

May 25 - 27, 2022

PARLIAMENT IN TIMES OF WAR

A weekly update on legislative and other activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

SITTING OF THE RADA

Legislative Work

- The Verkhovna Rada assembled for a plenary sitting on May 22, 2022. Eight bills were adopted, and two bills were adopted at the first reading. The adopted laws mainly focused on economic and social issues. The Verkhovna Rada ratified one international agreement and withdrew from four international treaties. Furthermore, one resolution was approved.
- Adopted bills and treaties had support in the range of 274-320 votes.¹
- For security reasons, the meeting was held in a semi-secret atmosphere. The meeting was not broadcast on television. In addition, the public was not informed about the date or time of the meeting. Information only began to appear during the session.

Other Aspects of Work

- Andrzej Duda, President of Poland, addressed the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and delivered a live speech. The speech focused on Ukraine's role in defending Europe from Russia, Russian crimes, Ukrainian-Polish unity, support of Ukraine, sanctions, and European integration. The speech lasted 30 minutes, which is considered one of the longest speeches delivered by a foreign leader in the Ukrainian parliament.²
(Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmi9qICzBmg>)
- Volodymyr Zelensky also delivered a live speech in honor of the President of Poland's visit to Ukraine. In his speech, Volodymyr Zelensky thanked the Polish people for sheltering Ukrainian refugees, implementing sanctions, and providing weapons to Ukraine, as well as stressed the solidarity and unity of the Polish and Ukrainian peoples.³
(Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVnJ2j7MGL0>)

¹ 226 votes are needed to pass an ordinary law, and 300 votes are needed to pass amendments to the Constitution.

² (UKR video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmi9qICzBmg>

³ (UKR video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVnJ2j7MGL0>

- Parliamentarians adopted Resolution 7073, which approved the report of the Temporary Commission of Inquiry of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the investigation of cases and causes of violations of children's rights during the decentralization of powers to protect children, reform the system of institutional care and education, the implementation of the child's right to family upbringing and adoption, and development (modernization) of social services.
- A new parliamentary group "Restoration of Ukraine" was registered in the Verkhovna Rada. The new group includes 17 parliamentarians. They are mostly former members of the Opposition Platform for Life faction, who left in March before the suspension of the party. A parliamentary group has almost the same opportunities (especially procedural opportunities) as a faction but cannot form a coalition. This situation is somewhat reminiscent of 2014. After Euromaidan and Viktor Yanukovich's escape, the Party of Regions (the ruling pro-presidential party under Viktor Yanukovich) split into several parliamentary groups.
- Two minority factions (Batkivshchyna and European Solidarity) adjourned the 30-minute break of the Verkhovna Rada (this is an opportunity provided for in the Rules of Procedure) and ended the meeting. Six issues on the planned agenda remained unconsidered.

Key issues covered by the adopted Laws included:

Treaties:

- № 0150 - Ratified the agreement with international financial organizations to obtain a loan of \$34 million from the IBRD to implement the investment project "Ukraine - Improving the resilience of the energy system for European integration of the power grid."
- № 0074 - Withdrawal from the Agreement with the CIS in the fight against illegal migration.
- № 0084 - Withdrawal from the CIS Agreement on the Common Agricultural Market.
- № 0145 - Withdrawal from the Agreement on the perpetuation of memory of courage and heroism of the CIS peoples in the Great Patriotic War.
- № 0146 - Denunciation of the Agreement between Ukraine and Russia on the avoidance of double taxation.

Adopted laws:

- № 7389 - Continuation of martial law until August 23, 2022.

- № 7390 - Continuation of the general mobilization until August 23, 2022.
- № 7214 (Re-vote with the President's proposals) - Ban on propaganda of the Russian neo-Nazi totalitarian regime.
- № 7200 - Simplification of the evacuation of children to safe places until the moment of reunification with families.
- № 7395 - Providing appropriate conditions for conducting business in the field of outdoor advertising.
- № 7313 - Permission to refuse the registration of drugs manufactured in Russia or Belarus.
- № 7361 - Ensuring the continuous functioning of the external quality assurance system of higher education.
- № 5876 - Stimulating the development of Ukrainian-language audiobooks.

