

**Technocrats under pressure:  
career trajectories and state control  
in Belarus's economic ministries**

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the institutional design, personnel policies, and operational practices of the Belarusian government's economic bloc from 2005 to 2025. It shows that this bloc functions under conditions of power centralisation and the personalised control of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. Appointments reflect the head of state's preferences and internal balances of influence, while the career trajectories of senior officials in economic ministries reveal the closed nature of public administration. These ministries have little autonomy in policy-making; their primary role is to maintain stability and manage resource allocation. Since 2025, the influence of the economic bloc within the government has declined due to the strengthened position of the financial bloc, which has acquired the powers of a parallel decision-making centre. Among the ministries analysed, the leadership of the Ministries of Industry and of Agriculture and Food changed frequently, whereas the leadership of Belstat remained largely stable.

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## INTRODUCTION

The government in Belarus, like most autocracies, focuses primarily on the economy because it plays a crucial role in sustaining the regime. Stable (albeit modest) household incomes, moderate inflation, full employment, and an extensive system of social support function as instruments of internal legitimation. The economy also serves as a tool of political control: through budget subsidies, public procurement, preferential lending, and other mechanisms, authorities distribute rents and maintain the dependence of various social groups on government.

Centralised budget management enables the authorities to reward loyalty and monitor those whose work relates to the public sector. Following 2020, there was a noticeable increase in the role of the security bloc within the government, which is reflected in subsequent budgetary allocations. By 2025, expenditures designated for the security bloc constituted approximately 20% of the national budget, a significant rise from 15% in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

The control over resource distribution, coupled with a Soviet-era perspective on the economy's pivotal role in public life, imparts significant importance to the economic bloc within the government and broader public administration. However, the specific characteristics of its operations and personnel policies remain underexplored. This study aims to analyse the institutional structure and personnel practices of the ministries and agencies that comprise the economic bloc of the Government of Belarus, as well as the factors influencing these elements. The research covers the period from 2005 to 2025.

The study examines the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade (MART), the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and the National Statistical Committee (Belstat). These bodies perform different functions: the Ministry of Economy develops and implements economic policy; MART regulates competition; the Ministry of Industry oversees the industrial sector; the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for agricultural development; and Belstat collects and analyses statistical data, including economic indicators. All of these bodies belong to the executive branch and report to the government (the Council of Ministers), except for Belstat, which reports directly to the head of the state.

The leadership of the economic ministries is formed predominantly from officials who have been in public service for a long time and are regarded as 'reliable personnel'. The political events of 2020 affected this segment of public administration. However, after the partial renewal of the government in 2025, no significant personnel changes took place: key positions were filled by officials with long experience in public service or in structures closely linked to the public sector. Yury Chabatar (Yuri Chebotar),<sup>2</sup> previously First Deputy Minister, became the Minister of Economy. In the Ministry of Industry, Andrei Kuznyatsou (Andrei Kuznetsov) was promoted from Deputy Minister to Minister. Yury Harlou (Yuri Gorlov), who had long worked in local government and in the Presidential Administration, became the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Artur Karpovich, who had experience in various ministries, the State Control Committee, and the diplomatic service, was appointed to head MART. Meanwhile, the head of Belstat, Inna Miadzvedzeva (Inna Medvedeva), has held her post continuously since 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Finance, 'Citizens' Budget', 2025, [https://www.minfin.gov.by/upload/bp/budjet/budjet\\_2025.pdf](https://www.minfin.gov.by/upload/bp/budjet/budjet_2025.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> In this paper, we employ Belarusian transliteration of names, with the Russian-based transliteration provided in brackets throughout.

Overall, despite the official rhetoric emphasising the arrival of a ‘new generation’ in government, the 2025 reshuffle had a technocratic character. Officials with a strong understanding of internal processes, managerial mechanisms, and the system’s constraints were appointed to leadership positions. However, they are not responsible for strategic development and primarily perform executive administrative functions. Their task is to ensure the stability of governance and public administration, to adapt the economy to external constraints, and to implement the directives of the head of state, rather than to initiate any substantive reforms.

This study employs a combined methodological approach that integrates open-source data collection and semi-structured interviews. To analyse biographies and reconstruct the career trajectories of ministers, agency heads, and their deputies from 2005 to 2025, we used information from open sources. A limitation of the research is that information on deputy ministers is often incomplete or unavailable, which means that some individuals may not have been included in the dataset.

In April and October 2025, we conducted ten semi-structured qualitative interviews with former civil servants and experts familiar with the specifics of the Belarusian public administration. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, we began with interviewees already known to the researchers and then expanded the pool through snowball sampling. Despite certain limitations, this data provides a sufficient basis for identifying and analysing the main characteristics of the government’s economic bloc.

## EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE BELARUSIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

After Aliaksandr Lukashenka came to power, Belarus underwent a transformation from the hybrid authoritarian system seen at the start of his rule, into a consolidated personalist regime. Following the 2004 referendum that removed term limits, governance and public administration became increasingly centred on the head of state. The Presidential Administration effectively assumed the role of a government, while the government, parliament, and courts mostly implemented decisions already taken by the head of state.<sup>3</sup>

From a political perspective, Belarus experiences alternating cycles of repression and liberalisation, driven by both external and domestic political factors. The most recent period of liberalisation began in 2014 and lasted until 2020. During this period, both the government and society experienced relatively liberal shifts, although the broader authoritarian constraints remained intact.

The appointment of Andrei Kabiakou (Andrei Kobayakov) as Prime Minister in 2014, despite his reputation as a non-reformer, nonetheless resulted in relatively liberal changes, including the simplification of business regulations and the modernisation of monetary and foreign exchange policy.<sup>4</sup> A similar approach to economic policy was continued by the government headed by Siarhei Rumas (Sergei Rumas), which was formed in 2018.

Although Rumas was widely regarded as a ‘liberal technocrat’, interviewees noted that the period of liberalisation had begun prior to his appointment and peaked during Kabiakou’s tenure (2014-2018) and that of his Deputy Prime Minister, Vasil Matsiusheuski (Vasily Matyushevsky). At that time, other ‘liberal’ appointments, including Pavel Kalaur (Pavel Kallaur) as head of the National Bank and Kiryl Rudyi (Kiryll Rudy) as the President’s Aide for Economic Affairs. Interviewees emphasised that the Rumas government did not introduce its own innovations but instead relied on previously established practices. Moreover, at the time when Rumas headed the government, an authoritarian rollback had already begun, accompanied by a ‘purge’ of the public administration ahead of the 2020 election.

*‘Roughly a year and a half before the election they simply began clearing the field en masse. So from 2018 onwards it can by no means be described as a period of liberalisation. On the contrary: everything was being purged; it was scorched earth. And Rumas was certainly not a liberal there; he had that image, but I wouldn’t classify him as such.’*

Even during the relatively liberal period, governance reforms were limited: a culture of vertical discipline prevailed, and proposals for change were accepted only insofar as they aligned with the President’s preferences and did not encroach upon his authority.

*‘It is always extremely difficult to get an idea implemented if it does not align with Lukashenka’s vision. Only if you come and say: we’ll reduce prison terms for business people from six years to three, and the treasury will receive a billion dollars – that will be accepted. But anything like ‘this will improve the investment climate’ – for him that is far too abstract.’*

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<sup>3</sup> Belarusian Yearbook 2008, ‘State Authority’, 2009, <https://nmn.media/yearbook/get/yearbook2008.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> One of the key liberal reforms was Decree No. 8 ‘On the Development of the Digital Economy’ (<https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=Pd1700008>), which lowered taxation for IT companies, legalised the circulation of cryptocurrencies, ICOs and smart contracts, and also introduced elements of English law for residents of the High-Tech Park.

*‘Liberalisation had clear limits: it could not touch the authority of the top figure; even the smallest reduction in his powers was unacceptable.’*

In summer 2020, Lukashenka appointed a new government led by Raman Halouchanka (Roman Golovchenko), which included many officials with backgrounds in the security and military services.<sup>5</sup> This reflects the regime's shift from prioritising economic development to implementing enhanced control following the fraudulent 2020 election. Over the subsequent five years, the government operated under international sanctions, necessitating adaptations in the public sector to address new constraints. The logic of economic decision-making increasingly shifted towards manual control and direct oversight.

In 2025, during the presidential election period, Lukashenka initiated a reshuffle in which Halouchanka was removed as Prime Minister and replaced by Aliaksandar Turchyn (Alexander Turchyn) – seen as more progressive and previously associated with the so-called ‘reformists’ in the government. At the same time, Halouchanka remained within the personnel pool and was appointed Chairman of the Board of the National Bank.

Following this reshuffle, competition for influence within the government intensified between two primary factions: the economic bloc, led by Prime Minister Turchyn, and the financial bloc, represented by the National Bank.<sup>6</sup> In September 2025, Lukashenka publicly criticised Turchyn, a move likely driven by slowing GDP growth, declining exports, and a crisis in the industrial sector. At the same time, the head of state established a new economic analysis working group within the National Bank. This group is headed by Halouchanka, which in effect gives him supervisory authority over the economic bloc. Lukashenka also expanded the National Bank’s powers: the institution now coordinates the work of state financial bodies and may issue regulatory acts without the government’s approval. This development elevates the financial bloc to a level comparable to that of the Council of Ministers and makes it a key centre of decision-making, including on economic matters.

Another sign of the economic bloc’s weakening was Lukashenka’s instruction for Halouchanka, as head of the National Bank, to rewrite the five-year social and economic development programme – a task traditionally carried out by the government. According to the law, the programme must be developed by the Council of Ministers jointly with the National Bank and the National Academy of Sciences, with the Council of Ministers playing the leading role.<sup>7</sup> Transferring strategic planning to the National Bank indicates that the head of the state likely trusts Halouchanka personally more than the current Prime Minister or officials within the economic bloc.

Experts evaluate these developments as being of a dual nature. On the one hand, expanding the National Bank’s powers allows faster decision-making and improves coordination within the financial system.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, transforming the National Bank into an alternative centre of economic policy raises concerns: it moves beyond the remit of a classical monetary regulator, blurs the boundaries of governmental authority, and increases the dependence of economic policy

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<sup>5</sup> Belarusian Yearbook 2022, ‘Government of Military Discipline’, 2022, <https://nmn.media/yearbook/get/yearbook2022en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> BIPART, ‘Public Administration in Belarus in September - October 2025’, November 2025, [https://bipart.eu/picture/library/new\\_d\\_sep\\_oct\\_2025\\_5.pdf](https://bipart.eu/picture/library/new_d_sep_oct_2025_5.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Pravo.by, ‘Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Belarus On State Forecasting and the Programmes of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus’, July 2023, <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12300279>

<sup>8</sup> Belsat, ‘The National Bank Now Has the Powers of the Government: Should Belarusians Expect Turmoil?’, October 2025, <https://ru.belsat.eu/89255206/u-nacbanka-tepier-prava-pravitielstva>

on decisions made by specific individuals. Analysts note that this redistribution of power strengthens Halouchanka personally, reduces the institutional autonomy of the economic bloc, and intensifies internal conflicts within the political system.<sup>9</sup>

As of late November 2025, the role of the government's economic bloc in public administration has diminished, with influence shifting to the National Bank, the State Control Committee, and the Presidential Administration. This shift may indicate a conflict within the system between technocrats advocating moderate liberalisation and the security-military bloc, which is determined to retain control over key resources and decision-making.

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<sup>9</sup> Zerkalo, 'We Are Inventing a Bicycle with Square Wheels': An Economist on Why Halouchanka Was 'Appointed' as an Inspector Bypassing the Government', September 2025, <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/109770.html>

## NORMATIVE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF PERSONNEL POLICY IN THE ECONOMIC BLOC OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BELARUS

The Constitution and presidential decrees define the procedures for appointing and dismissing ministers and their deputies, with the head of state retaining direct control over these decisions (see Table 1). The National Statistical Committee is a special case: it is led not by a minister but by a Chair **who is a member of the Council of Ministers** yet reports directly to the head of state. As Belstat does not fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers, Decree No. 113 assigns responsibility for submitting appointment proposals to the Presidential Administration rather than the Prime Minister. The head of state also appoints the Deputy Chairs of Belstat on the basis of nominations from the Committee's Chair.

*Table 1. Procedure for appointing and dismissing the heads of economic agencies and their deputies*

Agency	Position	Proposes appointment / dismissal	Confirms appointment / dismissal	Formally appoints / dismisses
MART	Minister	Prime Minister	President	President
	Deputy Minister	Prime Minister	President	Council of Ministers
Ministry of Economy	Minister	Prime Minister	President	President
	Deputy Minister	Prime Minister	President	Council of Ministers
Ministry of Industry	Minister	Prime Minister	President	President
	Deputy Minister	Prime Minister	President	Council of Ministers
Ministry of Agriculture and Food	Minister	Prime Minister	President	President
	Deputy Minister	Prime Minister	President	Council of Ministers
Belstat	Chair	Presidential Administration	President	President
	Deputy Chair	Chair of Belstat	President	President

*Source: legal acts of the Republic of Belarus*

Notably, legislation sets the number of deputy positions in some ministries but not in others. MART, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food have no fixed number of deputy ministers. In the Ministry of Economy, the head of state determines the number of deputies on the basis of a proposal from the Council of Ministers; in practice, the only binding requirement is that this number must be set by the head of state. Belstat is the sole exception, as it is legally required to have exactly four deputy chairs. These differences indicate that even the basic structural parameters of ministries depend on Lukashenka's personal preferences.

