**From:** PUBB UK <>

**Subject: Re: Social responsibility of Bayer - placing of advertisements on Belarusian State Television**

**Date:** 8 August 2021 at 12:17:06 BST

**To:** werner.baumann@bayer.com

**Cc:** christopher.loder@bayer.com, <>@belarusabroad.org, <>@belarusabroad.org, <>@gmail.com

Dear Mr Baumann

We refer to our below request which remains unaddressed so far.

The placement of ads on Belarusian TV by European and American companies is now attracting the attention of [media](https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=auto&tl=en&u=https://www.dw.com/ru/pravozashhitniki-zapadnye-korporacii-finansirujut-propagandu-lukashenko/a-58751449) and [social networks](https://twitter.com/andersostlund/status/1423200561474777090). Also, at the end of June, [EUvsDisinfo](https://euvsdisinfo.eu/about/) (the EU cell dedicated to strategic communication to Eastern Europe) devoted a specific publication to the fact that [Belarusian television fuels hate](https://euvsdisinfo.eu/disinformation-fuels-hate-on-belarusian-tv/).

We request you to reconsider your group’s stance in this matter (as per our message below) as the current situation is not in line with the applicable ethical standards and is potentially detrimental to your group’s reputation.

Yours sincerely,

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**P**rofessional **U**nion of **B**elarusians in **B**ritain

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[www.pubb.uk](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pubb.org.uk%2F&data=04%7C01%7Civana.blazanovic%40normagroup.com%7C5c26ba517abd40ec8bb408d93a3f486f%7C458226210c354772b6100387c186eeba%7C0%7C0%7C637604865870256054%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=hFYbNwXjhbTgVjcIYbX0k%2Bz72AtATr%2FJKXqxWWII9ts%3D&reserved=0)

<>

On 23 Jul 2021, at 10:54, PUBB UK < > wrote:

Dear Mr Baumann

Have you had the opportunity to consider our below request? We remain at your disposal for any additional information and are looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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**P**rofessional **U**nion of **B**elarusians in **B**ritain

<>

[www.pubb.uk](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http*3A*2F*2Fwww.pubb.org.uk*2F&data=04*7C01*7Civana.blazanovic*40normagroup.com*7C5c26ba517abd40ec8bb408d93a3f486f*7C458226210c354772b6100387c186eeba*7C0*7C0*7C637604865870256054*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C1000&sdata=hFYbNwXjhbTgVjcIYbX0k*2Bz72AtATr*2FJKXqxWWII9ts*3D&reserved=0__;JSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJQ!!IY5JXqZAIQ!tPGvir7e2JloAfFKPKZkLB4iWnKJBqaTJI8mnorYZCDQY9H3GHK4GvdFhNqPmw72qAk$)

<>

On 8 Jul 2021, at 09:41, PUBB UK <[pubb.uk.by@gmail.com](mailto:pubb.uk.by@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Mr Baumann,

We, the Professional Union of Belarusians in Britain (PUBB), the People’s Embassy of Belarus in the UK and the Belarusian Community Group "Nadzeya" are reaching out to you regarding the placing of a television advertisement for Bayer on Belarusian State Television.

We urge you to abstain from placing further advertisements on Belarusian TV channels. Indeed, Belarusian state television is a propaganda tool used to distort the truth, intimidate the population and support the illegitimate regime and state terrorism:

* The highjacking of the Ryanair civilian plane on 23 May was called the “salvation of Europe” by the ONT channel. The broadcasting of Roman Protasevich’s “confessions” and also the “interviews” were clearly conductedunder duress and amounts to complicity in torture according to international legal practice. As early as November 2020, the political prisoner, Mikalai Dziadok, was shown on Belarusian state television and forced to make a confession of guilt visibly under torture. Numerous other opponents of the regime are regularly forced to confess their guilt on Belarusian state television.
* On 1st of June 2021, the  [European Broadcasting Union (EBU) expelled Belteleradio](https://wiwibloggs.com/2021/06/30/belarus-ebu-expels-belarus-broadcaster-btrc-not-eligible-for-eurovision/265914/) in view of concerns regarding the public Belarusian broadcaster’s ability to uphold the EBU core values of freedom of expression, independence and accountability.
* The [chairman](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L:2020:426I:FULL&from=EN) and [vice chair of Belteleradio are both on the EU sanctions list](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0997&from=EN) because respectively “... *he is responsible for the dissemination of state propaganda in public media and continues to support the Lukashenka regime. … he also fired striking employees of Belteleradio Company under his management, thereby making him responsible for human rights violations*” and “*... has been willingly providing the Belarusian public with false information about the outcome of elections, protests and the repressions perpetrated by the state authorities...*“
* There is ample evidence of violations of workers' rights on Belarusian state television: pressure, intimidation, dismissals for participating in strikes and protests (see above quotes from the EU Regulations).
* The situation of media freedom in Belarus has been alarming for many years. In the Reporters Without Borders press freedom ranking, Belarus is ranked 158 out of 180 countries. On 18 May 2021, the most popular independent Belarusian website TUT.BY was shut down. According to the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), 25 media workers are currently imprisoned, including 12 TUT.BY staff and 5 Press Club Belarus staff.