Draft laws passed in the first reading (they have not yet become laws):

- Draft law № 7337 - Elimination of the discrimination against pension recipients.
- Draft law № 7293 - Improving the functioning of the vocational education system in martial law.

Details

Treaties:

- № 0150 - Ratified the agreement with international financial organizations to obtain a loan of \$34 million from the IBRD to implement the investment project "Ukraine - Improving the resilience of the energy system for European integration of the power grid." The project aims to install a 212 MW energy storage system and a 63.9 MW solar power plant.
- № 0074 - Withdrawal from the Agreement with the CIS in the fight against illegal migration.
- № 0084 - Withdrawal from the CIS Agreement on the Common Agricultural Market.
- № 0145 - Withdrawal from the Agreement on the perpetuation of memory of courage and heroism of the CIS peoples in the Great Patriotic War.
- № 0146 - Denunciation of the Agreement between Ukraine and Russia on the avoidance of double taxation.

Adopted laws:⁴

- № 7389 - Continuation of martial law until August 23, 2022.

⁴ Draft laws adopted only in the first reading were not included in the text, as their content may be changed before the second reading.



- № 7390 - Continuation of the general mobilization until August 23, 2022.
- № 7214 (Re-vote with the President's proposals) - Ban on propaganda of the Russian neo-Nazi totalitarian regime. The law recognizes modern Russia as a terrorist state with a Nazi totalitarian regime that ideologically imitates the National Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regime that existed in Hitler's Germany. The President provided certain technical proposals that were taken into account.
- № 7200 - Simplification of the evacuation of children to safe places until the moment of reunification with families. In the case of resettlement of children under 18 years of age who are enrolled in round-the-clock institutions (boarding schools), the administrations of relevant institutions or their employees will temporarily act as legal representatives until the children return to Ukraine or are able to reunite with their families.
- № 7395 - Providing appropriate conditions for conducting business in the field of outdoor advertising.
- № 7313 - Permission to refuse the registration of drugs manufactured in Russia or Belarus.
- № 7361 - Ensuring the continuous functioning of the external quality assurance system of higher education. The aim is to extend the term of office of the temporary staff of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education during martial law and a six-month period after its abolition or termination until the election of a new member of the National Agency. In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has been instructed to start the competition procedure for the election of members of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education within one month from the date of termination or abolition of martial law.
- № 5876 - Stimulating the development of Ukrainian-language audiobooks. The law eliminates the legal gap regarding the tax exemption for Ukrainian-language audiobooks. The law provides for stimulating the development of Ukrainian-language audiobooks and supporting the spread of the Ukrainian language. The law supplements Article 197 of the Tax Code of Ukraine with a new sub-clause, which exempts from value added tax, supply, preparation (literary, scientific, technical editing, adjustment, etc.), production, distribution of audiobooks in Ukrainian, except for erotic publications. The law also applies to electronic services for the supply of electronic copies (electronic digital information) and/or the provision of access to audiobooks in Ukrainian, except for erotic publications).

Rada continues high-level international diplomatic relations

- On May 23, 2022, Oleksandr Merezhko, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, met with Paule Robitaille, Member of the National Assembly of the Province of Quebec in Canada. They discussed the security and humanitarian situation in Ukraine as a result of Russia's armed aggression, the situation in the Black Sea, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russia on the territory of Ukraine, punishment of war criminals, and sanctions against the aggressor state (an oil and gas embargo). Oleksandr Merezhko stressed the importance of providing Ukraine with heavy weapons and imposing additional sanctions on Russia.⁵

Paul Robital conveyed a statement of the National Assembly of Quebec condemning the war against Ukraine and expressing its support for the country.



