I wouldn't know

47. Is it admissible for a human rights organization to disseminate deliberately misleading information, if, in its opinion, it can lead to positive results? (*please, select only 1 answer option*):

1. Yes, it is
2. Sometimes, it depends on the situation, for example, if it is the only way to achieve objectives in view
3. No, it isn't
4. I wouldn't know

48. How would you behave if an employee of your organization or someone from your colleagues inside the human rights sector insulted anyone in your presence, because of his/her sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc. accessories? (*please, select only 1 answer option*):

1. I would demand to avoid using abusive language, because it is unacceptable for a human rights defender
2. I would demand to avoid using abusive language, because I demand it from everyone
3. I wouldn't undertake anything
4. Other (*specify, please*): _____

Let's talk about your organization and its activities:

49. Is your organization registered?

1. Yes, in the Republic of Belarus
2. Yes, abroad (*please, specify in which country*): _____
3. It does not have registration
4. I do not know

Belarusian human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusian human rights organizations

Research report

50. What is legal form of your organization? (please, select only 1 answer option):

1. Public Association
2. Foundation
3. Establishment
4. Union, Association
5. Other (specify, please): _____
6. Unregistered
7. I wouldn't know

51. How long has your organization existed?

1. Less than 3 years
2. 3-5 years
3. 6-10 years
4. More than 10 years
5. I wouldn't know

52. If your organization is a member one, how many members of your organization there are at present?

1. Please, specify the number (exactly or approximately): _____
2. I do not know
3. I do not want to answer
4. The organization is not member one

53. How many regularly paid employees there are in your organization at the moment (part-time job, and more)?

1. Please, specify the number (exactly or approximately): _____
2. I wouldn't know

54. How many volunteers there are in your organization at present?

1. Please, specify the number (exactly or approximately): _____
2. I wouldn't know

55. Please, indicate who mostly makes each of the following decisions in your organization? (please, give 1 answer in each line):

		Responsible employee	The head	The Board	General Assembly	Auditing body	Nobody	I don't know
1.	Project submission	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Adoption of a public statement on behalf of the organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Decision on the protection of a client	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Approval of the project/organization's budget	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Hiring a new employee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Delegating of an employee on the Congress/Forum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Project cooperation with other organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Strategic cooperation, partnership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



56. Please, indicate at what levels does your organization undertake its activities, regardless of the formal level of organization, prescribed in the regulations? (please, mark all possible options):

1. International
2. National/Republican
3. Minsk
4. Regional center(-s)
5. District center(-s)
6. Region(-s)
7. District(-s)
8. City(-ies) of regional subordination
9. Countryside
10. I do not know

57. Please, indicate which of the main fundamental human rights and freedoms are within the scope of your organization? (please, mark all possible options):

1. The right to life
2. Prohibition of the death penalty in peacetime
3. Prohibition of the death penalty in time of war
4. Freedom from torture and ill-treatment
5. Freedom from slavery and prohibition of trade in people
6. The right to liberty and security of person (the right to protection from arbitrary arrest)
7. The right to a fair trial (the right to access to justice, procedural law, the right to counsel and legal aid, the right to conduct the process in his/her own language or with an interpreter, the right to execution of court decisions, etc.)
8. No punishment without law
9. Respect for private and family life
10. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
11. Freedom of expression and access to information
12. Freedom of assembly and association
13. The right to marriage and equality in marriage
14. The right to an effective remedy against violations of rights
15. Prohibition of discrimination on any grounds
16. Ownership
17. The right to education
18. The right to free elections
19. Prohibition of imprisonment for debt
20. Freedom of movement and freedom to choose residence
21. The prohibition of deportation of nationals from the country
22. The prohibition of collective expulsion of foreigners
23. The right to housing
24. The right to work and the right to just and favorable working conditions
25. The right to form trade unions
26. The right to social security
27. The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for him-/herself and his/her family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions
28. The human right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
29. The right to peace
30. The right to development
31. The right to a healthy environment
32. The right to communicate
33. Other (specify, please): _____

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

58. Specify, please, who are the main target groups/clients/beneficiaries of your organization? (please, mark all possible options):

1. Refugees
2. Servicemen, veterans of the armed forces and law enforcement bodies, war veterans, former prisoners of concentration camps
3. Children
4. Women
5. LGBT-communities
6. People in difficult situations
7. Persons with disabilities
8. Local and central authorities
9. Youth
10. National minorities
11. Social and political activists
12. Society/population on the whole
13. Civil society organizations
14. Elderly people
15. Human rights defenders
16. Entrepreneurs and business
17. Professional and creative communities
18. Religious communities
19. Other (*specify, please*): _____
20. I do not know

59. Please name the 3 main sources of funding of your organization over the past three years (in order of significance for the organization):

		I st place	II nd place	III rd place
1.	Foreign gratuitous aid, international technical assistance, grants	1	2	3
2.	Membership fees	1	2	3
3.	State funding	1	2	3
4.	Sponsorship of Belarusan economic entities	1	2	3
5.	Voluntary donations of citizens	1	2	3
6.	Business activities, provision of services	1	2	3
7.	Other (<i>specify, please</i>): _____	1	2	3

60. Please, indicate to what extent do the following factors determine the activities/projects of your organization? (please, give 1 answer in each line):

		Not in the least	To a small extent	To a great extent	To the utmost	I wouldn't know
1.	Needs of the target group	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The strategy of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Priorities of donor programs	1	2	3	4	5
4.	A strategy adopted by a group of organizations, a coalition or an umbrella structure	1	2	3	4	5
5.	A strategy adopted by the Belarusan state authorities	1	2	3	4	5
6.	A strategy adopted on international level	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Other (<i>specify, please</i>): _____	1	2	3	4	5



