



Wartime parliament in operation: Lessons learned from Ukrainian democracy

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Iterations of the research

- **First cycle (24.02.2022 – 30.06.2023).** The key issue is the functioning of the parliament of a developing democratic state in conditions of full-scale war.
- **Second iteration (10th session: 05.09.2023 – 05.02.2024).** The key issue was changes in the work of the parliament at the end of the second year of the Russian full-scale invasion.

Methodology



**Open data
analyses**

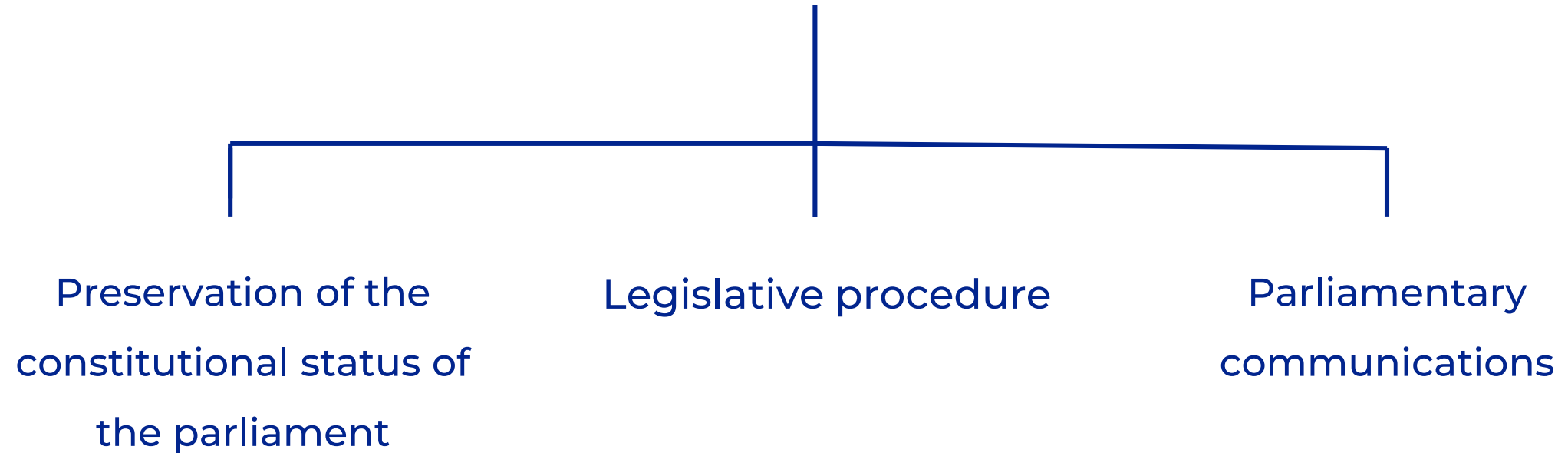


**Individual anonymous
interviews**

Key findings of the first study (24.02.2022 – 30.06.2023)

- **Parliament continues to work offline** in accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine;
- **Most decisions of the parliament are made by political consensus** (supported by representatives of all parliamentary parties);
- **Parliamentary legislative procedures are simplified**, but all the main stages are followed;
- **The level of transparency and openness of the work of the parliament has been significantly reduced** for reasons of national security.

The main results of the 2nd study



5 main lessons learned ahead →

Lesson 1. War does not pause the politics

Despite the **increase in the number of meetings per month** and the **increase in the duration** of such meetings, **the number of issues** considered by the Parliament each month **decreased**.

4,5

On average, during the **10th session**,
plenary meetings were held every month (days of extension of the ongoing plenary session)

For comparison: data on previous sessions

3,7

9th
session

3,4

8th
session

3,5

7th
session*

** from the day martial law was introduced*

In the 10th session, there was a **decrease** of laws adopted as a **whole in the 1st reading** and **without discussion**

10th session **23 (36%)**

31%

of adopted laws by the parliament
without discussion (10th session).

24.02.2022 –
30.06.2023 **246
(49%)**

69%

For comparison :

of adopted laws by the parliament
without discussion in the period
from 24 February 2022 to 31 May
2023.

