

RESEARCH

The capacity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to ensure the strategic course of the state towards Ukraine's full membership in the European Union: opportunities and challenges

SEPTEMBER 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Ukraine was granted candidate status for accession to the European Union on 23 June 2022, and on 25 June 2024, an intergovernmental conference between Ukraine and the EU officially launched membership negotiations in Luxembourg. This stage requires Ukraine to comprehensively bring its national legislation into line with EU norms and standards in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria (1993), which cover political, economic and the ability to implement the *acquis communautaire* – the EU's common legal *acquis*⁽¹⁾. In addition, the Madrid criterion (1995) specifies the need for administrative and institutional capacity of the state to effectively apply these norms in practice. In the process of European integration, the national parliament plays a key role in adopting and adapting laws, as well as exercising parliamentary control over the implementation of European Union law.

The activities of parliament must comply with the principles and standards of parliamentary democracy, which are defined by a few key sources. In particular, the Copenhagen Document of the CSCE (now the OSCE) of June 1990 contains principles that include political pluralism, parliamentary control, opposition rights and transparency of activities². Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union enshrines fundamental values – respect for democracy, human rights, equality and the rule of law – that are binding on all Member States and EU institutions, including parliaments. The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, in turn, shapes standards of parliamentary democracy through legal opinions and recommendations covering issues of democratic legitimacy of parliaments, the role of the opposition, the quality of law-making, parliamentary control procedures and the balance of powers⁽⁴⁾. The Commission's documents serve as a guide for reforming parliamentary systems in line with European democratic standards.

Every year, the European Commission publishes reports on the progress of candidate countries, assessing the state of parliamentary democracy in the section *on the functioning of democratic institutions*: the quality of the electoral process, the effectiveness of parliamentary control over the executive branch, the transparency of parliament's work, and the participation of the opposition in the political process. These criteria are used by the Commission as a tool to monitor the compliance of candidate countries with the political conditions for EU membership. With regard to Ukraine, the European Commission, in its *annual reports on EU enlargement (2023 and 2024)*, notes the Ukrainian parliament's ability to support the legislative process aimed at implementing the Association Agreement and harmonisation with the EU *acquis*, even in the context of martial law⁵.

¹ European Council. *Presidency Conclusions. Copenhagen European Council, 21–22 June 1993*. Copenhagen, 22.06.1993. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/ec/pdf/cop_en.pdf

² CSCE. *Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE*. Copenhagen, 1990. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/c/14304.pdf>

³ European Union. *Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2010/C 83/01)*. Official Journal of the European Union, C 83/1, 30 March 2010. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_b06#Text

⁴ Venice Commission. *Report on the Role of the Opposition in a Democratic Parliament*. Adopted at the 84th Plenary Session, 2010. <https://rm.coe.int/report-adopted-by-the-venice-commission-at-its-84th-plenary-session-de/1680b17bca>

At the same time, the Commission emphasises the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ukrainian parliament, in particular the committees working on European integration issues, and to develop analytical and expert support for processing the large volume of EU legislation. Among the problematic aspects, it highlights the weakening of the parliament's control function in the implementation of adopted laws, the use of shortened procedures that limit public debate, and the insufficient assessment of the impact of legislative changes.

In May 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a Roadmap on the Functioning of Democratic Institutions⁶, developed with the participation of experts from the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and representatives of the Verkhovna Rada in close cooperation with other executive bodies, civil society and international partners. The document is consistent with the recommendations of the European Commission. This strategic document contains measures aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity and improving the effectiveness of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in particular by ensuring its transparency and accountability, improving mechanisms for parliamentary control over public finances, and ensuring the integrity of Ukrainian MPs.

I. Effective and depoliticised parliamentary practices in the process of adapting national legislation to European Union law: an overview

A priority component of the European integration process is the adaptation of national legislation to EU standards. The experience of candidate countries and new EU members shows that the fullness of the role and functions of parliament and the effectiveness of parliamentary support directly affect the speed and quality of European integration. Most candidate countries and members of the European Union have introduced special parliamentary procedures for considering draft laws in the field of European integration. This approach has made it possible to systematically streamline the process of adapting national legislation to the *acquis communautaire*, ensuring the priority and expediency of consideration of relevant legislative initiatives. Parliamentary practice shows that ***the legislative procedure for considering draft laws in the field of European integration includes the following provisions***⁷:

- marking European integration bills with special labels to give them priority in the legislative process,
- Careful development of a legislative initiative involving all stakeholders in registering the project in parliament,
- availability of a table compliance and certificate on compliance of the provisions of the draft law with EU law,
- accelerated consideration (under conditions high-quality preparation of the draft law) to avoid political obstruction,
- allocating separate time (in some countries – allocating separate days) in the session agenda for consideration of European integration draft laws.

⁵ European Commission. *Ukraine 2024 Report. Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*. Brussels, 30 October 2024, SWD(2024) 699 final. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1924a044-b30f-48a2-99c1-50edeac14da1_en?filename=Ukraine%20Report%202024.pdf; European Commission. *Ukraine 2023 Report. Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*. Brussels, 8 November 2023, SWD(2023) 699 final https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf

⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. *Order on "Certain issues of ensuring the negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the European Union under cluster 1 "Fundamentals of the EU accession process"*. 14.05.2025, No. 475-r. Kyiv.

⁷ USAID Programme "RADA: Next Generation". *Five Signs of a Successful Parliament on the Path to Full Membership in the European Union: The Experience of EU Candidates and Current Members*. Kyiv, 2024. ; USAID Programme "RADA: Next Generation". *Fact Sheet "The Role of Parliament on the Path to EU Membership"*. Kyiv, 2024.

Country **Features of legislative planning**

Croatia	Every year, the Sabor discussed the government's annual programme for Croatia's accession to the EU – the Programme for the Adaptation and Implementation of the Acquis Communautaire – and adopted a plan for harmonising national legislation with the acquis.
Slovakia	Based on the Concept of Approximation of Legislation in the Slovak Republic, adopted by the government, the approximation of legislation was carried out by the ministries responsible for harmonisation in their respective areas of competence. The National Council (Slovak Parliament) adopted a strategic document entitled "Objectives and Main Responsibilities in Preparing for the Slovak Republic's Accession to the European Union". In this document, the National Council stated that it would focus its efforts on meeting the Copenhagen criteria within the framework of the approximation of the Slovak legal system to the acquis, and also gave its committees the right to verify the compatibility of thematic draft laws with EU requirements.
Albania	At the beginning of each year, the Assembly considers an extended report from the Council of Ministers on the integration process in accordance with the National Plan for European Integration. The Committee on European Integration and other committees, in accordance with their areas of responsibility, may call on legally established independent institutions and bodies that report and inform the Assembly to provide information on European integration issues. Parliamentary committees draw up a special calendar of hearings of independent institutions to monitoring the progress of integration into the EU.

Effective European integration is also impossible without **a parliamentary apparatus capable of working with the EU acquis and providing an adequate level of legislative support**. In candidate countries, the development of the institutional capacity of parliament is traditionally identified as one of the priority areas of preparation for membership. The analysis and adaptation of EU legislation require specialised knowledge, drafting skills and proficiency in legal English. For this reason, both candidate countries and Member States have created special institutional mechanisms and infrastructure aimed at enhancing the professional and human resources capacity of parliamentary bodies.

Country**Features of the institutional capacity of the parliamentary apparatus**

Latvia	In 1997, the EU Information Centre was opened in the Saeima. Its task was to provide MPs and parliamentary staff with the necessary documents and analytics, including weekly reviews of events. Subsequently, the Information Centre became accessible to the public. This transition to an "open door" policy took place in several stages. Initially, the Centre worked with journalists. Staff prepared answers to any questions they had about the European Union. Answers were prepared as quickly as possible – within two days. Subsequently, the Information Centre became accessible to anyone interested. Those interested were mainly students, teachers and other interested groups.
Romania	EU Directorate was set up within the Romanian Parliament, whose main functions were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to provide advice on issues of interaction between the government and parliament in the context of European integration;• publishing information on EU policies and legislation;• maintain databases of documents related to EU policies and legislation;• in interaction with the Directorate External Relations Ensure the participation of MPs and the secretariat in relevant international events.• organise training for parliamentary staff on EU policies and legislation.

The experience of European countries on the path to EU integration shows that effective parliamentary diplomacy requires clear ***coordination between the government and parliament in the field of adapting legislation to European Union law***. Developing a common position allows for coordination of the negotiation process, ensures timely information for legislators and the public, and maintains unity of the state's position in the international arena. This approach significantly increases the effectiveness of promoting national interests in negotiations. In the examples of Estonia and Croatia, this is achieved through regular consultations, exchange of documents and discussion of negotiation strategies by parliamentary committees and the government.

