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PARLIAMENTARY TRANSFORMATION:

Achievements and Next Steps

The EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project
(February 2019 – October 2021)

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Since the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX convocation came together, we have been constantly working to improve the internal parliamentary procedures and the transparency of the parliament.

One of the first changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine was the inclusion of provisions on the introduction of systematic planning of legislative activity, and for the second year in a row we have approved a plan for the legislative activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, involving all subjects of legislative initiative in its formation.

It is worth noting that thanks to the revision of parliamentary procedures, we have been able to ensure the continued work of the parliament on a democratic basis even in times of crisis, as humanity faces a global pandemic. Today, our work is focused not only on the effectiveness of the procedure for reviewing draft laws, but also on improving the process of drafting laws, the quality of which could significantly improve law-making and the work of parliament. Law-making should be done in accordance with modern policy-making practices, and should include, in particular, the study of social problems, the development of concepts for draft laws with regard to how they might impact the lives of every Ukrainian, public consultations, and the application of sound expertise.



Ruslan Stefanchuk
Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada
of Ukraine



Matti MAASIKAS
EU Ambassador,
Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine



Over the last years, Ukraine has time and again proven that it is a society deeply committed to democracy. The European Union is glad to have supported the Ukrainian Parliament on its path to becoming an open, transparent, and effective institution. EU assistance to the implementation of the Action Plan on Internal Reform and Capacity Building of the Verkhovna Rada was instrumental in facilitating the reform process at both strategic and technical levels, as well as contributed to a number of legal, policy and organisational improvements in legislative work during 2016-2021.



Ukraine has launched an ambitious reform package and is continuing to consolidate its democracy, including its government institutions and parliament. Democratic institutions are where the aspirations of the people are heard, and the reform agenda is shaped. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine is at the centre of this process. It is also the place where commitments like the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals are translated into legislation. UNDP has been a proud partner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for many years. The hallmarks of our cooperation are our support for reforming legislative planning and oversight, the development of an effective and efficient support service, and strengthening outreach and communication, all of which are financially supported by the European Union.



Dafina GERCHEVA
UNDP Resident
Representative to Ukraine



REFORM OF THE VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE

A parliament is at the heart of a democracy. Ideally, this democratic institution should represent all citizens, develop and pass laws and budgets, and oversee the executive. In Ukraine, transitioning from a post-Soviet legacy towards a modern democracy means addressing the challenges that face the legislature. In 2016, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine took the lead and adopted its own reform agenda so as to better carry out its constitutional responsibilities and become a progressively more effective, accountable and transparent institution.

In its modernisation and reform efforts, the VRU relies on its partnership with the European Parliament and the support of international development partners, including UNDP. From 2016 to 2021, Ukraine's parliament has been enacting a wide range of reform measures in order to modernise itself in line with European democratic best practices.



To improve the drafting of legislation, the VRU set out to enhance its strategic legislative planning and prioritisation, as well as upgrade legislative drafting processes and methodologies, taking into account the requirement to implement the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.



To increase political oversight of the executive, the VRU put in motion new practices of cooperation and coordination between the legislative and executive branches.



To support representation of the public, the VRU focused on making parliament more open, transparent and accountable to citizens. In addition, the parliament is continuing to move forward with its communication and e-Parliament strategies.



To enhance its administrative capacities, the VRU started to implement a new HR strategy. Improvements in the organisation and management of the VRU Secretariat have been crucial.



THE EU-UNDP PARLIAMENTARY REFORM PROJECT



Duration – 2 years 8 months
(February 2019 to October 2021)



Donor partner – European Union



Budget – \$ 3,4 million



Implementing partner – United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine



Beneficiary – Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

✓ OUR GOAL

Strengthening the functioning of the Ukrainian parliament (the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, or VRU), to make it a progressively more effective, accountable and transparent institution in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities to create legislation, perform oversight, and represent citizens, and also to positively influence the overall process of implementing the EU-UA Association Agreement.

▣ PROJECT COMPONENTS

#Rada4Reforms

Fostering the parliament's role in the overall reform process, with a particular emphasis on improving the legislative process and parliamentary oversight, by providing comprehensive expert support to the implementation of the VRU Roadmap for Internal Reform and Capacity Building.

