



UKRAINE WEEK IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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on EP CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR THE VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE

***in support of the Memorandum of Understanding
between the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
and following the recommendations from the report of the Needs Assessment Mission***

Brussels, 2 March 2016

As an outcome of the debates that took place during the Ukraine Week, the following proposals which are in line with the Report and Recommendations of the Needs Assessment Mission led by Pat Cox have been prepared to frame and guide the work that will be developed in the coming months by the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada and, as such, form the basis of the EP capacity building programme for the Verkhovna Rada, within the financial allocations foreseen by the European Parliament for these activities.

Relations between the legislative and the executive

- For enhanced coordination between the executive and the legislative, an agreement framing the inter-institutional relations between the Verkhovna Rada and the Cabinet of Ministers could be established. Should there be the political will for this, the European Parliament and the Commission could share relevant expertise (in support of NAM recommendation 1);
- Both the European Parliament and the Commission could also share expertise with the Cabinet of Ministers and Verkhovna Rada on "green papers/white papers" as best practices in the "end-to-end legislative process" (in support of NAM recommendation 2);
- The European Parliament could contribute to strengthening the role of the Committees of the Verkhovna Rada both in the legislative process and in the oversight of the executive, by creating an



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informal network of EP-Verkhovna Rada Committee chairs and/or by facilitating bilateral relations between respective Committee chairs from the two institutions (in support of VRU committees in general vis a vis the executive);

- The European Parliament could organise seminars in Brussels or in Kiev for Chairs of Committees of the Verkhovna Rada, where Members of European Parliament and Members of EU national parliaments exchange best practices on Committee oversight (in support of NAM recommendation 16);

Role of a Parliament in the budget cycle

- The European Parliament could organise seminars for the Verkhovna Rada, in Brussels or in Kiev, together with EU National Parliaments, on best practices in budgetary procedures and other related budgetary matters, including on the specific relations between the Committee responsible for the budget and other Committees (in support of Annex 7 of the NAM report);
- The European Parliament could share its expertise on the introduction of a "Rapporteur system" linked to the annual budgetary procedure (in support of NAM recommendation 19 and annex 7);
- If a specific chapter (within the above mentioned inter-institutional relations agreement between the Verkhovna Rada and the Cabinet of Ministers) is foreseen covering their relations in the framework of the budgetary procedure, the EU institutions could share relevant expertise (in support of NAM recommendation 1, and annex 7);

Openness, transparency and accountability: the representation role of a Parliament

- European Parliament assistance for the development of an e-parliament strategy and a comprehensive communication strategy for the Institution should be an important component in the joint *Administrative cooperation agreement* (in support of NAM recommendations 23 and 28);
- Should the Verkhovna Rada decide to task one of its Members with the specific portfolio of communications and relations with the citizens, the European Parliament could share best practices and expertise, and provide advice (in support of NAM recommendations 23 and 28);
- The European Parliament could support the Verkhovna Rada in establishing permanent mechanisms for enhanced involvement of young citizens in the parliamentary process;



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- The European Parliament would encourage civil society involvement, where relevant, in the internal reform process of the Rada through joint actions with the EP as part of the EP capacity-building programme;
- The European Parliament fully supports the initiative of the Committee of the regions of the EU to share best practices with the Verkhovna Rada on decentralised accountability and relations with citizens;

Best practices on harmonisation of national legislation with EU acquis

Parliamentary expertise and capacities in the harmonisation of national legislation to the EU acquis primarily lies within the remit of EU national parliaments. The European Commission has also been monitoring the harmonisation processes in candidate and associate countries for many years (thus having horizontal expertise and overview of best practices of this process). In this context, the European Parliament:

- would encourage the European Commission:
 - to launch an EU-funded twinning project for EU National Parliaments in order to share best practices and build capacities of the Verkhovna Rada in harmonisation of national legislation to the EU acquis;
 - to appoint experts in the Verkhovna Rada with a view to providing expertise to staff in this specific field of expertise;
 - to help in monitoring the harmonisation and implementation process, in line with EP resolution of January 2016;
- could convene a 2-day training session on its premises for Members of the European Affairs Committee and other relevant committees of the Verkhovna Rada as well as EU national parliament's Committees on European Affairs to exchange best practices on harmonisation to the EU acquis, or on best practices on the management of translation. European Affairs committees from parliaments of associate countries could also take part (in support of NAM recommendation 34);
- could task the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee to include, at each of its bi-annual meeting, a discussion item on state of play of harmonisation, inviting all relevant VRU Committee Chairs and focal points to participate, on draft annual plans of implementation and on the efficiency of the measures described above in support to the process (in support of NAM recommendation 31 and 33);



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The role of Parliament and Political Parties: towards a culture of dialogue, compromise and consensus building

International partners should continue, in a coordinated way, with their engagement and sharing of best practices on strengthening inter-party dialogue as a means to accompany the process of implementation of the reform agenda of the Verkhovna Rada. Concomitantly, the European Parliament could:

- develop activities that build upon the trust established during the Needs Assessment Mission, to facilitate informal political dialogue and to strengthen inter-party and intra-coalition dialogue with the leaders of the political parties or other factions' representatives (in support of NAM recommendation 47);
- offer training targeted at any future specialised capacities in the Rada that focus on, or facilitate, inter-party dialogue, cross-party caucuses, political dialogue and consensus building (in support of NAM recommendation 45 and 46);
- in close cooperation with the secretariats of the political groups of the European Parliament, strengthen the secretariats of political factions of the Verkhovna Rada - in a neutral fashion and without prejudice to political agendas - with a view to enhancing the predictability and coherence in the work of these factions and thus contributing to trust amongst the citizens and by the executive;

Administrative capacities

- The European Parliament would support the strengthening of the capacities of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada, as outlined in the Administrative Cooperation Agreement, via the provision of expertise, guidance, mentoring, trainings staff exchanges and study visits in various fields of interest (in support of NAM recommendations 23 to 29, and 36 to 41);

Others

- The European Parliament would be ready to support for the continuation of the debate on parliamentary ethics within the Verkhovna Rada, and share its expertise and best practices in drafting a Code of Conduct, addressing issues such as ethical standards, conflicts of interest, and anti-corruption measures (in support of NAM recommendation 52).