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უკრაინის საპარლამენტო რეფორმის განხორციელება: ძირითადი მიზნები და მიღწეული შედეგები

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სტატიაში მოცემულია უკრაინის საპარლამენტო რეფორმის განხორციელებასთან დაკავშირებული საკითხების ღრმა ანალიზი. ხაზგასმულია ამ რეფორმის სხვადასხვა ასპექტები, ანუ: უმაღლესი რადას (უკრაინის პარლამენტი) საკანონმდებლო შესაძლებლობები და საკანონმდებლო პროცესი; აღმასრულებელი ხელისუფლების პოლიტიკური ზედამხედველობა; პარლამენტის ღიაობა, გამჭვირვალობა და ანგარიშვალდებულება მოქალაქეების წინაშე; უკრაინის კანონმდებლობის დაახლოება ევროკავშირის კანონმდებლობასთან; უკრაინის უმაღლესი რადას სამდივნოს ადმინისტრაციული შესაძლებლობები; კოალიცია, ოპოზიცია და დიალოგი უკრაინის უმაღლესი რადას შემდგენლობაში; ეთიკის ნორმებისა და სტანდარტების დაცვა და ა.შ.

დასაბუთებულია, რომ ეს რეფორმა ძალზე მნიშვნელოვანია უმაღლესი რადას (უკრაინის პარლამენტი) და მისი სამდივნოს საქმიანობის შემდგომი მოდერნიზაციის, მისი ეფექტურობისა და პარლამენტისა და მისი წევრების მუშაობისადმი საზოგადოების ნდობის გასაზრდელად, მოქალაქეები, გადაწყვეტილების მიღების პროცესის გაუმჯობესება და ა.შ. ამავ დროს, აღინიშნულია, რომ ეს რეფორმა წარმოადგენს ევროინტეგრაციის პოლიტიკის შემდგომი რეალიზაციის მთავარ ბერკეტს, რომელიც განისაზღვრება უკრაინის მთავრობის მთავარ პრიორიტეტად.

კვლევის დროს გამოყენებულ იქნა ზოგადი სამეცნიერო და სპეციალური კვლევის მეთოდები, კერძოდ: თეორიული განზოგადება, შედარება და მორფოლოგიური ანალიზი - კვლევის კონცეპტუალური და კატეგორიული აპარატის ფორმირების პროცესში; სისტემის ანალიზი - საპარლამენტო რეფორმის განხორციელების სამართლებრივი და ინსტიტუციური მექანიზმების შესაძლებლობების და დასაბუთება, ევროპული და საერთაშორისო ორგანიზაციების (კერძოდ, ევროპის) რეკომენდაციების გათვალისწინებით.

ჩატარებული გამოკვლევის საფუძველზე წარმოდგენილია პრაქტიკული რეკომენდაციები უკრაინაში საპარლამენტო რეფორმის შემდგომი განხორციელებისა და უმაღლესი რადას და მისი სამდივნოს საქმიანობის მოდერნიზაციის შესახებ.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: რეფორმა, პარლამენტი, კანონმდებლობა, მოდერნიზაცია, უმაღლესი რადა, სამდივნო, ევროინტეგრაცია, უკრაინა, შესაძლებლობები.

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ATTITUDE OF STAFF TOWARDS INTERNAL CONTROL ON THE EXAMPLE OF BATUMI HOTELS

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The article provides a deep analysis of the issues related to the implementation of the parliamentary reform in Ukraine. It is highlighted the different aspects of this reform, i.e.: legislative capacity and legislative process within the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament of Ukraine); political oversight of the executive; openness, transparency and accountability of the Parliament to citizens; approximating Ukrainian legislation to the European Union acquis; administrative capacities of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Secretariat; coalition, opposition and dialogue within the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; respecting ethical norms and standards etc.

It is justified that this reform is extremely important for ensuring further modernization of the activity of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament of Ukraine) and its Secretariat, increasing its effectiveness and public trust to the work of the Parliament and its members, promoting the dialogue with the citizens, improving the decisionmaking process etc. At the same time, it is noted that this reform represents a key stone for further realization of the European integration policy which is defined a key priority by the Government of Ukraine.

In the course of the research general scientific and special research methods were used, in particular: theoretical generalization, comparison and morphological analysis in the process of formation of the conceptual and categorical apparatus of the research; system analysis identifying opportunities and justification of the legal and institutional mechanisms of the parliamentary reform implementation, taking into account the recommendations of European and international organizations (in particular, Europe).

