

Sufficiency as Climate Action and for Sustainable Lifestyles in Nordic & Baltic Countries and Belarus

Seminar in Tartu, Estonia & ONLINE - April 20, 2026

Sufficiency in Belarus

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NORDIC-BALTIC SUFFICIENCY SEMINAR – 20 April 2026



Sufficiency in Belarus

Measures · Proposals · Communication

Ecohome NGO
Belarus/ Lithuania



Sufficiency
as
Climate
Action

CONTEXT: BELARUS & SUFFICIENCY



Challenging Context

- Political restrictions limit formal policy advocacy
- Civil society operating under significant constraints
- Ecohome in exile in Lithuania since 2021
- Economic pressures reduce individual choice
- Limited access to international networks

Opportunities & Strengths

- Strong tradition of home-growing food & self-sufficiency
- Culture of repair, reuse and 'making do'
- High public transport use in cities
- Dacha culture = local food production
- Active online environmental communities

Ecohome NGO works across borders to support Belarusian civil society on environmental issues

CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACTION: BEFORE 2020



Before the political crisis, Belarus had a vibrant eco-civil society movement — documented by Green Belarus Portal (greenbelarus.info):



VeganFest Minsk

Annual festival: lectures, vegan food market, film screenings, workshops on animal rights & plant-based living. Held at Korpus Cultural Centre, Minsk.

2018 · 2021



Book & Clothing Freemarket

Free exchange market — take what you need, leave what you don't. Book freemarkets since 2015 (8+ events). Clothing swaps in Minsk, Vitebsk, Gomel.

2015 – 2020



Eco-Market «Pasternak»

First eco-market in Belarus: organic food, ethical cosmetics, handmade goods. Held on World Vegan Day. Friendly atmosphere, community-building focus.

2015 – 2019



Karani Kirmash Eco-Festival

3-day eco-festival in Minsk: craftspeople's market, ecology lectures, yoga, herbal tea, music. Focused on human connection with nature and with each other.

2020 · 2021



Farmers' Market «Usyo Svayo»

Weekly Saturday farmers' market in Minsk (Kalvariyskaya 21). Homemade cheese, cottage cheese, pies – meet the farmers, trace the food's journey.

2021

WHAT THESE EVENTS SHOWED



These events were not just markets – they were spaces for building an eco-conscious community:

Community over commerce

Participants came to connect, share knowledge, and exchange ideas – not just to buy. Events featured lectures, workshops, yoga, music alongside stalls.

Sufficiency as a lived practice

Freemarkets, second-hand clothing swaps and repair workshops made circular consumption fun and social – not preachy or restrictive.

Food sovereignty & plant-based culture

VeganFest and organic markets introduced Belarusians to local farmers and plant-based food as affordable, healthy and culturally fitting.

Network building

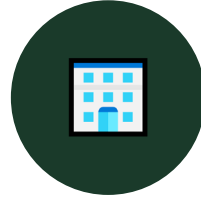
Events connected NGOs, craftspeople, farmers, young activists, and everyday citizens – creating the social fabric for a wider sufficiency movement.

greenbelarus.info documented all these events in detail – [click here to browse](#)



District Heating

- Soviet-era centralised district heating still dominant
- Lower per-capita energy than individual boilers
- State sets heating seasons – reduces over-heating
- Thermostat access still limited in many buildings



Compact Housing

- High-density Soviet apartment blocks widely used
- Smaller average floor area than Western Europe
- Dacha plots used for seasonal living & food growing



Energy Behaviour

- Economic necessity drives energy conservation
- Strong culture of turning off lights, heating
- Double-glazing self-installation common practice
- Ecohome campaigns on smart energy habits

Transport

- Extensive urban public transport (trams, trolleybuses, buses, metro in Minsk)
- High public transport ridership – low car ownership vs. EU average
- Walking & cycling common for short trips in cities and towns
- Shared marshrutka (minibus) culture in cities and between towns
- Rail network connecting cities

