
UKRAINE'S NEW AND UNPREDICTABLE PARLIAMENT SET FOR MARATHON FIRST SESSION

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Ukraines new parliament will meet for the first time on Thursday (29 August), dominated by the party of ex-comedian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy who has an unprecedented chance to fulfil his political ambition of breaking the system.

The 41-year-old won a landslide election in April and his young Servant of the People party gained an absolute majority in last months snap parliamentary elections.

Zelenskiys overwhelming success in the polls demonstrated the level of frustration in one of Europes poorest countries with the old elites, seen as corrupt and inefficient.

Zelenskiy has already picked his prime minister, according to a source close to the presidency: Olexiy Goncharuk, a lawyer who is just 35 years old and currently oversees economic issues in the administration.

Lawmakers could confirm the nomination as early as Thursday, according to some Ukrainian media. One source told AFP however that the vote was more likely to happen next week.

Goncharuk was appointed to be part of Zelenskiys administration at the end of May and previously headed the consultancy Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) financed by the European Union to promote small and medium-sized businesses.

Among Zelenskiys campaign promises is to put an end to the conflict with pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, fight corruption and launch economic reforms.

I am not a politician, he said in April ahead of his election, I am just a simple person who has come to break the system.

I am the result of your mistakes and promises.

Zelenskiys Ukraine: Greenhorn challenge

Balázs Jarábik looks into the stakes of Sundays (21 July) Ukraine parliamentary elections, in which President Volodymyr Zelenskys party rides high. Uncertainty prevails as to how he will deliver once he gets to power, Jarábik writes.

Work all night

Besides possible confirmation of a new prime minister, a parliament source told AFP that Zelenskiys party was also planning to vote on Thursday for two key posts – a new prosecutor general and a new head of the SBU security services.

Zelenskiys team has instructed deputies to prepare to work all night from Thursday to Friday to vote on up to a hundred laws, media reported.

Made up of many young political novices, the Servant of the People party won 254 seats out of 450 in last months polls. It was a result unprecedented in independent Ukraine where parliamentary clashes have sometimes become physical.

Its an extraordinary opportunity, and an extraordinary responsibility, Sergiy Fursa, chief of Dragon Capital investment group, said on his blog.

This parliament can either accelerate structural changes and transform the country or get bogged down in populism and change nothing, he wrote.

Four other political forces managed to surpass the five-percent barrier to get into parliament, including the pro-Russian Opposition Platform (43 seats), ex-prime minister Yulia Tymoshenkos Fatherland (26 seats), ex-president Petro Poroshenkos European Solidarity (25 seats), and Voice, founded by rocker Svyatoslav Vakarchuk (20 seats).

Fifty-six deputies represent other smaller parties or are independent, and a further 26 seats are unclaimed because their constituencies live in Crimea or parts of eastern Ukraine that are not controlled by Kyiv.

Kaynak/Source: