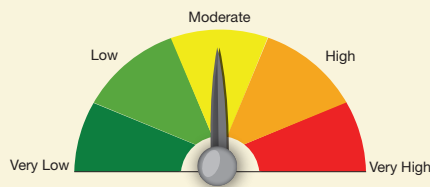


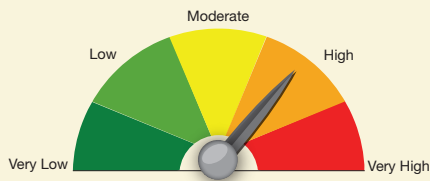
## Country Risk Tier

CRT-5

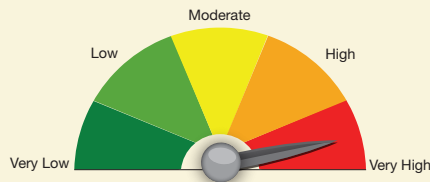
### Economic Risk



### Political Risk



### Financial System Risk



[For information on companies followed](#)

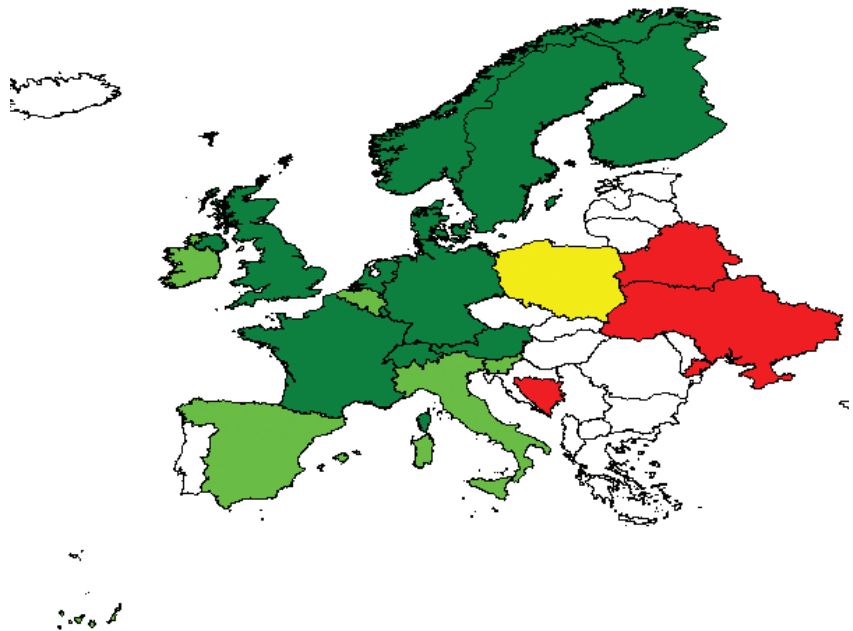
[Market Outlooks](#)

# Belarus

- The Country Risk Tier (CRT) reflects A.M. Best’s assessment of three categories of risk: Economic, Political and Financial System Risk.

- The government of Belarus, a CRT-5 country, continues to employ significant control over private sector commercial and industrial activities, in contrast to most other countries that were formerly of the Union of Soviet and Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). Therefore, it is considered high risk in the area of political risk, which is unique given that it achieves a score of moderate in the category of economic risk.

- The majority of countries pictured below are categorized as CRT-1 or CRT-2. The exceptions are the Eastern European countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.



CRT 1 2 3 4 5



## Regional Summary: Eastern Europe

- Eastern European countries are all at various stages of transition since the collapse of the Union of Soviet and Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). For most, the transition process involved the adoption of entirely new regulatory, legal and economic philosophies while combating cultural and / or historical tensions.
- All classified as “emerging market” countries, some have managed to achieve a great deal of economic stability and political power, particularly those that have secured membership in the European Union (EU) and some, even the euro-zone.
- Eastern Europe shows a great deal of potential and in recent years has been a favorite region for foreign investors from developed nations.