On the basis of the conducted research, it is presented the practical recommendations regarding further implementation of the parliamentary reform in Ukraine and modernization of the activity of the Verkhovna Rada and its Secretariat.

Keywords: *reform, Parliament, legislation, modernization, Verkhovna Rada, Secretariat, European integration, Ukraine, capacity.*

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Analysis of recent research and publications.

The problem of parliamentary reform implementation has occupied one of the leading places in the scientific researches of the national (Ukrainian) and international experts, jurists, philosophers, sociologists, political scientists. In this regard, it should be noted the works of S. Alekseev, Y. Bersheda, V. Goshovska, B. Gurne, R. Hertzog, I. Khmilko, Y. Lykhach, A. Maliuga, G. Marcou, O. Kopylenko, O. Povazhnyi, E. Rakhimkulov, M. Tepluk, V. Tolkovanov and other scientists.

Aim and research objectives

The purpose of the article is to highlight the main objectives of the parliamentary reform in Ukraine, the key challenges to be faced as well as the results to be achieved.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

1. To analyze the main recommendations provided by the international and European organizations as well as to point out their role in the process of the parliamentary reform implementation;
2. To describe the parliamentary reform, its main goals and achieved results in the framework of the implementation of the complex public administration and European integration process realization;
3. To develop the concrete recommendations regarding further modernization of the activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and its Secretariat.

Presenting the main materials.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU) has been the Parliament of Ukraine since independence in 1991. Ukraine's 1996 Constitution describes its constitutional role of

legislating, voting the national budget, overseeing government action, and representing Ukrainian citizens in the national governance process [7]. The VRU's powers are articulated within the Constitution that defines inter alia the role of MPs, the administration of parliament, and the functioning of parliamentary committees. The VRU is further governed by its Rules of Procedure that also have the status of a law, and which define the functioning of the parliament.

The VRU has 450 members, although currently only 423 are elected as elections could not be held in 2014 in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the City of Sevastopol, and in the non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (NGSA). Half of the members of parliament are elected from single-mandate constituencies and half through a proportional national party list system [4].

The officials of the VRU Secretariat are covered by the Law "On Civil Service" [3] and act under the leadership of the Head and five Deputy Heads responsible for specific aspects of parliamentary administration. The current maximum number of positions in Secretariat is limited to 1101 positions.

The VRU, like other state institutions of Ukraine, is in the process of transformation into a modern democratic legislature based on a European democratic model. The process of democratisation in Ukraine has faced a number of challenges including the heritage of an authoritarian governance model, divergent ideological and geostrategic perspectives, and cycles of popular unrest and regime change, most recently during the 2014 Maidan Revolution, when the previous government was deposed through a popular uprising, leading to Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2014.

Taking into account key provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the

European Union ratified by the Law of Ukraine as of 16 September 2014 No 1678-VII, in February 2016 the European Parliamentary Needs Assessment Mission (hereinafter – the European Parliament Mission) developed and presented the Report and the Roadmap on strengthening institutional capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [2].

While the constitutional and legal framework for democratic governance in Ukraine is welldeveloped, if in the views of many observers overlegislated, the partypolitical system is weakly institutionalized, with most parties lacking a clear programmatic vision. Ukrainian MPs generate a plethora of legislative proposals, few of which become law (which is sometimes referred to as “legislative spam”). For example, in the 6th session of the 8th Convocation, from 21 February to 14 July 2017, MPs submitted 402 legislative proposals, compared with only 87 from the government, and 19 from the Presidency. The proportion of MP proposals that become law is low, rising from 7% to 18% of laws proposed in the years 2014 – 2017. Government legislative efficiency is also low by international standards: between 2014 and 2017 the proportion of government legislative proposals that became law rose from 40% to 45%. In both of these areas, legislative efficiency is slowly improving, however the legislative pressure on the VRU remains intense due to Ukraine’s commitment to enact the EU *acquis* contained within the Association Agreement as well as other international treaties and obligations, along with an ambitious state reform agenda [4].

A democratic parliament is a body in which different political forces both work together to enable the institution to function and compete with each other to further their specific agenda. In a wellfunctioning parliament in an established democracy, the ‘rules of the game’ through which

the institution functions are commonly accepted, enabling decisions to be made consensually in areas related to the management and operating rules of the institution. Even in established democracies, however, political competition more or less frequently impinges on institutional organization, resulting in disruptions to parliamentary procedures, boycotts, etc [10].