#RadaPro

Supporting the professional modernization of the parliamentary Secretariat through the finalisation and implementation of its strategic development plan and comprehensive human resource development.

#Transparent&ServiceOrientedRada

Building stronger transparency and accountability links between parliament and citizens by making use of new technologies in communications, civic education, and participation.

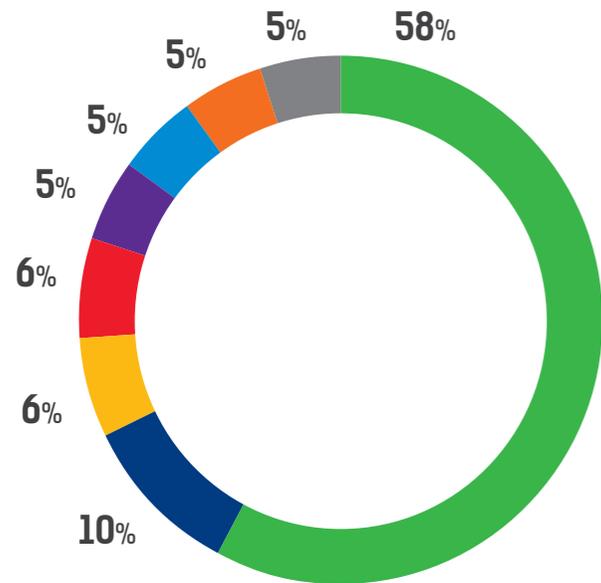
The Parliamentary Reform Office (PRO) is a key component of the project, acting as an advisory group to the leadership and Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, under the general supervision of the VRU Chairperson.



VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE FACTSHEET (IX convocation)

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX Convocation consists of 422 MPs (335 men and 87 women). The percentage of women members of parliament is currently at a historic high of 21 percent (12 percent of the VRU of the VIII Convocation were women).

There are 23 committees in the parliament (the VRU of the VIII Convocation had 27 committees).



Deputy Factions and Groups in the IX Convocation:

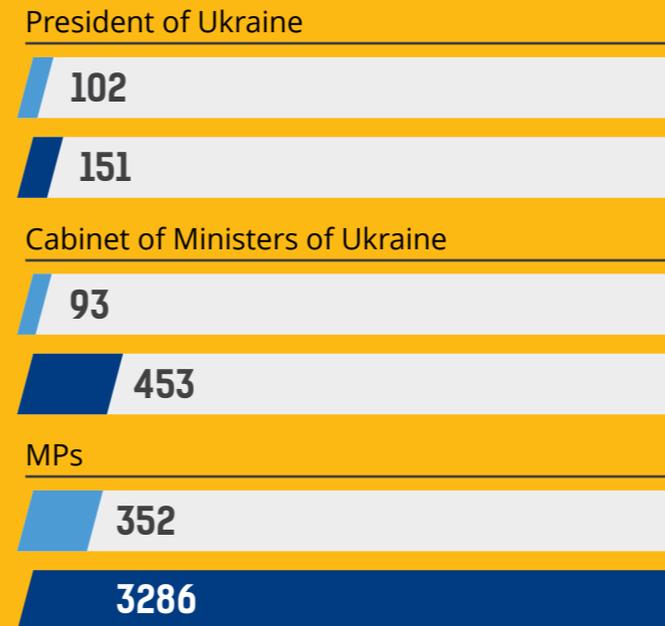
- Faction of the political party «Servant of the People»
- Faction of the political party «Opposition Platform – For Life» at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
- Faction of the political party «European Solidarity»
- Faction of the political party the All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna”
- The parliamentary group «For the Future»
- The parliamentary group «The Trust»
- Faction of the political party «Voice»
- Non-fractional

SOURCES OF LEGISLATION

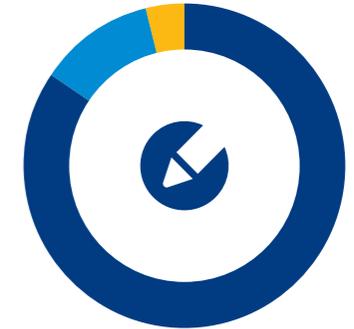
Registered VS Adopted IX Convocation of the VRU