61. Please, answer what tools does your organization use to achieve its goals? (please, mark all possible options):

1. Legal advice (consultation)
2. Legal aid (protection of rights through representation in authorities)
3. Legal aid (in court litigations)
4. Legal aid in international bodies
5. Collection of information on human rights violations
6. Documentation of facts of human rights violations
7. Investigation of facts of human rights violations
8. Monitoring of human rights violations
9. Preparation of general or thematic presentations, reports on human rights violations
10. Dissemination of information (including through the media, the Internet) about human rights violations and ways of protection
11. Educational and awareness-raising human rights activities (for citizens, for activists, for public associations, and others.)
12. Holding public events, round tables, discussions
13. Holding local or national human rights campaigns
14. Organization of actions (picketing, collecting signatures, performances, etc.) in support of specific victims, or to protect human rights in general
15. Providing assistance to activists or political prisoners
16. Assistance or support to other human rights defenders or human rights organizations
17. Assistance to other public organizations
18. Participation in public, consultative and expert councils under government bodies
19. Development of drafts of normative documents
20. Cooperation with other non-human rights organizations
21. Problem analysis and preparation of analytical documents, studies, reports
22. Monitoring the implementation of the authorities' decisions
23. Provision of services
24. Financial help to victims of human rights violations, their families
25. Medical and psychological help to victims of human rights violations, their families
26. Coordinating activities of human rights defenders
27. Other (*specify, please*): _____
28. I wouldn't know

62. Please, rate the intensity of your organization's cooperation with the following institutions/organizations on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "Not cooperating at all", and "10" — "Very closely cooperating"? (please, give 1 answer in each line):

		Not cooperating at all										Very closely cooperating
1.	The Government, ministries, national agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2.	Administration of the President	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3.	The Parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4.	Local government and self-government authorities of Minsk city and/or regional levels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5.	Local government and self-government authorities of rural, district or city level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6.	Other Belarusian civil society organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7.	Other civil society organizations outside the country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8.	International organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9.	State authorities of other countries (parliaments, governments, ministries, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

10.	Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11.	State institutions and budget organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12.	State enterprises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13.	Private commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

63. Please, rate the success of your organization's cooperation with the following institutions/organizations on a scale from 1 to 10, where "10" means "Very successful" and "1" — "No success at all" (please, give 1 answer in each line. In case your organization does not cooperate with any of the entities listed below, choose "0" — "Not cooperating"):

		Very successful									No success at all	Not cooperating at all
1.	The Government, ministries, national agencies	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Administration of the President	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	The Parliament	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Local government and self-government authorities of Minsk city and/or regional levels	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Local government and self-government authorities of rural, district or city level	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Other Belarusan civil society organizations	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Other civil society organizations outside the country	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	International organizations	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	State authorities of other countries (parliaments, governments, ministries etc)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	Media	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	State institutions and budget organizations	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	State enterprises	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
13.	Private commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

64. Please, rate the degree of risk for your organization in consequence of cooperation with the following institutions/organizations on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "Not risky at all" and "10" — "Very risky" (please, give 1 answer in each line):

		Not risky at all									Very risky
1.	The Government, ministries, national agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	Administration of the President	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.	The Parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	Local government and self-government authorities of Minsk city and/or regional levels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



5.	Local government and self-government authorities of rural, district or city level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6.	Other Belarusian civil society organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7.	Other civil society organizations outside the country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8.	International organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9.	State authorities of other countries (parliaments, governments, ministries etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10.	Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11.	State institutions and budget organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12.	State enterprises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13.	Private commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

65. Please, specify the 3 main problems faced by your organization:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

66. Please, specify the 3 major achievements of your organization over the past 3 years:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

67. Please, specify the 3 main achievements of civil society organizations in Belarus over the last 3 years:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please, tell how the work with public opinion is organized in your organization:

68. Do you consider it necessary to inform the Belarusian society about your organization's activity?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I wouldn't know

69. Please, specify what ways of informing the society about your organization's activity you use? (please, mark all possible options):

1. Public reports about the activities
2. Newsletters, mass mailing
3. Interviews and articles in the media
4. Regular updating of information on the organization's website
5. Representation in social networks
6. Meetings with citizens
7. Presentations at civil society exhibitions, fairs
8. Other (specify, please): _____
9. We do not inform the public about our activities
10. I wouldn't know

Belarusan human rights defenders' view on human rights activity and questions of cooperation between Belarusan human rights organizations

Research report

70. If your organization does not publish public reports on its activities, for what reason? (please, choose the main reason):

1. We don't have enough time and resources for this work
2. We can not tell about everything that we do because of the danger of reprisals
3. There is no such need, all the information is on our website and in the media
4. We do not consider it necessary to specifically inform anyone about our activities
5. Other (*specify, please*): _____
6. I'm not aware of these reasons
7. We publish public reports on our activities

Please, tell about the strategic development of your organization:

71. Formulate, please, the mission/the primary aim of your organization activity: _____

72. Have there any sessions on strategic planning been held in your organization, and when was held the last one?

1. Yes, the last session was held this year (in 2016)
2. Yes, the last session was held last year (in 2015)
3. Yes, the last session was held the year before (in 2014)
4. Yes, the last session was held before 2014
5. Such sessions were not held
6. I wouldn't know

73. Please, tell whether your organization has the strategic plan of activity?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

74. If there is a strategic plan, does your organization succeed to follow it in its activities, from your point of view?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I wouldn't know
4. There is no strategic plan

75. Does your organization hold the internal evaluation of the activities effectiveness?

1. Yes, the activities assessment is carried out regularly
2. Yes, the activities assessment is carried out, but not regularly
3. No
4. I do not know

76. Can you specify the 3 priorities in your organization's activity for the next 3 years?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. I can not tell



77. Does your organization need additional educational activities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

78. If you think that your organization needs educational activities, then please select topics that interest you the most
(please, select no more than 5 answer options):

1. Monitoring human rights violations
2. Documenting human rights violations
3. Legal aid organization (consultations), reception work
4. Information security
5. Carrying out investigations of human rights violations
6. Use of national human rights protection mechanisms
7. Use of international human rights protection mechanisms
8. Organizational development
9. Fundraising
10. Project management
11. Strategic planning
12. Trainings on separate human rights *(please, specify what rights):* _____
13. Search for information (in specialized databases, advanced search in Internet, etc.)
14. Other *(specify, please):* _____
15. I wouldn't know
16. My organization does not need educational events