Food & Self-Sufficiency

- Dacha culture: 30–40% of households grow own vegetables & fruits
- Home pickling, preserving, fermenting – deeply embedded tradition
- Market-based local food: farmers markets in most cities
- Ecohome: campaigns promoting plant-based and seasonal food choices

IMPLEMENTED MEASURES: PRODUCTS, REPAIR & SHARING

Strong

Repair culture

Electronics, appliances & clothing repaired rather than discarded – economic necessity

Active

Second-hand markets

Bazary and online platforms widely used for buying/selling used goods

Growing

Sharing practices

Tool sharing among neighbours; community sharing of garden equipment common

Note: Many sufficiency practices in Belarus arise from economic necessity rather than explicit environmental policy – this is both a challenge and an opportunity.

PROPOSALS FROM ECOHOME NGO



01

Recognise existing sufficiency practices

Frame and celebrate traditional Belarusian practices (dacha culture, repair, home food production) as sufficiency successes – build positive identity around them.

02

Expand repair & reuse networks

Support establishment of repair cafés, tool libraries and second-hand hubs through civil society – low-cost, high-impact entry points for sufficiency.

03

Promote plant-based food choices

Online campaigns and school programmes to frame plant-rich diets as healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate – not as deprivation.

04

Advocate for smart thermostat access

Push for individual thermostat control in apartment buildings – a key energy sufficiency measure with immediate cost benefits for residents.

05

Build cross-border knowledge networks

Connect Belarusian civil society with Nordic-Baltic experiences and resources, channelled via diaspora and exile organisations like Ecohome.

Environmental Organisations



Calls for formal recognition of sufficiency in national climate strategies; support for community gardens and urban food growing; campaigns against single-use plastics and fast fashion.

Diaspora & Exile Networks



Transfer of Nordic-Baltic sufficiency models to Belarusian audiences via online channels; promotion of circular economy concepts through social media and webinars accessible inside Belarus.

Youth & Student Groups



Zero-waste student initiatives at universities; clothing swaps and repair workshops; advocacy for cycling infrastructure and safe pedestrian routes in cities.

Community & Local Initiatives



Neighbourhood food sharing schemes; community composting projects; local seed-sharing networks preserving traditional crop varieties and reducing dependence on commercial inputs.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE SUFFICIENCY IN BELARUS



Frame as tradition, not sacrifice

Connect to existing values: "We have always been resourceful"



Lead with economic benefits

Save money, reduce bills – a universal motivator across all audiences



Health & wellbeing framing

Plant-rich food, cycling, less clutter – good for your health



Community & solidarity

Sharing, repairing together – strengthens social bonds

Key Communication Channels



TikTok, Telegram, Instagram

Primary channels for environmental communities inside Belarus



YouTube & online video

Tutorials on repair, growing food, energy saving



Diaspora networks

Ecohome and others amplify messages cross-border



School & university programmes

Where direct access is possible



Word of mouth & neighbours

Grassroots – still the most trusted channel

WHAT BELARUSIAN CIVIL SOCIETY NEEDS



Requests to Nordic-Baltic partners and this seminar:

1

Share practical, replicable models

Examples of low-cost sufficiency initiatives that can be adapted in constrained contexts – new context for old practices.

2

Support communication materials

Translated, accessible resources in Russian and Belarusian on sufficiency measures – for use via online channels.

3

Include Belarus in regional advocacy

Name Belarus in Nordic-Baltic sufficiency strategies – visibility matters for future policy windows when conditions allow.

4

Solidarity and continued partnership

Maintain and strengthen the connection with Belarusian civil society in exile and inside the country.

Thank You

Ecohome NGO Belarus / Lithuania



More: <https://ecohome.ngo/>

More: Sufficiency as Climate Action Project, presentations and publications:
[https://inforse.org/europe/Sufficiency as Climate Action Project.htm](https://inforse.org/europe/Sufficiency%20as%20Climate%20Action%20Project.htm)