In principle, the administration of parliament should be separated from the political decisionmaking processes [12]. Typically, the parliamentary administration in an established democratic parliament is largely insulated from political influence, although this is never absolute, and parliamentary officials in every country must carefully balance neutrality with their obligation to assist MPs from every different political grouping with widely divergent agendas. In Westminstertype parliaments, the Speaker typically resigns from party allegiance and leads the institution as a neutral figure.

This is not the case in most parliamentary systems with a Napoleonic heritage, including Ukraine, where the Chairperson of the VRU (Speaker) remains a political figure while at the same time also having responsibility for setting administrative direction [1]. As a result, it is not possible in a parliament such as the VRU to separate internal reform (e.g. strengthening capacity of the parliamentary Secretariat) from wider political reform of the legislature, and internal (administrative) reform requires the support of the Chairperson, the management of the parliamentary Secretariat and the Chairperson’s Office, who remain key actors in both political and administrative reform, and support of other parliamentary factions, committees is required in advancing both reform processes.

As part of the institutional reforms inherent in Ukraine’s European orientation, the VRU

embarked on a comprehensive reform strategy developed through a partnership with the European Parliament and with support of international development partners including UNDP. A 'Needs Assessment Mission' (NAM) headed by former European Parliament President Pat Cox in 2015/2016 resulted in the adoption of the VRU resolution of 17 March 2016 "On measures with regard to implementation of the recommendation on internal reform and strengthening institutional capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" (hereafter VRU Roadmap for Internal Reform and Capacity Building) [5].

It includes 52 recommendations covering the following reform priorities:

- legislative capacity and legislative process within the VRU;
- political oversight of the executive;
- openness, transparency and accountability of the Parliament to citizens;
- approximating Ukrainian legislation to the EU acquis;
- administrative capacities;
- coalition, opposition and dialogue within the VRU;
- respecting ethical norms and standards within the VRU.

It is important to stress that the international organizations (in particular, the Council of Europe, EU, UNDP, USAID and others) have contributed to the successful implementation of the parliamentary reform as well as the modernization of the Ukrainian Parliament and its Secretariat. Among all donor funded projects, we have to note the activity of the EUUNDP Parliamentary Reform Project (PRP). Its main objective is to strengthen the functioning of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU), including its Secretariat, on the path towards building a performing, trusted and transparent

parliamentary institution able to effectively carry out its constitutional responsibilities of legislation, oversight and representation in line with best European democratic parliamentary practices.

The ongoing parliamentary reform in Ukraine is aligned with the priorities of the EU's Single Support Framework for Ukraine 2018 – 2020, the Government of Ukraine – UN Partnership Framework 2018–2022, and the UNDP Country Programme Document 2018 – 2022. It is built on achievements and lessons learnt of the EUUNDP Rada for Europe project (201618) and will continue to support parliamentary reform, including through supporting the implementation of the VRU's Roadmap for Internal Reform and Capacity Building of 17 March 2016. This Roadmap is based on the 20152016 Needs Assessment Mission (NAM), which shall be considered as a crosscutting element addressed within the scope of the project, when appropriate and relevant.

In the framework of further parliamentary reform implementation, it is important to coordinate closely the activity with other donorfunded projects, i.e. the second phase of the EUAssociation4U project and other EUfunded sectorial initiative, notably to ensure effective prioritisation and planning of legislative process related to the EUUkraine Association Agreement (AA) at both the parliamentary and governmental level. In this view, a reinforced legislature and its services/staffers, well-equipped with the relevant expertise and support from the EU side is viewed as a precondition to timely implementation of legal obligations foreseen by the AA.

Furthermore, the parliamentary reform implementation process will also closely coordinate with and complement the USAID RADA program, notably with regard to

parliamentary education centre and training activities for MPs. A detailed description of the project's approach to inter-project cooperation and coordination in the areas related to parliamentary reform, strategic framework for legislative support to AA implementation and relevant aspects of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) is provided in the section "Partnerships" below.

Specifically, the parliamentary reform objectives respond to the EU Single Support Framework Sector One, "Strengthening institutions and good governance", with its emphasis on "inclusive and evidence-based policy and legislative development", and "improved democratic decision-making processes", through "more effective and efficient legislative structures and procedures at all levels and for all policy areas promoted", and "improved practices of non-government stakeholders participation in policy making". The EU/OECD Principles of Public Administration and other relevant standards will also be providing guidance as applicable [15].