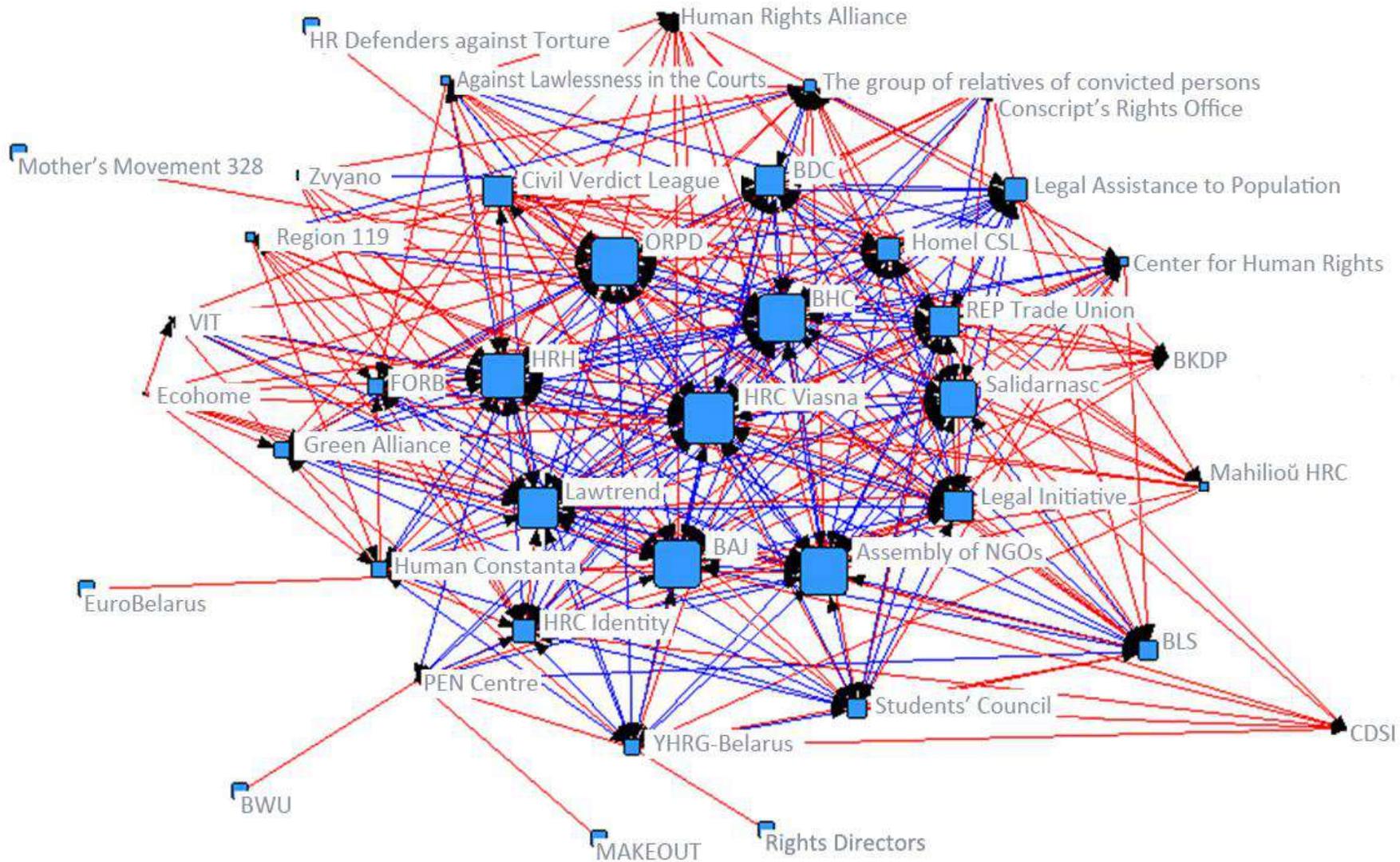
79. If you think that your organization needs educational activities, then please specify the most suitable formats for you
(please, select no more than 3 answer options):

1. Online courses
2. Seminars in Minsk
3. Seminars in regions
4. Workshops abroad
5. Experience exchange with the Belarusan organizations
6. Experience exchange with foreign organizations
7. Educational materials on the topic
8. Other *(specify, please):* _____
9. I wouldn't know
10. My organization does not need educational events

Thank you once again for your participation!

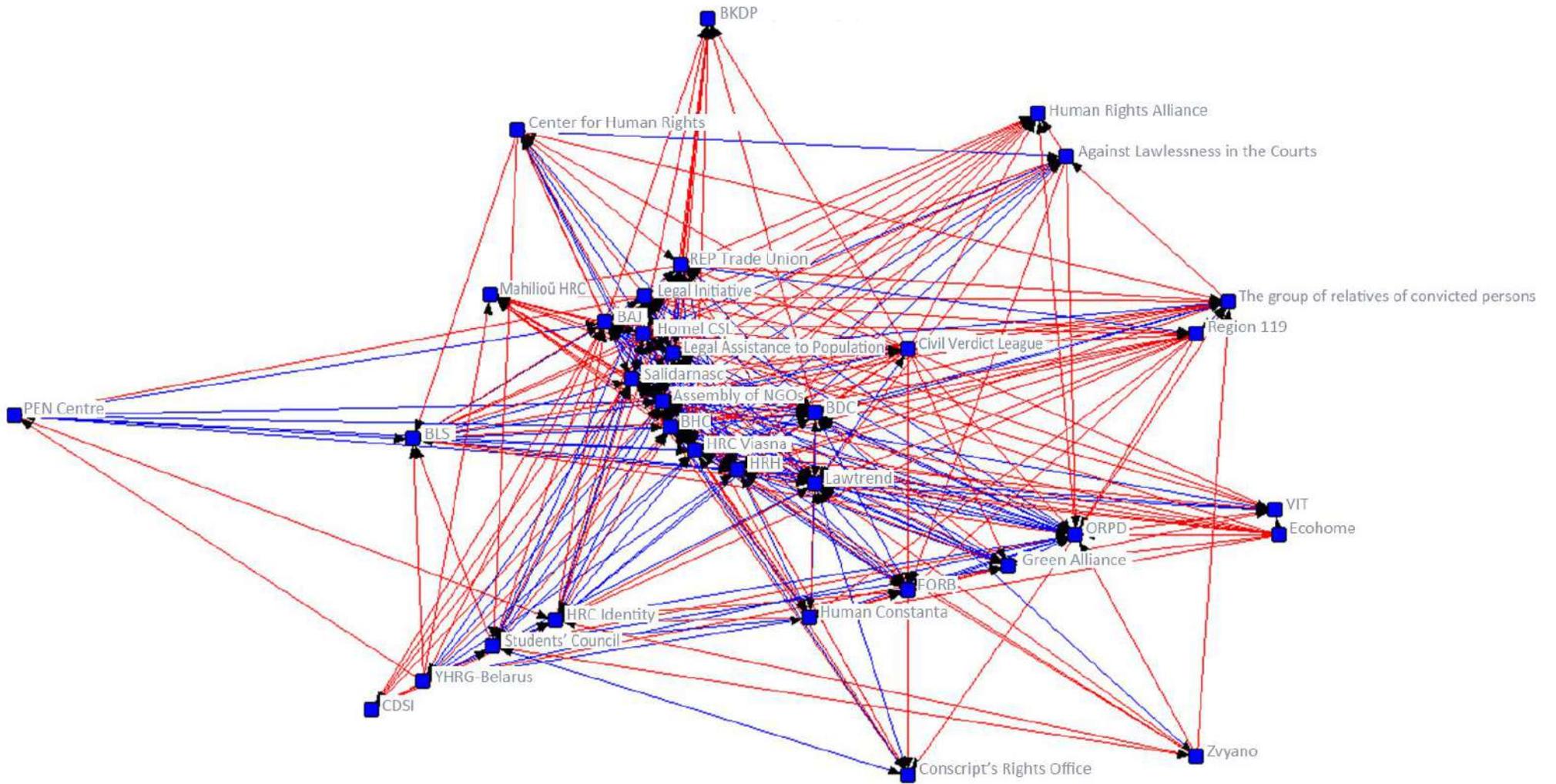
Annex 3. Structure of network interactions in the sector of human rights organizations