### Economic Risk: Moderate

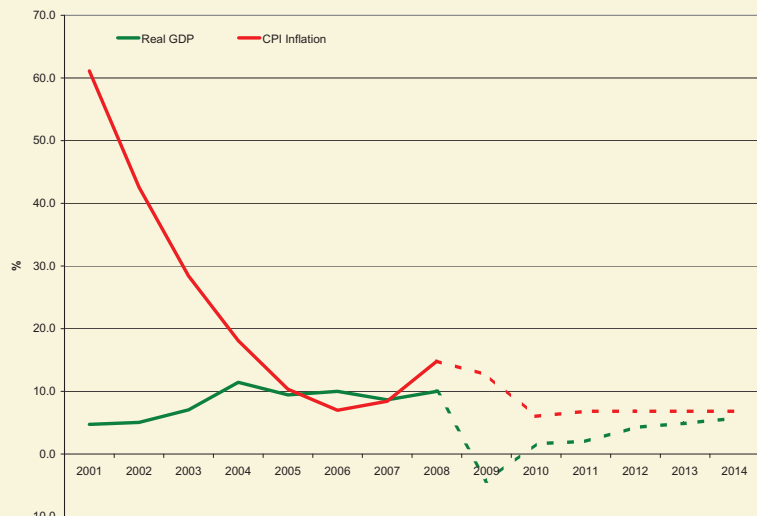
- Over the past few years, the Belarusian economy has experienced strong economic growth with a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 10.8% in 2008. Growth is contracting sharply in 2009, and the Belarusian government continues to exercise conservative economic policies to maintain relative price stability.
- Nevertheless, inflation has increased in 2009 to 16% , augmented in part by the depreciation of the Russian ruble and by global strength of the US dollar and euro. Inflation is expected to fall to single digits by 2011.
- The Belarusian government controls a large portion of economic activity, and increased activity in the private sector may decrease Belarus’s vulnerability to external shocks.

Vital Statistics 2008		
Nominal GDP	USD bn	60.29
Population	mil	9.7
GDP Per Capita	USD	6,234
Real GDP Growth	%	10.0
Inflation Rate	%	14.8
Premiums Written (2007,Life)	USD mil	13
Premiums Written (2007,Non-Life)	USD mil	245
Premiums Growth (07-08)	%	16.7

Regional Comparison	
	Country Risk Tier
Belarus	CRT-5
Russia	CRT-4
Kazakhstan	CRT-4
Slovenia	CRT-2
Ukraine	CRT-5
Poland	CRT-3

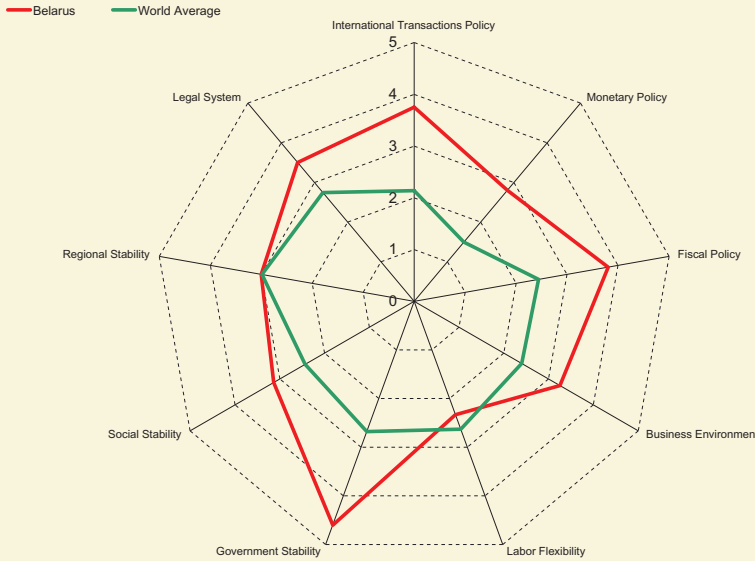
Source: IMF, Swiss Re and A.M. Best



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook (10/08) and A.M. Best

### Political Risk Summary

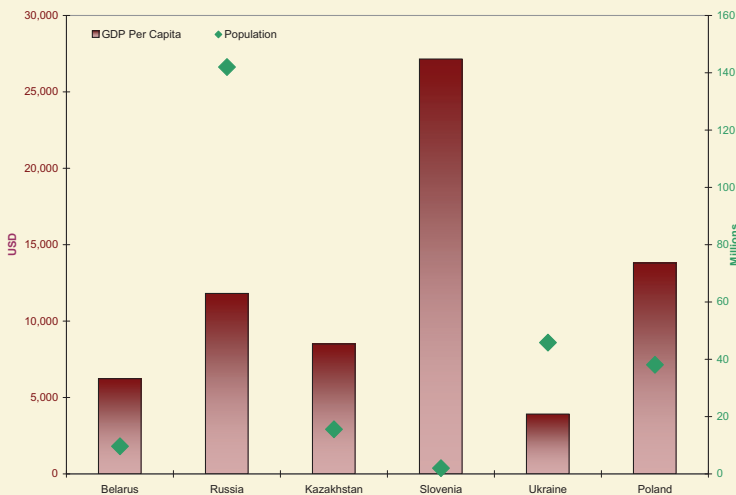
Score 1 (best) to 5 (worst)



Source: A.M. Best

### Political Risk: High

- The central government is very strong and largely controls economic activity, in contrast to most other countries that emerged from the former Union of Soviet and Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R).
- The private sector is subject to influence and intervention by the Belarusian government, while the corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy weigh on the pace and cost of doing business.
- Belarus is a strong ally to Russia and is highly impacted by Russia’s economy but is seeking to improve relationships with Europe.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a standby loan for Belarus, suggesting positive reform in the future.



