

GOVERNMENT AND COURTS IN UKRAINE

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Ukraine is a sovereign state. Its independence was proclaimed on August 24, 1991. There are 26 administrative districts and the Crimean autonomous republic in Ukraine. The power in the country is divided into three branches: legislative, executive and judiciary. Verkhovna Rada is the main legislative body, it consists of 450 deputies. The elections to the Verkhovna Rada are held every four years. The deputies are elected by equal, secret and direct ballot. All parties that win at least 3% of the national vote in the parliamentary election are awarded seats on a proportional basis.

The highest executive body is the President. He can veto any decision of Verkhovna Rada. The President is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Ukraine. He also represents the state in international relations. The other part of the executive branch is the Cabinet of Ministers, which is headed by the Prime Minister. There are 20 Ministries and 25 seats in the Cabinet. The Cabinet of Ministers may introduce bills to the legislative body. So, the Cabinet is responsible to the President of Ukraine and is under the control of and accountable to the Verkhovna Rada.

The judicial system of Ukraine consists of four levels of courts of general jurisdiction, as follows: local courts of general jurisdiction (combining criminal and civil jurisdiction), appeals courts, high courts with specialized jurisdiction, the Supreme Court, covering all cases. The Constitutional Court of Ukraine is a special body with authority to assess whether legislative acts of the Parliament, President, Cabinet or Crimean Parliament are in line with the Constitution of Ukraine. This Court also gives commentaries to certain norms of the Constitution or laws of Ukraine (superior acts of Parliament). The courts enjoy legal, financial and constitutional freedom guaranteed by measures adopted in Ukrainian law in 2002. Although there are still problems with the performance of the system, it is considered to have been much improved since 1991.

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