Figure 1. The overall picture of network interactions in the sector of human rights defenders organizations*



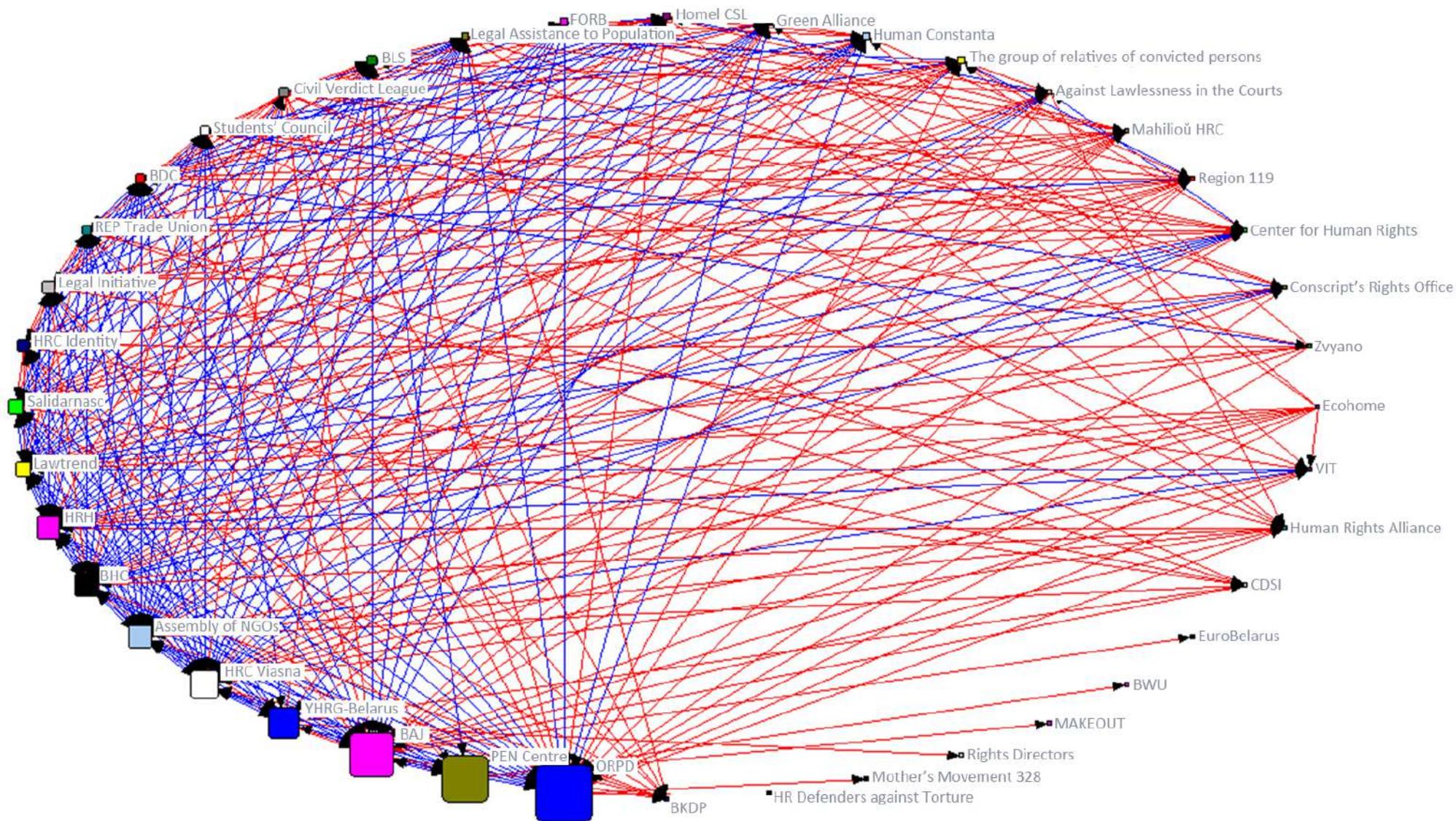
* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic01-en.png>.