Furthermore, the parliamentary reform reflects the vision and principles of the EU Global Strategy (Council Conclusions, Oct 2016), the New European Consensus on Development 'Our world, our dignity, our future' (Jun 2017) and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019). Lastly, the parliamentary reform will be implemented within the UNDP's Democratic Governance programme which aims to contribute to the achievement of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels", and to foster the role of the parliament in the implementation of the agenda across all thematic policy areas.

The parliamentary reform's overall approach is to reflect the EU and UNDP experiences in supporting sector reforms and public administration reform through Ukrainian Reform Architecture, including Reform Delivery Office of the Cabinet of Ministers and Reform Support Teams in the selected ministries under the umbrella of "EBRD-Ukraine Stabilisation and Sustainable Growth Multi-Donor Account" (hereafter – EBRD MDA).

In particular, the parliamentary reform will adjust and adapt this approach to the extent possible to the legislature, while keeping in mind the constitutional and institutional specificities of parliament.

For this purpose, a significant part of the parliamentary reform is delivered through an advisory group to the VRU leadership and Secretariat – Parliamentary Reform Office – which is established as a part of the project's implementation mechanism, notwithstanding and without affecting the existing legal structural framework of the parliament, which is determined by the Constitution and applicable legislation [4]. The approach is based on the understanding that the parliament itself is the driver and owner of its reform agenda, and that assistance in this regard will be provided on the basis of the decisions of parliament under and in follow up the VRU resolution of 17 March 2016 "On measures with regard to implementation of the recommendation on internal reform and strengthening institutional capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" (Roadmap) [5].

The support to parliamentary reform in Ukraine is embedded in the broader effort of promoting democratic governance reforms, which is one of the pillars of the UN Partnership Framework and also one of the main priorities of the EU Single Strategic Framework for Ukraine and the UNDP Country Programme Document.

The theory of change of this project is therefore to be understood within the broader theory of change inscribed in those strategic documents.

The parliamentary reform aims primarily at supporting the capacity building process of a single institution, i.e. the parliament, which is, at the same time, the highest platform for reflecting political dynamics in Ukraine, which will be renewed in an election during the implementation period, as well as the permanent secretariat structures and processes, that remain through and beyond the electoral cycle. This has significant consequences for the underlying theory of change, which must reflect the highly volatile and political context in which the project operates [14].

The theory of change underpinning the project is built on the central role of a parliament in democratic governance, and the necessity of a parliament to carry out its constitutional roles effectively, efficiently and openly. It should be stressed that this project has been developed in close consultation with the various assistance providers and has been designed to be complementary to already existing parliamentary support activities provided. Discussions have also involved the key parliamentary stakeholders, in particular the participants of the Jean Monnet Dialogue, namely the Chairperson, faction leaders and the European Parliament, and they will continue to be involved during the implementation period.

At the same time, the Parliamentary Reform Office (PRO) coordinates closely with other actors in the effort to promote and support democratic governance, the rule of law, human rights, transparency and integrity. The PRO will continue its very close partnership and interactions with the other actors in parliamentary development. Specifically, the predecessor project has already worked closely with the National Democratic

Institute that plays a key role in coordinating the Jean Monnet Dialogue process. The PRO will build upon and expand the project's support to the better articulation between the high-level Jean Monnet Dialogue on the one hand and the VRU Reform Working Group at the implementation level, in particular through the PRO, that brings together the representatives of the different parliamentary groups with the Secretariat, under the leadership of the Chairperson and with the support of the Parliamentary Reform Office. In this regard, the VRU Secretariat is expected to ensure organisational and informational support to the functioning of the VRU Reform Working Group, including planning of meetings, agenda, technical and background notes, minutes, etc. The relevant information is expected to be shared by the VRU Secretariat with all project's stakeholders, including EU Delegation and European Parliament. In addition, the project works closely in collaboration with NDI on gender equality initiatives in the VRU, with a number of joint activities to be conducted.

As a number of UN agencies provide advice and support to the VRU in their respective mandated areas of specialization, and as advice and recommendations have tended to be provided in an unsystematic and uncoordinated manner, it is opportune to use UNDP's close partnership with the VRU to streamline the legislative process to also optimize the input provided by different UN agencies. Formal recommendations should be made publicly available and accessible wherever appropriate, and MPs and Secretariat staff should be duly advised and informed about the different international obligations and respective mandates on the basis of which such advice is rendered. Working closely with the UNDP Country Office and the Democratic Governance Programme, the project can play a useful role in facilitating the coordination of

UN-mandate-based recommendations to the legislative process, which is in line with the EU's priorities for reform support in Ukraine.