Country **Features of coordination between the government and parliament**

<p>Estonia</p>	<p>On 19 January 1998, the Committee on European Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the CEA) presented the Prime Minister with proposals for cooperation with the government on European integration issues. Among the key provisions are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The negotiation strategy will be presented by the government to the CEA for discussion and possible comments. 2. The negotiation strategy will be discussed in the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). 3. Regular meetings will be held between the CEA and the Prime Minister to discuss key positions in the negotiations. Where necessary, relevant ministers and experts will attend these meetings. 4. The government will regularly inform the CEA about the progress and problems of the negotiation process. 5. The government will provide the CEA with all important materials and documents related to European integration in written form.
<p>Croatia</p>	<p>The procedure for preparing and adopting the negotiating positions of the Republic of Croatia in the EU accession negotiations (which entered into force on 7 April 2005) provided for detailed procedures for adopting Croatia's negotiating position:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal for Croatia's negotiating position must be submitted for discussion to the National Committee (a special parliamentary committee comprising representatives of all political forces). 2. After receiving the opinion of the National Committee, the negotiating team discussed the position of the National Committee and adopted a position. 3. The final draft of the negotiating position is submitted to the National Committee. 4. The National Committee also regularly receives various documents related to the negotiation process on an ongoing basis. These documents include screening reports, EU common positions, strategies and reports, the action plan, reports on the implementation of commitments arising from the negotiation process, etc. the negotiation process, etc.

Coordination between the government and parliament creates the basis for **political consensus on European integration**, which is a strategic priority for all political forces. The practice of European integration of EU candidate countries and member states suggests that discussions may focus on specific aspects without calling into question the overall course towards full membership. To coordinate these processes, some countries have established specialised institutions that bring together political forces and formulate a coordinated agenda for integration.

Country	Features of institutional support for political consensus
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Albania	<p>The National Council for European Integration operates within the parliament as the highest national consultative body, promoting transparency in decision-making on integration issues and comprehensive cooperation between political forces, state institutions and civil society. Its main tasks are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to achieve consensus among all political forces, • coordinating parliamentary and government activities, • interaction with civil society and the expert community.
Croatia	<p>The National Committee was established as a special parliamentary committee tasked with monitoring the negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union (2005–2011). The committee consisted of 19 members – 15 members of parliament and/or representatives of parliamentary parties and 4 other members representing the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia, trade unions, employers' associations and the scientific community. The powers of the National Committee included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and evaluating the progress of negotiations; • providing conclusions and recommendations on behalf of the Croatian Parliament on the prepared negotiating positions; • reviewing information on the progress of negotiations; • reviewing and express their opinions on issues that arise during negotiations; • analyse and evaluate the work of individual members of the negotiating group; • through the Chair of the Committee, hold regular consultations and exchange information with the President of the Republic of Croatia, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament; • hold regular consultations with the head of the delegation and the chief negotiator on the progress of the negotiations, open issues arising during the negotiations, and possible ways to close individual chapters; provide, if necessary, conclusions on the harmonisation of Croatian legislation with EU rules; • report to on the work of the Committee the Croatian Parliament at least twice a year.

Parliamentary diplomacy strengthens the international position of the state and increases the effectiveness of promoting national interests in the international arena. Thus, the success of European integration largely depends on the activity of the parliament not only in domestic law-making, but also in the field of foreign parliamentary diplomacy. It is interinstitutional cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the national parliaments of EU member states that provides political support and technical assistance for the adaptation of legislation to the *acquis communautaire*. The key instruments of external parliamentary diplomacy include:

- the establishment of joint parliamentary committees with the European Parliament,
- participation in EU technical and expert assistance programmes (PHARE, TAIEX, Twinning⁸),
- bilateral and multilateral consultations with the parliaments of Member States,
- interaction with the Venice Commission and the Council of Europe on constitutional and institutional reforms,
- regular monitoring of the implementation of European Commission recommendations within the framework of annual reports.

Countries Features of parliamentary diplomacy

Romania	In 1995, the Committee on European Integration was established within the Parliament, which liaised directly with EU bodies and COSAC (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs). Annual Romania-EU Joint Parliamentary Committees were introduced, which became a permanent format for dialogue between the Romanian Parliament and the European Parliament. Active use of the Twinning and TAIEX programmes to attract expertise and train parliamentarians with the participation of colleagues from EU member states. Cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission in the field of constitutional reforms, ensuring compliance with EU democratic standards.
Bulgaria	The Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of European Funds coordinated legislative adaptation and control of EU funds. Parliament actively participated in COSAC plenary sessions and working groups, exchanging experience with other parliaments. Twinning and TAIEX programmes were used to train parliamentarians and attract expert support. Cooperation was established with the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission to support constitutional and institutional reforms. Particular attention was paid to combining foreign diplomacy with the control of European funds and the formation of common positions in the EU.

⁸ European Commission. *TAIEX & Twinning – institution building instruments for EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy*. DG NEAR. 2025. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-technical-assistance/taieux-twinning_en

II. Parliament in the context of a country's accession to the EU: the Ukrainian context

1. Parliamentary procedures for adapting Ukrainian legislation to European Union law (EU acquis)

One of the pressing problems in the field of adaptation of legislation to EU law is the outdated nature of Ukraine's framework legislation. Law of Ukraine "On the State Programme for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Legislation" No. 1629-IV of 18 March 2004 remains in force. This Law, which aims to regulate the planning and coordination of European integration activities, was adopted even before the signing of the 2014 Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine and the granting of candidate status for accession to the European Union to Ukraine by the European Council in June 2022. In fact, Law No. 1629-IV has become obsolete, as it does not take into account the current requirements of the EU acquis, the results of the screening of legislation, and the new architecture of law-making. The need to adopt a new law was already noted in the Report and Roadmap on Internal Reform and Institutional Capacity Building of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, prepared by the European Parliament's Needs Assessment Mission chaired by Pat Cox (September 2015 – February 2016)⁹.

The Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, approved by Law No. 1861-VI of 10 February 2010, like other legislative acts, do not establish special procedural requirements for the consideration of draft laws on European integration. In particular, there are no deadlines, procedural rules or precise requirements for the content and accompanying documents of draft laws related to European integration.

On 29 July 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted Resolution No. 2483-IX "On Certain Measures to Implement Ukraine's Commitments in the Field of European Integration" IX. This regulatory act aims to improve the organisational and legal mechanisms for parliamentary consideration of draft laws aimed at adapting national legislation to the EU acquis and ensuring the proper implementation of Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration.

Despite the procedural features of the consideration of European integration draft laws introduced by Resolution No. 2483-IX, the regulation of the procedure for accession to the EU by the resolution appears constitutionally questionable, since Article 83 of the Constitution of Ukraine stipulates that only the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure establish parliamentary procedure. The working group on parliamentary law reform has identified other problems in the sphere of submission, consideration and adoption of draft laws in the version of Resolution No. 2483-IX¹⁰.

⁹ European Parliament. *Report and roadmap on internal reform and institutional capacity building of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (European Parliament Needs Assessment Mission, chaired by Pat Cox)*. Kyiv. 2016.
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20160301RES16508/20160301RES16508.pdf>

In particular:

- the issue of priority and planning for the consideration of European integration draft laws has not been regulated, and no update of the Law "On the State Programme for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to EU Legislation" is done.
- there are no procedural requirements for consulting with EU institutions on specific draft regulatory acts when this is required by relevant obligations. The Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada do not provide for any cases or procedures for agreeing draft laws with the European Commission.

According to current legislation, a draft law aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law and fulfilling Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration is considered by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in accordance with:

- the general rules of legislative procedure established by the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine No. 1861-VI of 10 February 2010 (as amended),
- and the specifics defined by the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On Certain Measures to Fulfill Ukraine's Obligations in the Field of European Integration" dated July 29, 2022, No. 2483-IX.

At the stage of **preliminary consideration of the European integration bill**, the committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, whose remit includes assessing the compliance of the draft law with Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration (hereinafter referred to as *the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU*):

- determines the compliance of the provisions of the draft law with international legal obligations regarding the adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of EU law and the relevant provisions of the EU legal act being implemented;
- provides the main committee with an opinion containing:
 - a general description of the draft law;
 - information on whether the subject matter of the draft law falls within the scope of Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration and the scope of EU law;
 - information on the compliance of the draft law with Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration and the provisions of EU law;
 - determination of the level of compliance of the draft law with EU law (EU *acquis*) in terms of Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration.

