

The Parliament of Ukraine adapts laws to the altered constitution

On 7 and 8 October, the Parliament of Ukraine introduced changes to a range of laws regulating the competences of organs of state to the extent required by the restoration of the 1996 constitution. Parliament also began work on a rapid amendment to constitution. It is noteworthy that the changes were approved barely a week after the Supreme Court's ruling, *de facto* returning Ukraine to a presidential system – they must therefore have been prepared in advance. Moreover, they were approved with hardly any debate.

The changes made to the laws on government, the regulation of parliament and a range of other laws adapt these legal acts (which had been approved or changed since 2004) to the precepts of the 1996 constitution. However, taking advantage of the opportunity, changes were introduced to the law on government which increased the powers of the Prime Minister at the expense of the powers of government as a collective body.

Parliament also submitted a project to amend the constitution, restoring a five-year term to parliament and local government bodies, as was valid in the period from 2005 to 2010. It must be expected that this plan will be accepted and sent to the Constitutional Court in the next few weeks, although final approval will not be given until the beginning of February (after the next session of parliament begins).

The above-mentioned laws were approved at an accelerated pace, without consultation with parliamentary committees. The majority of the opposition deputies boycotted the session. The speed at which the laws were approved leads one to suppose that the current Ukrainian government is also working towards a constitutional amendment which will allow them to avoid parliamentary elections in spring next year, which could be unfavourable to Party of Regions. <TAO>