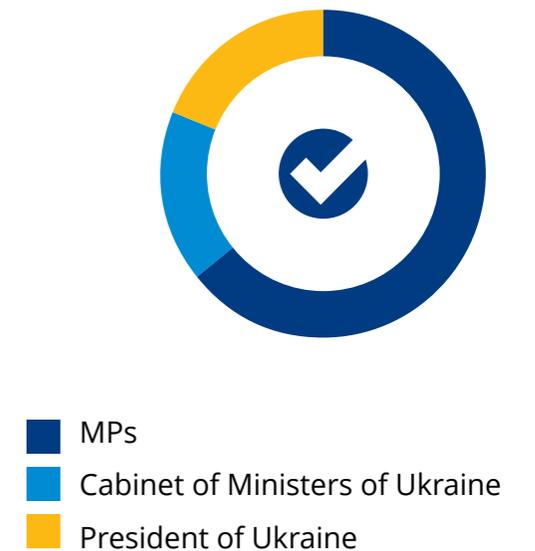
Registered VS Adopted by Subjects IX Convocation of the VRU



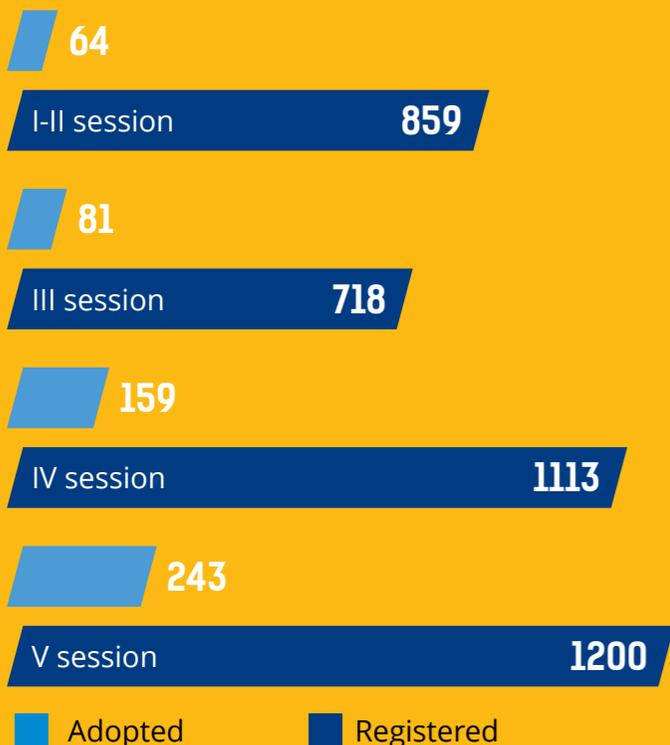
Registered by Subjects IX Convocation of the VRU



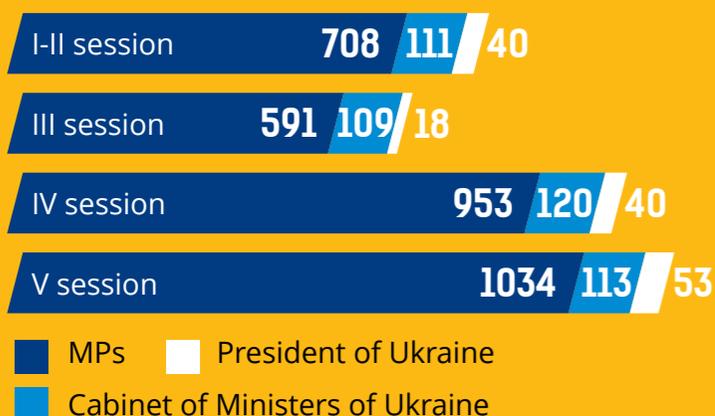
Adopted by Subjects IX Convocation of the VRU



Registered VS Adopted (by Session)



Draft Laws Registered (by Subjects)



MAJOR REFORM MEASURES WERE PASSED

Agriculture

- ▶ Law on Agricultural Cooperation

Animal Protection

- ▶ Law on Veterinary Medicine and Animal Welfare

Citizen Engagement

- ▶ Law on Democracy through National Referendums

COVID-19

- ▶ Law on Social Support for Insured Persons and Business Entities for the Period of Restrictive Anti-Epidemic Measures Introduced to Prevent the Spread of the Acute Respiratory Disease COVID-19 Caused by the SARS-Co V-2 Coronavirus in Ukraine
- ▶ Law on Assistance to Insured Persons for the Period of Restrictive Anti-Epidemic Measures Introduced to Prevent the Spread of the Acute Respiratory Disease COVID-19 Caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus

Customs

- ▶ Law on Customs Tariffs of Ukraine

Education

- ▶ Law on Complete General Secondary Education

Energy

- ▶ Law on Measures Aimed at Repaying Debts Formed in the Wholesale Electricity Market

Environment

- ▶ Law on Ozone Depleting Substances and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases
- Law on Principles of Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Law on Restricting the Circulation of Plastic Bags on the Territory of Ukraine

E-services

- ▶ Law on the Peculiarities of Providing Electronic Public Services

Finances

- ▶ Law on Concession
- ▶ Law on Lease of State and Communal Property
- ▶ Law on the Regime of Joint Transit and Introduction of the National Electronic Transit System
- ▶ Law on Preventing and Counteracting the Legalization (Laundering) of Income from Crime, Financing of Terrorism and Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- ▶ Law on the Bureau of Economic Security of Ukraine
- ▶ Law on State Support for Investment Projects with Significant Investments
- ▶ Law on Payment Services
- ▶ Law on Financial Leasing

Gambling

- ▶ Law on State Regulation of Activities Concerning the Organization and Conduct of Gambling

Military Cooperation

- ▶ Law on Approval of the Decision of the President of Ukraine on the Admission of Units of Armed Forces of Other States to the Territory of Ukraine in 2020 for Participation in Multinational Exercises

Governance

- ▶ Law on the Special Procedure for Impeachment of the President of Ukraine

Human Rights

- ▶ Law on Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine

Medicine

- ▶ Law on Safety and Quality of Donor Blood and Blood Components

National Security

- ▶ Law on Liability of Enlistees and Certain Other Persons
- ▶ Law on Defence Procurement
- ▶ Law on Intelligence
- ▶ Law on the Fundamentals of National Resistance

Social Policy

- ▶ Law on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities

Transportation

- ▶ Law on Inland Water Transport

Youth Policy

- ▶ Law on Basic Principles of Youth Policy

COMPONENT 1

Key Achievements

#Rada4Reforms



The EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project helps the Ukrainian Parliament to improve the law-making process in line with best practices through:



introducing the planning of law-making activity and ensuring the law-making process is cyclic;



making the procedure for drafting and considering bills more efficient;



conducting legal monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of legislation;



expanding the practice of public consultation;



assessing the effectiveness of the application of legislation and the impact of draft regulations (LNA).

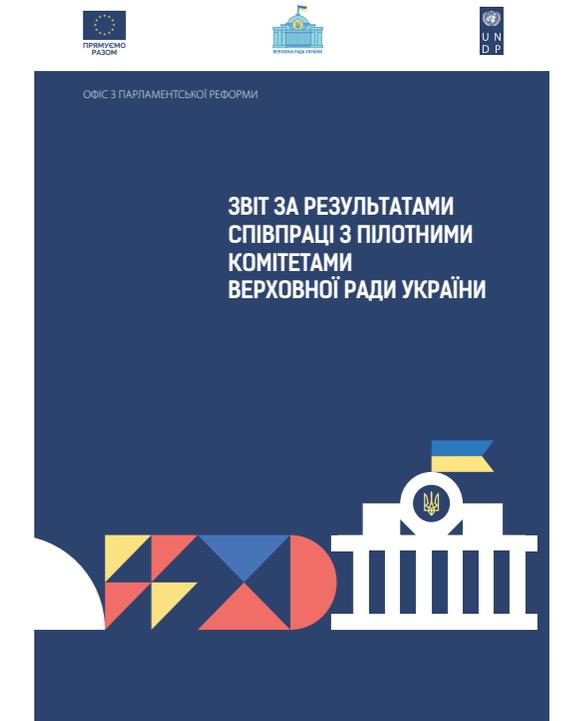
Experts from the Parliamentary Reform Office of the EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project assisted in the development of the Draft Law “On Law-Making Activities” No. 5707, which will regulate an “end to end” legislative process. To do this, the most relevant international experience was studied, along with the best practices of the European Commission and individual EU Member States with similar contexts to Ukraine. The conclusions and recommendations of the Venice Commission on the development of similar laws were also taken into account. The proposed changes have already received record support from parliamentarians of the IX convocation – the bill was co-initiated by 193 MPs.