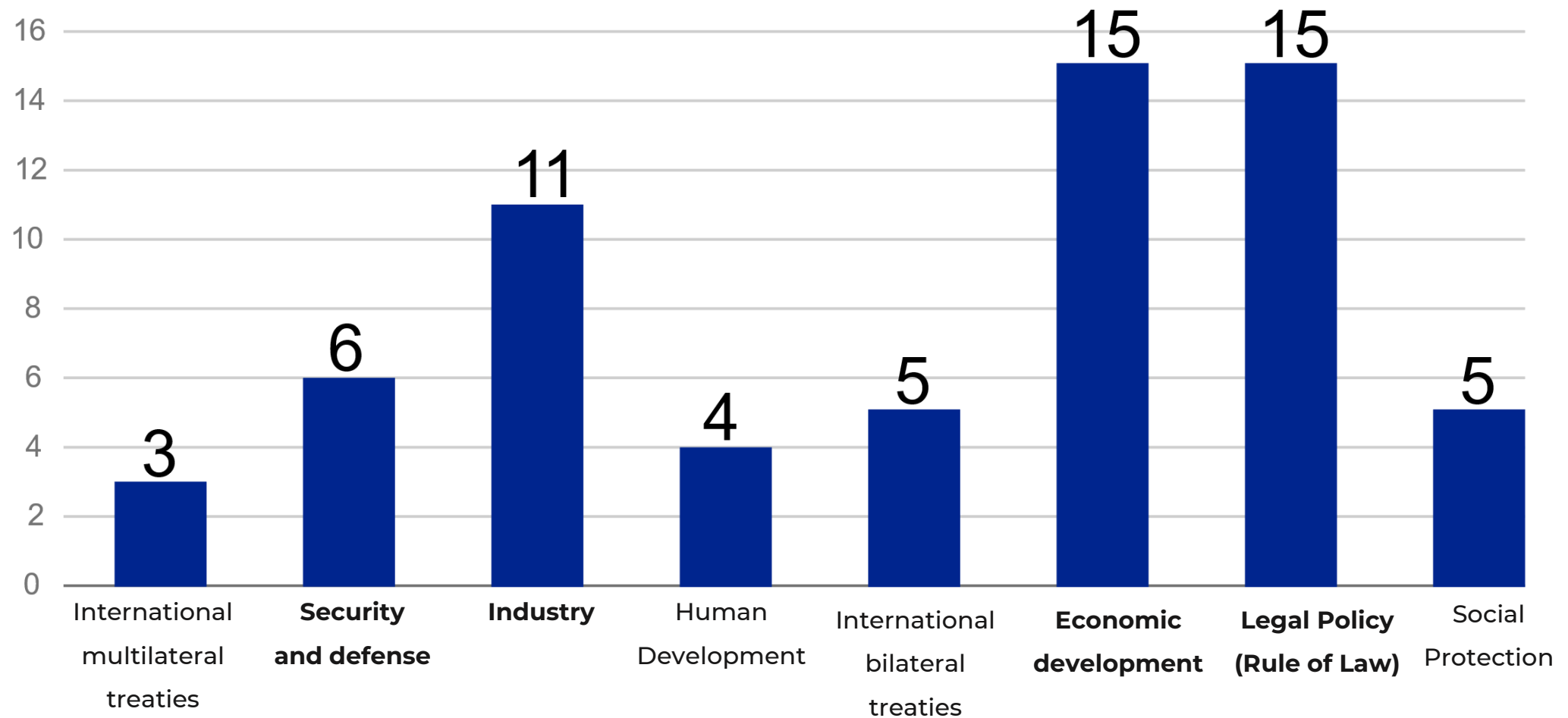
Lesson 2. War dictates priorities and complicates planning

The agenda of the Verkhovna Rada is mostly **based on urgent wartime issues** and priorities of European integration, relying to a lesser extent on the approved **Plan of Legislative Activities**.

20
(31,3%)

of the 64 laws adopted by the Verkhovna Rada during the 10th session, in one way or another, related to the issues provided for in the Plan of Legislative Activities of the Verkhovna Rada for 2023.

Spheres of regulation of adopted laws



Lesson 3. Delegation of powers shall be balanced by effective Parliament's control

The delegation of legislative powers to the executive was more often used in laws passed in the **first year of martial law** (however, most of them are still in force).

Such delegation is practically absent from the laws passed during the 10th session.

However, in certain cases, lack of parliamentary control over delegated powers **undermined transparency and public trust in decision-making** on the level of the executive power.

Selected example. Law on defense procurement

Law of 16 August 2022

“The **peculiarities** of defense procurement during the period of martial law are determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine”

Law of 24 February 2023

- More detailed provisions on the content of a procurement agreement
- Reports on non-classified procurements must be published on the Prozorro platform (the official website on public procurements)
- On its request within 10 days, Parliament’s National Security Committee must be provided with all information, including classified, about a procurement contract

Lesson 4. The Parliament should strive to be transparent even in wartime to preserve its legitimacy and constitutional role

Transparency restrictions imposed **with the eruption** of the full-scale Russian aggression of **24 February 2022**

Limited access

- Composition of the Parliament
- Composition of the Parliament's Secretariate
- Live-streaming and recordings of Parliament's meetings
- Calendar and agendas of upcoming Parliament's meetings
- Minutes, agendas and calendars of committee's meetings

Consequences. Decrease in the level of trust with the cause of time

May 2022

58% of respondents trusted the Parliament*

*Kyiv International Institute of Sociology
(2022&20223)

**CHESNO NGO (2024)

December 2023

15% of respondents trusted the Parliament*

65% of citizens supported the presence of independent journalists at plenary meetings**

57% of citizens believed that these meetings should be live-streamed**

Consequences. Legitimation of constitutionally questionable practice of pocket veto



Law no. 5655 (city-building)

1 day between publication before the second reading and final adoption

Not signed up today (adopted on 13 December 2022)