Figure 2. Spatial relations between organizations of the network (the “far periphery” organizations are excluded) (*Non-metric multidimensional scaling*)*



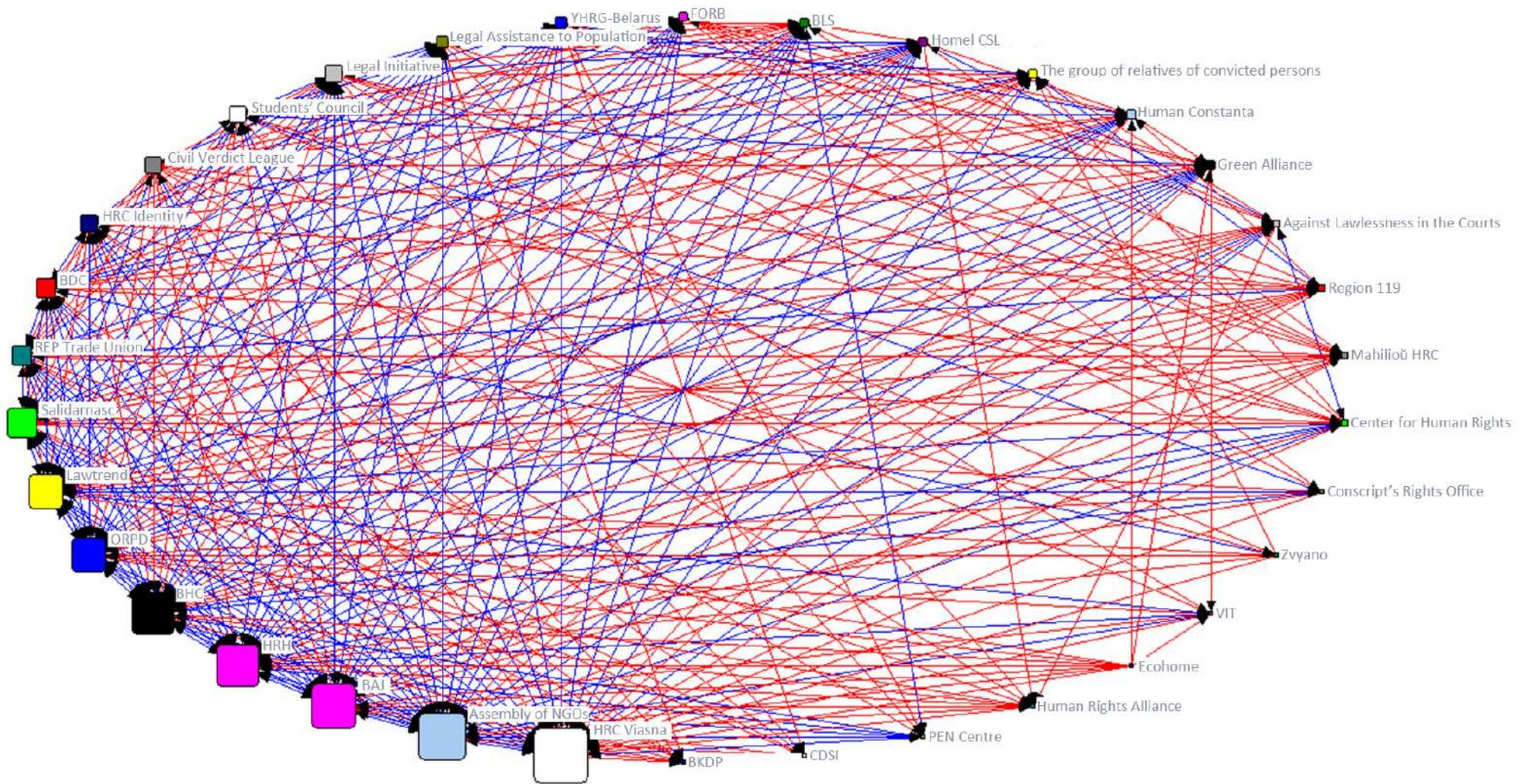
* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic02-en.png>.

Figure 4. Basic communicators and intermediaries in the network: the centrality of a knot as for betweenness (*Betweenness centrality*)*



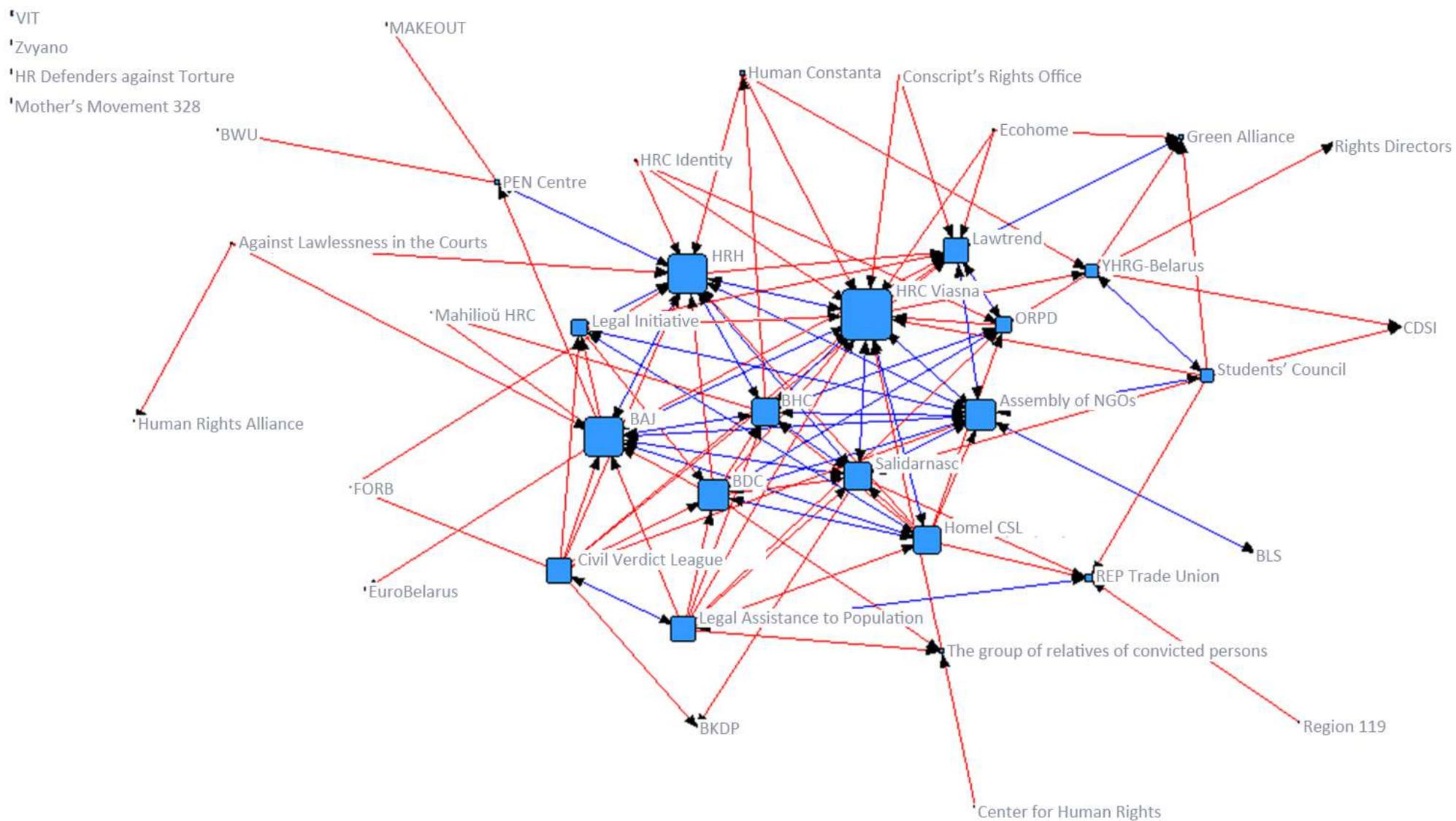
* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic04-en.png>.