## Personnel registers, personnel reserves, and their role in personnel policy

Personnel registers play an important role in personnel policy within the public administration in Belarus. Formally, they are intended to ensure transparency and structure in the selection of senior officials, but in practice they operate as instruments of personalised political-administrative control over civil servants. Registers constitute lists of positions and the procedure for their appointment. They serve as a legally codified instrument of vertical appointments rather than a ‘list of candidates’ for posts in public administration (a common misinterpretation in everyday bureaucratic practice).

The structure of personnel registers is defined in Presidential Decree No. 46 of 5 February 2024 ‘On the Personnel Register of the Republic of Belarus’ and includes:

- The Personnel Register of the President, which lists positions such as ministers, deputy ministers, heads of state committees, and other senior executive posts;
- The Personnel Register of the Council of Ministers, which covers subordinate positions – heads of departments, directorates, and other structures within the Council of Ministers;
- Registers of other state bodies, created according to a standard procedure..

Personnel registers exist across all public institutions and cover not only civil servants but also the heads of state media outlets, state enterprises, and universities. Interviews confirmed that, for each position, the HR departments maintain lists of several potential candidates and compile dossiers containing personal information and other details deemed important.

In addition to **personnel registers**, the Belarusian public administration system also operates **personnel pools (reserves)**, which include specific individuals identified for potential appointment to high-level positions<sup>10</sup>. One may enter a personnel pool (reserve) following an initiative from their immediate supervisor, the HR department, or, in some cases, through self-nomination. A single individual may simultaneously appear in several reserves (for example, within their own agency and in a related one).

*‘There is a personnel department in every directorate. It cooperates with the organisational and personnel department, which manages everyone’s career paths. They look for potential candidates and submit them for consideration. A person can, of course, ask to be included, but if the immediate supervisors do not support it, if the personnel staff do not back the idea, if there is no one in the system willing to vouch for the candidate, then it will be much harder for them to progress.’*

Being listed in a personnel reserve does not guarantee either rapid promotion or an appointment at all: an ‘outsider’ can easily bypass those in the reserve.

*‘Nothing prevented someone else who was not in the reserve from getting the position. It was not a binding requirement – it just had to exist.’*

*‘You may remain in the reserve for ten years and nothing may ever change.’*

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<sup>10</sup> The legal ground for such personnel pools is Presidential Decree No. 354 of 26 July 2004 ‘On Work with Senior Personnel in the System of State Bodies and Other State Organisations’, which has been amended multiple times. The most recent amendment is Decree No. 113 ‘On Improving the Procedure for Considering Personnel Matters’ of 24 March 2025.

Placement in reserves for senior posts is considered an area of heightened scrutiny from security services. Interviews revealed that the Main Directorate for Combating Organised Crime and Corruption specifically sought compromising material on individuals included in such reserves.

*‘And all senior officials knew this, so few actively sought inclusion. Once you enter, you fall under automatic wiretapping – you are placed under a microscope. All services start watching you. Big Brother switches on completely.’*

Interviews also showed that even those working inside the system often conflate the terms ‘personnel register’ and ‘personnel pool (reserve)’. This confusion reflects the specific nature of Belarusian personnel policy in public administration: formal appointment procedures are tightly intertwined with informal mechanisms of selection. In practice, registers and reserves function as a single ‘system of personnel movement.’

## FEATURES OF THE BIOGRAPHIES AND CAREERS OF MINISTERS IN THE ECONOMIC BLOC OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BELARUS

### Ministry of Economy

The Ministry of Economy is responsible for state economic policy and strategic planning. It develops macroeconomic forecasts, manages state programmes, and shapes and coordinates policy in investment, privatisation, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship, and regional development. The Ministry plays a crucial role in Belarus’s power system because it provides strategic planning and sets the parameters for other ministries within the centralised governance model. Through its control over forecasts, investment projects, sectoral strategies, and development indicators, the Ministry supports politically important sectors and limits the emergence of independent economic actors. It also provides analytical support for decisions of the head of state and acts as a filter through which proposals from other bodies must pass, reinforcing vertical public administration.

### Leadership of the Ministry of Economy

As of November 2025, the Minister of Economy is Yury Chabatar. After graduating from the Belarus State Economic University, he spent his entire career within the Ministry and was appointed Minister in January 2024. Chabatar has five deputies, including First Deputy Minister Ivan Viazhnavets (Ivan Vezhnovets). When appointing Chabatar, Lukashenka tasked him with stimulating the economic potential of the ‘real sector’, strengthening analytical capacity, and proposing concrete measures for industries and regions.<sup>11</sup>

Between 2005 and 2025, six individuals served as Ministers of Economy (see Appendix 1). Open sources also provide information about 21 deputy and first deputy ministers appointed between 2011 and 2025 (though the actual number is likely higher).

The average age at appointment was 48 for ministers and 41 for deputy ministers. All officials held at least one higher education degree. All ministers and deputy ministers had prior public administration experience; four ministers and 11 deputies built their careers inside the Ministry. After leaving office, officials often move to related ministries or the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).

*Table 2. Biographical Information on Ministers of Economy and Their Deputies*

Name	Position	Year of Appointment (Years in Office)	Career Path (Internal Promotion / External Appointment)	Post-Government Position
Yury Chabatar	Minister	2024 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Aliaksandar Charviakou (Alexander Chervyakov)	Minister	2020 (4)	Internal promotion (Research Institute	Embassy in China

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Economy, ‘Mikalai Snapkou Introduced Yury Chabatar as Minister of Economy’, January 2024, <https://economy.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/nikolaj-snopkov-predstavil-jurija-chebotarja-v-dolzhnosti-ministra-ekonomiki-48617-2024/>

			of the Ministry of Economy)	
Zmitser Krutoi (Dmitry Krutoy)	Minister	2018 (1.5)	Internal promotion	Government of Belarus
Uladzimir Zinouski (Vladimir Zinovsky)	Minister	2014 (3.5)	External appointment	No new appointment
Mikalai Snapkou (Nikolai Snopkov)	Minister	2009 (5)	External appointment	Presidential Administration
Mikalai Zaychanka (Nikolai Zaichenko)	Minister	2003 (6)	Internal promotion	EEC
Ivan Viazhnavevts	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Kiryl Masharski (Kirill Masharsky)	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Alena Balihatava (Elena Boligatova)	Deputy Minister	2024 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Maryja Mazhynskaya (Maria Mazhinskaya)	Deputy Minister	2024 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Andrei Kartun	Deputy Minister	2023 (N/A)	External appointment	National Bank
Uladzimir Navumovich (Vladimir Naumovich)	Deputy Minister	2023 (N/A)	External appointment	Ministry of Construction
Alesia Abramenska (Alesya Abramenko)	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Tatsiana Brantsevich (Tatyana Brantsevich)	Deputy Minister	2021 (N/A)	External appointment	EEC
Siarhei Mitsianski (Sergei Mityansky)	Deputy Minister	2020 (N/A)	Internal promotion	No new appointment
Anzhalika Nikitsina (Anzhelika Nikitina)	Deputy Minister	2020 (N/A)	External appointment	N/A
Alena Piarminava (Elena Perminova)	Deputy Minister	2019 (N/A)	Internal promotion	EEC
Zmitser Yarashevich (Dmitry Yaroshevich)	Deputy Minister	2018 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Development Bank
Yury Chabatar	Deputy Minister	2016 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Minister of Economy
Aliaksandar Charviakou	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Minister of Economy

Zmitser Matusevich (Dmitry Matusevich)	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	Internal promotion	State Property Committee
Pavel Utsiupin (Pavel Utyupin)	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	External appointment	Ministry of architecture and construction
Iryna Kastsevich (Irina Kostevich)	Deputy Minister	2015 (N/A)	External appointment	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
Aliaksandar Zabarouski (Alexander Zaborovsky)	Deputy Minister	2014 (N/A)	External appointment	National Bank
Zmitser Krutoi	Deputy Minister	2014 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Minister of Economy
Aliaksandar Yarashenka (Alexander Yaroshenko)	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Great Stone Industrial Park
Anton Kudasau (Anton Kudasov)	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	N/A	EEC

Source: open-source data

### Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade

The Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade (MART) is responsible for competition policy, price and tariff regulation, domestic trade, and consumer protection. It also oversees regulatory support and supervision of public procurement procedures. MART's functions enable the state to maintain control over the economy: by regulating prices, tariffs, and competition, the Ministry ensures market stability and social predictability. Its oversight of domestic trade and procurement strengthens administrative influence over business.

### Leadership of MART

At the time of writing, the Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade is Artur Karpovich. Since 1999 he has worked within public administration; before becoming Minister in January 2025, he served at the Belarusian Embassy in Russia. Karpovich has three deputies, including First Deputy Natallia Vasileuskaya (Natalia Vasilevskaya). Upon appointing him, the head of the state instructed him to ensure a stable and 'fair' pricing system, maintain control over trade, and prevent excessive price increases.<sup>12</sup>

Between 2005 and 2025, five people held the position of Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade (see Appendix 2). Open sources also provide information on ten deputy and first deputy ministers appointed between 2011 and 2025. The average age at appointment was 51 for ministers and 49 for deputy ministers. All held at least one higher education degree. None of the ministers built a long-term career within MART before their appointment, and only three of the ten deputies had prior MART experience. After leaving office, ministers and deputies typically move to related institutions, quasi-state organisations, or diplomatic posts. One former minister (Chakanau) was later arrested on charges of abuse of power.

<sup>12</sup> BelTA, 'Lukashenka on the pricing formula: prices must not jump, especially upward', January 2025, <https://belta.by/president/view/Lukashenka-o-formule-v-tsenoobrazovanii-chtoby-tseny-ne-skakali-osobenno-vverh-688663-2025/>

*Table 3. Biographical Information on MART Ministers and Deputies*

Name	Position	Year of Appointment (Years in Office)	Career Path	Post-Government Position
Artur Karpovich	Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Aliaksei Bahdanau (Alexei Bogdanov)	Minister	2021 (4)	External appointment	Embassy in Kazakhstan
Uladzimir Kaltovich (Vladimir Koltovich)	Minister	2015 (6)	External appointment	Council of Ministers Apparatus
Valiantsin Chakanau (Valentin Chekanov)	Minister	2009 (6)	External appointment	No new appointment
Aliaksandar Ivankou (Alexander Ivankov)	Minister	2005 (4)	External appointment	Transport Inspectorate
Sviatlana Karatkevich (Svetlana Korotkevich)	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Natallia Vasileuskaya (Natalia Vasilevskaya)	Deputy Minister	2023 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Nina Yamial'yanava (Nina Yemelyanova)	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	External appointment	N/A
Ivan Viazhnavets	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	External appointment	Ministry of Economy
Aksana Kanstantsinovich (Oksana Konstantinovich)	Deputy Minister	2019 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Embassy in China
Andrei Kartun	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	External appointment	Ministry of Economy
Ihar Famin (Igor Fomin)	Deputy Minister	2016 (N/A)	External appointment	N/A
Artur Karpovich	Deputy Minister	2013 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Association of E-Commerce Enterprises
Aliaksandar Zabela (Alexander Zabello)	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	External appointment	Belarusian State Food Industry Concern

Edvard Matulis (Edward Matulis)	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	External appointment	N/A
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Source: open-source data

## Ministry of Industry

The Ministry of Industry is responsible for public policy in the field of industrial development. The Ministry oversees modernisation, localisation and import substitution, industrial cooperation, exports of industrial products, and the introduction of innovation. The Ministry controls major state-owned industrial enterprises (SOEs) – the cornerstone of state-regulated economy and one of the main sources of employment and social stability.

### Leadership of the Ministry of Industry

As of the time of writing, the Minister of Industry is Andrei Kuznyatsou. He has extensive managerial experience in industrial enterprises and served as Deputy Minister for a year prior to his appointment. Kuznyatsou has four deputies, including First Deputy Andrei Kaniushka (Andrei Konyushko). When appointing Kuznyatsou in 2025, Lukashenka emphasised that industry was one of the country's most problematic sectors and tasked him with improving the efficiency of state-owned industrial enterprises.<sup>13</sup>

Between 2005 and 2025, nine individuals served as Minister of Industry (biographical information is presented in Appendix 3). Open sources also provide information about 12 deputy and first deputy ministers appointed between 2011 and 2025.

