

Valiantsin Stefanovich, Belarus

Speaker, Round Table: Europe & Abolition



Mr. Stefanovich is the Vice-Chairman of the Human Rights Centre “Viasna”(<http://spring96.org/en>), one of the last remaining independent human rights organisation in Belarus. Viasna was created in 1996 during mass protest actions of the democratic opposition in Belarus. Viasna was initially a group created to help the arrested rally participants and their families, whom Mr. Stefanovich, a lawyer, has defended since 1998. In addition to researching and monitoring the human rights situation in Belarus, and spreading informational and educational materials on the sphere of human rights, Viasna is engaged in international advocacy with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) of which it is a member since 2004. In November 2011, Ales Bialiatski, President of Viasna and Vice-President of the FIDH, was condemned to four and a half years of prison with forced labour. As Vice-President of Viasna, Mr. Stefanovich was also condemned for alleged tax evasion on the basis of information transmitted to Belarus by some EU Member States.