In accordance with Article 93 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, **the main committee shall, within thirty days, preliminarily consider** the draft law and adopt a conclusion on the expediency of including it in the agenda of the session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

¹⁰ Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Information note on *the procedure for considering and adopting European integration draft laws in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. Kyiv. 2024. https://pravo.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Poryadok_rozglyadu_ta_uhvalennya_yevrointegratsijnyh_zakonoprojektiv_u_VRU.pdf

In accordance with subparagraph 2 of paragraph 4 of Resolution No. 2483-IX of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine dated 29 July 2022, **at the stage of preparation for consideration in the second and subsequent readings**, *if provisions related to the adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law, the fulfilment of Ukraine's international legal obligations*, the main committee shall refer such a draft law to the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for additional examination of their compliance with European Union law (EU *acquis*) in terms of Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration.

According to current legislation, a European integration bill may be adopted as a law:

- either after completion of its consideration in the second reading;
- or, as an exception, after adoption as a basis in accordance with part two of Article 114 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. However, this is only on condition that the draft law is recognised as not requiring further revision and has received a positive expert opinion from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

At the same time, the current legislation regulating the specifics of considering draft laws aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to European Union law is characterised by a certain lack of consistency and effectiveness. As a result, delays in the consideration and adoption of draft laws often occur.

For example, there are obvious shortcomings in the timeliness and planning of adoption "European integration" initiatives. One of many examples is bills No. 3196-d (reform of the Security Service of Ukraine) and No. 4330 (expansion of the powers of private enforcement agents), which are awaiting their second reading in 2021. However, both acts need to be rethought in light of the changed socio-political realities associated with the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation. Draft law No. 4330 has even been removed from the agenda of the Committee on Legal Policy due to significant shortcomings¹¹. Draft law No. 5660 on the same issue was also submitted by a group of MPs led by the deputy chair of the Committee on Legal Policy. The bill passed its first reading in 2021 but has not progressed further.

There are still many draft laws aimed at European integration that were submitted before the full-scale war and are still under consideration, for example:

Draft law No. 5629 introduces restrictive measures against domestic violence using electronic means of control, which ensure that the perpetrator complies with orders and restrictions prohibiting them from approaching the victim. Submitted in 2021, the bill passed its first reading in 2023 and is still awaiting its second reading. The delays may be due to doubts among expert NGOs about the effectiveness of the measures introduced.

- Draft law No. 5751, which aims to reform the existing security system for victims and other participants in criminal proceedings, for example by creating a new body – the National Agency for the Security of Participants in Criminal Proceedings – has not yet passed the committee after being submitted in 2021, although it is supported by expert NGOs, and its main author is the chair of the subcommittee on criminal law of the Committee on Law Enforcement. One of the reasons for the delay is the lack of funding and resources to launch the new body.

¹¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. *Transcript of the meeting of the Committee on Legal Policy*. Kyiv. 14.04.2021, p. 7-

¹² <https://kompravpol.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/33391.pdf>

- Draft law No. 6487 on the High Court of Intellectual Property was submitted in 2021 but has not yet been included in the parliament's agenda. It should be noted that the High Court of Intellectual Property was formally established in 2017, but the competition for judges' positions has been frozen since 2019, and the court is currently not functioning.
- Draft law No. 6177 on the implementation of the GDPR was submitted in 2021 and has also not yet been included in the parliament's agenda. In addition, there is draft law No. 8153, also aimed at implementing the GDPR. It has been more successful: submitted in 2022, the bill passed its first reading in November 2024.
- And others.

At the same time, while some bills remain unconsidered for a long time, others are considered in the second reading at an accelerated pace and submitted to deputies shortly before the final vote, which makes it difficult for the deputies to analyse them thoroughly. In a number of cases, this leads to a lack of support for the legislative initiative in the plenary hall. For example:

- European integration bill No. 8146, which amended the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes regarding counter-terrorism measures, was adopted and entered into force. However, its revised text for the second reading was published on the parliament's website on 21 March 2023 and adopted on the same day. This violated Article 117 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, which requires that draft laws for the second or repeated second reading, together with the conclusions of committees and other documents, be provided to deputies at least 10 days before the plenary session.
- *Similarly*, a comparative table (second reading) for draft law No. 12414 (on the procedural rights of anti-corruption law enforcement agencies) was published on the parliament's website on 22 July 2025 and adopted on the same day. The draft law was not marked as "European integration". At the same time, its provisions clearly contradicted Ukraine's international obligations and, as a result, European partners regarded this as a significant step backwards in the reform process, creating risks for Ukraine's European integration prospects and causing considerable concern at the level of the European Commission and expert circles. Therefore, the draft law required additional expertise on its compliance with Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration, which, according to the above-mentioned Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of 29 July 2022 No. 2483-IX, is carried out only in relation to projects marked as "European integration".

The above cases demonstrate **the absence of a single strategic document** agreed between parliament and government that would contain a clear and comprehensive list of legislative initiatives necessary for full EU membership, as well as clear deadlines for the adoption of such legislative initiatives. Although the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has approved a number of strategic documents in the field of European integration (see, for example, the roadmaps approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 14 May 2025 No. 475-r "Some issues of ensuring the negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the European Union under cluster 1 "Fundamentals of the EU accession process"). However, firstly, there is an obvious problem of insufficient political coordination between the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada regarding the necessity and urgency of adopting the legislative initiatives provided for in these documents. Secondly, the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada do not provide for a "link" to such strategic documents and special provisions or procedures for considering relevant draft laws.

At the same time, there are legislative initiatives to eliminate gaps in the current legislative procedure for reviewing EU-related legislation. Thus, back in November 2022, a draft law was registered, *"On Amendments to the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Submission, Consideration and Adoption of Draft Laws Aimed at Adapting Ukrainian Legislation to the Provisions of European Union Law (EU Acquis) in Terms of the Fulfilment of International Legal Obligations"* No. 8242. The draft law defines a special procedure for the submission, consideration and adoption of draft laws aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law (EU acquis). In particular, it expands the cases in which they can be adopted as a basis and as a whole in the first reading. At the same time, the accelerated adoption of the Law can only take place if the Government and the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union conclude that the draft law under consideration is fully compliant with EU legislation.

The working group on parliamentary law reform has identified specific problems in the area of submitting, reviewing and adopting draft laws in the version of Resolution No. 2483-IX¹². In particular:

- Part two of Article 93 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, as amended by draft law No. 8242, stipulates that every draft law (not only those related to European integration) must be sent by the committee responsible for budgetary matters to the Cabinet of Ministers within three days to the Cabinet of Ministers for examination of its impact on budget indicators and compliance with laws governing budgetary relations, which creates an excessive and unnecessary burden on the Cabinet of Ministers and may actually lead to a longer and more complicated consideration of any draft laws in the Verkhovna Rada;

¹² Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Information note on *the procedure for considering and adopting European integration bills in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. Kyiv. 2024. https://pravo.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Poryadok_rozglyadu_ta_uhvalennya_yevrointegratsijnyh_zakonoprojektiv_u_VRU.pdf

- the draft law effectively offers different members of the Ukrainian parliament different levels of legislative initiative, since, according to the provisions of part four of Article 102 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada, as amended by draft law [No. 8242](#), members of parliament who are not members of the main committee do not have the right to submit proposals and amendments to a draft law aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law (EU acquis). Since the right to submit proposals and amendments to draft laws is an integral part of the right of legislative initiative, this provision of the draft law is unconstitutional.

Draft Law [No. 8242](#) is still awaiting consideration in the first reading from the date of its submission. (28 November 2022).

Another important bill was registered in the Verkhovna Rada on 17 August 2025 – *Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Improvement of Procedures for Adapting Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Law (EU acquis)* [No. 13653](#). The draft law is currently under consideration by the Committee on Regulations, Deputy Ethics and Organisation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (main committee). The draft law has a broader scope of regulation compared to No. 8242, as it proposes not only a special procedure for considering draft laws related to Ukraine's accession to the European Union (amendments to the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada [No. 1861-VI](#)), but also a comprehensive update of the legislation regulating the adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to the EU acquis, by amending the Law "On the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine", the Law "On the Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" and the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada. Draft law [No. 13653](#) provides for:

- amendments to the Law "On the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine" regarding the government's powers in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, its approval of the National Programme for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Law (EU acquis);
- supplementing the Law "On Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" with provisions on the participation of committees in the preparation of government draft laws on adaptation;
- the introduction of a new chapter to the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada, which defines:
 - features of initiating, registering and reviewing draft laws on adaptation;
 - requirements for accompanying documents;
 - procedures for consideration in committees and at plenary sessions;
 - deadlines for submitting proposals, expert opinions and conclusions on adaptation bills;
 - rules for expedited consideration of adaptation draft laws;
 - features of the second or repeated second reading of adaptation bills;
 - restrictions on the application of this procedure to draft codes.

Draft law [No. 13653](#) takes into account certain **procedural gaps that exist in the process of reviewing draft laws on adaptation to the acquis of the European Union**, in particular:

- **the lack of a consistent approach to labelling (special designation as European integration) such draft laws,**
- **poor coordination between parliament and government when planning the**

list of such draft laws.