The average age at appointment was 50 for ministers and 43 for deputy ministers. All held at least one higher education degree. Eight out of nine ministers and ten out of twelve deputies had extensive experience managing state-owned industrial enterprises. A typical career path involves moving from the position of factory director to that of deputy minister or minister.

After leaving office, ministers and deputies often return to senior positions in state-owned enterprises. Another distinctive feature of the Ministry is the unusually frequent turnover of its leadership: new ministers are appointed every one to two years following the scandalous dismissal of Vitali Vouk in 2018 for failing to fulfil directives on the development of the Orsha district.<sup>14</sup>

Table 4. Biographical Information on Ministers of Industry and Their Deputies

Name	Position	Year of Appointment (Years in Office)	Career Path (Internal Promotion / External Appointment)	Post-Government Position
Andrei Kuzniatsou	Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position

<sup>13</sup> BelTA, 'Belarusian Industry Ministry urged to focus on business efficiency', July 2025, <https://eng.belta.by/economics/view/belarusian-industry-ministry-urged-to-focus-on-business-efficiency-169468-2025/>

<sup>14</sup> CTV, 'Aliaksandar Lukashenka: 'Dismiss Cherny and Vovk immediately. Dvigalev and Zas are in complete professional non-compliance', August 2018, <https://ctv.by/news/obshestvo/aleksandr-Lukashenka-chernogo-vovka-nemedlenno-otpravit-v-otstavku-dvigalevu-zasyu-polnoe-sluzhebnoe-nesootvetstvie>

Aliaksandar Yafimau (Alexander Yefimov)	Minister	2024 (1)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Aliaksandar Rahozhnik (Alexander Rogozhnik)	Minister	2022 (1.5)	External appointment	Embassy
Piotr Parkhomchyk (Petr Parkhomchik)	Minister	2020 (2)	External appointment	Government
Pavel Utsiupin	Minister	2018 (2)	External appointment	Embassy
Vitali Vouk	Minister	2014 (3.5)	External appointment	Presidential Administration
Zmitser Katsiarynich (Dmitry Katerinich)	Minister	2011 (4)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Aliaksandar Radzevich (Alexander Radevich)	Minister	2009 (1.5)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Anatol Rusetski (Anatoly Rusetsky)	Minister	2003 (5.5)	External appointment	Council of the Republic
Andrei Kaniushka	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Dzianis Bakei (Denis Bakei)	Deputy Minister	2024 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Andrei Kuznyatsou	Deputy Minister	2024 (N/A)	External appointment	Minister of Industry
Aliaksandar Yafimau	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	External appointment	Minister of Industry
Aliaksei Kazlou (Alexei Kozlov)	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Zmitser Kharytonchyk (Dmitry Kharitonchik)	Deputy Minister	2020 (N/A)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Andrei Buinevich	Deputy Minister	2020 (N/A)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Siarhei Gunko (Sergei Gunko)	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise
Zmitser Korchyk (Dmitry Korchik)	Deputy Minister	2015 (N/A)	Internal promotion	State-owned industrial enterprise
Henadz Svidersky (Gennady Svidersky)	Deputy Minister	2015 (N/A)	External appointment	State-owned industrial enterprise

Aliaksandar Aharodnikau (Alexander Ogorodnikov)	Deputy Minister	2013 (N/A)	External appointment	Embassy
Pavel Utsiupin	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	External appointment	Minister of Industry

Source: open-source data

## Ministry of Agriculture and Food

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is a body of public administration subordinated to the Council of Ministers. It oversees one of the key foundational sectors of the Belarusian economy – the agro-industrial complex. For Lukashenka, who cultivates the image of a ‘strong agro-manager’ and a ‘man of the people’, this ministry carries significant symbolic weight.

### Leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food

At the time of writing, the Minister of Agriculture of Belarus is Yury Harlou. He has extensive experience working in local executive authorities and was appointed Minister in 2025 after holding a position in the Presidential Administration. The Ministry has four deputy ministers. The head of the state tasks Harlou with core agricultural objectives: ensuring the timely completion of sowing and harvesting campaigns.

Between 2005 and 2025, ten individuals served as Minister of Agriculture and Food (biographical information in Appendix 4). Open sources also provide information on 13 deputy and first deputy ministers appointed between 2011 and 2025.

The average age at appointment was 50 for ministers and 47 for deputy ministers. All had at least one higher education degree. External appointments dominate the ministry; typical career paths include moving from the Presidential Administration, a local executive committee, or an agricultural enterprise to the position of minister or deputy minister.

After leaving office, former ministers and deputies are typically transferred to the Presidential Administration or to a local executive committee. As in the Ministry of Industry, new ministers are appointed every one to two years following the high-profile dismissal of Leanid Zayats in 2019, after Lukashenka expressed outrage at the conditions in which cows were kept at an enterprise in the Shklov (Shklov) district.<sup>15</sup> It is noteworthy that Ihar Bryla was arrested within a year of leaving office on corruption charges.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> BelTA, ‘Lukashenka outraged by the conditions in which cows were kept at a farm in the Shklov district’, March 2019, <https://belta.by/president/view/Lukashenka-vozmutiljsja-soderzhaniem-korov-na-ferme-v-shklovskom-rajone-341455-2019/>

<sup>16</sup> Milknews.ru, ‘Former Belarusian Minister of Agriculture Igor Brylo detained’, November 2023, <https://milknews.ru/index/brylo-zaderzhanie.html>

*Table 5. Biographical Information on Ministers of Agriculture and Their Deputies*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Year of Appointment (Years in Office)</b>	<b>Career Path (Internal Promotion / External Appointment)</b>	<b>Post-Government Position</b>
Yury Harlou	Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Anatol Linevich (Anatoly Linevich)	Minister	2024 (1)	External appointment	N/A
Siarhei Bartash (Sergei Bartosh)	Minister	2023 (1)	External appointment	District Executive Committee
Ihar Bryla	Minister	2022 (1.5)	External appointment	Presidential Administration
Ivan Krupko	Minister	2020 (2)	External appointment	Regional Executive Committee
Anatol Khat'ko (Anatoly Khotko)	Minister	2019 (1)	External appointment	University
Leanid Zayats	Minister	2012 (7)	External appointment	Regional Executive Committee
Mikhail Rusy	Minister	2010 (2)	External appointment	Government
Siamion Shapira (Semyon Shapiro)	Minister	2008 (2)	External appointment	Regional Executive Committee
Leanid Rusak	Minister	2004 (4)	External appointment	No new appointment
Vitali Kulak (Vitaly Kulak)	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Aliaksandar Yakouchyts (Alexander Yakovchits)	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Natallia Shautsova (Natalia Shevtsova)	Deputy Minister	2025 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Aliaksandar Lamskoi (Alexander Lomskoi)	Deputy Minister	2024 (N/A)	External appointment	Presidential Administration
Siarhei Fedchanka (Sergei Fedchenko)	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	External appointment	N/A

Vadzim Shahoika (Vadim Shagoiko)	Deputy Minister	2022 (N/A)	Internal promotion	N/A
Ihar Bryla	Deputy Minister	2013 (N/A)	External appointment	Presidential Administration
Aliaksei Bahdanau	Deputy Minister	2021 (N/A)	Internal promotion	MART
Ivan Smilgin	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Alla Lamakina (Alla Lomakina)	Deputy Minister	2017 (N/A)	Internal promotion	No new appointment
Vasil Pivavar (Vasily Pivovar)	Deputy Minister	2015 (N/A)	Internal promotion	No new appointment
Uladzimir Hrakun (Vladimir Grakun)	Deputy Minister	2014 (N/A)	Internal promotion	No new appointment
Vasil Kazakevich (Vasily Kazakevich)	Deputy Minister	2011 (N/A)	N/A	EEC

Source: open-source data

### National Statistical Committee

The National Statistical Committee (Belstat) collects, processes, and disseminates statistical information, coordinates statistical work across state bodies, and ensures methodological compatibility with international standards. Belstat's statistical outputs construct the official representation of the socio-economic situation and serve as the basis for policy decisions. In an authoritarian system, the Committee performs not only a technical but also a reputational function: it supports the image of stability and state control.

### Leadership of Belstat

At the time of writing, Belstat is headed by Inna Miadzvedzeva, who spent many years working within the system of state statistical bodies and served in the Presidential Administration immediately prior to her appointment. She has four deputies, including First Deputy Tsimafei Zhyharau (Timofei Zhigarev).

Between 2005 and 2025, only two individuals held the position of Chair of Belstat (see Appendix 5). Open sources provide information on seven deputy and first deputy chairs appointed between 2011 and 2025. Both chairs and their deputies typically build long-term careers inside the Committee before rising to senior posts. Leadership turnover in the institution is extremely rare. After leaving office, deputy chairs are sometimes transferred to the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). The only Chair removed from the position was subsequently appointed Minister of Economy.

*Table 6. Biographical Information on Chairs of Belstat and Their Deputies*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Year of Appointment (Years in Office)</b>	<b>Career Path (Internal Promotion / External Appointment)</b>	<b>Post-Government Position</b>
Inna Miadzvedzeva	Chair	2014 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Uladzimir Zinouski	Chair	1998 (16)	Internal promotion	Ministry of Economy
Tsimafei Zhyharau	Deputy Chair	2022 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Aliaksei Yarkavets (Alexei Yarkovets)	Deputy Chair	2025 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Alena Kukharevich (Elena Kukharevich)	Deputy Chair	2020 (N/A)	Internal promotion	EEC
Natallia Tarasiuk (Natalia Tarasiuk)	Deputy Chair	2020 (N/A)	Internal promotion	Current position
Iryna Kanhra (Irina Kangro)	Deputy Chair	2009 (N/A)	Internal promotion	EEC
Zhanna Vasileuskaya (Zhanna Vasilevskaya)	Deputy Chair	2015 (N/A)	External appointment	Current position
Aleh Malatsou (Oleg Molodtsov)	Deputy Chair	2014 (N/A)	N/A	N/A

*Source: open-source data*

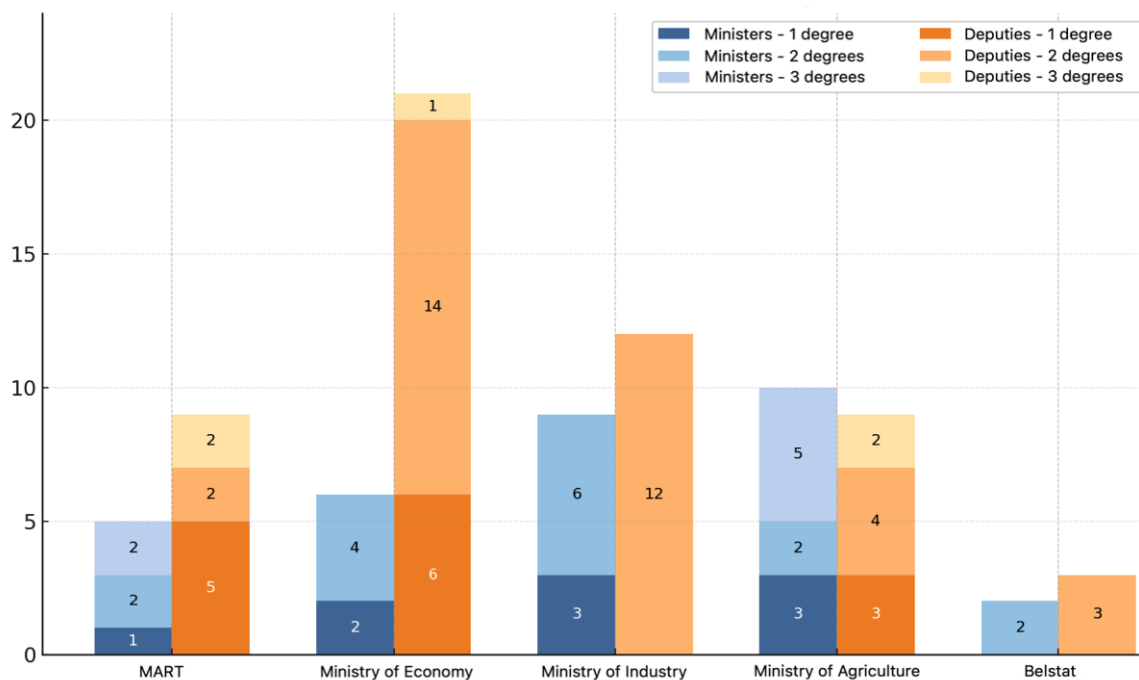
## ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF BIOGRAPHIES OF HEADS OF ECONOMIC AGENCIES AND THEIR DEPUTIES

In total, the study analysed the biographies and career trajectories of 32 heads and 63 deputy heads of economic agencies.

