

How Poroshenko uses the Committee to block the anticorruption court draft law in the Rada

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Desperately trying to delay creation of the anticorruption court while saving face before the international partners, Poroshenko has been abusing the tactics “me not guilty”.

The President keeps promising one new date after another to adopt the law on the anti-corruption court and then puts the onus on the MPs.

First, in October 2017, Poroshenko, whose faction is the biggest one in the parliament, [promised](#) adopting the law on the Anti-corruption court **by the end of 2017**. Then, in [February](#), **by mid-April**.

Recently, in his interview to the [German magazine](#) Focus he mentioned **May**. Whereas just a fortnight before Artur Herasymov, head of the Presidential faction in the Parliament, [named](#) different dates – **May** or even **June**.

What is really happening in the Parliament?

The Verkhovna Rada voted for the law draft on the Anti-corruption Court on March 1, 2018. For 2 weeks after the voting, i.e. until March 15, amendments to the law draft, were accepted. The total of nearly 2000 amendments have been submitted.

However, since March 15, for nearly 2 months, all of 2000 amendments have been “shelved” at the Committee on Legal Policy and Justice.

Head of the Committee Ruslan Kniazevych (Poroshenko’s Bloc) is a trusted person of the President, jurist, BPP representative at the Central Election Commission at the 2014 election and the President’s Representative at the Verkhovna Rada (June 2014 – January 2015).

14 out of 32 MPs-members of the Committee are also from the Presidential faction.

Besides, another member of the Committee happens to be close associate of the President, who often [pays nocturnal visits](#) to the Administration at Bankova, is Oleksandr Hranovskyi.

Since March 15, there have been some FIVE Committee meetings, however, the anti-corruption court demanded by the IMF, the EU and Ukrainian citizens, did not make it to the list of priorities. During those meetings **the Committee neither managed to create a working group to process the amendments, nor started reviewing those nearly 2000 amendments.**

As late as April 11, a whole month after the amendments were submitted, instead of holding a Committee meeting, Kniazevych had a closed discussion, during which he distributed charts of amendments to the law draft and dismissed the MPs to reflect on the CONCEPT of the Anti-corruption court as factions envision it. All this in the time when the law draft was voted in the first reading, when there are clear recommendations

from the Venice Commission and all proposals from factions have been submitted.

The President may keep blaming the Verkhovna Rada, but one will easily recall how swiftly the MPs voted on other law drafts, beneficial for Poroshenko. For instance, ballot to appoint Yurii Lutsenko Prosecutor General, voting on Donbas re-integration or new procedural codes. Kniazevych's Committee worked daily for several weeks on amendments to the latter ones.

The issue with this is not just the fact that Ukraine is in dire need of the Anticorruption Court to bring the corrupt officials to justice for what they have stolen. If the law draft on the Anticorruption court is not adopted until the end of the session, Ukraine is guaranteed not to get the next IMF tranche. Without this money Ukraine is most likely to get into deep financial crisis and economy ruin due to inability to pay back its external debt obligations.

The IMF policy of providing financial assistance to the countries stipulates that no tranches are transferred in Q4 due to fears of influencing the budget process; also assistance allocation is avoided in the time of election. Therefore, we are left with Q3 2018. Meanwhile the IMF stands firm in its demand: no anti-corruption court - no tranche.

Voting for the anticorruption court, promised by the President, will actually decide the country's economic fate within the next few years. Without Western partners and the IMF's support, Ukraine is unlikely to overcome the economic crisis on its own. Therefore the President has to green light the draft law's second reading as soon as possible.

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