Figure 5. The basic communicators and intermediaries in the network (*Betweenness Centrality*), except for the periphery*



* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic05-en.png>.

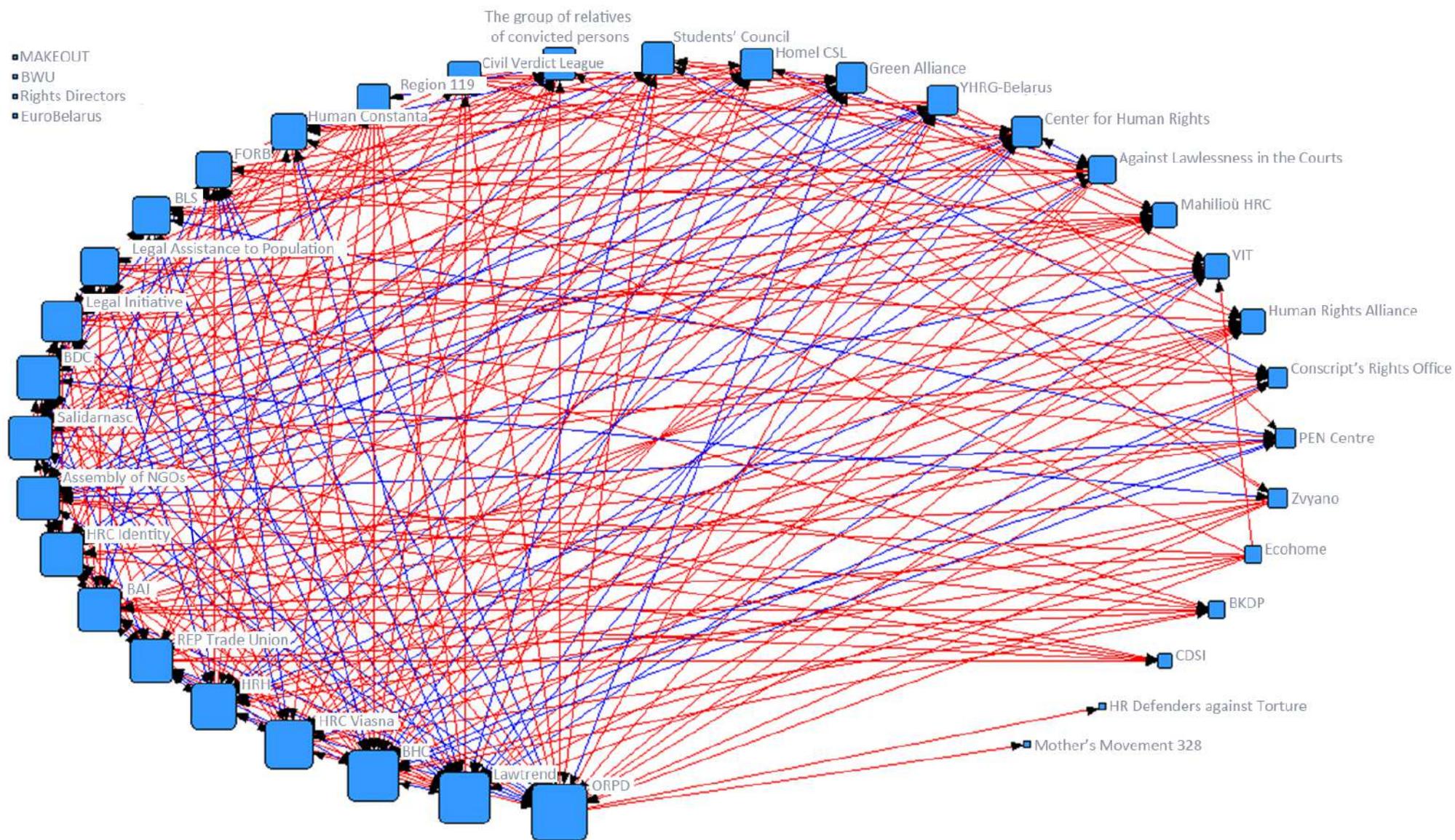
Figure 6. Often cooperated during three years; the knot size shows relative weight in frequent interactions*



* Index of connections 1,5-2,0.

See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic06-en.png>.

