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Policies for Sufficiency as Climate Policies Presentation of sufficiency policies and proposals from Belarus

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Sufficiency in Belarus

Practice without policy — and what to do about it

- Ecohome · civil society in exile and inside the country



By practice, Belarus already lives closer to sufficiency than most EU countries

HOUSING

Small

floor area per person

TRANSPORT

Low

car ownership, high public transport use

PRODUCTS

Repair

still the norm, not a revival

FOOD

30–40%

of households grow their own

HOLIDAYS

2.2 M

travel at home rather than abroad

And yet there is no sufficiency policy at all.

These practices come from low incomes and Soviet infrastructure — not from deliberate choice, and not from regulation.

Involuntary sufficiency dissolves as incomes rise

01

Car ownership rising

Motorisation climbing from a low base

02

Second-hand markets losing to marketplaces

Cheap new goods displace resale and import a fast-fashion model

03

The dacha generation is ageing

Food-growing knowledge held by people who won't be replaced automatically

04

Delivery normalises single-use

A food order arrives as containers and cutlery, a parcel as plastic and cardboard

The reframing has to happen while the practice still exists. Rebuilding a lost repair culture — costs several times more than sustaining a living one.

Isolation reshaped holidays more thoroughly than any climate policy



× 2

domestic travel since 2019 —
1.1 M → 2.2 M a year



93.8%

of those trips were
single-day excursions



–25%

outbound travel is still
below the 2019 level



1.1 : 1 → 3 : 1

domestic-to-outbound ratio,
2019 versus 2025

This is not sufficiency. It is isolation.

Short distances, surface transport, rural stays instead of flying — the exact pattern EU policy is chasing, produced by an airspace ban, visa barriers and cost. Freedom of movement is not available for climate trade-offs.

Outbound travel is already up 19% in a year, and will rebound fast when borders open. Room occupancy is 38.5%; multi-day domestic tourism barely exists. The task is quality by then — not preserving the restriction.

Households pay about one fifth of what heat actually costs

27–29

BYN / Gcal · subsidised household tariff, from 1 March 2026

147.5

BYN / Gcal · full recovery of economically justified costs

What follows

- No price signal for saving — campaigns work against household economics
- The gap is absorbed by the budget, including by people who consume little
- Raising the tariff alone would be sharply regressive and politically impossible

Floor before ceiling

A “consume less” message aimed at a society where much of the population already lives modestly will be rejected — and rightly so.

The Belarusian version starts with a guaranteed minimum of heat, mobility, space and decent food for everyone — and only then constrains excess at the top.

Constrain excess

second

**Guarantee
the minimum**

first

Don't let the window close

01

Anchor it in policy

Tariffs, codes, infrastructure, institutions — what outlives a change of government and does not depend on income levels.

02

Make it a deliberate choice

Education, schools and universities, culture, the public conversation that makes repairing and sharing normal and current rather than a mark of going without. This is civil society work, and it is possible now.

- *Policy alone is not enough. If the practice stays a marker of poverty, it leaves when poverty does — only what people choose for themselves remains.*

It works without the state — which is why it fits Belarus

No registration, no public advocacy, no foreign attribution required.



Repair

Mending sessions for clothes, appliances, bicycles. Start small; no owned premises.



Exchange & reuse

Swaps of clothing, books, children's items, seeds — restoring Belarus's own freemarket line.



Sharing

Neighbourhood lending of tools and equipment. Simplest form: a list in a building chat.



Food

Seed exchange, local varieties, preserving; food waste at building level; plant-rich diets.



Documentation

Record what is repaired, how second-hand works, who grows food. No central base, no personal data.



Communication

Money first. Tradition, not sacrifice. Health and neighbourliness beat a climate frame.

The work that cannot be done from inside

First rule: do not create risk for partners inside.

No reporting or visibility that endangers them; donor communication requirements stop with us.

- **Transfer models, not brochures**
Repair workshops, libraries of things and seeds, food-sharing cabinets, reuse rooms — delivered as replicable protocols: what is needed, how many people, how much money, what fails.
- **Language and terminology**
Materials in Belarusian and Russian. The word for “sufficiency” is technical in both — lead with the practice, introduce the term later.
- **Keep Belarus on the regional map**
Named in Nordic–Baltic sufficiency strategies and project outputs. Visibility matters for future policy windows.
- **Prepare the reform package**
Turn the measures ahead into draft instruments, ready for the first months of a transition — when there will be no time to write them.

What a transition would need — floor before ceiling

I First year	II 1–3 years	III 3–10 years
• Apartment-level heat metering and control, funded by the programme • Moratorium on cutting tram and trolleybus networks • Free travel for children, students, the elderly • Reuse rooms at waste sites; libraries of things at public libraries	• Tariff reform — only after metering, control and targeted support • Deposit-return system for packaging • Reduced VAT on repair and second-hand, in primary legislation • Parking reform; zero-traffic-growth agreements with cities • Transport allowance where public transport is inadequate	• Thermal renovation of panel housing, worst heat loss first • Right to repair: repairability, spare parts, information • Regional rail links and local stations restored • Co-housing and shared-facility ownership framework

Keep Belarus on the regional agenda

Name the country in Nordic–Baltic sufficiency strategies, in joint papers and in research — even while we can take part only in part.

The situation will change and we will return to normal work. By then, deliberate sufficiency should no longer be a state of affairs forced on people, but one of the principles the reforms are built on.

- *Visibility today is what a political window is made of tomorrow.*