### Education

Formally, ministers and their deputies possess a high level of education. In all of the examined agencies, at least one higher education degree is a mandatory requirement for senior positions. Second and third degrees are fairly common. In a number of ministries—particularly the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Industry—the majority of deputy ministers hold two higher education degrees, while in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food some ministers and deputies hold three. Additional degrees are likely perceived as an advantage, although not a formal prerequisite.

Picture 1. Number of higher-education degrees held by ministers/chairs and their deputies



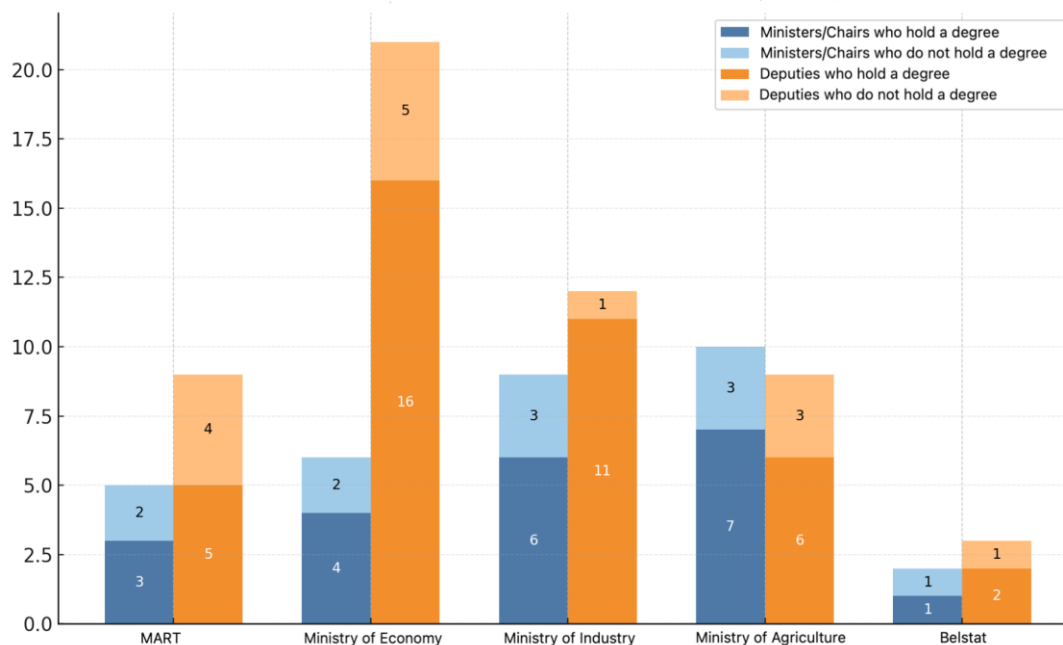
Source: open-source data

A considerable proportion of senior officials also hold postgraduate degrees. The majority of such cases were found in the Ministry of Economy, followed by the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; academic degrees were less common in MART. As with multiple higher-education degrees, academic qualifications are not formally required, but they enhance a civil servant's professional standing and may serve as an additional advantage.

## Academy of Public Administration in officials' careers

Most ministers and deputy ministers obtained their second higher education at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus (APA).

Picture 2. Degree of the Academy of Public Administration held by ministers/chairs and their deputies



Source: open-source data

Notably, the proportion of APA graduates is usually higher among deputy ministers than among ministers. This suggests that an APA degree may facilitate advancement at the deputy-minister level, whereas appointments of ministers and agency heads depend on other factors. Overall, an APA diploma is not a mandatory requirement for appointment.

Interviews with experts and former civil servants indicate that studying at the Academy functions as a marker of loyalty and belonging to the system. Admission poses few obstacles: ministries receive quotas, and the nomination process is routine and largely formal. They also highlighted the low quality and formal nature of the Academy's education. The training is not oriented towards knowledge provision; grades are often awarded on the basis of rank and status rather than competence. Senior officials and representatives of the security forces reportedly receive top grades regardless of attendance or performance. Teaching staff are selected from among loyalists, contributing to the erosion of professional standards. A person who studied there described the programme as a 'travesty of education', noting that he earned a distinction despite minimal attendance.

*'They are interested in where you work and what you do... The first exam question is: where do you work? And that is essentially it – it cannot be called education.'*

*‘It is hard to imagine an APA lecturer giving a failing grade to the chair of a district executive committee, let alone a minister. Obviously, a minister may not attend exams at all – everything will be marked for him.’*

Thus, the Academy functions primarily not as an educational institution but as a tool for providing and legitimising a civil servant’s status.

### **Additional training for civil servants**

Interviews reveal that Belarusian civil servants have opportunities for additional education and professional development, although the scope of these opportunities changes over time and is influenced by the political environment. Until 2010, such opportunities were limited; their number increased considerably between 2010 and 2020, but has decreased again since 2020.

When opportunities were limited, decisions on who would attend were made top-down: supervisors selected staff for courses.

*‘There were few courses at the time. We wanted to strengthen computer skills – some opportunities existed... Management decided whom to send – a very small group. That was 15 years ago.’*

During the ‘thaw’ in relations with the West in the mid-2010s and up to 2020, professional development opportunities expanded, and decisions were often made bottom-up, with civil servants selecting courses and seeking managerial approval. Staff of economic ministries could take part in training abroad, hosted by the ministries of economy and finance and the central banks of Austria, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland. Interviewees also mentioned opportunities in the United States (Washington D.C.), China, South Korea, and Turkey.

*‘There were many opportunities – annual lists of courses appeared on the websites of these institutions; they were aggregated, and you selected what you wanted to attend. There were usually limits – one or two courses per year – because everyone wanted to go somewhere and approvals were needed, but overall it was quite liberal, and people travelled.’*

Domestic training opportunities have always existed too. Ministries could reimburse staff for language courses or postgraduate studies. Internal professional-development programmes were organised, sometimes involving experts from universities or independent research centres. Specialists from the regions could go to Minsk for training. However, since 2020 the external window has narrowed sharply, with this trend driven mainly by the Belarusian government rather than external restrictions. Opportunities have shifted more towards those found in programmes offered within the Eurasian Economic Union.

*‘Now most of these programmes have closed – not due to external pressure, but internal decisions. What remains are programmes of the Eurasian Economic Union – also good ones – for example, in the Central Bank of Russia, and in Armenia and Kazakhstan.’*

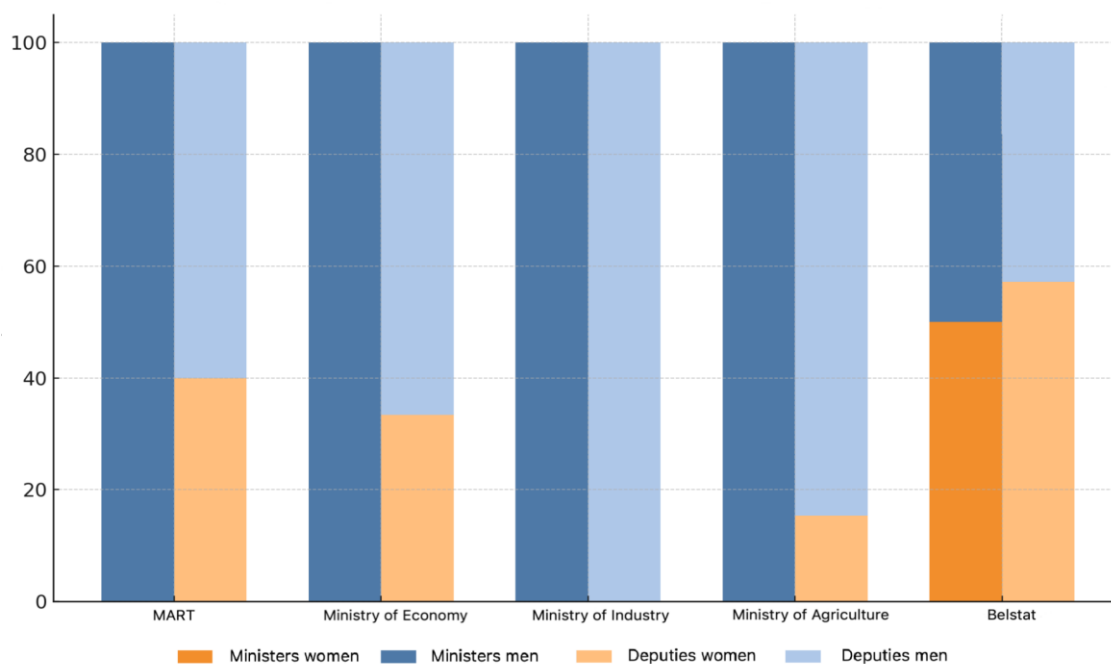
Interviews suggest that until 2020 the authorities valued qualified civil servants and invested in their professional development. However, additional training neither accelerates career advancement nor guarantees senior posts. It is useful ‘if a person wants to develop professionally for their own sake.’ It is not mandatory, and in some cases a desire for further education may even be viewed as a burden, as it requires several days away from work.

### Gender composition

Gender appears to be an important factor in appointments to senior positions. Among ministers and heads of agencies in the economic block of the government, men dominate – which is unsurprising given Lukashenka’s repeated public assertions that women are ‘not created’ for management roles. Between 2005 and 2025, there was not a single female minister in MART, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Industry, or the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. At the same time, a woman currently heads Belstat.

Women do appear among deputy ministers and deputy heads, although their share remains lower than that of men. Between 2011 and 2025, women accounted for 40% of deputies in MART, compared with 60% men. In the Ministry of Economy, women made up 33% and men 67%. There were no female deputy ministers in the Ministry of Industry. In the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, women represented 15% and men 85%. Belstat, however, had proportionally more female deputies – 57% compared with 43%.

Picture 3. Gender composition of ministers/chairs and their deputies



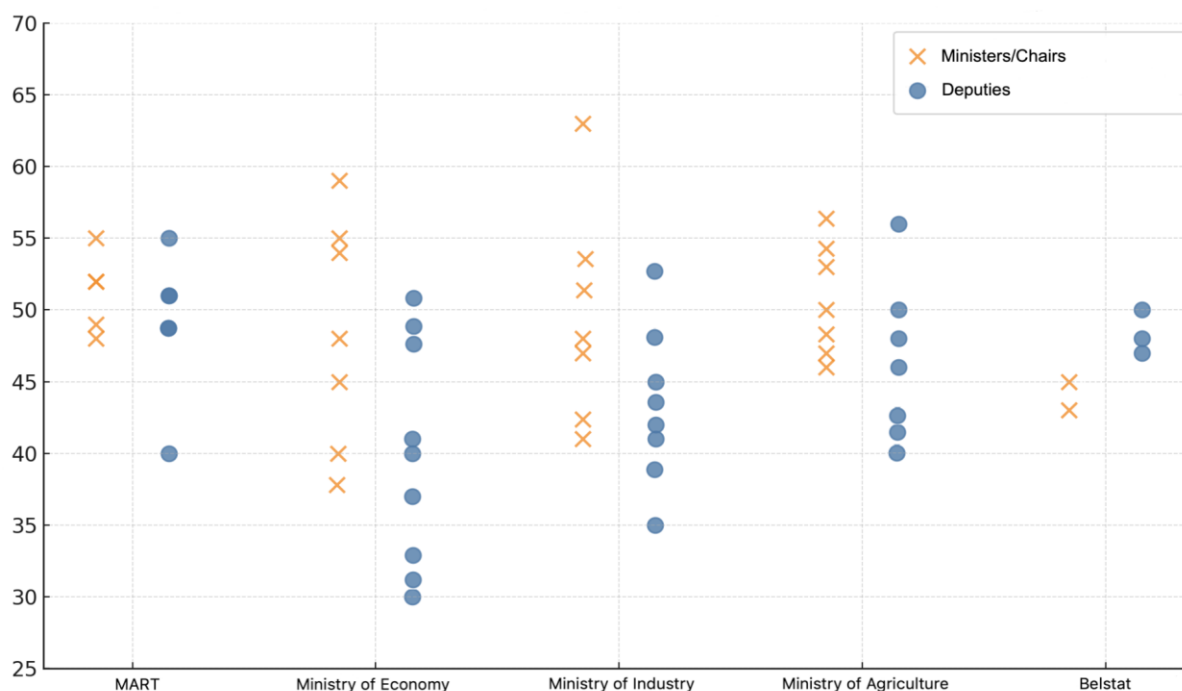
Source: open-source data

## Age of appointment of ministers and their deputies

No ministers or deputies were younger than 35 at the time of appointment. Comparing the average age of ministers, Belstat was the ‘youngest’ agency (44), while MART was the ‘oldest’ (51). For deputy ministers, the Ministry of Economy was the youngest on average (41), and MART the oldest (49).

Age variation is wide. The youngest minister was appointed at 37 in the Ministry of Economy; the oldest was 63 in the Ministry of Industry. Among deputy ministers, the youngest was 30 in the Ministry of Economy, and the oldest was 56 in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food..

