**TRANSLATION**

This translation contains the essential facts of the document/or excerpt attached herewith.

**Council under the President of the Russian Federation for the Promotion of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights**

**Bulletin № 5 Public Russian-Belarusian human rights commission**

24.02.06

**Public Russian-Belarusian human rights commission of the Presidential Council for the Promotion of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights**

**Persecution of dissent**

Director of the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS) registered in Lithuania, Oleg Manaev received a warning from the Prosecutor General of Belarus. The text of the official warning states that the prosecution claims relate to the information published in some Belarusian media. “According to publications IISEPS that is not registered and is not accredited in the established order in Belarus, held sociological research on the territory of the Republic and informed the public about its’ results, "says the document. In it, in particular, is explained that "in accordance with the provisions of the Council of Ministers of Belarus the conduction of research and publication of the results of opinion polls relating to the results of the referendum, the election of the president, members of parliament and political situation in the country, carried out by legal entities accredited in Commission on Public Opinion Polls of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus". "Thus, the conduct of the IISEPS opinion polls are carried out in violation of the law", - stated in the text of the warning. In addition, "an opinion poll in the period of preparation and holding of presidential elections in Belarus without accreditation in accordance with the law is a violation of election legislation and constitutes an offense under the Code of Administrative Offences of Belarus."

**Oleg Manaev answered questions from the site "Belarusian Partisan":**

-Did you personally receive a warning?

-Yes. The first time I was called in late December last year.

-Did you give any oral or written explanations to investigators?

-The First time I gave the relevant explanations. In particular, I said that we do not act as an organization in the territory of the Republic of Belarus. It operates a group of private persons, and any law does not prohibit that.

Now they say that "public opinion survey during the preparation and holding of presidential elections in the Republic of Belarus without accreditation in accordance with the relevant decision of the Council of Ministers is in direct violation of the election legislation." That is, now I am charged with violation of election legislation.

-Did investigators tell you about a possible punishment?

-According To them, I broke the article 167/3, which entails the imposition of a fine or correctional labor for up to 2 months with a deduction of up to 20% of earnings.

-Did they just warn you or also your employees who work in Belarus?

-When I was summoned for the first time, on December 31, I said that the organization is not valid, there acts a group of scientists of Professor Manaev, which includes me, associate professor Sosnov and a number of political scientists, economists, sociologists - a group of individuals.

Therefore, only I was submitted under claims.

-What are you going to do next?

-I called the senior investigator of the Department for Supervision of legality. I said next: “Before that I gave you some explanations, but now I will not, because I see that you have no legal grounds to make such a warning. You pull the ears ruling Council of Ministers, since it regulates the activities of legal entities and not private. And I think that you yourself violate the law, not oversee it. We will appeal your actions to the Attorney General and, of course, will continue its activities as individuals.

-How do you feel before the elections - would the government will take some steps to completely paralyze the work of the independent sociologists?

-I do not doubt it. Another thing - whether they can do it?

-In Your opinion, will you be able to get some objective, not only the official results of the elections?

-I can only say that we will do everything to get real results.

-A series of politicians, including Rushailo, said that «exit-poll» does not reflect the real picture, because it’s not needed. In your opinion, does this mean that the authorities will try to prevent it from carrying out the elections in March?

-Rushailo’s statement is only aimed at independent sociological services. There is no doubt that the situation in Belarus again last parliamentary elections: the light released pseudo-independent organizations that will carry out their research.

\* The Supreme Court of Belarus on January 24th suspended the activities of the public association "Belarusian think tanks" (BFM) for three months.

As the chairman of the Coordinating Council of BFM Oleg Manaev stated, the reason for the suspension of the activities of the public association was "standard procedure": the Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court referred to the fact that the BFM does not have a legal address, as registered with the housing.

Oleg Manaev said that there are two reasons for the suspension of activities of a public association: "The first - in the case of the closure of BFM government unleashes the people who worked there. That is, they still are not going anywhere, just to be working illegally. And it allows them to do whatever they see fit, only on its own behalf and not on behalf of BFM. The second reason - the power to close unprofitable structure having a weight in the West, on the eve of elections and the visit of the OSCE mission in Belarus". According to O. Manaev, the Supreme Court decision is a violation of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the right to freedom of association. "We have no doubt that after the elections the authorities would liquidate BFM. Therefore, we will not even try to appeal the decision of the court ", - he said.