

The year 2019 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, the fundamental law of the state. It was adopted on March 15, 1994 at the 13th session of the Belarusian Supreme Council. It is the first Constitution in the history of sovereign Belarus and the fifth Constitution of Belarus adopted after the October Revolution in 1917.

According to the Constitution, the people are the only source of power and bearers of sovereignty in Belarus (Article 3). Fulfilling their direct right to participate in social and governmental affairs (Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus), the citizens have determined the future path of our state in the national referendums on the main governmental and social issues. The decisions that were adopted in referendums in 1996 and 2004 are reflected in the amendments to the current Constitution.

The Belarusian Constitution guarantees every citizen the rights and freedoms necessary for decent life, constructive work and harmonious development of a person. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus is the quintessence of continuity and experience of the centuries-old historical path of Belarus. It has heralded a new era in the political, social and economic development of the country. The Constitution is based on the inalienable sovereign right of the Belarusian people to develop statehood and be a full-fledged subject of the international relations.

The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus has embodied the world's best legislative practices of the time. And its' no surprise, as one of the first Constitutions of Medieval Europe, the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was adopted on the territory of our country.

The structure of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus represents the system of constitutional norms and consists of the Preamble, main body, final and transitional provisions. It comprises 146 Articles.

The Preamble of the Constitution highlights the main ideas and principles which serve as guidelines for the people and the authorities in the process of state construction and social development. These include the responsibility for the present and future of Belarus; recognizing Belarus a full-fledged subject of the international community; inalienable right to self-determination; reliance on the centuries-old history of development of the Belarusian statehood; assertion of the rights and freedoms of every citizen; maintenance of civic concord and firm foundations of government by the people and the state based on the rule of law.

Section I of the Constitution "Fundamentals of the Constitutional System" describes Belarus as a unitary, democratic, social state based on the rule of law. It ascertains mutual responsibility of the citizen and the state.

Section II "Individual, Society and the State" specifies personal, political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms of citizens; determines obligations of citizens; responsibilities of the state before the society and the individual, the obligation of the state to provide material guarantees and resources necessary for the full exercise of the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Section III “Electoral System. Referendum” formalizes the main principles of the electoral system, introduces the order of holding republican and local referenda.

Section IV “President, Parliament, Government, Court” specifies the status and authorities of the President; the order of formation, membership, purview, forms and methods of activities of government bodies; outlines the structure of the court system and the principles of administering justice in the republic.

Section V “Local Government and Self-Government” determines the bodies to exercise local government and self-government functions as well as their status and authority.

Section VI “Prosecutor’s Office. Committee of State Control” provides for the norms regulating activities of the two government bodies, namely the Prosecutor’s Office and the State Control Committee.

Section VII “Financial and Credit System of the Republic of Belarus” reads that the Republic of Belarus pursues a uniform fiscal, tax, credit and currency policy. The section specifies the procedure for replenishing state budget revenues, the structure of national spending, the procedure for drawing up, approving and implementing budgets and public non-budgetary funds.

Section VIII “Effect of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and Procedure of Its Changing” determines the force and role of the Constitution, formation of the entire legal system taking into account the hierarchy of legal acts, specifies the effect of the Constitution and the procedure of its amending.

Section IX of the Constitution is named “Final and Transitional Provisions”. The last section of the Constitution provides for the legal means to ensure transition to the implementation of the norms which cannot be implemented immediately after the Constitution enters into force. The section also includes the norms highlighting the peculiarities of formation and preservation of the authority of previously established and new state bodies.

On February 21, 2019 the National Library of the Republic of Belarus hosted a solemn event dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus. The representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in our country took part in the event.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Makei, cited a number of provisions of the fundamental law that perpetuate the sovereign right of Belarus to implement domestic and foreign policy independently, defend its’ independence, territorial integrity and constitutional order.

More than 20 foreign diplomats have read extracts from national Constitutions in their native languages, which most clearly embody the norms and principles on which the state system and policies of their countries are based.