Such legislative novelties became possible because the experts helped to develop provisions for the introduction of systematic planning of legislative activities, along with a plan for drafting laws – which has been approved for the second year in a row, and which involves all subjects of the right to put forward legislative initiatives.

Over the last two years, the EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project has developed and published a number of analytical documents and recommendations to improve the work of the Ukrainian parliament, including:

- ▶ A conceptual note on improving the legislative process in Ukraine;
- ▶ Parliamentary scrutiny recommendations: practical tips and tricks to improve efficiency;
- ▶ Methodological approaches and recommendations for the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for assessing the effectiveness of legislation;
- ▶ Proposals to improve the scrutiny of bills by parliament;
- ▶ Proposals for the core approaches to planning and monitoring legislative activity in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Piloting parliamentary oversight of eight of the 23 VRU committees was an equally important achievement. The project provided methodological assistance and involved experts whose recommendations proved very useful to the committees. A total of 45 pieces of legislation were analysed, new forms of interaction with the government were introduced, and the practice of studying the effectiveness of legislation was introduced.



COMPONENT 2

Key Achievements

#RadaPro



Following the recommendations of the European Parliament's Needs Assessment Mission of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, led by Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament 2002-2004, and in accordance with the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On Measures to Implement Recommendations on Internal Reform and Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" No. 1035-VIII of 17 March 2016, the Strategy for Human Resource Development of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine up to 2022 was approved under Order of the Head of the VRU Secretariat No. 3359-k of 5 December 2019. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the above-mentioned Strategy, the relevant Action Plan for 2020 has been developed and approved under Order of the Head of the VRU Secretariat No. 358-k of 20 February 2020. A total of 25 out of 36 activities of the Action Plan have since been fully implemented. At the same time, with Project support, five out of 10 activities earmarked for realisation under the Human Resource Management (HRM) strategy during its second implementing phase (2021-2022) have been successfully realized.

IMPLEMENTATION OF HRM PRACTICES



A Quality Management System (under Order of the Head of the VRU Secretariat No. 429-k of 28 February 2020) as well as a draft Action Plan on a survey of the quality management system in the VRU Secretariat have been developed;



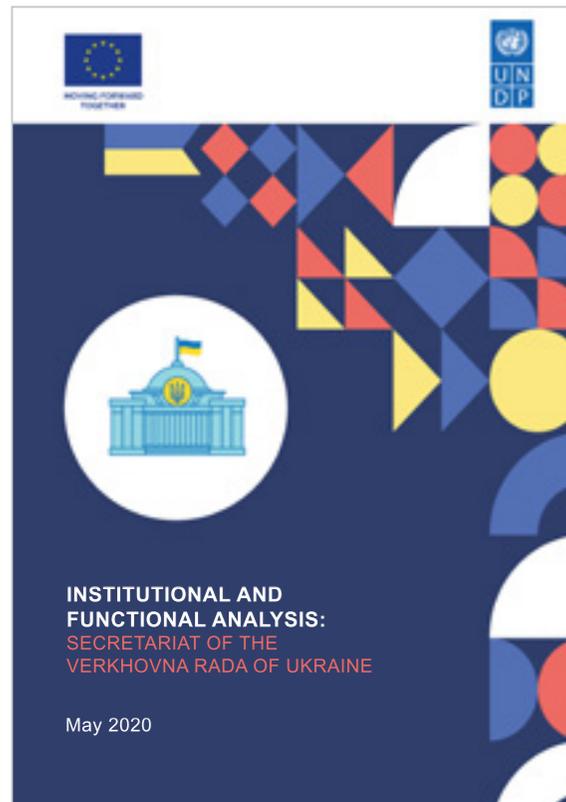
Standards of Gender Equality (under Order of the Head of the VRU Secretariat No. 597-k of 31 March 2020). Furthermore, 47 authorized employees of structural units of the VRU Secretariat have been made responsible for ensuring gender equality standards are met;



Development of a Corporate Culture (under Order of the Head of the VRU Secretariat No. 662-k of 14 April 2020).

FUNCTIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

A functional and institutional analysis of the VRU Secretariat was conducted in the period from December 2019 to April 2020. Based on the results of this analysis, appropriate recommendations for the further improvement of the VRU Secretariat's structure, business processes and the draft Strategic Plan of the VRU Secretariat were developed and discussed with key parliamentary stakeholders.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VRU SECRETARIAT STAFF

As a result of a comprehensive training needs assessment of key parliamentary stakeholders conducted at the end of 2019 in cooperation with the VRU Secretariat, the Project contributed to the realization of the following training activities:



The development of 18 online thematic training courses for promoting key “soft” and “hard” skills of key parliamentary stakeholders;



The organization of over 80 activities with the participation of over 1,000 VRU Secretariat officials and other categories of parliamentary stakeholders;



The development of a new VRU online training platform that can be accessed via <http://e-learning.in.ua> for organizing professional training, etc.



Modernising and reforming the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada are considered to be indispensable elements of the comprehensive transformation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine within the framework of conducting parliamentary reform. Together with the EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project, the implementation of HRM practices, a functional and institutional analysis, and skills development activities were conducted, these being essential components of any reform. Our joint work enhanced institutional capacity and strengthened the functioning of the Ukrainian Parliament and its Secretariat.



Mykhailo Tepliuk
Acting Head of the Secretariat
of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

COMPONENT 3 Key Achievements

#Transparent&Service OrientedRada



Under Component 3, the Project team worked on communications, citizen engagement, and the IT transformation of the Verkhovna Rada.

The very first VRU Press Centre was launched with the support of the Project. The concept and design of the VRU Press Centre were developed and then approved under an Order of Head of the VRU Secretariat. The first part of the required equipment, furniture, for the centre was procured by the Project.

The Project developed a Concept of Internal Communications, which was approved under an Order of the Head of the Secretariat. On the basis of this concept, an online course on internal communications for employees of the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat was developed.

From March to July 2020 communication specialists were assigned to each VRU committee to develop media and content plans based on the VRU Communications Strategy, and to support their implementation.

Supporting an integrated approach to communications in the Verkhovna Rada, the Project developed a training curriculum on effective communications (56 hours). Training was provided on the planning and management of the communications process, the development of communication plans, crisis communications, the development of visual products, communication with various target audiences on new platforms, and more.

The VRU's capacity for communication through social networks was enhanced. Fifteen pages of Verkhovna Rada committees on Facebook, the Verkhovna Rada's Facebook page, the Facebook page of the Verkhovna Rada Education Centre, and the Verkhovna Rada's Telegram channel received blue checkmarks indicating the official status of the page.

VRU CAPACITIES FOR COMMUNICATION THROUGH FACEBOOK ENHANCED



Page followers:

November 2019 – **20,050**
September 2021 – **105,079**

Page Reach:

November 2019 – **21,000**
September 2021 – **497,034**

Number of likes of posts (per month):

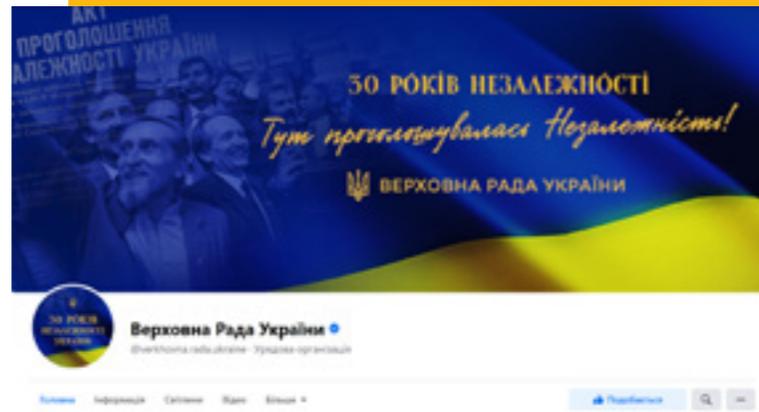
November 2019 – **876**
September 2021 – **12,281**

Number of shared posts (per month):

November 2019 – **252**
September 2021 – **1,144**

Number of comments posted (per month):