Photo: Verkhovna Rada (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223161.html>)

- Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Chairwoman of the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU, and Roksolana Pidlasa, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, took part in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze expressed that the only possible end to the war is victory of Ukraine and the complete defeat of Russia. She noted that negotiations with the enemy

⁵ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223161.html>

are impossible and called on the world to think about what kind of Russia it will have to deal with after the war.⁶ According to Roksolana Pidlasa, the most important topic to discuss is food insecurity, which has been caused by the blockade of Ukrainian ports. She mentioned that the creation of a special convoy or the provision of weapons and anti-ship missiles for Ukraine could be used as strategies to unblock Ukrainian seaports.⁷



Photos: Verkhovna Rada (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223172.html> and <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223180.html>)

- Ms. Klympush-Tsintsadze also held an online meeting with her Irish colleagues (members of the Parliamentary Committee on EU Affairs). They discussed the food crisis, Ukrainian refugees in Ireland, inadmissibility of territorial concessions, European integration, and sanctions.⁸
- The committees and Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada held a series of meetings with their international counterparts, which included representatives from Austria, Chile, Croatia, Finland, Poland, Spain, and the United States. In the meetings, they discussed a variety of topics, such as the sixth package of sanctions, the provision of modern heavy weapons, military assistance, support for Ukraine, Ukraine's candidacy for membership in the European Union, the reconstruction of Ukrainian regions and cities affected by the Russian invasion, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russia on

⁶ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223172.html>

⁷ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223180.html>

⁸ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223225.html>

the territory of Ukraine, and Russia's legal responsibility for crimes committed in Ukraine.^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17}



Photos: Verkhovna Rada (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223200.html>, <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223287.html>, and <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223274.html>)

- Ruslan Stefanchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, took part in the First Legal Forum "EU - Eastern Partnership." He focused on the appropriate punishment for those who carry out an armed aggression against Ukraine, commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, and genocide of the Ukrainian people.¹⁸

Food crisis

- The Rada Committee on Agrarian and Land Policy has stated that "Ukrainian seaports must be unblocked to avoid global food crisis".

According to the Ministry of Agrarian Policy, the sowing of spring cereals and legumes was completed by 75% of last year's figures. Ukraine has stocks from the previous year and plans to harvest a significant part of this year's harvest. In order to avoid a global food crisis, Ukrainian seaports must be unblocked to ensure that crops can be exported.¹⁹

⁹ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223182.html>

¹⁰ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223186.html>

¹¹ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223216.html>

¹² (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223200.html>

¹³ (video UKR) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PXCJcydGaw>

¹⁴ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223287.html>

¹⁵ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223274.html>

¹⁶ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223255.html>

¹⁷ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223227.html>

¹⁸ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/223261.html>

¹⁹ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223160.html>



Photo: Verkhovna Rada (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223160.html>)

Prohibition of pro-Russian parties

- From May 20 to 23, 2022, the Eighth Administrative Court of Appeal issued several rulings on pro-Russian parties. In order to secure the Ministry of Justice's claim to ban the parties, the Court ruled to ban them from conducting financial transactions and banned banking institutions from conducting party expenditures pending resolution on the merits. The lawsuit was filed by the Ministry of Justice in accordance with a recently passed law that expanded the grounds for banning parties. These decisions concerned the following parties: "Party of Shariy," "Nashi" ("Our"), "The Union of Left Forces," "The State," "Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine," "Socialist Party of Ukraine," "The Socialist Party," and "Volodymyr Saldo Bloc." These parties were banned by the National Security and Defense Council in March 2022. In addition, the Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit to ban another party "Justice and Development." Little is known about this small party. Regarding "Opposition Platform - For Life," the Court decided to suspend its funding from the state budget to secure the claim. Ukraine has a system of state funding for political parties that have passed the party list to parliament. The National Agency on Corruption Prevention controls the financial statements of parties and transfers funds from the state budget.