We note that under its Human Rights Policy, Suppliers Code of Conduct and its commitments to UN Global Compact principles, Bayer subscribed to and expect its business partner to respect universal human rights principles, including freedom of association and non discrimination on political grounds. We kindly invite you to consider if continuing cooperation with a propaganda tool of "illegitimate, illegal and criminal" (these are the actual terms from the [EU Parliament Resolution](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0328_EN.html)) regime is compatible with Bayer ethical standards and the above commitments?

We are confident that Bayer highly values ​​its reputation and the risks that it incurs from prolonging cooperation with Belarusian broadcaster are incommensurate with the reputational and eventual financial damage. There are several additional considerations for cutting ties with the Belarusian state TV:

1. Public refusal to cooperate with the Belarusian state television will help you win the sympathy of an audience that does not watch Belarusian TV. Such news will be published in independent media, telegram channels, social networks and will create a positive image of your company among opponents of the illegitimate government, as can be seen from the example of the [Nivea, Skoda](https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=ru&tl=en&u=https://charter97.org/ru/news/2021/1/16/407818/) and [Liqui-Moly](https://belsat.eu/en/news/liqui-moly-to-not-sponsor-hockey-world-cup-if-it-takes-place-in-belarus/) brands, which refused to sponsor the World Ice Hockey Championship in Minsk.

2. [Only 15% of the country's population trusts](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/2021-06-14-belarusians-views-political-crisis.pdf) the state television. More than half of Belarusians prefer to receive information from independent media, social networks and telegram channels.

3. The negative attitude towards pro-government television extends to the companies that cooperate with it, including advertisers. Advertising of Nestlé products, which interrupted the so-called "interview" of Protasevich, triggered indignation of Belarusians and world audience,  an [open letter from over 50 NGOs](https://freedomhouse.org/article/nestle-must-immediately-stop-funding-state-media-belarus) and [its shaming in the leading German publications](https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/unternehmen/warum-nestle-fuer-sein-handeln-in-belarus-kritisiert-wird-17408163.html) after which [Nestlé announced a significant reduction of its advertising budget](https://www.rnd.de/politik/belarus-nestle-wegen-tv-werbung-in-der-kritik-folteropfer-und-schokoriegel-QMK6V6NHMZHJHJ2HBDGUSR6PJY.html) in Belarus.

4. Presumably your company made a decision to place advertisements based on audience analysis provided by [Mediameter («Медиаизмеритель»)](https://mediameter.by/), Realnoe Izmerenie («Реальное измерение») or MediaMetrix. There are reasons to believe that these companies are not only involved in corruption schemes, but also [provide inaccurate information about the TV viewing](https://aro.by/2021/06/01/%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3-%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2-2/) indicators in Belarus.

5. Further its expulsion from EBU, it is highly likely that the Belarusian state channels will be deprived of the right to broadcast the summer Olympics, which will significantly affect the TV viewing indicators and reduce the effectiveness of advertising.

We are sending similar requests to all major advertisers in Belarus, including Nestlé, Jacobs, Mars and Henkel and trust Bayer will be a champion of acting up to its affirmed ethical standards.

Please keep us informed on your group’s decision. We are looking forward to hearing from you. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us (<>, PUBB, <>; + <>) should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

<>, coordinator, Professional Union of Belarusians in Britain

<>, coordinator, People's Embassy of Belarus in the United Kingdom

Belarusian Community Group "Nadzeya", signed collectively