An important novelty of this draft law, a detailed description of which is provided below, is the definition that draft laws aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation

Only those projects included in **the National Programme for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Law (EU acquis)**, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, are subject to European Union law. This link resolves the above-mentioned problem of the absence of a "parliamentary-governmental" strategic planning document on the path to accession to the European Union.

The current legislation of Ukraine does not provide a clear explanation of which draft laws are considered to be European integration or adaptation draft laws (in the terminology of Draft Law [No. 13653](#)). According to Resolution No. 2483-IX, the committees of the Verkhovna Rada carry out preliminary review and preparation of draft laws aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law (EU acquis), fulfilling Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration, provided that tables of conformity and official translations of EU legal acts are attached. This may be used as a criterion for specially marking draft laws on the Unified Web Portal of the Verkhovna Rada, in the Verkhovna Rada's draft law work plans for the relevant year, etc., as containing a feature of European integration.

However, **the practice of labelling European integration bills reveals contradictions**. For example, Bill No. [6004](#) (on integrated prevention and control of industrial pollution) was not labelled as "European integration" and *did not have a table of conformity with the EU acquis*. Meanwhile, the alternative draft law No. [6004-1](#) (on the prevention, reduction and control of industrial pollution) *contained a table of conformity* but was not labelled as "European integration". On the other hand, [No. 6004-2](#) (on the safety of life and health of the environment) has the "European integration" label, but *there is no table of conformity with the EU acquis*. The revised [No. 6004-d](#) (on the safety of life and health of the environment) *has a table of conformity with the EU acquis and the "European integration" label "European integration"*. Also, some bills, like [No. 5629](#), [No. 5751](#), [No. 6487](#), are marked as "European integration" on the Unified Web Portal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, although they do not provide for the implementation of EU acts (*as stated in the Government's conclusions in response to requests from the main committees*).

Part 4 of Article 151-3 of Draft Law No. 13653 stipulates that a draft law submitted in accordance with the requirements of parts two and three of this article shall be registered with the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat with a special mark affixed on the day of registration – “draft law on adaptation”. Among these requirements is the presence of an explanatory note, which contains information on its inclusion in the National Adaptation Programme, an assessment of compliance with the EU acquis, implementation deadlines, as well as the necessary organisational, material and financial measures for the implementation of the law. The draft law shall be accompanied by a table of compliance with the provisions of the acquis, a certified translation of the relevant EU act, a list of subordinate acts for implementation, information on approval by the European Commission (if any) and other documents provided for by the Regulations. If changes to other laws are necessary, they shall be made in the section "Final Provisions" or in a separate draft law. The draft law shall be registered with the mark "adaptation bill", and documents submitted without complying with the requirements are not considered by the committee until all requirements are met. An alternative bill may be submitted within 7 days of receiving the main bill.

At the same time, although the authors of this study consider the "link" to the National Adaptation Programme to be a positive step, it is also worth considering international experience in this context. European practice shows that candidate countries regularly updated similar programmes – for example, Croatia adopted **an annual Plan** harmonisation national legislation with **acquis**, which was approved **by parliament and synchronised with government priorities**; parliament monitored the implementation of the Plan.

2. Institutional structure, functions and human resources of the Verkhovna Rada in the process of adapting legislation to EU law (EU acquis)

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX convocation has 23 committees. The legal status of the committees, their functions and organisational basis for their activities are regulated by the Law of Ukraine "On Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" of 4 April 1995 No. 116/95-VR. The main functions of committees include **legislative, organisational and supervisory functions**, each of which is aimed at fulfilling specific tasks that constitute the constitutional powers of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Article 85 of the Constitution of Ukraine). The ability of parliamentary committees to perform their constitutional functions largely depends on their institutional capacity to carry out their duties in an effective, efficient and transparent manner. This capacity is shaped by a number of important factors, including a stable organisational structure, human capital, and the availability of financial and technical resources.

Special parliamentary institutions in the process of European integration include **the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union and subcommittees on European integration in other parliamentary committees, as well as committee secretariats.**

The Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union was established in 2019 in accordance with Law No. 116/95-VR. The Committee consists of eight members of parliament. In accordance with the Verkhovna Rada resolution "On the list, quantitative composition and subjects

According to the "List of Competences of Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the Ninth Convocation" dated 29 August 2019 No. 19-IX, the Committee's competences include:

- Ukraine's participation in international integration processes related to the activities of the European Union;
- adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to European Union legislation, ensuring its compliance with Ukraine's obligations within the Council of Europe;
- assessment the compliance of of draft laws to international legal Ukraine's commitments in the field of European integration;
- state policy in the field of European integration;
- ensuring interparliamentary relations within the framework of Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union;
- coordination of European Union technical assistance programmes for the Verkhovna Rada and special training programmes;
- giving consent to the binding nature of Ukraine's international treaties with the European Union and its member states (ratification, accession to an international treaty, adoption of the text of an international treaty), denunciation of the aforementioned international treaties of Ukraine;
- cross-border and interregional cooperation with European Union countries Union countries;
- cooperation with EU institutions on issues of repelling external aggression against Ukraine, non-military international forms and methods of deterring the aggressor state.

The committee has established four subcommittees that carry out legislative work, study and preliminarily consider issues, prepare conclusions and proposals for draft laws and other acts of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for consideration by the committee, ensure

the implementation of the committee's decisions and instructions from the committee's leadership, and conduct a preliminary analysis of the practice of applying laws and other acts of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine:

- Subcommittee on the approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU legislation.
- Subcommittee on Economic and Sectoral Cooperation and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the EU.
- Subcommittee on Coordination of Technical Assistance Programmes of the European Union and cooperation with Euratom.
- Subcommittee on regional and cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and EU member states

There are some **political and operational challenges** that affect the activities of key special parliamentary institutions in the field of European integration:

1. There are political contradictions between the relevant committee and the government. Paradoxically, the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union, which acts as the main committee, has no draft laws marked as projects related to accession to the EU under consideration. Communication between the government and the Committee on issues of integration Ukraine into European Union requires constructive dialogue and cooperation. EU. Therefore, this situation should be resolved at the political level.

2. Resolution No. 2483-IX (2022) of the Verkhovna Rada provides for the creation of subcommittees on European integration in all parliamentary committees; as of August 2025, such subcommittees have been formed in all committees except the Committee on Law Enforcement¹³. At the same time, the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine do not define the role of such subcommittees in the legislative process. In fact, only the conclusions of the Government and the relevant Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU are taken into account when considering draft laws. Thus, the concept of the work of such subcommittees needs further refinement.

With regard to committee secretariats, it is worth noting the following. Global practices regarding the formation of committee secretariats vary significantly. Some countries have a large staff that, in addition to organisational functions, performs tasks related to the professional processing of legislative initiatives and parliamentary control issues. Other countries choose an approach whereby secretariats consist of a small number of staff who mainly perform organisational functions, while professional and expert tasks are assigned to other structural units of the parliamentary apparatus and, where necessary, to contracted external consultants. Looking at EU countries, most of them belong to the second model. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine belongs to the first of the above categories.

In 2020, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy conducted a comprehensive institutional and functional analysis of the work of committees¹⁴. The study showed that the main challenge is **the excessive workload on parliamentary committees caused by the large volume of legislative proposals that need to be considered**.

A study by the RANG Programme (2024) also **revealed a significant workload on committee secretariat staff in terms of performing their duties in relation to the legislative procedure ("legislative workload")**¹⁵. At the same time, the workload varies significantly between committees. Thus, the workload (number of draft laws per employee during the ninth convocation) in the committee with the highest workload – the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Law Enforcement

law enforcement activities, which is 71.9 times higher than in the committee with the lowest workload – the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Freedom of Speech.

There are also significant differences between committees in the ratio of the number of committee secretariat staff to the number of Ukrainian MPs who are committee members (MPs), ranging from almost twice the number of secretariat staff to the number of MPs in the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Freedom of Speech, to almost three MPs per secretariat employee in the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Transport and Infrastructure.

The reason for this workload is, *first*, the regulatory requirements for the preliminary preparation of all draft laws registered in parliament, which, given the "legislative initiative" of MPs, places a significant burden on committee secretariat staff. According to the Constitution of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada has the exclusive right to legislate, which imposes on its committees the obligation to review, evaluate and refine draft laws at all stages of their passage. However, the complexity of the legislative process and the need for parliamentary oversight lead to constant overload.

committees. This, in turn, reduces the quality of legislative work and limits the opportunities for in-depth consideration of each initiative, although Article 89 of the Constitution explicitly defines committees as bodies responsible for preliminary analysis and preparation of draft laws for consideration.