42 090 signatures under petition to veto the Law

Law no. 2839-IX as of 13.12.2022 (criminal liability for military offences)

5 days between publication before the first reading and final adoption

43 days pending for President's signature

34 941 signatures under petition to veto the Law



***Parliament's response.* Increased openness and aspiration to communicate more systematically**

Restored access to:

- Composition of the Parliament
- Recordings of Parliament's meetings
- Parliament's plenary hall for a limited number of journalists
- Minutes, agendas and calendars of committee's meetings (excluding the Law Enforcement Committee and the National Defense Committee) – *details in the next section*

Development of Parliament's Communication Strategy

with the support of the RADA Next Generation Program

5-year term

Main philosophy: communications of the Parliament is an integral component in the development of a democratic state (1) on the way to establishing peace (2) and sustainable pro-European development of Ukraine and Ukrainian society (3).

Lesson 5. Wartime communications need creative solutions

- Shift to social media
- Establishment of the Communications Headquarters led by the VRU Vice Speaker

December 1, 2021, to December 1, 2022



211.2% rise in subscribers



3158.5% rise in subscribers

September 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024



0.35% rise in subscribers

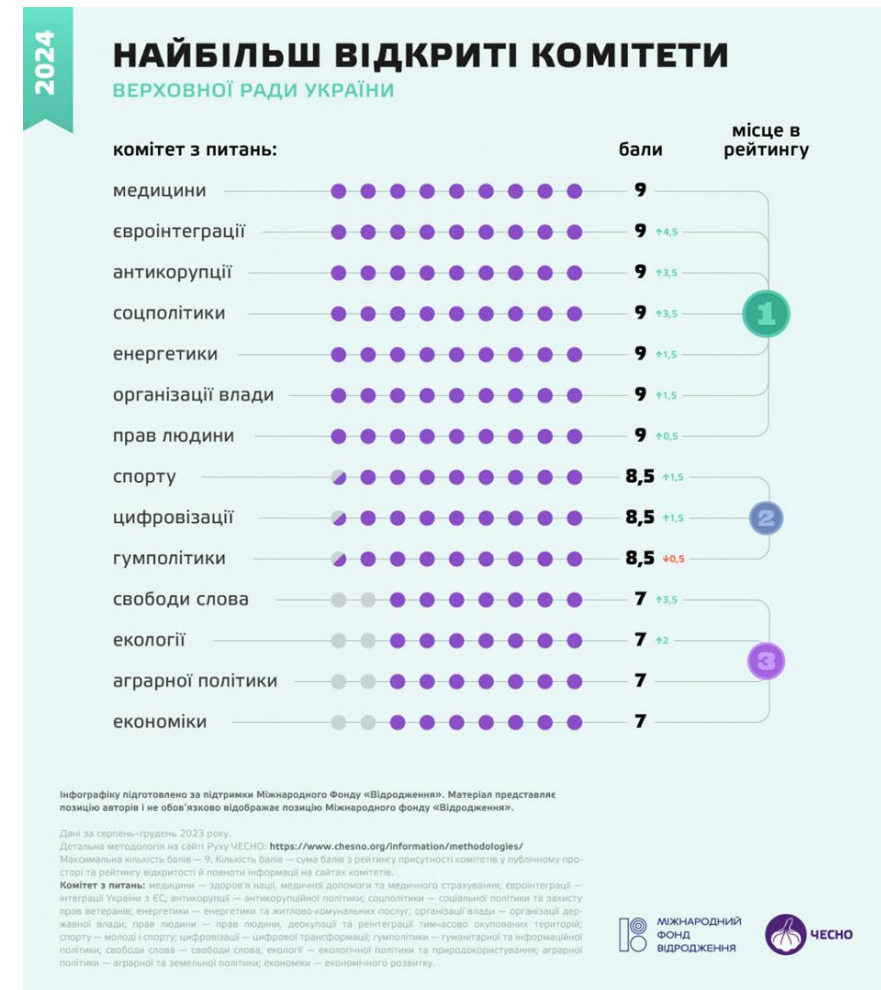


15.1% decrease in subscribers

Parliament's committees improve their communication

- Only one committee (excluding the National Security and Defense and Law Enforcement Committees) still did not publish video recordings of its meetings;
- Some committees introduced new transparency mechanisms:
 - the Social Policy Committee created a News Monitoring webpage to track events and developments easily;
 - The EU Accession Committee and the Energy and Utilities Committee published selected news in English;
 - the State-Building and Urban Development Committee developed a unique visual style for its materials.

*the Law Enforcement Committee and the National Defense Committee were excluded from the assessment



Summing up the tendencies so far

- **Plenary sessions continue to be held face-to-face**, and their duration and monthly number are relatively the same from session to session;
- **Most of the decisions of the parliament are adopted according to the usual procedure of two readings;**
- The number of cases of adoption of laws **without discussion has significantly decreased;**
- **Despite martial law conditions**, the committees find an opportunity to involve the public and independent experts.



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**Thank you for
your attention!**



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