Source: IMF and A.M. Best

### Financial System Risk: Very High

- The Insurance Supervisory Authority, part of the Ministry of Finance, regulates the insurance industry.
- State owned banks dominate the banking sector. The government has announced that there is a plan to privatize some, and portions of some, of the state-owned banks.
- The IMF has identified that Belarus’ financial system regulation does not comply with international standards, particularly with respect to “lack of full independence of the supervisory agencies and the restrictions on activities of non-bank financial institutions.”

## GUIDE TO BEST'S COUNTRY RISK TIERS

A.M. Best defines country risk as the risk that country-specific factors could adversely affect the claims paying ability of an insurer. Country risk is evaluated and factored into all Best's Credit Ratings. Countries are placed into one of five tiers, ranging from "CRT-1" (Country Risk Tier 1), denoting a stable environment with the least amount of risk, to "CRT-5" (Country Risk Tier 5) for countries that pose the most risk and, therefore, the greatest challenge to an insurer's financial stability, strength and performance.

A.M. Best's Country Risk Tiers are not credit ratings and are not directly comparable to a sovereign debt rating, which evaluates the ability and willingness of a government to service its debt obligations.

### Country Risk Tiers

Country Risk Tier	Definition
CRT-1	Predictable and transparent legal environment, legal system and business infrastructure; sophisticated financial system regulation with deep capital markets; mature insurance industry framework.
CRT-2	Predictable and transparent legal environment, legal system and business infrastructure; sufficient financial system regulation; mature insurance industry framework.
CRT-3	Developing legal environment, legal system and business environment with developing capital markets; developing insurance regulatory structure.
CRT-4	Relatively unpredictable and nontransparent political, legal and business environment with underdeveloped capital markets; partially to fully inadequate regulatory structure.
CRT-5	Unpredictable and opaque political, legal and business environment with limited or nonexistent capital markets; low human development and social instability; nascent insurance industry.

### Country Risk Reports

A.M. Best Country Risk Reports are designed to provide a brief, high level, explanation of some of the key factors that determine a country's Country Risk Tier assignment. It is not intended to summarize A.M. Best's opinion on any particular insurance market, or the prospects for that market.

### Categories of Risk

Country Risk Reports provide "scores" for three categories of risk for each country. These "scores" are: (1) Very Low; (2) Low; (3) Moderate; (4) High and (5) Very High.

Category of Risk	Definition
Economic Risk	The likelihood that fundamental weaknesses in a country's economy will cause adverse developments for an insurer. A.M. Best's assessment of economic risk evaluates the state of the domestic economy, government finances and international transactions, as well as prospects for growth and stability.
Political Risk	The likelihood that government or bureaucratic inefficiencies, societal tensions, inadequate legal system or international tensions will cause adverse developments for an insurer. Political risk comprises the stability of the government and society, the effectiveness of international diplomatic relationships, the reliability and integrity of the legal system and of the business infrastructure, the efficiency of the government bureaucracy and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the government's economic policies.
Financial System Risk	Financial system risk (which includes both insurance and non-insurance financial system risk) is the risk that financial volatility may erupts due to inadequate reporting standards, weak banking system or asset markets and/or poor regulatory structure. Along with the risk that the insurance industry's level of development and public awareness, transparent and effective regulation and reporting standards and sophisticated regulatory body will contribute to a volatile financial system and compromise the ability of an insurer to pay claims.

### Political Risk Summary

To provide additional detail on the political risk in a given domicile the Country Risk Reports include the Political Risk Summary. The Political Risk Summary is a radar chart that displays scores for nine different aspects of political risk scored on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least amount of risk and 5 being the highest amount of risk.

Category	Definition
International Transactions Policy	Measures the effectiveness of the exchange rate regime and currency management.
Monetary Policy	Measures the ability of a country to effectively implement monetary policy.
Fiscal Policy	Measures the ability of a country to effectively implement fiscal policy.
Business Environment	Measures the overall quality of the business environment, and ease of doing business.
Labor Flexibility	Measures the flexibility of the labor market, including the company's ability to hire and fire employees.
Government Stability	Measures the degree of stability in a government.
Social Stability	Measures the degree of social stability including human development and political rights.
Regional Stability	Measures the degree of stability in the region
Legal System	Measures the transparency and level of corruption in the legal system.

### Country Risk Tier Disclosure

A Country Risk Tier (CRT) is not a credit rating, rather it represents a component of A.M. Best's credit rating methodology that is applied to all insurers. A CRT is not a recommendation to purchase, hold or terminate any security, insurance policy, contract or any other financial obligation issued by a government, an insurer or other rated issuer, nor do they address the suitability of any particular policy, contract or other financial obligation for a specific purpose or purchaser.

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