Secondly, unlike most other democratic states, there are no mechanisms for staff mobility (rotation) between secretariats and/or the functioning of a single structural unit (cluster of structural units) that would provide support to all (or several "related") committees at once. Parliament is already moving towards levelling out the organisational cause by supporting the creation of a Budget Office and a Regulatory Drafting Office, which will provide support to the entire body of deputies. In addition, as shown by statistics provided by the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat, a significant proportion of committee secretariat staff have experience working in other structural units

of the Secretariat, which could potentially facilitate the implementation of staff mobility mechanisms.

According to the Roadmap for the Functioning of Democratic Institutions, the creation of a Regulatory Drafting Office is planned by the fourth quarter of 2027. The concept of creating a regulatory drafting service unit within the Verkhovna Rada was developed by the USAID programme "RADA: Next Generation" (2022). Regulatory drafting offices are specialised units in which qualified specialists provide technical preparation of draft laws; similar practices are widely introduced in developed parliamentary democracies and contributes to improving the quality of legislative activity. There are three organisational models for such offices¹⁷:

- *classical* – an office within the parliamentary secretariat. It works on requests from MPs or parliamentary committees. It is mandatory to submit a policy paper or a completed application form. If the request is of poor quality, the office may refuse it. It does not deal with politics, only legal formalities. An example is the Office of Legislative Drafting of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

¹³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. *Committee on Law Enforcement*. Committee website, as of 16 August 2025

https://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/site2/p_komity?pidid=3018

¹⁴ Westminster Foundation for Democracy, EU-UNDP Parliamentary Reform Project. *Institutional and Functional Analysis: Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. Kyiv, 2020. 125 p.

¹⁵ USAID Programme "RADA: Next Generation". *Functional and Institutional Capacities of Parliamentary Committees: Best International Practices and Current Challenges*. Kyiv, 2024. 74 p.

¹⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. *Roadmap on the functioning of democratic institutions*. Kyiv, 2025, 25 p. https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/UA_Dorozhnyia-karta-z-pytan-funktsionuvannya-demokratychnyh-institutsij.pdf

- *Government-centric* – an office within the government (as a separate agency or structural unit of the government secretariat or relevant ministry, usually the Ministry of Justice). The government is the main initiator of laws. The office prepares draft laws on behalf of ministries in accordance with the government's plan. There is a high level of formalisation of requests (for example, in Canada or Ireland – only after the concept of the future law has been approved). The *government-centred* model has been implemented in Australia, Poland, Greece, Albania, France and Italy.
- *Mixed* – simultaneous functioning of the office in both the government and parliament. The government office prepares most government bills. Parliamentary – assists MPs (especially senators). Close cooperation with parliamentary research services and the library.

The government-centred model is the most common practice, as in most democratic states the government is the main initiator of legislative initiatives. Unlike the mixed and parliamentary models, *the centralised law drafting office* (whose specialists are involved in the technical preparation of draft laws) is a separate state institution coordinated by the government. They not only draft bills, but also publish adopted laws. Classic examples of this model are the Parliamentary Counsel Offices in Australia and New Zealand.

In these countries, it is the government that initiates the vast majority of draft laws. Individual MPs submit draft laws much less frequently, and their initiatives usually concern specific issues, such as the interests of a particular constituency. Therefore, the main clients of the law drafting office are government officials. The staff of these offices are not only responsible for drafting bills, but also participate in all stages of the legislative process until the adopted law is published. For example, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel in Australia sends its experts to both houses of parliament to support the passage of government bills and provide advice on parliamentary procedures. This approach ensures the quality and systemic consistency of national legislation, and this positive experience should be taken into account when establishing a legislative drafting office in Ukraine.

*In Ukraine, the vast majority of draft laws considered are initiated by members of parliament. On average, they submit 80% of all draft laws considered by the Verkhovna Rada during a session*¹⁸. In view of this, experts from the USAID RADA: Next Generation Programme believe that improving Ukrainian legislation would be more effective if a regulatory drafting office were established within the parliament.

With Ukraine's acquisition of candidate status for membership in the European Union, our country faces the ambitious task of implementing thousands of EU *acquis* acts. On 29 July 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted Resolution No. 2483-IX "On Certain Measures to Fulfil Ukraine's Commitments in the Field of European Integration." Paragraph 8 of this Resolution instructs the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to take measures to define in the staffing table of the secretariats of the committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine the positions of civil servants with established job responsibilities within the scope of the tasks provided for paragraphs 2–4, subparagraph 1 of paragraph 7 of this Resolution (i.e. powers related to the preparation and consideration of draft laws aimed at adapting Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law).

¹⁷ Internews Ukraine & USAID "RADA: Next Generation" Program. *Concept of the creation of a legislative drafting service unit in the secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. Kyiv, 2024. <https://internews.ua/storage/app/media/rang/VRU-law-drafting-office-concept.pdf>

In addition, providing official translations of EU acquis acts is a pressing issue, as only a limited number of such acts are available in Ukrainian. On 5 December 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the creation of *the State Institution "Translation Office"*¹⁹. This institution will ensure the effective translation of regulatory and legal documents necessary for Ukraine to fulfil its obligations in the field of European integration, especially in the context of Ukraine's preparation for EU membership. The creation of the Office demonstrates the development of the organisational capacities of the Verkhovna Rada and the Government to ensure the regulatory and legal framework for Ukraine's accession to the EU.

A study of the activities of the parliamentary committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine revealed **a blurred division of powers between the committees and other bodies of the Verkhovna Rada, particularly with regard to setting the agenda for plenary sessions. Although it is the committees provide substantive content for the agenda, their real ability to prioritise legislative initiatives is often negated by political dynamics and control by the parliamentary majority.** This indicates that the weak autonomy of committees in shaping the legislative agenda is a structural problem of Ukrainian parliamentarism, characteristic of systems where the balance between political expediency and institutional independence is not properly regulated.

Unlike most parliaments in democratic states, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in particular the secretariats of committees, **lacks effective public policies and strategies ensuring equality and attracting new human resources, as well as public reports on the status of their implementation.** The strategy for developing the human resources of the of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine until 2022, approved by order of the Head The Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine No. 3359-k of 5 December 2019 contained relevant provisions, but its term has now expired.

The approval and implementation of a new human resources policy strategy would address, in particular, the following identified challenges in the area of staffing for committee secretariats: **gender imbalance** (73.5% of all committee secretariat staff are women); **insufficient English language skills** (almost two-thirds of all committee secretariat staff have English language skills at A1 level or below or do not speak the language at all); **low proportion of young people**. In addition, such a strategy could include **issues related to supporting the mental health of employees**, which is extremely important in the current environment and is common practice in the parliaments of the EU and the UK.

Of course, given the wide range of functions performed by committee secretariat staff, **not every employee needs to be proficient in English.** However, only one third committee secretariat staff have English language skills at level B2 or higher (although, in our opinion, working with EU acquis requires knowledge of at least level B1). This percentage may be insufficient for high-quality work with European Union legislation and other English-language sources. Thus, each committee secretariat should have staff who not only know the basics of the European integration process and EU legislation relevant to their committee's remit, but also have a perfect command of English to work with such legislation from primary sources.

¹⁸ Internews Ukraine & USAID "RADA: Next Generation" Program. *Concept of the creation of a legislative drafting service unit in the secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. Kyiv, 2024. <https://internews.ua/storage/app/media/rang/VRU-law-drafting-office-concept.pdf>

¹⁹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. *On the establishment of the state institution "Translation Office"* (Order No. 1222-Kyiv, 05.12.2024. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-utvorennia-derzhavnoi-ustanovy-ofis-perekladiv-1222r-051224>

At the same time, **statistics on the length of service of committee secretariat staff in their current positions and in the Secretariat-General as a whole show the following positive trends**: committee secretariats are mostly staffed by experienced personnel; despite possible difficulties and heavy workloads, conditions have been created in committee secretariats that encourage a significant proportion of staff to remain in service; long service in the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat in various positions demonstrates that public service in parliament creates certain conditions for career growth.

One of the ongoing problems faced by committees is **the lack of comprehensive dialogue with stakeholders at the stage of developing legislative initiatives, especially before the official registration of a bill in the Verkhovna Rada or its approval by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine**²⁰. Currently in force legislation does not provide for public consultations at this stage (especially with regard to draft laws submitted by members of the Ukrainian parliament), which means that proposals from interested parties are only received during the consideration of the draft law by the relevant committees. This gap highlights the urgent need for legislative changes that would require mandatory public consultations at the pre-legislative stage, taking into account the experience of European systems, where involving the public at an early stage is critical to the law-making process.

In this context, it is important to define the role of the committee in the system of mandatory public consultations. In our opinion, the committee could perform two key tasks in the system of public consultations: (1) verifying the quality of public consultations conducted by legislative initiators (the government, members of parliament, the President); (2) conducting public consultations independently in the event of the submission of draft laws by decision of the committee, including draft laws revised by the committee in accordance with the procedure provided for in Part 2 of Article 110 of the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada.