November 2019 – **102**
September 2021 – **956**



VRU Facebook page got a blue tick that identifies it as official



Creation of its own infographics, video, posters



All visual products are in unified design

30 РОКІВ НЕЗАЛЕЖНОСТІ УКРАЇНИ

Верховна Рада України

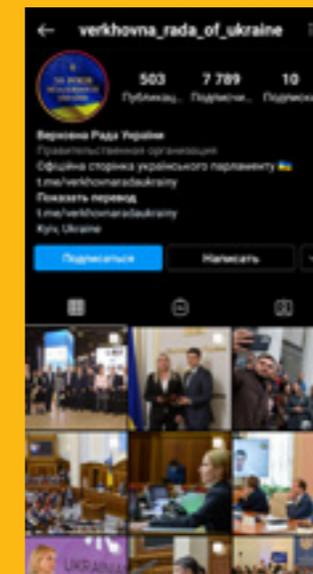
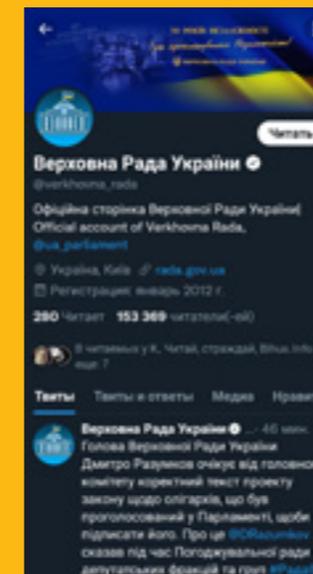
6,389 підписчиків

Описание

Офіційні новини Верховної Ради України

t.me/verkhovnaradaukrainy

The VRU Telegram Channel got a blue tick that identifies it as official



VRU CAPACITIES FOR COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS ENHANCED



We have the following dynamics for Telegram:

Followers:

November 2019 – **450**
September 2021 – **6,500**

Reach:

November 2019 – **225**
September 2021 – **19,300**

Number of posts:

November 2019 – **37**
September 2021 – **90**



We have the following dynamics for Twitter

Followers:

February 2019 – **143,000**
September 2021 – **154,300**

Reach:

February 2019 – **570,000**
September 2021 – **624,500**

Number of posts:

February 2019 – **58**
September 2021 – **156**



We have the following dynamics for Instagram

Followers:

February 2019 – **221**
September 2021 – **7,831**

Reach:

February 2019 – **130**
September 2021 – **11,200**

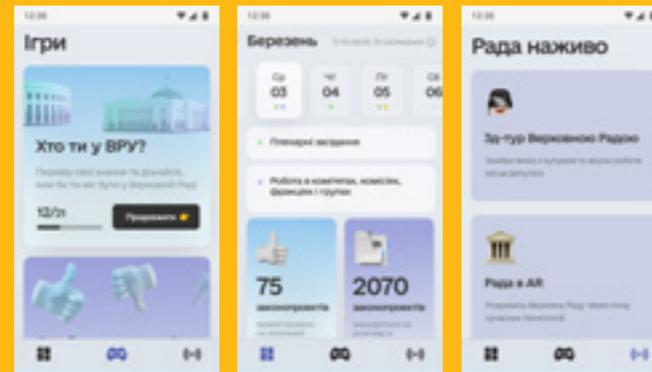
To enable the effective communication of the Verkhovna Rada with school students, in July 2019, the Education Centre of the VRU was launched with the support of the Project.

Between July 2019 and August 2021, 11,678 offline and 7,142 online school students attended the Education Centre.

A Comprehensive Parliamentary Education Programme was developed to improve public understanding of the parliament, its functions, and tools for citizen engagement. This programme was designed for schools, university students, and adults. It consists of thematic lessons about the VRU, guided tours through the VRU building, and other simple and engaging activities to raise awareness of the roles of parliament and of citizen participation.

In May 2021, the Project and the VRU Education Centre taught the National Parliament lesson from the Comprehensive Parliamentary Education Programme curriculum to more than 35,000 school students.

New, quest-format types of VRU tours based on the Comprehensive Parliamentary Education Programme were launched.



A mobile application for the VRU called “Parliament GO” was developed for iOS and Android users (including, in a game format, information about the VRU and its functions and structure; quizzes and tests; a 3D tour of the VRU; and augmented reality elements).

Supporting the Verkhovna Rada in the implementation of the e-Parliament Strategy and transformations towards paperless operations, the Project developed a tool for online registration of citizens to visit the Verkhovna Rada. This online tool helps citizens simplify the process of choosing a relevant event, a convenient date, and registering for VRU tours, Education Centre events, committee meetings, plenary sessions, exhibitions, and other open events of the Verkhovna Rada.