Picture 4. Age at appointment of ministers/chairs and their deputies



Source: open-source data

There is no clear trend toward the appointment of younger ministers or deputies in the economic faction of the government. Lukashenka frequently speaks about the ‘renewal’, ‘rejuvenation’ of the government with ‘new young people’ to be appointed. He returned to this theme repeatedly, including in 2024, when he again emphasised the need to ‘hand power over to the youth.’<sup>17</sup> In practice, however, people under 40 are rarely appointed to senior positions. Only one minister under 40 appeared in the Ministry of Economy, along with six deputy ministers in that ministry and two in the Ministry of Industry. In some cases, the age at appointment is unknown, so the actual number of appointees under 40 may be slightly higher.

Interviewees noted that to reach a senior role in the economic block, a civil servant must possess high professional competence. This is one reason why those under 40 seldom got high position: such competence must first be acquired and then demonstrated, alongside proof of loyalty.

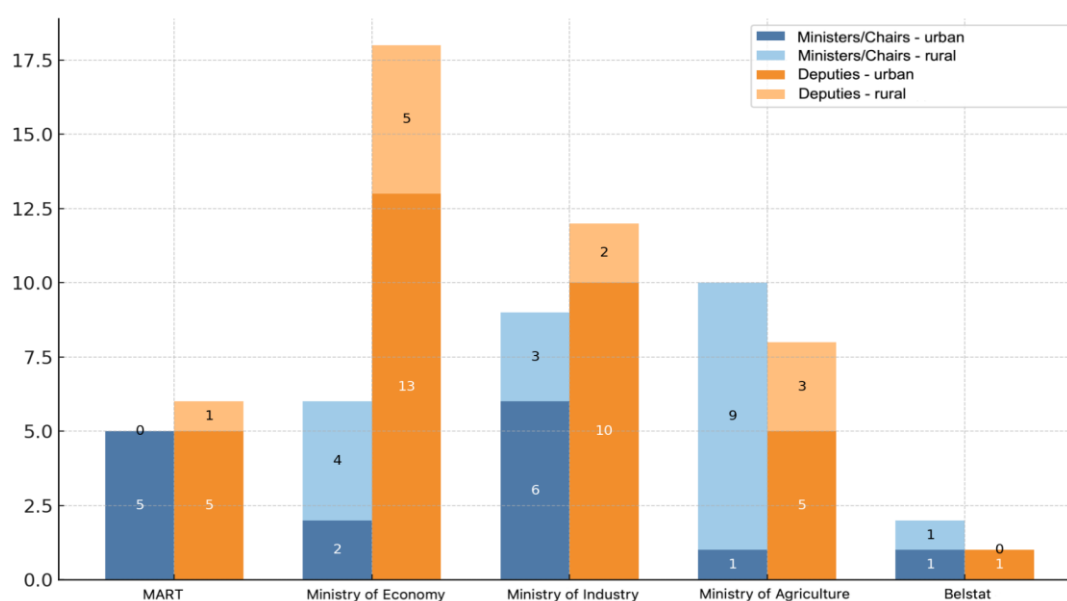
<sup>17</sup> Pul Pervogo, ‘The President explained what must be done before handing the reins of governance over to the youth’, October 2024, [https://t.me/pul\\_1/18832](https://t.me/pul_1/18832)

## Place of birth

Place of birth does not appear to be a significant factor in appointments overall. No strong preference for either urban or rural origins is observed. The only exception is the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, where nine of ten ministers were born in rural areas. This reflects the fact that senior officials in this sector typically have backgrounds in collective farms or agricultural enterprises, most of which are located in rural areas.

Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is the only agency where place of birth may matter for appointments. Lukashenka frequently states that an agricultural background is desirable for officials in this ministry.

Figure 5. Place of birth of ministers/chairs and their deputies



Source: open-source data

## ANALYSIS OF CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF MINISTERS AND THEIR DEPUTIES

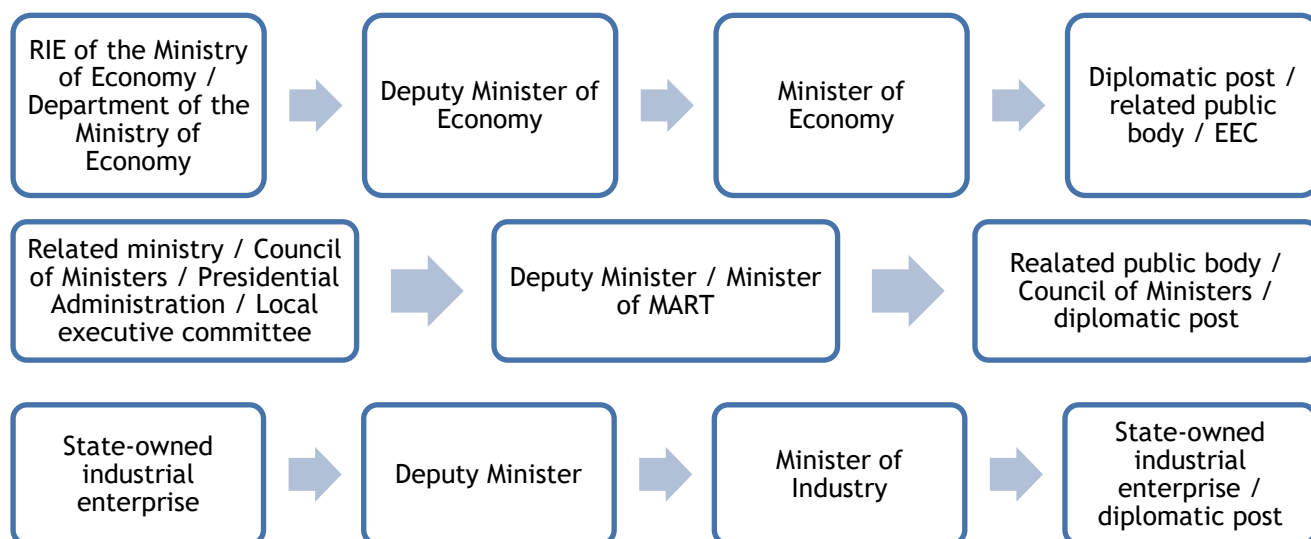
Ministers and heads of agencies within the economic block of the Belarusian government rarely build long-term careers inside their own agencies. Of the 32 individuals in the sample, only four (12.5%) gradually advanced through internal career ladders: Ministers of Economy Krutoi and Chabatar, and Chairs of Belstat Zinouski and Miadzvedzeva. Nine individuals (28.1%) entered their ‘home’ agency directly as deputy ministers and later became ministers – the largest number of such cases occurs in the Ministry of Industry. At the same time, 16 people (50%) were appointed straight to the ministerial post; this trajectory is typical for the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

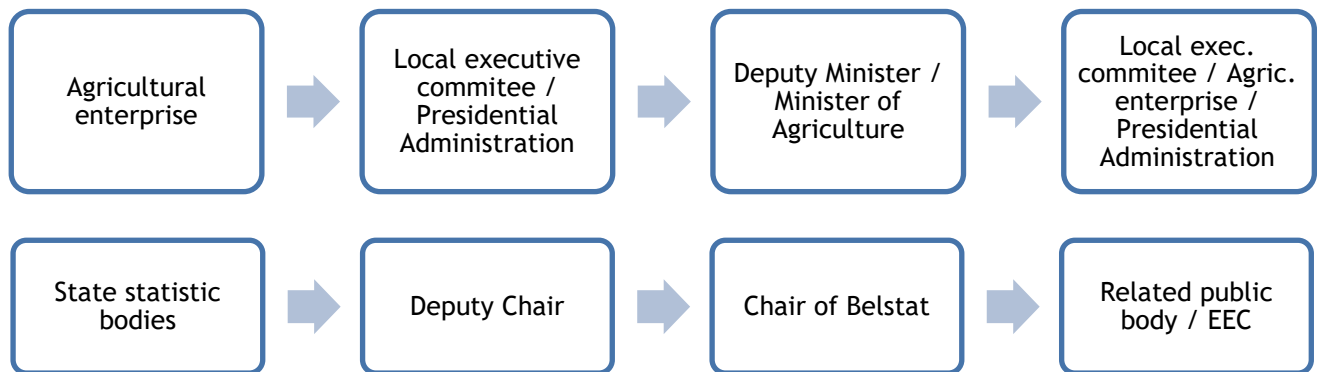
Deputy ministers and deputy heads are more likely than ministers to pursue careers inside their own agencies. Still, external appointments are more common than internal ones. Of 59 deputies, 28 (47.5%) previously worked elsewhere in the same ministry, while 31 (52.5%) were appointed from outside organisations. The highest number of external appointments occurred in the Ministry of Industry, MART, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The Ministry of Economy and Belstat show the opposite pattern – deputy heads more often rise internally.

After removal from office, most former ministers and deputies continue public service. Of 27 former ministers and agency heads, 17 (63%) received new positions in public administration or within the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). Five (18.5%) moved to state-affiliated structures (such as state-owned enterprises), and another five received no new appointments (at least three probably because they retired). Among 43 former deputies, only nine (20.9%) received no new postings; ten (23.3%) became ministers, and the remainder took new positions either in public administration or in state-adjacent organisations.

Typical career trajectories before and after appointment are shown in Scheme 1.

*Scheme 1. Career trajectories of heads of economic ministries and agencies*





Source: authors' synthesis of biographical data and information on officials' career paths

Thus, the career paths of leaders of economic ministries and agencies reflect the system's closed nature. Appointments and dismissals operate as tools of internal rotation and redistribution of administrative resources. Interviews confirm this logic: experts described appointments, dismissals, and subsequent reappointments as a form of continuous internal circulation.

*'If you are highly competent, you will be sent to a more responsible position. If you are less competent, you will be moved to a similar one.'*

However, the significance of positions assigned to former ministers and deputies varies. Some appointments constitute promotions – for example, Deputy Prime Minister or chair of a regional executive committee.

*'Regional executive committees report directly to the President ... They are, in effect, mini-Lukashenkas in terms of authority. These are genuinely autonomous figures – if they know how to work. You make a decision, and it is carried out. You report to one person. In this sense, they are more independent than the Prime Minister.'*

Other appointments may be viewed as demotions. For instance, when former ministers or deputies of industry become directors of enterprises, their formal status decreases. However, interviews show that such moves are often preferred by the former officials themselves. Many ministers come from factory management; they are production specialists rather than bureaucrats. They find it easier and more satisfying to run a single enterprise – to *'carry out their own project'* – than to be *'responsible for multiple failing factories without real resources.'*

Similarly, moving a former minister to lead a district executive committee is formally a demotion. But in practice, such appointments can increase real influence: *'It is better to be the first person in a village than the second in a city.'* For more ambitious officials, however, such moves may feel punitive.

Interviews identified several reasons that may lead to the demotion of a civil servant, including:

- **Failure to meet performance indicators.** Ministries are assigned specific criteria used to assess how effectively an organisation fulfils its tasks. In the economic sphere, these may include indicators related to prices, employment, or business inspections.
- **Leaders' response to emergency situations.** If a force majeure event occurs or a problem arises that requires ministerial intervention, the leader is expected to demonstrate deep engagement. Whether they are on leave or not, at work or at home, *'it goes without saying*

*that you stay overnight (at the office) today, that you must be reachable, effectively, 24 hours a day, and if someone needs something – you must come in or deal with it from home, whatever the case.’* Actions deemed unsatisfactory or insufficient by senior leadership during emergencies may affect officials’ standing within the system.

- **Ethical misconduct.** This includes breaches of public order (drink-driving or other offences committed under the influence). Such cases rarely receive publicity, yet a civil servant may be quietly transferred to a less significant position.
- **Advanced age.** When an official holding a senior post approaches retirement age, they may be gradually moved down the hierarchy, with younger leaders appointed in their place.

It is worth noting that this list of reasons for demotion is typical of Belarus’s private sector as well: managers are expected to meet performance indicators, respond effectively to emergencies, and comply with ethical standards.

Interviews also indicated that professional attestations and re-attestations may serve as instruments for demoting an inconvenient official. These procedures are often a mere formality, yet the criteria are vague, allowing a worker to be labelled incompetent.

*‘As part of such an attestation, a person may be ‘failed’ on some very specific, highly technical or narrow questions (...) and on this basis their contract may simply not be renewed.’*

## THE ROLE OF PERSONAL NETWORKS IN THE APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS IN THE ECONOMIC BLOC

According to interviewees, the formation of personal teams and circles of influence is a widespread feature of the Belarusian administrative system. These relationships are based on trust and proven reliability: ministers prefer to work with people whose abilities they know well. In some cases, teams may follow a leader from one agency to another, although such ‘group transfers’ are not common. Typically, this involves only a few key staff members rather than a wholesale replacement of management. Personal networks may also be dispersed across different organisations.