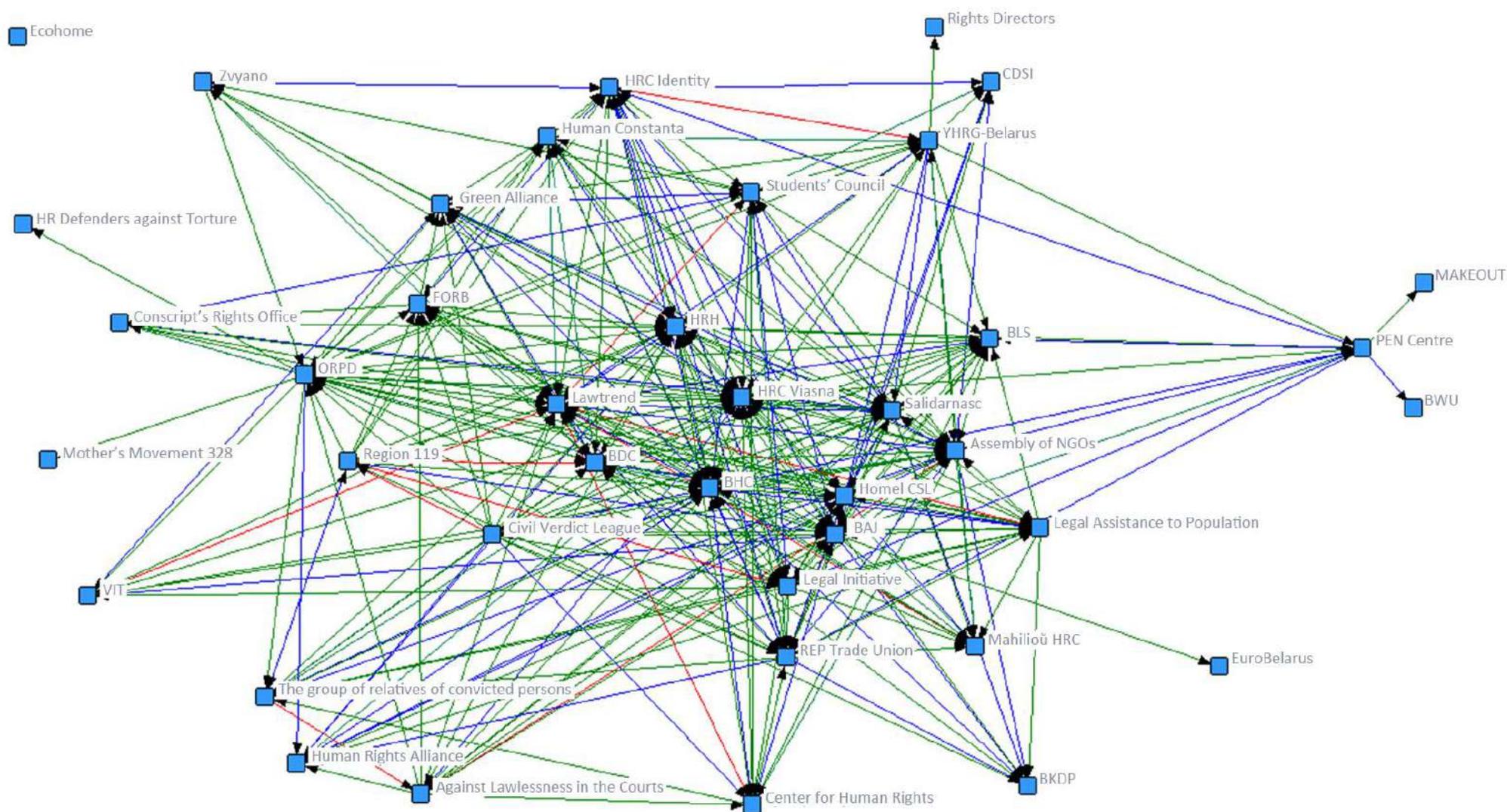
Figure 7. Less frequent interaction during three years*



* Index of connections — 1 and 0,5.

See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic07-en.png>.

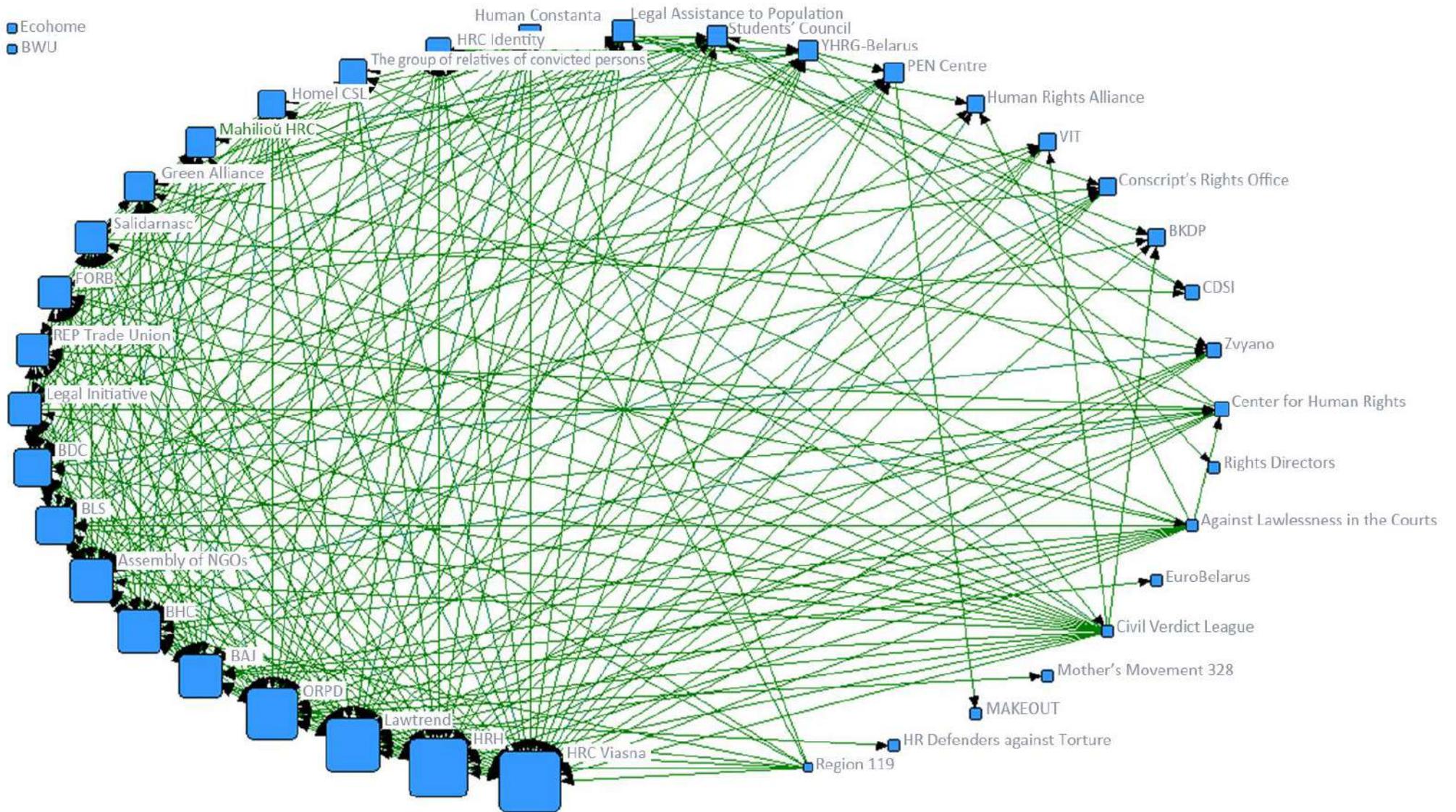
Figure 8. Cooperation experience (all connections): spatial relations between the network organizations (*Non-metric multidimensional scaling*)*



