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Briefing Note

Current Situation in Ukraine and the Work and Roles of Parliamentarians

Prepared by the Parliamentary Centre and the Agency for Legislative Initiatives under the Parliamentary Accountability for the Security Sector (PASS Ukraine) project, funded by the Peace and Stabilisation Operations Program of Global Affairs Canada.

The analysis included in this note is based on media reports and information obtained from the Verkhovna Rada and other legislative bodies. It is essential that Ukraine's democratically elected officials continue to perform their duties while enduring Russia's unprovoked, illegal and horrific invasion.

This note is for information only and is not meant to convey opinions regarding policy decisions in the Verkhovna Rada's sole purview. The contents of this note do not necessarily reflect the views of PASS partners or Global Affairs Canada.

This note contains two statements by the leadership of the Verkhovna Rada, information on the work of 14 committees and results of a plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada. (as of 9:00 pm, March 3, Kyiv time). It will not necessarily reflect the up-to-date current state of affairs as the situation changes every hour. Every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, acknowledging the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian and security situation, the disruption of the flow of information and organized disinformation all present incredible challenges.

Key Highlights

Adaptations to the way the Rada Operates

On March 3, the First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Anti-Corruption Policy, Yaroslav Yurchyshyn, spoke on Channel 24 about the **new procedure and directions of the work of MPs**. According to his presentation, **the Verkhovna Rada is currently structuring its work around four dimensions: legislative, diplomatic, informational and organizational**:

- In the diplomatic dimension, MPs try to influence different countries to support Ukraine and impose sanctions on Russia. MPs have the most difficulty in communicating with India, the UAE and China;
- The information dimension is to communicate with Ukrainian and foreign media;
- The organizational work of MPs focuses on assistance to territorial defence, coordination of volunteers, delivery of humanitarian aid.
- The new legislative process is as follows:

1. A working group is set up consisting of MPs from all factions and groups. This group prepares draft laws;
2. Then, at the Conciliation Board, all factions and groups elaborate on a common position on all disputed aspects and pre-agree to support the bills;
3. After that, MPs have a plenary session and vote as quickly as possible, in accordance with previous agreements. This procedure was created due to the danger to the lives of MPs.

Thanks to this procedure, during the plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada on March 3, all bills had extremely high support (280-300 votes) and were voted in less than half an hour. The voting process is done according to the ad-hoc procedure. Bills are adopted at the first reading and as a whole.

Most recent activities under the diplomacy role of MPs and requests to the international community:

Many MPs and members of the parliamentary leadership **called for closing the skies over Ukraine**. On March 03-04 alone, this call was made by members of the Committee on Digital Transformation [1], Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada[2], Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada[3].

Members of the Human Rights Committee[4] and Committee on Nation's Health [5] appealed to the Red Cross and the UN Commissioner for Human Rights to **create humanitarian "green corridors."**

The Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk, had a telephone conversation with the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Mezzola [6]. Key requests:

- The number of Russian banks disconnected from SWIFT should be increased. Cryptocurrency transactions involving Russian entities should be banned. Ships under EU flags must refrain from entering Russian ports. We are waiting for the refusal of European partners from Russian raw materials. Russia must be punished for cyberattacks. We must also take all necessary measures to prevent Russia from circumventing these sanctions.
- There is a need to provide residents with food and medicine and arrange "green corridors" for evacuation.
- It is necessary to ensure a no-fly zone over Ukraine and increase funding for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
- Permanent delegations of the Russian Federation in the parliamentary assemblies of various international organizations must be completely isolated until the cessation of aggression.

On March 4, members of the Anti-Corruption Policy Committee appealed to the Council of the European Union, the European External Action Service, parliaments and foreign governments

to introduce comprehensive and effective restrictive measures (sanctions) against the Russian Federation. [7] Sanctions to be imposed:

1. to expand the list of Russian and Belarusian banks, to which SWIFT is prohibited, to fully cover Russian and Belarusian banking system without any exceptions;
2. to expand the list of legal entities under the special restrictive economic and other measures (sanctions) to cover all the Russian and Belarusian state-owned enterprises, including “Gazprom,” “Rosneft,” “Rosatom,” “RZhd” (“Russian Railways”), “Roskosmos” and their subsidiaries, legal entities with shares owned by companies mentioned above; to prohibit the introduction of joint enterprises with such companies and implantation of any joint projects with such companies (including those that have been already started), to ban such companies from participation in public procurements.
3. to introduce prohibition for take-offs, landings and flights over the territory of states for aircraft owned, used or disposed of by Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus, legal entities registered in other states with beneficial ownership of Russian or Belarusian citizens and/or with the majority of shares directly or indirectly owned by Russian or Belarusian citizens or legal entities registered in Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus;
4. to introduce prohibition for entering to the ports and territorial waters of states for vessels owned, used or disposed of by Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus
5. to introduce prohibition for railway transportations to and from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus
6. to introduce personal special restrictive measures that include the prohibition to travel, ban for any financial operations, ban for acquisition, disposal or sale of any assets for the following categories:
 - o (a) high-level political leadership of Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus;
 - o (b) members of parliaments of Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus;
 - o (c) business people with significant financial resources in the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus (including top-100 Russian oligarchs);
7. to introduce the same personal special restrictive measures for family members of persons mentioned in para. 6 above of the same scope of restrictions;