*‘These may be people working in the private sector or in other state organisations... It is not about formal hierarchy – any senior official with a vision will naturally have such a network.’*

Personal connections can also manifest in corruption schemes, especially in public procurement. An official may facilitate contracts for relatives or acquaintances.

*‘A friend runs a business and, through this link, is able to earn additional income.’*

Interviewees noted that the arrival of a new minister almost always triggers personnel changes, although their extent depends on external factors as well as the minister’s personal preferences. For example, when a ministry has been sharply criticised by Lukashenka, a new minister may take this as a signal that staff changes are necessary.

*‘A minister is not the president. He has limited influence over personnel policy. He cannot hire or dismiss everyone as he wishes.’*

Since 2020, the influence of ministers over personnel decisions has weakened further. Personnel matters have increasingly come under the control of the security services, which gather and analyse information on potential officials.

*‘Personnel policy is now largely in the hands of the State Security Committee.’*

Belarusian ministers lack real independence not only in personnel matters. Their autonomy is mostly confined to minor internal changes; on all major issues of economic policy and reform, ministers simply carry out directives handed down from above.

At the same time, a minister’s personality and their access to the top of the power hierarchy can provide opportunities to promote their ideas or defend specific decisions. Interviewees identified two ministers who exercised some degree of autonomy: Mikalai Snapkou (Minister of Economy, 2009-2014) and Dmitry Krutoi (Minister of Economy, 2018-2019, currently Head of the Presidential Administration).

*‘Snapkou was quite an independent minister. He had access to the highest offices, which allowed the ministry to push important draft laws through the bureaucratic machinery. He was not afraid to act boldly and openly.’*

Despite the top-down nature of the policy agenda, some ministries attempted to work with limited autonomy. For example, the Ministry of Economy developed its own internal socio-economic forecast, which was more realistic than the official national forecast. The ministry relied on this internal forecast in practice. Interviewees noted that this practice of ‘dual forecasts’ – the official one and the real one – persisted at least until 2022.

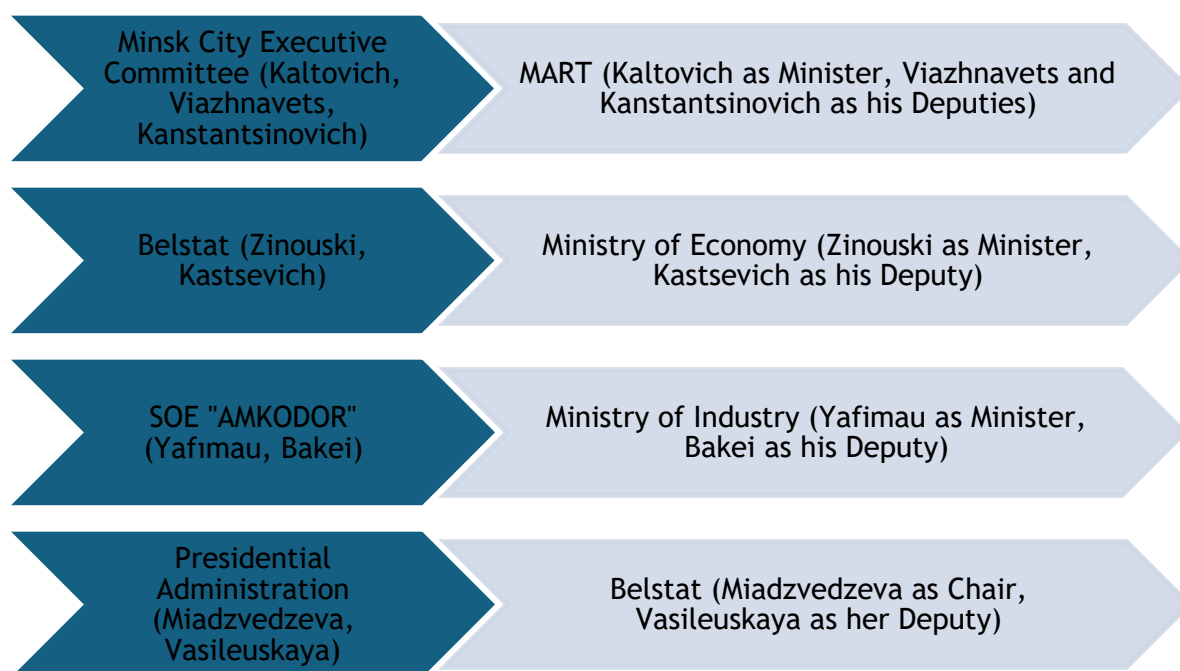
*‘Decisions were based on what was actually happening with inflation. The same applied to the Ministry of Economy – they always had two forecasts: the official socio-economic development forecast and the internal one that they actually lived by.’*

Thus, the independence of Belarusian ministries is limited. Some room for autonomy exists only where ministers have personal weight and access ‘upwards.’ The Ministry of Economy’s ‘dual forecasts’ reveal the gap between public governance goals and reality, as well as the broader opacity of the system.

### Examples of personal links between ministers and their deputies

Analysis of the career biographies of ministers and their deputies shows that personal ties can explain a deputy’s appointment only in rare cases. The most plausible examples occur where career paths intersected outside the ministry in question. Only four such cases were identified (see Scheme 2).

*Scheme 2. Links between ministers/chairs and their deputies*



*Source: authors’ synthesis of biographical data and information on officials’ careers*

In addition, there were 14 cases where ministers’ and deputies’ biographies overlapped within the same ministry. The Ministry of Economy had six such cases, which is to be expected given its internal career development patterns. Belstat had three. All four overlaps in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food occurred under Minister Zayats, who served a record seven years. The Ministry of Industry had only one internal overlap, and MART had none.

Thus, both interviews and the analysis of collected data indicate that personal ties in the Belarusian context should be seen only as an auxiliary factor in appointing leaders of the economic block. Since 2020, ministers’ influence over personnel decisions has diminished further – control has shifted partly to the security services and the State Security Committee (SSC or KGB)..

## FREQUENCY OF MINISTERIAL TURNOVER

Analysis of five ministries and agencies shows substantial differences in leadership turnover. In the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Industry, ministers tend to change every one to two years, and sometimes do not remain in office for a full year. Belstat demonstrates the opposite pattern: in twenty years, only two leaders have held the post. Zinouski served for sixteen years, and Miadzvedzeva has been in office since 2014.

Interviewees offered several explanations for the rapid turnover in the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food::

- Strong personal involvement of Lukashenka in industrial and agricultural affairs.

*‘Lukashenka believes he saved industry – that economic stability in Belarus is built on it... that strong performance, high wages and competitiveness must be ensured. But this is hard to achieve... And if the minister fails, who else will be blamed?’*

*‘It is very difficult to be Minister of Agriculture when there is always someone above you who, in his view, understands your job a hundred thousand times better. He will inevitably see mistakes.’*

- High public visibility of these sectors. Industry and agriculture employ many people and are constantly in the public eye. These fields make it easy to demonstrate ‘restoring order’, assigning blame and dismissing officials. Indeed, both ministries saw high-profile dismissals – Minister of Industry Vitaly Vovk in 2018 and Minister of Agriculture Leanid Zayats in 2019.

*‘It is easy to sell this to the public: they failed to meet targets, heads must roll.’*

- Limited authority of ministers. In the Belarusian model of governance, ministers cannot meaningfully influence policy, core institutions or structural reforms.

*‘It is difficult to solve systemic problems within the constraints in which you operate... When conditions are favourable, you grow and say everything is fine and criticisms are fewer. When circumstances change, questions appear immediately.’*

*‘The minister usually does not make decisions in these sectors. He is simply an intermediary.’».*

- Corruption risks. Both ministries oversee large numbers of enterprises. Long tenure increases the risk of entrenched personal networks. Frequent rotation is seen as a mechanism to reduce these risks and prevent ministers from accumulating excessive informal power.

*‘You are responsible for who sold what, to whom, and at what price... It is important to reshuffle these people because if someone sits too long, he will accumulate connections, corruption risks, and turn into a small Don Corleone running a quasi-business empire.’*

Thus, rapid turnover in the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food stems primarily from Lukashenka’s personal attention to these sectors and the nature of their work.

In the case of Belstat, interviewees suggested different reasons for the exceptionally rare turnover:

- Belstat is not a public-facing institution. Its role is largely hidden. It does not make major decisions, design policies or carry responsibility for reforms.

*‘There is nothing to scold Belstat for – they do not produce outcomes and cannot influence anything.’*

*‘Why criticise Belstat? They are responsible for nothing.’*

- Belstat handles highly sensitive information. It publishes – or withholds – data that can affect domestic decision-making, the regime’s public standing and external assessments of Belarus. Preventing leaks or unauthorised disclosures is crucial, therefore reliable and trusted officials are kept in charge.

*‘Think about the data they have... I conducted a study and had to obtain data through the SSC because Belstat would not release them. Demography, productivity – the figures were alarming. They were terrified that the data might leak. The most dramatic example was their decision to suppress all COVID data – nothing was published. It is an extremely sensitive field, which is why they avoid changing the leadership.’*

*‘Statistics is a secretive domain tied to the security services. The Director of Belstat can be compared to the Chair of the SSC in terms of importance.’*

- Narrow professional requirements and a limited talent pool. Leading Belstat requires very specific technical expertise and, simultaneously, absolute loyalty.

*‘We operate within our own closed environment. The head must be someone from within the system – our work has strong specific features. Competence matters.’*

*‘Professionalism is essential. You cannot simply appoint a general here, as one might do in the Ministry of Industry.’*

- Organisational conservatism. Belstat’s core staff consists largely of women with families, who tend to avoid conflict and maintain organisational stability.

*‘Women form the core of the team – they are more cautious, less inclined to take risks, they simply work quietly and well.’*

*‘Most are women, and with children – they are naturally more careful.’*

Thus, interviews depict Belstat as a technical, low-conflict institution with specific professional requirements. Views differed regarding its importance: some saw it as a minor body compared to the Ministry of Economy, while others regarded it as comparable to the security forces due to its access to sensitive data. Either way, these factors help explain the rare turnover in Belstat’s leadership.

## ASSESSMENTS OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMPARISON OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN BELARUS AND RUSSIA

Interviews also raised questions about the attractiveness of public service in Belarus and its comparison with the situation in Russia. Notably, interviewees themselves tended to shift to these topics. According to their assessments, some Belarusian officials consider leaving public service, yet such a step is difficult for those holding senior positions due to their embeddedness in the administrative vertical. Interviewees cited examples of successful exits from the system and noted that such cases are perceived by colleagues as a desirable but nearly unattainable alternative.

*‘He left alive, without losing his health, and into the civilised world. Everyone envies him because (...) he quietly, elegantly stepped away. That’s simply everyone’s dream.’*

Among the reasons for leaving were the necessity to perform large volumes of meaningless work and the need to invest enormous effort to advance even minimal positive changes.

*‘Any job in a ministry at the level of deputy minister and above – that’s just a disaster for your health. (...) When people left such positions for the private sector, they literally became younger. I personally know two such people, they just blossomed after leaving public service.’*

Another factor lowering the attractiveness of Belarusian public service is low income. According to interviewees, officials often try to move to the private sector or start their own business in order to improve their financial situation. This underscores the key difference between public service in Belarus and Russia: the Belarusian public administration corps appears more modest, materially vulnerable, and institutionally constrained, while the Russian one is more affluent and behaviourally unconstrained.

*‘Compared to Russian officials, ours always looked like poor relatives (...). All those jokes about the elder and the younger brother – one clearly richer, freer, more relaxed, and we are more constrained, poorly dressed, and if anything, we get scolded publicly by Lukashenka.’*

Overall, interviews suggest that differences between Belarusian and Russian officials are institutional. In Belarus’s hyper-centralised system, noisy ‘family appointments’ are avoided, and a leadership position is monetised through public procurement and affiliated firms. In Russia, open patronage is more acceptable, and the position itself becomes a source of rent and status. Combined with the scale of budgets available to ministries and general remuneration levels in the public sector, this results in higher material wellbeing among senior Russian officials. Public service in Belarus appears less prestigious than in Russia.

### Geopolitical orientations of Belarusian officials

Another insightful aspect of internal organisation of public administration in Belarus concerns the foreign policy views of civil servants. According to experts and former public servants, it is difficult to identify stable or pronounced geopolitical orientations among Belarusian ministers. Senior leadership adhered to the overall political line set by Lukashenka, and geopolitical preferences played no independent role in appointments to high-level positions.

*‘There was never a situation where someone dreamt of Belarus joining Russia, sought a particular position to achieve that, and somehow influenced government policy or Lukashenka.’*

*‘If cooperation with Russia benefits them, they will be pro-Russian.’*

Only some officials were viewed as leaning toward Russia or the West. For example, Prime Minister Kabiakou was seen as more pro-Russian, while Minister of Foreign Affairs Makei was regarded as being more pro-Western. Inside the bureaucracy, such preferences were taken for granted and explained more by professional networks than by ideological convictions.