Statements and appeals

- Yaroslav Yurchyshyn, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Anti-Corruption Policy, stressed that Russia continues to commit war crimes and fire on civilian targets. Russia must be punished for these crimes.²⁰



Photo: Verkhovna Rada (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223158.html>)

- The Committee on Youth and Sports calls on the G7 member states to urgently impose a new package of sanctions against the Russian Federation and refrain from buying Russian fuel.²¹
- Olena Moshenets, Deputy Chairwoman of the Committee on Anti-Corruption Policy, called for the adoption of the sixth package of sanctions. This includes a total ban on Russian oil and gas supplies, which will demonstrate the EU's consistent and principled position in condemning Russia's aggression.²² She also stressed that Ukraine needs strong air defense systems to save lives.²³
- The Committee on Youth and Sports insists on the establishment of a special military tribunal for the urgent investigation of war crimes and genocide of the Russian Federation during the war against the Ukrainian people.²⁴

²⁰ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223158.html>

²¹ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223173.html>

²² (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223181.html>

²³ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223285.html>

²⁴ (UKR) <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/223223.html>

Information on pro-Russian parties that were banned by the National Security and Defense Council

1. “Opposition Platform - For Life” – The only party on this list that had parliamentary representation (about 40 members of the Verkhovna Rada). It had more than 4,000 members in local councils (approximately 9% of all members in local councils in Ukraine). The party has a pro-Russian rhetoric and is often accused of collaborationism. Some of the local authorities cooperating with the occupiers belong to this party. Some members of the Verkhovna Rada from this party went abroad before the war. Viktor Medvedchuk is one of the party’s leaders. He was under investigation for treason but escaped from house arrest at the start of the war. Vladimir Putin is the godfather of Viktor Medvedchuk’s daughter.
2. “Party of Shariy” – Shariy is a YouTube blogger with a large number of subscribers. He lives in Spain and has been sanctioned by the National Security and Defense Council. Shariy is one of the most prominent pro-Russian propagandists, and many members of his party are currently accused of collaborationism. The party has about 50 members of local councils.
3. “Nashi” (“Our”) – The party of Yevhen Murayev, who was named the candidate for Prime Minister of Ukraine in the event of a Russian occupation. The party has six members in local councils. The party has a pro-Russian rhetoric.
4. “Opposition Bloc” – A party that had parliamentary representation in the Verkhovna Rada of the VIII convocation. The party list did not pass to the Verkhovna Rada of the IX convocation, but some of its members passed in the majority constituencies. It has about 200 members in local councils. The party has a pro-Russian rhetoric.
5. “Left Opposition” – A party that was created by members of banned parties in 2015 (this includes the CPU, which was an influential party with parliamentary representation until 2013). It is currently a marginal party but has 13 members in local councils. The party has a pro-Russian rhetoric.
6. “The Union of Left Forces” – A marginal party. Not much is known about this party.
7. “The State” – A marginal party with pro-Russian rhetoric.
8. “Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine” – The party was active in the early 2000s. It is now a marginal pro-Russian party.
9. “Socialist Party of Ukraine” – A large and influential party in the early 2000s. In a scandal, Ilya Kiva was elected as the head of the party in 2017. In 2019, he became an MP in the OPFL. Since then, he has openly supported the Russian Federation, left



- Ukraine before the war, and is now actively involved in Russian propaganda shows. At a meeting on March 15, 2022, he was deprived of his mandate of People's Deputy (MP).
10. "The Socialist Party" – A marginal party that has one member in local council. Not much is known about this party.
 11. "Volodymyr Saldo Bloc" – Volodymyr Saldo was the mayor of Kherson from 2002 to 2012 (Kherson is now under occupation) and was also an MP from 2012 to 2014. He is currently a member of the Kherson City Council, which includes eight other members of this party. During the occupation of Kherson, Volodymyr Saldo took part in the "Rescue Committee" of Kherson, which is a collaborationist body.

Background on the weekly update on activity of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada

Ukraine's democratically elected officials continue to perform their duties while enduring Russia's unprovoked and horrific invasion. These briefing notes provide the latest information about the legislative activities of the Verkhovna Rada.

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The analysis included in this note is based on media reports and information obtained from the Verkhovna Rada and other legislative bodies.

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.

Every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, acknowledging the fluid humanitarian and security situation, the disruption of the flow of information and organized disinformation.