With regard to specific public administration reform (PAR) aspects which are common for both legislative and executive branches (strategic planning, legislative development, HRM, eservices policy and standards) the project will cooperate closely with the EU-funded project in support to PAR "EU4PAR", upcoming EU4PFM (regarding financial impact analysis) or other relevant initiatives such as USAID TAPAS project. The project will aim to build close partnership with the new phase of the USAID RADA project and EU-funded Association4U project, which are expected to launch their activities in the second half of 2019. The cooperation will be established within overall cooperation framework established between implementing organisations and the VRU. Partnerships are also maintained with other actors in parliamentary development including those that are not present on the ground in Ukraine, but which carry out parliamentary development activities, including OSCE/ODIHR which works particularly on parliamentary ethics.

Further implementation of the parliamentary reform process should also focus on building partnerships with European member state parliaments, and as these partnerships enable durable support and information exchange relationships to multiply, these will continue beyond the end of the PRP, as has already been seen in the VRU's initiation of continuing work with the European Parliament and parliaments of European countries following links that have helped to enhance VRU officials' comfort in leveraging international knowledge. These partnerships will be multiplied and deepened in the following years. New legislative, oversight and representation business workflow models

developed based on European and international best practices will be adopted to ensure effective legislative process and parliamentary business processes after the project completion [11].

Consistent monitoring of progress under the expected deliverables at the level of Parliament, particularly through continuous engagement with the Working Group on Internal Reform and VRU Secretariat leadership will facilitate institutionalisation of the advice and other technical support provided by the project into the management practices and culture of the VRU Secretariat. Furthermore, transfer to VRU Secretariat of developed software, online training courses and other project deliverables will help to sustain the VRU capacity in terms of horizontal management functions, as well as to scale up implementation of the project recommendations. Specific training curricula on civic education will help to reach wider audience. Collaboration will also be pursued with the education sector, in particular schools and universities.

As it has been already noted, another important institutional mechanism for supporting the parliamentary reform implementation in Ukraine is the Parliamentary Reform Office (PRO). It is an advisory group to the Leadership and Secretariat ("Apparatus") of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU) under the general supervision of the VRU Chairperson, which as a component of the EUUNDP Parliamentary Reform Project provides support to parliamentary reforms aimed at strengthening the functioning of the Ukrainian Parliament, including its Secretariat, as a progressively more effective, accountable and transparent institution in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities of legislation, oversight, and representation with positive influence on the overall process of EU-Ukraine Association Agreement implementation. The main objectives of the PRO include the following:

- Improving the legislative process and parliamentary oversight;
- Enhancing the institutional capacity of the VRU and its Secretariat;
- Strengthening VRU transparency and accountability to the citizens, including through new technologies for better internal processes, communications and participation.

At the strategic level PRO reports to the EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Steering Committee (Project Board), which delegates its authority of PRO oversight to PRO Consultative and Over-sight Board (COB).

COB monitors PRO annual plans implementation, proposes amendments to these plans and provides recommendations to the Steering Committee (Project Board) in terms of PRO monitoring and evaluation. The Consultative and Oversight Board consists of the Heads of the administrative and political parts of the Working Group, as well as representatives of UNDP, EU Delegation, and the European Parliament (as an observer).

COB meetings are held quarterly on the basis of transparency and openness. Members of the Working Group are informed about the COB meeting no later than 10 days before the event. At the operational level PRO is accountable to UNDP as per the applicable project governance rules and regulations. PRO staff members are not civil servants, but rather individual contract holders, selected on the competitive basis, and hired in accordance with UNDP service procurement procedures. The premises and furniture for the PRO are provided by the VRU Secretariat, while technical facilities and equipment are provided by the EUUNDP Parliamentary Reform Project. PRO operates based on the Resolution of the Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On Parliamentary Reform Office”.