8. to introduce a requirement for immediate leave of foreign states by persons under the personal special restrictive measures;
9. to immediately freeze all the assets that are owned and/or disposed of by natural or legal persons, for which/whom personal special restrictive measures (sanctions) are required, legal entities under the direct or indirect ownership of Russian and Belarusian governments, afterward to forfeit such assets and to sell them subsequently; these measures should be applied to virtual assets, including cryptocurrencies;
10. to prohibit persons under the personal special restrictive measures (sanctions) to acquire foreign citizenship in exchange for investments in foreign states (so-called "golden passports"), as well as to deprive of citizenship acquired before based on such a ground;
11. to introduce prohibition for transactions and operations in MasterCard, Visa, American Express payment systems in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus and/or for any operations with the following parties: Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus
12. to include the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus to the FATF list of high-risk jurisdictions;
13. to introduce a prohibition for disposal or use of SDR issued by the IMF for the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus and to distribute these SDR to Ukraine;
14. to exclude or to suspend the membership of Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus in international financial institutions, including EBRD IBRD, as well as to prohibit allocation of any funds to these states from international financial institutions;
15. to introduce a prohibition for any investment funds (including pension funds) to directly or indirectly invest in legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus,
16. to introduce a prohibition for any direct or indirect financing (including though loans, lending, refundable or non-refundable financial assistance) for legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus, legal entities registered in other states with beneficial ownership of Russian or Belarusian citizens and/or with the majority of shares directly or indirectly owned by Russian or Belarusian citizens or legal entities registered in Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus,

17. to introduce a prohibition for provision of insurance services (including insurance for assets, vehicles, risks etc.) for Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus
18. to introduce a prohibition for the provision of auditing services by so-called “Big Four” companies for legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus
19. to introduce a prohibition for opening and maintaining bank accounts for Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus, to close existing accounts; to limit cash withdrawals to the equivalent of USD 2,000;
20. to introduce a prohibition for issuance of business, study and tourist visas for Russian and Belarusian citizens;
21. to introduce a prohibition of international trade operations with the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus: to ban the import of gas and oil and products of their subsequent processing; to ban the export of military technologies and dual-use items; to prohibit the export of chemicals, cosmetics, seeds, pharmacy products, foods and beverages, all the electronics and semiconductors, software (including updates for software and withdrawal of licenses for previously sold software), machinery products, cars and vehicles, luxury goods;
22. to introduce a prohibition for functioning in Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus of Google, Google Playmarket, Apple Store, Amazon Web Services platforms as well as all the digital cloud services;
23. to introduce a prohibition for broadcasting and any kind of spreading the information (including on Youtube, Facebook and other platforms) for TV channels and information agencies, which are directly or indirectly controlled by Russian and Belarusian governments, as well as for propagandists who systemically spread pro-Russian propaganda and disinformation;
24. to ensure complete and comprehensive compliance with sanctions regime by all the states, including through the application of “secondary” sanctions for those persons and entities who violate sanctions administration;
25. to ensure transparency of ownership of legal entities, including disclosure of beneficial ownership, to provide effective control on compliance with the sanctions regime, inter alia, for legal entities registered in so-called “tax havens”;
26. to limit possibilities for establishment and registration of new legal entities for Russian and Belarusian citizens as well as for third persons acting on their behalf;

27. to introduce a prohibition on the management of corporate rights and shares (“bearer shares”) owned by Russian or Belarusian citizens, legal entities registered in the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus,
28. to maintain sanctions regime till the end of military aggression of Russian Federation against Ukraine and restoration of territorial integrity of Ukraine within internationally recognized borders (i.e., with the restoration of complete effective control over temporary occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Autonomous Republic of Crimea).

[1] <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/220187.html>

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpuMhtYTIB8&feature=emb_title

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmoEydjBdcU&feature=emb_title

[4] <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/220170.html>

[5] <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/220185.html>

[6] <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/220184.html>

[7] <https://www.rada.gov.ua/en/news/News/220183.html>