* Green — positive and rather positive interactions; blue — neutral; red — negative and rather negative.

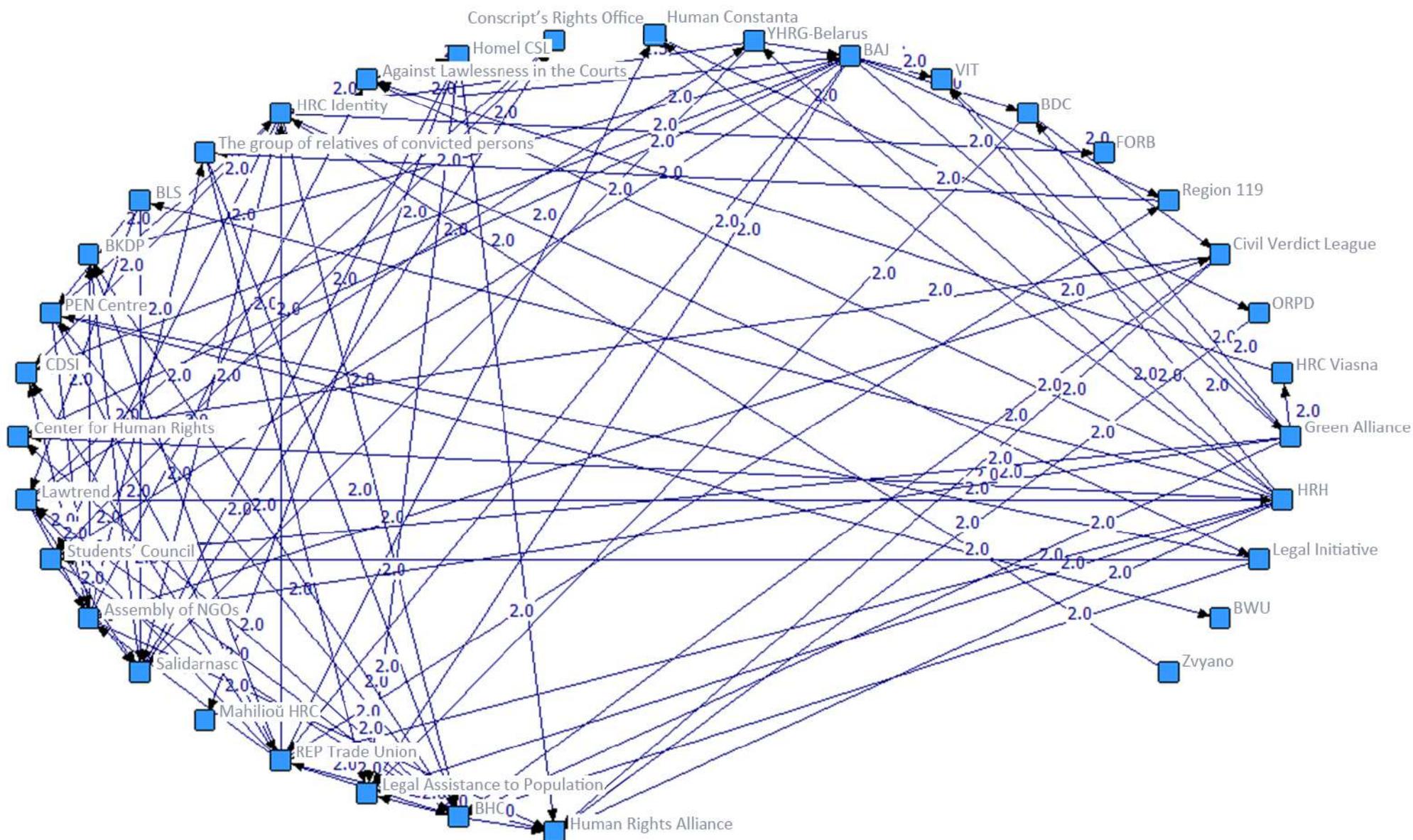
See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic08-en.png>.

Figure 9. Positive and rather positive experience of cooperation: the knot size depends on the number of incoming connections (*Indegree*)*



* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic09-en.png>.

Figure 10. Neutral experience of cooperation: knots are located according to the number of incoming connections (*Indegree*)*



* See the pixel-peepable figure by link: <https://cet.eurobelarus.info/files/userfiles/5/HR/Pic10-en.png>.

**Belarusan human rights defenders' view
on human rights activity and questions of cooperation
between Belarusan human rights organizations**

Research report

The research was initiated by
The Barys Zvozkau Belarussian Human Rights House

Authors: **Alena Zuikova**
Andrei Yahorau
Aksana Shelest

Editor and proof-reader: **Andrei Shutau**

Design: **Andrei Shutau**

The Center for European Transformation (CET) is an independent Belarusan think-tank founded in March 2010. The CET is a member of the EuroBelarus International Consortium.



Center for European Transformation
Minsk, Belarus

cet@eurobelarus.info

cet.eurobelarus.info

+375 29 6185388



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[VKontakte](#)