*‘In economic affairs, if you deal with Russian businesspeople, that’s just how it is; there’s nothing special about it.’*

Between 2014 and 2020 there was a growth of ‘Western direction’ and multi-vector foreign policy. However, this manifested in specific projects rather than systemic political or ideological changes.

*‘During the 2014-2020 period, the Western direction definitely grew – money, technology, investment, large-scale projects. When they went into the wood processing (...) industry, food processing. I remember the excitement when Turchin brought the Swiss, the Stadler. I can’t recall similar projects from Russia, with a foreign investor bringing real money into Belarusian production. This didn’t happen, so of course the Western block grew.’*

*‘I’d say everything was quite open – towards the West and with Russia. There was an attempt to maintain good relations everywhere.’*

Interviewees also stressed the importance of balance:

*‘In 2017-2020 everyone felt that, yes, we are friendly with the Russians, but we must seek balance, maintain relations with everyone – with Europe, Russia, and China.’*

After 2020, the orientation changed sharply, and Belarus turned decisively toward Russia. Within the bureaucracy, officials with pro-Western views were either repressed or ‘went quiet.’

## CONCLUSIONS

The economic bloc of the Belarusian government consists of ministries whose primary role is to sustain the oversized public sector and uphold political stability. It does not function as an independent policymaking centre but is subordinated to the Presidential Administration and to Lukashenka personally, focusing on implementing directives rather than pursuing structural reforms. Personnel policy in this bloc, as in the government more broadly, is centred on the head of state and marked by opaque procedures.

The professional career paths of heads of economic ministries differ from those of heads of financial ministries.<sup>18</sup> The financial block appears more closed and technocratic, where expertise and internal experience matter. While the heads and deputy heads of the financial ministries typically build their careers within their own institutions, those leading the economic ministries more often come from other public administration bodies or quasi-state organisations. Career paths in the economic ministries characterised by frequent inter-agency rotations and an emphasis on general managerial experience. Belstat is the only agency where leadership follows a consistent internal career path.

In the economic bloc, the position of deputy minister can serve as a career lift, but not always. The trajectory ‘deputy minister → minister’ occurs in roughly one quarter of cases, particularly in the Ministry of Industry. It can be assumed that appointment as deputy minister functions as a probation mechanism to test the managerial suitability of former directors of state-owned enterprises.

Despite the abundance of informal practices in Belarusian public administration, the appointment process of ministers and their deputies is formalised and bureaucratically regulated: it relies on personnel registries, personnel pools (reserves), and mandatory coordination procedures. These instruments were designed as rational mechanisms for selecting and training managerial cadres, but in practice operate inconsistently. In decisive moments, the determining factor is Lukashenka’s preferences rather than institutional procedures.

Among formal requirements for getting a high position, higher education is most important; among informal ones, political loyalty dominates. After 2020 the importance of the latter factor increased. Interviews indicate that many heads of the economic block possess high professional competence. Personal connections do not significantly influence appointments.

Most former ministers and deputy ministers continue to work in public administration or quasi-state organisations. Even high-profile scandals do not necessarily result in their departure from the system, reflecting the closed nature of elite circulation. For the most part, individuals leave the civil service only upon retirement.

The current leadership of the government’s economic bloc is a technocratic group whose authority is constrained by Lukashenka and by the strengthened financial bloc led by the National Bank. The economic bloc functions as a stabilisation mechanism, ensuring predictable economic parameters and social manageability. However, this role also increases its vulnerability: the more central stability becomes, the tighter the control exercised over those responsible for maintaining it.

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<sup>18</sup> BIPART, ‘A Minister’s Path: Career Trajectories in Financial Governance in Belarus’, 2025, [https://bipart.eu/picture/library/fin\\_block\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://bipart.eu/picture/library/fin_block_eng_final.pdf)

## APPENDIX 1

### Biographies of the Ministers of Economy

#### Yury Chabatar (2024-present)

Yury Chabatar (born 1979) was appointed Minister of Economy on 4 January 2024 and continues to hold this position. He was born in Minsk and graduated from the Belarus State Economic University in 2002, followed by the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus in 2008. After university, he worked for one year at the Research Institute of the Ministry of Economy and subsequently began his career within the Ministry itself, rising from economist to Deputy Minister by 2016. In 2020, he became First Deputy Minister, and several years later he was appointed Minister.

#### Aliaksandar Charviakou (2020-2023)

Aliaksandar Charviakou (born 1966) was appointed Minister of Economy on 4 January 2020. He was born in the village of Babinichy (Babinichi) in the Vitsebsk (Vitebsk) region. In 1988, he graduated from the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy, and in 1994 he completed postgraduate studies there. In 1996, he earned a Candidate of Technical Sciences degree, and in 2002 he was awarded the title of Associate Professor. He is the author and co-author of numerous academic works and five inventions, including 'A Device for Preparing Liquid Feed' and 'A Device for Separating Manure into Solid and Liquid Fractions'. He worked for many years at the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy. In 2010, he became Director of the Research Institute of the Ministry of Economy, and in 2017 he was appointed Deputy Minister. In 2018, he became First Deputy Minister and later Minister. After leaving office, he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the People's Republic of China.

#### Zmitser Krutoi (2018-2019)

Zmitser Krutoi (born 1981) was appointed Minister of Economy on 18 August 2018. At the time of his appointment (aged 37), he was the youngest minister in the government. He was born in the village of Bialynichy (Belynichi) in the Mahiliou (Mogilev) region. In 2003, he graduated from the Belarusian State Technological University and subsequently entered postgraduate studies there. In 2010, he received a diploma from the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus. He worked for several years at the Ministry of Forestry and, in 2006, moved to the Ministry of Economy as Deputy Head of a Department. By 2014 he had risen to the position of Deputy Minister, in 2017 he became First Deputy Minister, and in 2018 he became Minister. After leaving this position, he continued his career in government, serving as First Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, and Ambassador to Russia. In 2024, he became Head of the Presidential Administration, a position he still holds.

#### Uladzimir Zinouski (2014-2018)

Uladzimir Zinouski (born 1955) was appointed Minister of Economy on 27 December 2014. He was born in the village of Yalizava (Yelizovo) in the Mahiliou region and graduated from the V. V. Kuibyshev Belarusian State Institute of National Economy (now the Belarus State Economic University) and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus. From 1981 onwards, he pursued a career in the National Statistical Committee, serving

as its Head from 1998 to 2014. In 2014, he was appointed Minister of Economy. There is no public information about further appointments, and he most likely retired.

#### Mikalai Snapkou (2009-2014)

Mikalai Snapkou (born 1969) was appointed Minister of Economy in December 2009. He was born in the city of Mahiliou. In 1991, he graduated from the Belarusian Agricultural Academy, and in 2001 he completed his studies at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus. From 1990 to 1996, he worked in banks and agricultural enterprises. From 1996 to 2009, he developed his career in local government, serving as Deputy Head of the Horki (Gorki) District Executive Committee and as Deputy Head of the Mahiliou Regional Executive Committee. In January 2009, he moved to the Presidential Administration as Deputy Head, and in December 2009 he was appointed Minister of Economy. After leaving office, he continued working in government. He returned to the Presidential Administration as Deputy Head, briefly served as Ambassador to China, and since 2020 has held the post of First Deputy Prime Minister.

#### Mikalai Zaychanka (2003-2009)

Mikalai Zaychanka (born 1948) was appointed Minister of Economy in December 2003. He was born in the settlement of Grodekovo in Primorsky Krai (Russia). In 1971, he graduated from the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute (now the Belarusian National Technical University). He holds a Candidate of Economic Sciences degree. Before becoming Minister, he worked at industrial enterprises and at the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences. He held senior positions at the economic institute of the State Planning Committee of the BSSR and served as First Deputy Minister of Economy. After stepping down from office, he headed the secretariat of a member of the Board for Industry and the Agro-Industrial Complex of the Eurasian Economic Commission.

## APPENDIX 2

### **Biographies of the Ministers of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade**

#### Artur Karpovich (2025-present)

Artur Karpovich (b. 1973) was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade on 14 January 2025 and holds this post at present. Born in Minsk, he graduated from the Belarus State Economic University in 1995. From 1995 to 1999 he worked in private companies, and from 1999 he moved to the State Control Committee, where he held various positions until 2008. In 2009 he headed the Department for Trade and Services Organisation at the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade (MART). In 2011 he joined the Office of the Council of Ministers as Head of Department, and in 2013 returned to MART as First Deputy Minister. He held this post until 2019, after which he headed the Association of Online Trade Enterprises. From 2020 to 2025 Karpovich served as Adviser and Head of the Belarusian Embassy Branch in Ufa (Russian Federation). In January 2025 he returned to MART as Minister. It is known that in the past he also headed the Minsk City Branch of the Belarus Table Tennis Federation.

#### Aliaksei Bahdanau (2021-2025)

Aliaksei Bahdanau (b. 1973) was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade on 21 December 2021 and held this post for three years until January 2025. Born in Minsk, he graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Physical Education and Sport in 1995, the International Humanities and Economics Institute in 2008, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus in 2018, and completed a Master's programme there in 2019. From 1995 to 2000 Bahdanau worked as a trainer-instructor at the Belarusian Traditional Karate Federation, and then for eight years taught in sports departments at Belarusian universities. From 2008 to 2014 he held managerial positions at state-owned enterprises. In 2014 he was appointed Head of the Main Department for Foreign Economic Activities at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and in 2021 became Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food. Less than a year later he was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade. In 2025, after his removal from the ministerial post, Bahdanau was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Kazakhstan. Almost simultaneously, in 2021, he also became President of the Belarus Karate Federation, a position he still holds.

#### Uladzimir Kaltovich (2015-2021)

Uladzimir Kaltovich (b. 1966) was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade on 17 December 2015 and served for six years. Born in Chervien (Chervyen) (Minsk Region), he graduated from the V. V. Kuibyshev Belarusian State Institute of National Economy (now Belarus State Economic University) in 1992 and from the Academy of Public Administration under the President in 2001. He began his career in 1984 as a shop assistant and spent many years working in the trade sector. He later held trade-related roles in the Administration of Zavodsky District in Minsk and in the Minsk City Executive Committee. In 2008 he was appointed Head of the Trade Department of the Council of Ministers, and in 2009 became Deputy Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade. Just a year later, in 2010, Kaltovich returned to the Minsk City Executive Committee as Deputy Chair. From 2012 to 2015 he served as Counsellor-Envoy at the Belarusian Embassy in Russia (Moscow). In 2015 he became Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade. After leaving this

post, he worked for several years as Deputy Head of the Office of the Council of Ministers. He resigned in 2024.

#### Valiantsin Chakanau (2009-2015)

Valiantsin Chakanau (b. 1957) was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade in January 2009 and held the post for nearly seven years. Born in Babruisk (Bobruisk) (Mahiliou Region), he graduated from the Belarus State Economic University, the Institute of Political Science and Social Administration of the Communist Party of Belarus, and the Academy of Public Administration under the President. From 1978 to 1990 he worked within the Komsomol structure. Between 1990 and 1993 he served as Economic Adviser and Head of the Trade Department of the Babruisk City Executive Committee. In the early 2000s he held senior posts in the Management Department of the Presidential Administration. From 2002 to 2009 he headed state-owned enterprise. In 2009 he was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade. At the end of 2015, during the formation of the new government after the presidential election, Chakanau was the only minister not reappointed. Media later reported that he had been detained by law enforcement bodies on charges of abuse of power or official authority. In 2016 it was reported that Chakanau had been released from pre-trial detention after his preventive measure was changed. His subsequent fate is not traceable in open sources.

#### Aliaksandar Ivankou (2005-2009)

Aliaksandar Ivankou (b. 1950) was appointed Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade in 2005 and held the position for four years. Born in Minsk, he graduated from the Moscow Cooperative Institute and the Minsk Higher Party School. From 1972 he worked within the consumer cooperation system, and from the late 1990s held various posts within the Office of the Council of Ministers. In 2003 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, in 2004 First Deputy Minister, and in 2005 Minister. After leaving the post he worked as Head of the Transport Inspectorate of Belarus.

## APPENDIX 3

### Biographies of the Ministers of Industry

#### Andrei Kuznyatsou (2025-present)

Andrei Kuznyatsou (b. 1977) was appointed Minister of Industry on 30 June 2025. Born in Homel (Gomel), he graduated from the P. O. Sukhoi Homel State Technical University in 2001 and completed postgraduate studies at Bryansk State Agrarian University in 2020. Between 2001 and 2013, he worked at the Homel Foundry and Standards Plant, rising to the position of Deputy Director. In 2013 he moved to Russia and held senior posts at Bryanskselmash Plant until 2021. That year he returned to the Homel Foundry and Standards Plant as Director. He became Deputy Minister of Industry in 2024 and Minister in 2025.

