

Regulations for the Accreditation of Foreign Journalists in Belarus

Enacted by Bylaw
of the Belarusian Council of Ministers
No. 2015 dated 25/12/2008

Regulations for the Accreditation of Foreign Journalists in Belarus

1. These regulations specify the procedures of accreditation for the foreign journalists in Belarus.
2. These regulations make use of the terminology and their meanings as defined by the Media Law of the Republic of Belarus dated 17 July 2008 (National Registry of Belarusian Legal Acts, 2008, No. 196, 2/1524).
3. Foreign media shall seek accreditation for their journalists, depending on their functions, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that issues accreditation for the following capacities: a foreign correspondent (correspondents, columnists, editors, presenters, commentators, producers, etc.); technical staff (photographers, TV and audio crews, lighting specialists, TV-, photo- and video maintenance staff, communications experts, drivers, secretary-interpreters and others).
4. Regardless of citizenship, foreign journalists may be entitled to:
 - permanent accreditation in Belarus, provided their stay in Belarus to exercise functions will last one year or longer;
 - temporary accreditation in Belarus, if they are due to arrive in Belarus under the instructions of the media so as to report on certain events or topics, or replace, for a two-month period, a permanently accredited journalist who should be absent from his or her job for vacations, a business trip, or on sick leave.
5. Accreditation cannot be issued to the staff of foreign diplomatic and consular missions, offices of the international organizations in Belarus, and individuals who are members of mass media registered in Belarus.
6. A written request signed by the head of a medium seeking the accreditation of a journalist shall be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Where permanent accreditation is sought, the following documents should be attached thereto:

- General details about a mass medium and its correspondent offices in Belarus;
- CV of the journalist, profiling his professional activities;
- Application Form completed by the journalist in either official language of Belarus or in English as patterned;
- Two photos;
- A copy of ID;
- A copy of journalist's ID card.

Where temporary accreditation is sought, the following documents should be attached thereto:

- Application Form completed by the journalist in either official language of Belarus or in English as patterned;
- Two photos.

7. The Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall consider applications for permanent accreditation within two months of receipt of the application, applications for temporary accreditation within 20 days of receipt of the application.

The application considered, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decides to either issue or deny accreditation.

8. Where permanent accreditation has been authorized for journalists and technical staff of the foreign media, a correspondent's accreditation card, valid for one year, is issued to the appropriate individual. The family members are issued a family member card for the same period.

The temporarily accredited journalists are issued accreditation cards valid for a maximum of two months, the technical staff of the foreign media may be entitled to accreditation cards of the technical staff for the same period.

9. A foreign journalist is not allowed to carry out his or her professional activities without an accreditation card.

10. A decision to deny accreditation may be issued if:

- The submitted paperwork falls short of the documents listed in Article 6 of these Regulations
- The application does not meet the requirements specified in Part 1 of Paragraph 6;
- The filed documents contain deliberately false information;
- The foreign journalist used to work as a foreign journalist in Belarus without being accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or without accreditation card.

11. In case the accreditation card is lost, the foreign journalist has to report the loss to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which further decides, within 14 days of the report filed, whether to issue a replica of the accreditation card.

12. Where permanent accreditation is required to be extended, with the card thereof due to be extended accordingly, a foreign mass medium editor shall, not later than fifteen days before the accreditation expires, send a written formal letter to the MFA requesting to extend the accreditation.

The letter shall be sent in with a filled-out application and two photos attached.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs decides whether to extend foreign journalist's accreditation within 15 days of receipt of such application.

13. The foreign journalist is obliged to relinquish his and his family's accreditation cards to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the accreditation period expires.

14. A foreign journalist, already accredited in Belarus as such, can be accredited as a correspondent of other foreign Mass Media as specified by these Regulations.

15. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is entitled to:

15.1. Issue a warning notice to a foreign journalist, provided that the journalist fails to meet the requirements of these Regulations.

15.2. Withdraw accreditation (including accreditation of a journalist in several foreign Mass Media) in the following cases:

repeated infringement of the accreditation rules within a year or dissemination of erroneous information, or that denigrating honour and dignity of citizens and (or) other individuals. infringement by a foreign journalist of the Belarusian legislation and these Regulations;

- 15.3. Withdraw accreditation for six months of all journalists of the foreign medium that uses the services of journalists and (or) other individuals whose accreditation was cancelled or had not been issued, and also deny accreditation for new journalists of this medium during the same period;
- 15.4. Deny accreditation for the medium, for the period of six months, where it is established that the medium has used the services of non-accredited journalists and (or) other individuals;
- 15.5. Reciprocate towards journalists of those countries that adopted restrictions in respect of the Belarusian journalists.