At the same time, it should be noted that many parliamentary committees, thanks in particular to international technical assistance, actively conduct public consultations and other forms of citizen engagement. However, given the limited resources, such committees need to make efforts to integrate the results of public consultations into the full policy-making cycle as much as possible (identifying current social problems and ways to solve them, preparing or refining legislative initiatives based on public consultations, monitoring the effectiveness of existing legislation, taking into account public opinion, and developing appropriate legislative changes or recommendations for improving law enforcement practices).

Although parliament is operating **with limited openness** due to martial law, **parliamentary committees are making significant efforts to communicate their work publicly and, in some cases, even to introduce new transparency mechanisms**. At the same time, the lack or absence of specialised staff remains a challenge responsible exclusively for the committee's public communications (in some cases, these duties are additionally assigned to secretariat staff who perform other functions). This situation could be resolved either by recruiting appropriate staff to each committee secretariat or by strengthening the press service of the Secretariat with employees who would be solely responsible for the communications of all (or several thematically related) committees.

²⁰ USAID Programme "RADA: Next Generation". *Functional and institutional capacities of parliamentary committees: best international practices and current challenges*. Kyiv, 2024. 74 p.

3. The supervisory function of the Verkhovna Rada and coordination with the Government on European integration issues

Parliamentary oversight is a key element of Ukraine's European integration process, as it ensures that formally adopted decisions are translated into real change. The adoption of laws that bring Ukraine closer to the EU acquis is only the first step, as the European Commission assesses not the number of acts adopted, but their practical implementation. Therefore, the Verkhovna Rada must systematically monitor the implementation process and demand real accountability from the government. In addition, parliament performs an important political function – it oversees the negotiation process with the EU, ensuring transparency and accountability of the executive branch. Equally important is parliamentary monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents, such as the National legislative adaptation programme, which is common practice for candidate countries and EU member states, because without proper oversight, such documents risk remaining declarative. Thus, parliamentary oversight ensures that European integration reforms are not only adopted on paper but also implemented in practice.

This function of parliament is analysed in detail by the European Commission in its 2024 Report on Ukraine. It notes that parliamentary control over the executive branch is formally ensured by a number of instruments – parliamentary hearings, interpellations, inquiries, the creation of temporary commissions and the work of specialised committees of the Verkhovna Rada²². The importance of monitoring the implementation of legislation, i.e. ensuring that the government adopts the necessary subordinate legislation and effectively implements the adopted legal norms, is emphasised separately. At the same time, according to the Commission's assessment, the effectiveness of these mechanisms is limited: the government often provides formal responses to parliamentary inquiries, and committees do not have sufficient analytical capacity for systematic monitoring. Therefore, the European Commission considers strengthening parliamentary control, especially in the area of oversight of law enforcement, to be a key element in ensuring the accountability of the executive branch and compliance with the principle of the rule of law.

However, in practice, the implementation of these mechanisms faces difficulties in Ukraine. Parliamentary oversight has traditionally been a weakness of the Verkhovna Rada. For example, the Ukrainian parliament had no practice of post-legislative control; government officials often ignore when parliament or a committee summoned them to ask questions; parliamentary hearings were usually a formality; and investigative commissions did not show significant results⁽²³⁾. Russia's full-scale invasion only exacerbated the situation. The Constitution of Ukraine requires the Verkhovna Rada to remain functional during wartime, ensuring the continuity of all its functions, including its crucial role of parliamentary oversight. As Ukraine experiences the pressures and challenges of war, the ability of Parliament to oversee the executive and other government bodies is more important than ever to prevent unchecked discretionary powers and ensure accountability. However, despite the existence of pre-war control mechanisms, Parliament has struggled to use them effectively in the context of wartime and has not introduced additional control mechanisms specifically adapted to the needs of wartime.

Post-legislative control

The current regulation of post-legislative control procedures is unsystematic and sporadic. Article 24 of the Law on Committees of the Verkhovna Rada, entitled "Analysis by committees of the practice of applying legislative acts in the activities of state authorities, local self-government bodies and their officials within the limits of their

powers” actually boils down to assessing the compliance of subordinate acts with the adopted law and monitoring the timeliness of their adoption. Assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of a legislative act and the achievement of the objectives of legal regulation is not part of this analysis.

Instead, **the Law on Regulatory Activity**, adopted by parliament on 24 August 2023, aims to establish uniform approaches and procedures for assessing the effectiveness of laws. It provides **for legal monitoring** (a term used instead of post-legislative control) as a systematic and comprehensive control activity aimed at tracking, analysing and evaluating the implementation of adopted regulatory acts regarding:

- their full implementation (entry into force, enforcement of the provisions specified in the transitional provisions, adoption of subordinate acts to implement the laws);
- achieving the planned objectives of legal regulation, its impact on society and/or individual social groups, sectors or industries, as well as determining the social, legal, political, economic, environmental, administrative or other possible planned effects or identifying unplanned consequences.

Thus, the scope of legal monitoring is much broader than the analysis of the practice of applying laws provided for by the current Law. At the same time, the provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On Rule-Making Activity" regarding legal monitoring will come into force only one year after the termination or cancellation of martial law.

However, the issue of post-legislative control is particularly relevant in wartime and during the EU accession process. The lack of post-legislative control tools prevents parliament from effectively monitoring the timely and proper implementation of legislation adopted to align with EU law.

Control exercised by parliament and its committees

Article 38 of the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada defines the procedure for hearing annual and extraordinary reports of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Article 38-1 of the Rules of Procedure regulates the hearing of reports from other bodies or officials who are required by law to report to parliament. These include:

- The Director of the State Bureau of Investigations.
- Attorney General.
- Head of the Security Service of Ukraine.
- Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine.
- State Property Fund of Ukraine.
- Report of the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting.
- Head of the National Bank of Ukraine.

In addition, parliament has the right to summon any official (except the President and judges) and request a report on a specific issue.

²¹ European Truth. "European integration" of the Verkhovna Rada: what needs to change in parliament due to EU candidate status. Stanislav Ivasyk, 06.07.2022. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2022/07/6/7142680/>

²² European Commission. *Ukraine 2024 Report. Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*. Brussels, 30 October 2024, SWD(2024) 699 final.

²³ European Parliament. *Report and Roadmap on Internal Reform and Capacity-Building for the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. European Parliament's Needs Assessment Mission to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine led by Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament 2002–2004. 2015–2016, p.

16. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20160229RES16408/20160229RES16408.pdf>

Although the law clearly defines the procedure for considering the above-mentioned reports and the rights and obligations of all parties, there are political problems that hinder effective political control. First of all, the issue of participation of officials of the appropriate political level in committee meetings remains relevant. As noted in the Report and Roadmap for Internal Reform and Capacity Development of the Verkhovna Rada, a number of MPs complain that ministers often fail to appear at committee meetings when summoned, while government officials explain that frequent attendance at such meetings would prevent them from performing their duties⁽²⁴⁾. There have been cases of officials ignoring summonses to plenary sessions when parliament required their presence. For example, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine (summoned on 6 February 2024) and the Prosecutor General (summoned on 18 June 2024) did not comply with the parliament's demands; the Prosecutor General appeared only on the day when the issue of his resignation was considered (29 October 2024).

The practice of committees considering reports submitted to parliament is also unsatisfactory. The rules of procedure stipulate that committees must prepare reports for consideration at a plenary session within 21 days of receiving them. In reality, however, consideration is often delayed for months. For example, draft resolution No. 10323 of 8 December 2023 on the 2022 report of the State Property Fund of Ukraine was registered by the committee chair seven months after receipt; draft No. 11441 of 25.07.2024 on the Antimonopoly Committee's report for 2023 – four months later; draft No. 11482 of 15.08.2024 on the SPFU's report for 2023 – three months later; draft No. 12115 of 11 October 2024 on the report of the director of the State Bureau of Investigations for 2023 – after seven months.

Regarding the Cabinet's report: Article 228 of the Regulations provides for annual consideration by parliament of a report on the implementation of the government's programme of activities, approved by the Verkhovna Rada. However, as of today, parliament has not yet approved the Cabinet's Action Programme, even though the current government has been in office for the longest period in Ukraine's history (the prime minister has been in office for almost five years). As a result, parliament has effectively deprived itself of one of its main objects of control.

Individual parliamentary control

In its Decision No. 8-rp/2000 of 10 May 2000, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine noted that control functions may also be exercised by individual MPs in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 86 of the Constitution or other provisions thereof. According to Article 86, during a session of the Verkhovna Rada, a deputy has the right to submit parliamentary questions to the Verkhovna Rada, the Cabinet of Ministers, the heads of other state authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as to the heads of enterprises, institutions and organisations, regardless of their form of ownership.

