

Presidential elections in Ukraine

Ukraine will hold presidential elections on 31 March, five years after the Maidan protests resulted in the impeachment of pro-Kremlin President Viktor Yanukovich, setting the country on a course to deepen ties with the West. Russia reacted by launching a hybrid war against Ukraine, which resulted in the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula in March 2014, and in military aggression in eastern Ukraine. The outcome of the ballot is uncertain, but the new leader is expected to continue the efforts of incumbent President Petro Poroshenko to deepen relations with the European Union and NATO, and continue the country's reform process, including anti-corruption measures.

A record 44 candidates are contesting the election, with actor and political novice Volodymyr Zelenskiy holding the lead in opinion polls, followed by Poroshenko and former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko. If no candidate secures an absolute majority in the first round, the top two contenders will face each other in a run-off on 21 April.

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