Over the past two years, the Ukrainian parliament has become more open, transparent, and understandable to citizens.

We're continuing to work in this direction within our Open Rada programme to strengthen citizens' trust in our parliament as an institution.

Our citizens can see these positive changes through the work of the VRU Education Centre, the press centre, modern formats of parliamentary communications via social networks, the rebooted RADA TV channel, and the new Branding strategy of the Verkhovna Rada. We're grateful to all our international partners for our joint work and their support for parliamentary reform.



Olena Kondratiuk
Vice-Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine



VRU ROLE IN SDG IMPLEMENTATION



UNDP as the SDG integrator supports both the Government of Ukraine and the Parliament in developing approaches to boost the effectiveness of their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



The Project was proud to engage an International Parliamentary expert to collect the experiences of EU parliaments and bring IPU representatives to a productive high-level discussion, at which the Deputy Speaker of VRU, a Deputy Prime Minister, the heads of VRU committees and international experts discussed approaches that can be implemented effectively in Ukraine to establish cooperation between the Government and the Parliament.

It is very important that both the Government and the VRU have a clear understanding that in 2021 we have only nine years left to implement Agenda 2030, and that effective cooperation between the executive branch and legislators is thus essential.





HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE VRU



The Project contributed to strengthening the role of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in monitoring international human rights treaties by:

- ▶ developing recommendations and guidelines on the monitoring by the Verkhovna Rada of the implementation by Ukraine of international human rights treaties;
- ▶ producing a database for monitoring Ukraine's reporting to UN treaty bodies, with a timetable for the years 2020 and 2021, and references to available reports, lists of issues, and submissions by civil society organizations and national human rights institutions;
- ▶ conducting training for MPs, their assistants and VRU staff.



The Parliamentary Reform Project has been mainstreaming gender issues in all its activities, with a special emphasis on the Human Resources Development Strategy of the VRU Secretariat, to make gender equality an integral part of the Human Resources policies of the Secretariat.

Also in cooperation with the leadership of the VRU, Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy and the Equal Opportunities Caucus the “[Gender Equality: Myths, Facts and State Policy](#)” guide for members of parliament was developed. The purpose of the guide is to present key facts and modern trends in the implementation of state policy on gender equality in Ukraine.

In addition, a draft handbook entitled “Integration of Gender Approaches and Increasing the Institutional Capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to Implement a Comprehensive Gender Approach” was also developed for the Secretariat.

A special online training course called “Introduction of Gender Equality Standards in the Work of the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat” was developed.



PARLIAMENTARY REFORM – NEXT STEPS

Parliamentary reform is a lengthy and complex exercise, especially in the context of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. While much has been achieved in Ukraine in the past few years, there are pressing issues that remain to be addressed, such as:

- ▶ the adoption of draft laws 5178 and 5707, which will require a set of measures to develop amendments to by laws/regulations and separate methodological proposals for legal monitoring, the planning of legislative activities, and impact assessment procedures;
- ▶ the implementation of the recommendations of the VRU Secretariat functional and institutional analysis;
- ▶ developing the 2022 Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for Human Resource Development of the Secretariat of the VRU up to 2022;
- ▶ the adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On Parliamentary Service”;
- ▶ implementation of the Comprehensive Parliamentary Education Programme;
- ▶ developing and implementing the Communication Strategy 2022-2026 Action Plan;
- ▶ improving RADA TV channel communications, based on the new communication strategy, and boosting the VRU Press Centre’s capacity;
- ▶ implementing the e-Parliament Strategy for 2022-2024.

To address remaining reform issues at the VRU, an institutional mechanism (the revival of the Working Group on Internal Reform, made up of MPs from the various parliamentary party groups) would be very useful¹. The group could develop and promote concrete proposals for activities in the VRU internal reform process, and further prioritise and conceptualise reform actions. The global parliamentary community and international development partners such as UNDP are ready to continue supporting Ukraine.

¹ Decree of the Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of 4 December 2019 “On the Working Group on Preparing and Supporting the Implementation of the Action Plan on Internal Reform, and Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine”



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CONTACTS

1, Klovsky Uzviz Str., Kyiv, 01021, Ukraine

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