

BELARUSIANS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Stephen White, Tania Biletskaya and Ian McAllister

Glasgow: CSPP *Studies in Public Policy* No. 489, 2011.

ISSN: 0140-8240

Abstract

Belarus has a divided identity that reflects its complex history and culture. Focus groups and a national survey conducted in 2011 suggest that the wider society is more likely to regard itself as European than counterparts in Ukraine and Russia, but less likely to do so than other European countries. There was substantial support for a hypothetical EU membership, particularly among younger respondents, but there was also strong and widespread support for a closer association with the other member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Over the past decade it is the multidirectional foreign policy followed by the current leadership, which seeks closer relations with East and West at the same time, that has found the greatest support. A Slavic choice is also popular, much more so than a Western choice or isolationism.