



Belarus – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 3 August 2012

If a Belarusian ex-pat has lost his/her passport, or same is back in Belarus, can Embassy officials organise a replacement passport for such a person? Or do they simply issue them with a 'right of return' document, and have them return to Belarus?

Information on replacing lost Belarusian passports was scarce among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

A document on the *United Information System* website states:

“In case the Belarusian citizen’s passport is lost or stolen (made useless for various reasons) outside the Republic of Belarus, you must immediately contact the nearest police station to get an appropriate document, and then apply to the nearest Belarusian consular office for a temporary identification document (certificate for returning to the Republic of Belarus). After returning to Belarus, this certificate is lodged to the issuing authorities. The lost passport is declared invalid, and a new passport is issued in accordance with the established procedures.” (United Information System (14 April 2009) *Border Crossing Rules*)

A *US Department of State* information travel document for Belarus, in a section titled “Entry / Exit Requirements for U.S. Citizens” (paragraph headed “Dual Nationality”)

“If you obtained U.S. citizenship through naturalization, you may not have automatically lost your Belarusian citizenship. In the majority of cases, naturalized U.S. citizens retain their Belarusian citizenship unless they take specific steps to renounce it. The Belarusian authorities will allow naturalized U.S. citizens from Belarus to enter the country without a valid Belarusian passport on a 'certificate of return' issued by Belarusian Embassies and Consulates, but please note that a valid Belarusian passport will be required to leave the country.” (US Department of State (13 September 2011) *International Travel Information – Belarus: Country Specific Information*)

See also Belarus Consular Information Sheet which states:

“After August 15, 2002, naturalized U.S. citizens originally from Belarus do not automatically lose Belarusian citizenship upon naturalization. Such individuals retain Belarusian citizenship unless they take specific steps to renounce it. The Belarusian authorities will allow naturalized U.S. citizens from Belarus without a valid Belarusian passport to enter the country on a 'certificate of return' issued by Belarusian Embassies and Consulates abroad, but please note that a valid Belarusian passport will be required to leave the country. It can take between two to four weeks to receive a new Belarusian passport...Children born to Belarusian parent(s) before August 15, 2002,

even if born in the United States and in possession of a U.S. passport, may not be issued a Belarusian visa for travel to Belarus. The Belarusian government considers these children to be Belarusian citizens until age 16, when they may choose to accept or reject that claim to citizenship. Instead of a visa, a 'certificate of return' is issued that will allow the child to enter Belarus. It is imperative that parents of such children understand that, in order to leave the country, the child will be required to have a Belarusian passport if he/she does not already have one." (US Department of State (6 April 2006) *Belarus Consular Information Sheet*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

United Information System (14 April 2009) *Border Crossing Rules*
http://brest-lublin.info/topic_en.php?tid=222
(Accessed 2 August 2012)

US Department of State (13 September 2011) *International Travel Information – Belarus: Country Specific Information*
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1033.html#
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US Department of State (6 April 2006) *Belarus Consular Information Sheet*
<http://statelists.state.gov/scripts/wa.exe?A3=ind0604a&L=DOSTRAVEL&E=q%3D%20NextPart%20001%2001C65A49.F54C2B40&T=text%2Fhtml;%20charset=iso-8859-1>
(Accessed 3 August 2012)

Sources Consulted:

Electronic Immigration Network
Embassy of Belarus Websites (various)
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Refugee Review Tribunal
UNHCR Refworld
US Department of State