The response to a parliamentary question is provided not only to the author of the question, but also to the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada. The question and response may be discussed at a plenary session if

²⁴ European Parliament. *Report and Roadmap on Internal Reform and Capacity-Building for the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. European Parliament's Needs Assessment Mission to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine led by Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament 2002–2004. 2015–2016, P.

This requires at least 1/5 of the members of parliament. Based on the results of the discussion, the Rada adopts a corresponding decision.

The Rules of Procedure stipulate that a deputy may usually submit no more than 10 requests per plenary week. However, during the period of martial law (in accordance with Resolution No. 2103-IX of 24 February 2022), parliament works in a single continuous plenary session, and the limit of 10 questions effectively applies to the entire session during wartime, rather than on a weekly basis, which significantly limits the opportunities for MPs.

Due to the lack of a clear calendar plan, the dates for announcing requests become unpredictable, and sometimes requests are not announced at all. The situation has improved somewhat since the 11th session, when parliament effectively returned to the traditional plenary week.

Preliminary control by parliament means that parliament's responsibilities in the process of the state's accession to the European Union concern not only control of the European integration process, but also ensuring the functioning of other mechanisms of parliament's influence on the state's European integration policy²⁵.

In order to develop an optimal model for organising the work and defining the role of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, its bodies or special bodies that may be created with the inclusion of members of parliament in their composition, during the negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the European Union, it will be useful to identify **three main models**, taking into account the experience of individual member states that have undergone European integration since 1995 (after the actual establishment of the EU):

1) legislative bodies with a strong influence on the European integration policy of the executive authorities – the existence of a set of institutional mechanisms to ensure prior control by parliament over the government. These include:

- a mechanism of parliamentary control that ensures that parliament is fully informed about the government's activities in fulfilling its obligations in the field of European integration;
- the functioning of permanent specialised parliamentary committees (commissions or councils) on European affairs;
- the establishment of a mechanism for consensus-based decision-making with the government;
- participation of parliamentary representatives in coordinating actions related to the country's accession to the EU;
- agreement on negotiating positions with parliament;
- support for the priority of the state's European integration course by all political forces.

²⁵ Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. *Parliamentary research on institutional and legal models for the organisation of the work and role of the national parliament, its bodies or bodies created with the inclusion of members of parliament, in particular the exercise of parliamentary control, during the negotiation process for the country's accession to the European Union*. Kyiv, 2023. <https://research.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/32798.pdf>

It should be noted that this model has proven to be effective mainly in parliamentary republics. This model has been used, in particular, by *Croatia and Slovenia*.

2) legislative bodies with limited influence on the European integration policy of the executive authorities – the existence of separate institutional mechanisms for preliminary control by parliament over the government. These include:

- the functioning of a permanent specialised parliamentary committee (commission or council) on European affairs;
- the existence of a mechanism for informing parliament about current issues in the country's European integration process;
- Parliament effectively plays the role of a "reserve participant" in the negotiation process.

This model has been used, in particular, by *Poland, Cyprus and Slovakia*.

3) Legislative bodies with little influence on the European integration policy of the executive authorities – the participation of parliament is effectively limited to:

- parliamentary control over the activities of the government in accordance with the general procedure (e.g. annual reporting by the government on the implementation of European integration commitments);
- providing advisory opinions from relevant parliamentary committees on the compliance of draft legislation with EU law.

This model has been used, in particular, by *Romania, Hungary, Lithuania and Bulgaria*.

4. Coordination of government and parliamentary actions in the field of adaptation of legislation to European Union law

Data from the CHESNO Movement shows that most EU-related bills come from MPs, followed by initiatives from the Cabinet of Ministers (Government) and the President. At the same time, the highest percentage of adopted laws is observed among initiatives from the President (39%) and the Government (34%)⁽²⁶⁾. This highlights the significant role of MPs in initiating

legislation, but at the same time shows **the Government's potential to expand its influence on the legislative process. Thanks to its executive powers, the Government has a unique opportunity to form a comprehensive system of basic legislation and subordinate**

acts. It is important that, in addition to **preparing legislative initiatives, the Government has the right to develop subordinate acts that ensure the simultaneous and comprehensive implementation of legislative norms.** This opportunity is key in the process of European integration, where

compliance with deadlines is critically important, as well as in strengthening the protection of human rights in the state. This resolves situations where the implementation of privileges or guarantees provided for by law is delayed due to the need to adopt subordinate legislation separately.

²⁶ Salizhenko, Oleksandr. *Through thorns to the stars: how the Verkhovna Rada adapts Ukrainian legislation to EU requirements.* Chesno, 25 June 2024. <https://www.chesno.org/post/6013/>

For reference. An example of strategic inconsistency between the Government and MPs in lawmaking is the implementation of the Rome Statute into national legislation – an important European integration initiative. Government bill

No. 11484 amends the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, bringing them into line with the Rome Statute and establishing procedures for cooperation with the International Criminal Court. This law has already entered into force.

Instead, MPs proposed draft law No. 11538, which provides for the adoption of a separate law "On Criminal Liability for International Crimes." In addition, draft law No. 11539 supplements No. 11538 by amending the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes to ensure their consistency with the proposed separate law. Supporters of this alternative initiative believe that a separate law on international crimes will better regulate the specifics of such offences and their prosecution.

The emergence of two competing approaches shows that some MPs disagree with the government's decision. They argue that passing a separate law on responsibility for war crimes sends a stronger political signal and is in line with the practice of some countries. Therefore, this appears to be more of an ideological dispute. The progress of these bills in parliament confirms this conclusion. Government bill No. 11484 was adopted in its second (final) reading on 9 October 2024 and came into force on 24 October 2024. Having brought its legislation into full compliance with the Rome Statute, Ukraine submitted a document on accession to the Rome Statute to the UN and became a full member on 1 January 2025. At the same time, despite the actual resolution of the accession issue, the parliament supported in the first reading draft law No. 11538, which provides for a completely different approach to international crimes. Its adoption in the second reading will require a reassessment of the compliance of Ukrainian legislation with the Rome Statute – a rather strange step, given that the current legislative framework has only been in force for a few months.

The experience of candidate countries or new EU members shows that effective political consensus was built through high-level platforms for political dialogue. For example, in 2005–2011, the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) had a **National Committee**, a special body for monitoring negotiations on the country's accession to the EU. It consisted of representatives of all parliamentary parties, made decisions by consensus, served as a platform for consultations between parliament and the government, and informed the public about European issues⁽²⁸⁾.

In Albania, the **National Council for European Integration** operates within the parliament (Quvendi) – the highest advisory body in the field of integration, which ensures transparency in decision-making decisions, cooperation between political forces, state institutions and civil society²⁹.

Ukraine should also apply a similar approach: involve all political forces and create a platform for dialogue with government officials and experts. In our context, it is also important to include representatives or experts from EU countries who can share their practical experience of implementing EU legislation in their countries. After all, it is this experience that often becomes the subject of speculation during discussions in the Verkhovna Rada on European integration.

²⁷ Bereziuk, Olha. *Ukraine submitted a document on accession to the Rome Statute to the UN. What does this mean.* Babel.ua, 25.10.2024. <https://www.babel.ua/en/news/112032-ukraine-submitted-a-document-on-accession-to-the-rome-statute-to-the-un-what-does-this-mean>

²⁸ ECPRD. *Request 4682: Experiences regarding organisation, competence and tasks of parliamentary bodies and administration responsible for issues of accession to the European Union.* Zagreb, 29 March 2021. https://docs.google.com/document/d/19Q0R866dit5RYJWAMgjRN_q64oLZhz6k/edit

III. Summary: key gaps and challenges in the Verkhovna Rada's capacity compared to EU membership requirements and best practices

Despite Ukraine's strategic course towards European Union membership, the parliament faces a number of institutional, regulatory and organisational challenges that reduce its effectiveness in implementing the European integration agenda and bringing legislation closer to the EU acquis.

1. **The outdated legislative framework** of Ukraine in the field of adaptation of legislation to the EU acquis creates significant difficulties for the qualitative and timely fulfilment of international obligations in the field of European integration. The 2004 Law "On the State Programme for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Legislation" was adopted before the Association Agreement and does not take into account either the current structure of the acquis or the results of the screening. European practice shows that candidate countries regularly updated such programmes – for example, Croatia adopted an annual Plan for the Harmonisation of National Legislation with the acquis, which was approved by parliament and synchronised with government priorities. It would be appropriate for Ukraine to adopt a modern framework law that would ensure coordinated planning and control over the implementation of European integration tasks

2. A persistent problem on the path to Ukraine's integration into the EU is the outdated and insufficiently structured legal framework for the preparation, initiation, consideration and adoption of draft laws on European integration. Updating this legislation and including a special section in the Law of Ukraine "On the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" could simplify the consideration of draft laws on European integration. The current regulatory framework does not provide adequate institutional and procedural capacity for the implementation of the adaptation process during the negotiation phase. There is no **special legislative procedure for the consideration** of European integration draft laws. There are also no established approaches to classifying draft laws as European integration or other, which complicates the marking (special designation) of European integration draft laws. Another significant challenge for all subjects of legislative initiative is members of parliament, the government, and the president is to provide official translations of EU acquis, as only a limited number of such acts are available in Ukrainian.