#### Aliaksandar Yafimau (2024-2025)

Aliaksandar Yafimau (b. 1983) was appointed Minister of Industry on 27 June 2024. Born in Barysau (Borisov), he graduated from the Zhodzina State Polytechnic College in 2003, the Belarusian National Technical University in 2009, and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus in 2013. From 2003 to 2007 he worked as a machine operator and setter at the Minsk Instrument-Making Plant. From 2007 to 2022 he built his career at SOE 'AMKODOR', eventually becoming its Head. He became Deputy Minister of Industry in 2022 and Minister in 2024. After leaving office he returned to lead AMKODOR.

#### Aliaksandar Rahozhnik (2022-2024)

Aliaksandar Rahozhnik (b. 1976) was appointed Minister of Industry on 3 October 2022. Born in Homel, he graduated from Francysk Skaryna Homel State University in 1998 and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2011. He worked for the Homel customs, the Ministry of Energy, and the Administration of Leninski District in Minsk. From 2011 to 2018 he served as Director of Optoelectronic Systems JSC. In 2018 he became Director of the Minsk Motor Plant. Appointed Minister of Industry in 2022, he was later appointed Ambassador of Belarus to Russia.

#### Piotr Parkhomchyk (2020-2022)

Piotr Parkhomchyk (b. 1957) was appointed Minister of Industry on 4 June 2020. Born in Minsk, he graduated from the V. V. Kuibyshev Belarusian State Institute of National Economy (now the Belarus State Economic University) in 1987, and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2002. He spent more than 30 years at Minsk Tractor Works, eventually becoming First Deputy Director-General. From 2007 to 2020 he headed SOE 'BELAZ'. He became Minister of Industry in 2020. After leaving the post he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister, and in 2024 became Chair of Brest Regional Executive Committee. Parkhomchyk has also taken part in sports governance, including the Belarusian Football Federation and the Belarusian Boxing Federation.

#### Pavel Utsiupin (2018-2020)

Pavel Utsiupin (b. 1976) was appointed Minister of Industry on 18 August 2018. Born in Popovka (Russia), he graduated from the Belarus State Economic University in 1998, and later from the Academy of Public Administration; he holds a PhD. He worked in industry and from 2002 to 2006 served as Adviser to the Chair of Mahiliou Regional Executive Committee. From 2006 to 2011 he was Deputy Director-General of SOE 'Belshina'. In 2011 he became Deputy Minister of Industry,

and in late 2017 moved to the Ministry of Economy as Deputy Minister. In 2018 he returned to the Ministry of Industry as its head. After leaving the post he was appointed Ambassador to Kazakhstan, and in 2025 became Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

#### Vitali Vouk (2014-2018)

Vitali Vouk (b. 1962) was appointed Minister of Industry on 27 December 2014. Born in Kalinkavichy (Kalinkovichi), he graduated from the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute in 1984 and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2009. He worked at various industrial enterprises and served as Deputy Director-General (2006-2010) and then Director (2011-2014) of the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant. He became Minister of Industry in 2014. In summer 2018 he was publicly dismissed by Lukashenka ‘for failing to implement the President’s instructions on the comprehensive development of the Orsha district and improper performance of official duties’. However, only a month later he became Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Vitsebsk Region, and from 2019 to 2024 headed Minsk Tractor Works. In 2025 he became Deputy Director of the Department for Industrial Policy at the Eurasian Economic Commission.

#### Zmitser Katsiarynich (2011-2014)

Zmitser Katsiarynich (b. 1957) was appointed Minister of Industry on 4 February 2011. Born in the village of Huta (Guta) in Brest Region, he graduated from the Belarusian State Technological University in 1983 and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2007. He worked in the industrial sector, became Adviser to the Director-General of SOE ‘Belshina’ in 2003, and then Director-General in 2006. He became Minister of Industry in 2011. After leaving office he headed SOE ‘MAZ’.

#### Aliaksandar Radzevich (2009-2011)

Aliaksandar Radzevich (b. 1957) was appointed Minister of Industry on 26 June 2009. Born in the village of Poharelshchyna (Pogorelschina) in Hrodna (Grodno) Region, he graduated from the Minsk Radio Engineering Institute in 1979. He worked in the industrial sector and in 2002 became Deputy Chair of Hrodna Regional Executive Committee. From 2005 to 2009 he headed SOE ‘Grodno Azot’. He became Minister of Industry in 2009. After leaving office he headed the Minsk Electrotechnical Plant named after V. I. Kozlov.

#### Anatol Rusetski (2003-2009)

Anatol Rusetski (b. 1951) was appointed Minister of Industry in 2003. Born in Barysau (Borisov), he graduated from the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute in 1973. A Doctor of Engineering Science and Professor, he is a specialist in electronic engineering. He authored more than 70 scientific works and holds 13 inventor’s certificates and patents. He worked at the Academy of Sciences, design bureaux and research-production associations. From 1997 to 2002 he served as Deputy and then First Deputy Minister of Industry. After leaving the post he worked at the Academy of Sciences and in the Council of the Republic.

## APPENDIX 4

### Biographies of the Ministers of Agriculture and Food

#### Yury Harlou (2025-present)

Yury Harlou (born 1977) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 4 March 2025 and continues to hold this post. He was born in the village of Lubyenki in the Bryansk region of Russia. In 2000, he graduated from the Bryansk State Agricultural Academy, and in 2009 from the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus. He worked as a livestock specialist at the Kamsamolets collective farm and from 2001 to 2012 built his career in district and regional executive committees. From 2012 to 2013, he headed the Breeding Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. He then returned to local executive authorities for ten years, heading the Staubtsy (Stolbtsy) and Maladziechna (Molodechno) district executive committees. From 2023 to 2025, he served as Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Homel Region, after which he was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food.

#### Anatol Linevich (2024-2025)

Anatol Linevich (born 1968) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 27 June 2024. He was born in the village of Sukhapol (Sukhopol) in the Brest region. He graduated from the Belarusian Institute of Agricultural Mechanisation in 1992, from Brest State Technical University in 2004, and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2008. He worked for many years in collective and state farms, leading several state-owned agricultural enterprises. In 2012, he began a career in local executive authorities, becoming head of the Kapyl (Kopyl) district executive committee in 2016. In 2019, he was appointed Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Vitsebsk Region. In 2023-2024, he served as First Deputy Head of the Vitsebsk regional executive committee. His tenure as minister lasted less than a year, and no subsequent appointments have been publicly reported.

#### Siarhei Bartash (2023-2024)

Siarhei Bartash (born 1974) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 8 August 2023. He was born in the village of Repiakhi (Repekhi) in the Brest region. He graduated from the Hrodna State Agrarian Institute in 1995, from the Institute for Advanced Training and Retraining of Personnel of Brest State Technical University in 2006, and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2012. He began his career in collective farms and agricultural enterprises, served as a deputy of the Pruzhany District Council, and from 2016 worked in district and regional executive committees. In 2022, he was appointed Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Homel Region; less than a year later, he became minister. In 2024, he was appointed Head of the Shklou district executive committee, a post he still holds.

#### Ihar Bryla (2022-2023)

Ihar Bryla (born 1972) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 10 February 2022. He was born in Barysau. He graduated from the Vitsebsk State Academy of Veterinary Medicine in 1996, from the Belarus State Economic University in 2008, and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2015. He holds a PhD. Bryla worked for many years as a veterinary doctor at veterinary stations and enterprises. In 2011, he became First Deputy Chairman of the Barysau district executive committee. In 2013, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food;

in 2021, First Deputy Minister; and in 2022, Minister. He remained in office for a year and a half. In summer 2023, he was appointed Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Vitsebsk Region, but several months later he was dismissed ‘for committing an offence incompatible with public civil service’. Media reported that he had been detained by the SSC. No further information is available.

#### Ivan Krupko (2020-2021)

Ivan Krupko (born 1974) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 16 March 2020. He was born in the village of Burdzevichy (Burdevichi) in the Hrodna region. In 1998, he graduated from the Hrodna State Agrarian University, and in 2007 from the Academy of Public Administration. He worked as a livestock specialist in the collective farm. In 2003, he joined the Niasvizh (Nesvizh) district executive committee and rose to its chairmanship by 2010. In 2018, he became Chairman of the Minsk district executive committee. Two years later, he was appointed minister, and a year and a half later – Head of the Homel regional executive committee, which he continues to lead.

#### Anatol Khat’ko (2019-2020)

Anatol Khat’ko (born 1974) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 2 April 2019. He was born in the village of Buda-Hreskaya (Buda-Gresskaya) in the Minsk region. He graduated from the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy in 1996 and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2006 and 2019. He worked in collective farms and enterprises, served as Chief Livestock Specialist of the Barysau district executive committee, headed a state grain-processing enterprise from 2007, and later led the State Breeding Association. From 2019 to 2020, he served as Minister of Agriculture. Since 2021, he has been Director of a branch of the Belarusian State Technological University.

#### Leanid Zayats (2012-2019)

Leanid Zayats (born 1958) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 21 August 2012. He was born in the village of Hatsuk (Gatsuk) in the Minsk region. In 1989, he graduated from the Belarusian Agricultural Academy. He worked in state-owned farms and enterprises, headed the Maladzyechna district executive committee from 1999, and served as Deputy Chairman of the Minsk regional executive committee from 2001 to 2008. From 2008 to 2012, he headed the Dziarzhynski agricultural complex. He served as minister for a record seven years. He was dismissed after Aliaksandar Lukashenka publicly criticised conditions at a dairy complex. However, within days, Zayats was appointed Chairman of the Mahiliou regional executive committee, where he worked for almost three years. He later became Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Republic. From 2022 to 2024, he served as Deputy Prime Minister. In 2024, he became a member of the Council of the Republic.

#### Mikhail Rusy (2010-2012)

Mikhail Rusy (born 1954) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food on 24 May 2010. He was born in the village of Varonina (Voronino) in the Homel region. He graduated from the Belarusian Agricultural Academy in 1977, from the Minsk Higher Party School in 1989, and from the Academy of Public Administration in 2007. Rusy began his career in collective farms, worked in district executive committees and in the Communist Party. From 1994 to 2001, he served as Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. In 2001, he was appointed Minister of Agriculture

and Food for the first time. Thus, the 2010 appointment was his second, and overall he held the minister post three times. Between appointments, Rusy worked at the Belarusian Embassy in Russia and chaired parliamentary agricultural committees and the Agrarian Party. After his dismissal in 2012, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister for seven years. In 2019, he became Assistant to the President for the position of Inspector for Mahiliou Region, and eight months later joined the Council of the Republic, where he still serves.

#### Siamion Shapira (2008-2010)

Siamion Shapira (born 1961) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food in 2008. He was born in the village of Rechan (Rechen) in the Minsk region and graduated from the V. V. Kuibyshev Belarusian State Institute of National Economy. He holds a doctorate in economics and is a professor. He worked in state farms and agricultural enterprises and served as a senior official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food from 1999 to 2004. From 2004 to 2008, he headed the Dziarzhynski agricultural complex. After serving as minister, he chaired the Hrodna and Minsk regional executive committees and the Belarus Ice Hockey Federation. He left public service in 2018.

#### Leanid Rusak (2004-2008)

Leanid Rusak (born 1952) was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food in 2004. Born in the village of Kukhchitsy in the Minsk region, he graduated from the Vitsebsk Veterinary Institute in 1980. He worked in collective farms and agribusiness organisations and held senior positions in Soviet party structures. He headed the Minsk district executive committee and served as Deputy Chairman of the Minsk regional executive committee. After stepping down as minister in 2008, no further public appointments have been reported.

## APPENDIX 5

### **Biographies of the Chairs of the National Statistical Committee**

Inna Miadzvedzeva (2014-present)

Inna Miadzvedzeva (born 1969) was appointed Chair of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus in 2014 and continues to hold the post. Born in Minsk, she graduated from the Belarusian Order of the Red Banner of Labour Polytechnic Institute in 1991 and from the Belarusian State Economic University in 1997. From 1991 to 2005 she built her career within the system of state statistics, eventually becoming Deputy Chair of Belstat. In 2005 she moved to the Presidential Administration, serving as Head of the Main Economic Directorate. In 2014 she returned to Belstat to lead the institution and has remained in this position since then.

Uladzimir Zinouski (1998-2014)

Uladzimir Zinouski (born 1955) was appointed Chair of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (at that time the Ministry of Statistics and Analysis) in 1998 and held the post until 2014. Born in the village of Yalizava (Yelizovo) in the Mahiliou Region, he graduated from the V. V. Kuibyshev Belarusian State Institute of National Economy and, in 1993, from the Academy of Public Administration under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus (later reorganised as the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus). He spent his entire career in the system of state statistics; by 1992 he had become Deputy Head of Belstat, and six years later he was appointed Chair. After stepping down in 2014, he was appointed Minister of Economy. He retired in 2018.