In order to facilitate the internal reform and capacity building process, in partnership with the European Parliament, and with support from NDI and the EUUNDP Rada for Europe Project, a “Jean Monnet Dialogue” (JMD) process has been established that regularly brings together the leaders of parliamentary groups to achieve highlevel agreement on reform areas. Based on these agreements, the Working Group on Rada Reform comprised of MPs representing parliamentary factions (groups) develops and promote concrete proposals on activities. Though the Working Group on Rada Reform held only five meetings it already has some intermediate results, such as registered new draft Laws No. 5522 amending Rules of Procedures with a view to bring it into compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine; No. 6256 on optimization of the quantity of the VRU Committees, paralleling them to the ministerial portfolios; No. 7550 on D'Hondt method of distributing committee seats. Draft laws No. 6256 and 7550 were adopted in the first reading in April 2018.

In parallel, the parliamentary administration has moved forward on reforms within its competence that do not require legislative changes. In particular, the VRU Secretariat had developed Communication and eParliament strategies (with R4E support), launched development of the HR strategy and the strategic development plan, as well as introduced an electronic discussion platform in test mode.

The VRU has made significant progress towards its goal of becoming a more effective and efficient institution, through following the VRU Roadmap for Internal Reform and Capacity Building. Overall, in the mid of 2018 37 of the 52 recommendations had been fully or partially implemented. In April 2018, a set of draft laws were adopted in the first reading providing for improvement of the parliamentary process, as a

direct result of the NAM recommendations and highlevel consensus achieved within the JMD.

However, the institution continues to be faced by important challenges that in turn hamper Ukraine's transformation into an effectively institutionalized democracy. The VRU continues to be faced by an overwhelming legislative workload which needs to be addressed within the VRU Rules of Procedures.

To effectively support the VRU's constitutional functions the VRU Secretariat requires implementation of strategic development plan, structural reorganisation and a forward looking human resources strategy, limited experience in conducting effective government oversight. Finally, the issues of public perception and of citizen understanding of the Parliament activity, including introduction of effective tools for citizens' engagement into parliamentary process is still high on the agenda.

Among the most significant challenges the VRU faces are the extremely low rate of trust and confidence in the institution among the general public (7% as of July 2019), and the difficult of sometimes unclear relationship it has with the Cabinet of Ministers and the Presidential Administration. Numerous reports have indicated that rules of procedure are frequently ignored in practice, and have inter alia emphasized the need to eliminate proxyvoting [4].

A public trust in institutions is generally low in Ukraine. However, even among the key institutions, the VRU fares unfavourably. The 2017 World Development Report identified exclusion, capture, and clientelism as manifestations of power asymmetries that that lead to failures to achieve security, growth, and equity [11].

The challenge with affecting the dynamics within the primary political arena embodied by the parliament is that it is at the same time the seat

of national sovereignty and the representative of the will of the people. Assisting parliaments from outside with an effort to promoter certain political outcomes (reforms) over others (decisions that favour clientelist interests) must therefore be undertaken with utmost care to not interfere in the political process, or even be perceived to do so. At the same time, external support cannot be entirely indifferent to political outcomes. In order to achieve sustainable improvements in security, growth, and equity or to attain the goals stipulated in Agenda 2030, effective policy interventions must therefore work through shifting the incentives of those with power, reshaping their preferences in favour of good outcomes.

As revealed by the Global Legislative Openness Conference, hosted by the VRU in May 2017, greater openness of the parliament will also display the deeply diverging views among politicians and expose corruption. Greater openness therefore only contributes to increasing public trust in parliament if it is accompanied by greater downward accountability of political leaders and parliamentarians to voters and the general public, and broader possibilities for the public to engage in the parliamentary activities including by providing views and proposals related to legislative and oversight functions of parliament.

The complicated constitutional and political relationship of the VRU with the executive is an important factor to be taken into account in the context of providing assistance to parliamentary reform. Ukraine had considered changing the current parliamentarypresidential system to move toward premierpresidentialism through limiting presidential powers and enhancing the power of parliament over the Cabinet of Ministers. The constitutional reform process has however been paused in this regard. A

Constitutional Commission remains in place and a working group has elaborated proposals for constitutional amendments in this regard, with active support from the Venice Commission and other international experts. For the time being, however, it appears unlikely that constitutional changes will be on the agenda in the foreseeable future.

In today's context, the new challenges arise regarding the mental, professional, regulatory and legal compatibility of the activities of the VRU Secretariat and peer parliamentary secretariats in other countries of Europe and globally.

The European integration policy highlights the need to prioritize efforts to improve performance of the Secretariat and human resources development in line with the European standards and best practices of other countries [13].