3. **Coordination between the government and parliament** in the field of European integration is another key challenge. The lack of clear rules for prioritising draft laws leads to situations where some projects remain unconsidered for years, while others are adopted hastily without sufficient analysis. European candidate countries have addressed similar problems through special coordination mechanisms. For comparison, in Slovakia, the National Council adopted the "Objectives and Main Responsibilities in Preparation for Accession," which established a coordination mechanism between the government and parliamentary committees. In Croatia, a special National Committee, which included representatives of all political forces, regularly discussed negotiating positions and harmonisation bills. In Poland, an EU Affairs Committee was created in the Sejm to coordinate adaptation bills before they reached the plenary hall. A similar instrument would ensure transparency and political consensus in Ukraine and reduce the risks of accelerated adoption without quality expertise.

4. EU requirements provide for close **cooperation with European Union institutions** in

the process of harmonising legislation. In Ukraine, however, the Verkhovna Rada's Rules of Procedure do not contain procedures for formal consultations with the European Commission on draft laws that require it. By comparison, in Estonia, the government was required to submit all materials and negotiation strategies to parliament, and the European Affairs Committee regularly discussed them with the prime minister. The introduction of a formalised procedure for coordination or consultation with the EU would avoid discrepancies at the implementation stage and increase the predictability of the Ukrainian parliament's work.

5. The heavy workload of parliamentary committees and the lack of flexible staffing mechanisms limit the quality of legislative work. In Ukraine, committee secretariats are often overloaded with draft legislation, there is a lack of staff mobility (rotation) between secretariats and/or support from a single structural unit (cluster of structural units) that would provide support to all (or several "related") committees at once. European experience demonstrates other approaches: in Latvia, the EU Information Centre was established in 1997 to provide analytical support, and in Romania, the EU Directorate in Parliament was established to provide expertise and training. Other challenges in the area of staffing committee secretariats include **gender imbalance** (73.5% of all committee secretariat employees are women); **insufficient English language skills** (almost two-thirds of all committee secretariat staff have English language skills at A1 level or below, or do not speak English at all); **low proportion of young people**.

6. The issue of **effective parliamentary control** is no less important. Currently, there are no **post-legislative monitoring** tools that would allow the Verkhovna Rada to assess the quality of implementation of adopted laws. In Central European countries, such tools are an integral part of the European integration process: for example, the Albanian parliament drew up special calendars of hearings on the progress of integration, and the Croatian National Committee regularly received screening reports and provided conclusions on the fulfilment of obligations. For Ukraine, the introduction of systematic post-legislative control, together with the involvement of officials of the appropriate political level in committee meetings, would allow parliament to become a true institutional guarantor of the fulfilment of European obligations.

7. Lack of comprehensive dialogue with stakeholders. A separate challenge is the insufficient inclusiveness of the law-making process. In most cases, consultations with civil society, experts and business take place after a bill has been officially registered in the Verkhovna Rada or approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. This reduces the quality of legislative decisions, as it makes it impossible to take into account the arguments and proposals of key stakeholders in a timely manner. In EU countries, broad consultations at an early stage of legislation development are a mandatory practice that improves the quality of texts, reduces the risk of politicisation and strengthens public confidence in parliament. In Ukraine, however, the absence of such comprehensive dialogue deepens the divide between the authorities and society and limits support for the European integration process.

²⁹ CRCA/ECPAT Albania. *CRCA/ECPAT Albania becomes a member of the National Council for European Integration of the Albanian Parliament*. Tirana, 6 July 2023. <https://www.crca.al/en/crca-ecpat-albania-becomes-a-member-of-the-national-council-for-european-integration-of-the-albanian-parliament/>

IV. Recommendations for strengthening the institutional capacity of the parliamentary apparatus in the field of Ukraine's accession to the EU, developing effective procedures for considering legislative initiatives in this field, and involving stakeholders in such consideration.

1. Adoption of a new framework law on the adaptation of legislation to the EU acquis, which would take into account the results of the screening and the current structure of the acquis. This will ensure systematic planning, control and coordination of the actions of the government and parliament in the process

fulfilment of Ukraine's obligations in the field of European integration. European practice shows that candidate countries regularly updated such programmes – for example, Croatia adopted an annual Plan for the Harmonisation of National Legislation with the Acquis, which was approved by parliament and synchronised with government priorities.

2. Introduction of special parliamentary procedures for considering European integration bills. It is advisable to update the current legal framework by amending the Regulations of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The roadmap on the functioning of democratic institutions already provides for the development, adoption and implementation of legislation on a special procedure for the preparation, initiation, consideration and adoption of European integration bills. Another important task is to define clear criteria for classifying draft laws as European integration-related (or “adaptation draft laws” in the terminology of draft law No. 13653). This will avoid legal uncertainty regarding bills that are being prepared to fulfil Ukraine's obligations under the Ukraine Facility, as well as bills that take into account the recommendations set out in the European Commission's screening reports, etc. In this context, it is advisable to:

- define the criteria for classifying a draft law as European integration-related,
- amend the Rules of Procedure to provide for special marking of European integration draft laws and mandatory accompanying documents (correlation tables, official translations of EU acts, implementation plans, conclusions of the government and the committee on EU integration),
- introduce shortened but high-quality procedures for their consideration (similar to the practices of Croatia and Slovenia),
- to determine that the possibility of adopting the draft law "as a basis and as a whole" applies exclusively after a positive assessment by the government and the Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU.

3. Strengthening post-legislative control and monitoring implementation.

One of the key challenges is the lack of a systematic mechanism for monitoring the implementation

adopted laws aimed at approximation with the EU acquis. It is advisable to create an institutionalised mechanism for coordination between the government and parliament, which would establish clear rules for prioritising draft laws, promote political consensus and ensure transparency in decision-making. This would avoid chaotic or overly hasty adoption of acts without proper expertise. An important component of such a mechanism should be regular reports by the government to parliament, parliamentary hearings and the introduction of an annual "acquis implementation declaration". An additional tool could be the creation of an open digital dashboard, which would allow society and international partners to monitor the status of European integration commitments in real time.

Institutionalisation of coordination between parliament and government. An important task is to ensure systematic dialogue between the legislative and executive branches of government on issues of European integration. It is advisable to enshrine in the Rules of Procedure and legislation the obligation for the government to consult with relevant parliamentary committees when preparing negotiating positions. The practice of Estonia and Croatia demonstrates the effectiveness of regular joint meetings between the government and parliamentary committees, which allow for timely coordination of positions and avoidance of duplication of initiatives. Special attention should be paid to creating a mechanism for joint planning of legislative work by the government and parliament, which will contribute to greater consistency and predictability in the process of adapting legislation to the EU acquis.

4. Strengthening the capacity of committees and secretariats. The overload of committees and their secretariats has a negative impact on the quality of draft legislation preparation and the performance of control functions.

To overcome this challenge, it is advisable to introduce staff rotation, create a single staff pool to support several committees at the same time, and establish minimum staffing standards depending on the volume of legislative work. Of particular importance is the accelerated creation of a Regulatory Drafting Office and a Budget Office, which should become service units providing professional support to the legislative process. This approach is in line with European practices and will improve the quality of legislative activity.

5. Building the staffing capacity of the Verkhovna Rada. Staff shortages and the lack of a modern HR strategy for parliament remain significant constraints. It is advisable to adopt a new human resources policy strategy for the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat, taking into account the requirements of European integration, with an emphasis on training specialists in European law, legal English and digital competencies. It is also important to introduce open competitions for key positions in the secretariats, which will contribute to increasing transparency and integrity in personnel decisions. Particular emphasis should be placed on attracting young professionals through internships and cooperation programmes with universities, which will ensure the gradual renewal of personnel and the continuity of institutional memory.

6. Ensuring political consensus on European integration. European integration should be a common goal of all political forces. To this end, it is advisable to establish a National Council on European Integration under the parliament with the participation of representatives of the coalition, the opposition, civil society and the expert community. Such a body will facilitate the coordination of positions, the development of joint statements and consolidating political unity on key negotiating issues. This will not only strengthen internal unity, but also enhance the trust of European partners, demonstrating that Ukraine's European course has stable cross-party support and is perceived as a strategic priority for the state.