Recently, a positive trend in the area of working with the staff of the Secretariat there is an effort to renew and improve competencies of the staff. With this view, the importance of such qualities of employees as respect to the law, integrity, protection of national interests, gender equality, humanism, etc., is increasing.

At the same time, new challenges regarding to further reform of the Secretariat are emerging. First of all, it concerns the protection of human rights and the development of anticorruption mechanisms in the area of human resources management.

It is a matter of implementing the constitutional provisions on equal rights to access to the civil service, career development with respect to the principle of meritocracy, combatting corruption, biased personnel appointments, etc.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and its Secretariat should become as open as possible, and their activities should be clearly regulated by the

effective legislation, determined by humanistic values and moral standards. It will facilitate the recruitment of professionals committed to further democratic development of Ukraine.

As it has been already noted, the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On Measures to Implement Recommendations on Internal Reform and Strengthening Institutional Capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" as of 17 March 2016 No 1035VIII [5], adopted in the followup to recommendations of the European Parliament Mission identified the priority areas for internal reform and human resources development of the Secretariat, in particular:

1. In the structure of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine a new and modern Human Resource Service should be established.
2. A comprehensive human resources development strategy of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine should be elaborated, led by properly resourced strategic training opportunities, including languages, and individualised career development plans identified through the regular performance appraisal system. A policy on staff mobility should be developed and encouraged.
3. Short term internships as regards terms and conditions of employment should be distinguished from those of the permanent civil servants and in line with international practice internships should carry no implicit commitment to full time employment.
4. In the longer term perspective, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine could consider moving towards the establishment of an independent parliamentary civil service.

It is also important to note that on 1 May 2016, the new Law of Ukraine "On Civil Service" as of 10 December 2015 No 889VIII [3] entered

into force. It defined the general framework, legal and organizational principles of civil service and established that the right of equal access of citizens to the civil service is based on their personal qualities and achievements. In this regard and in order to increase the level of efficiency and effectiveness of the activity of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, it is recommended to develop and to implement a longtermed Strategy for Human Resources Management and Development of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Results and discussion.

It is justified that the parliamentary reform became an important tool for further modernization of the activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and its Secretariat. It is highlighted the key objectives, the main challenges to be faced and the achieved results.

It is also justified the necessity to develop the cooperation with the international organisations (in particular, the European Parliament, UNDP, USAID etc.) in implementing the parliamentary reform. In order to increase the effectiveness of the parliamentary activity, to improve the decisionmaking process and strategic planning within the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and its Secretariat, it is proposed to develop an effective management and to promote leadership at all levels (political, administrative etc.).

Conclusions and recommendations.

The parliamentary reform represents a core element for further modernization of the public administration system in Ukraine and successful implementation of the European integration policy. In this regard, the full support by the VRU Chairperson and the parliamentary Secretariat (the "Apparatus") is essential, but it must be complemented by the endorsement of various factions and groupings of MPs in parliament

and must be broadly supported by the Ukrainian citizens.

Taking in to account the achieved results, it is proposed to consider the following proposals regarding further implementation of the parliamentary reform:

- to harmonize the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada with the current Constitution of Ukraine, in particular the selection of candidates for judges of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, regulation of the status of the coalition, as well as mechanisms for its formation and counting, etc.;
- to conduct a comprehensive review and revise the Roadmap for Internal Reform of the Verkhovna Rada in order to finalize recommendations that have lost relevance or are of dubious relevance in the context of domestic parliamentary practices;
- to approve the concept of the legislative process "from beginning to end", which should be agreed between all subjects of the legislative process and correlate with the current reform of public administration;
- to adopt the Law "On normative legal acts" to ensure the effective division of the scope of regulation of laws and bylaws, as well as to establish uniform rules for drafting laws, their coordination between stakeholders, the order of interaction of legislative entities, the entry into force of laws, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of laws;
- develop and adopt a Code of Ethics for Deputies, taking into account international standards of parliamentarians;
- to adopt the Law "On Peculiarities of Civil Service in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine";
- to develop and to implement a longtermed Strategy for Human Resources Management and Development of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

- to organize the process of drafting comprehensive amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine in Parliament with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in order to strengthen the role of Parliament and solve existing internal problems arising from the Constitution of Ukraine: a) change the way voting by law by simple majority; b) restriction of the individual right of the legislative initiative of people's deputies; c) abolition of the mandatory mandate.

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