



Ukraine — Va-PoReg Country Report

Kailitz, Steffen, et al., 2026: Varieties of Political Regimes (Va-PoReg). Country Report Ukraine, Dresden: Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/JYEL7U>

04/19/1783 Start Part of Other Country [of Russia]: On 02/09/1667 following the Truce of Andrusovo the historical region of left-bank Ukraine was incorporated by the Tsardom of Russia.¹ On 04/19/1783 the Russian Empire annexed the Crimean Khanate.² The historical region of right-bank Ukraine was annexed by the Russian Empire in the Second Partition of Poland in 1793.³ A treaty between Prussia and the Russian Empire was signed on 01/23/1793.⁴

06/23/1917 End Part of Other Country [of Russia, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: The Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR), declared on this date, following the February Revolution in Russia, independence. Initially, it was a socialist-leaning entity under the Central Council of Ukraine, which sought autonomy within the Russian Provisional Government. The Central Council of Ukraine, or the Ukrainian Central Rada, declared Ukrainian autonomy and later proclaimed the UPR's independence on 01/22/1918, in response to the Bolshevik Revolution. During its brief existence, the UPR underwent several political changes. After the Bolshevik October Revolution, the UPR denounced the Bolshevik seizure of power. In December 1917, a competing government, the Ukrainian People's Republic of Soviets, was declared in Kharkiv by local Bolsheviks. This Soviet Republic, supported by Soviet Russia, aimed to establish a communist regime in Ukraine.⁵ However, this did not represent the mainstream UPR government based in Kyiv, which continued to oppose Bolshevik control and sought to establish a democratic socialist republic. The political landscape in Ukraine at the time was highly fragmented, with various factions including the UPR, the Bolsheviks, and other nationalist and anarchist groups vying for control. The UPR government led by the Directorate, particularly under Symon Petliura, maintained a socialist orientation but was distinct from the Bolshevik communists.⁶ LIED does not provide any data for this period.

01/09/1918 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: Universal suffrage was introduced, and the Ukrainian People's republic (Ukrainian SSR) held multiparty legislative elections on this date [O.S. 12/27].⁷ The elections could only be held in part of the territory and the elections had to be paused due to the invasion of Russia and the chaos that was spread as the result of it. LIED does not provide any data during this specified period.

04/01/1918 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, the socialist authority of the republic was suspended when it was overthrown by the pro-German Ukrainian State of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, who was elected as a Hetman by a congress of peasants.⁸ LIED does still not provide any data during this specified period.

11/14/1918 End Military Autocracy/Start Communist Ideocracy: On this date, the Ukrainian socialists announced a new revolutionary government, the Directorate.⁹ The Directorate fought against troops loyal to Skoropadskyi and remaining German troops in Ukraine.¹⁰ On 12/14/1918, after German troops abandoned Kyiv, Skoropadskyi abdicated and fled to Germany, and the remaining government surrendered power to the Directory.¹¹ No data was provided by LIED during the specified period.

12/30/1922 End Communist Ideocracy/Start Part of Other Country [of USSR, Communist Ideocracy]: On this date, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, proclaimed on 03/10/1919, was admitted to the USSR. Initially, a policy of Ukrainization was pursued, which involved promoting the Ukrainian language and the inclusion of

ethnic Ukrainians in leadership positions.¹² Since 1928, a policy of Russification, collectivization and purges were imposed. Repressions against kulaks were imposed, including escalating taxes, dispossession and deportation to Siberia and Kazakhstan. From 1932 to 1933, Stalin's agricultural policies resulted in the famine known as Holodomor. After the famine, Russian settlers were relocated to repopulate the countryside. During the Great Purge, from 08/19/1936 to 11/17/1939, about half of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) members were expelled and 99 of 102 members of the Central Committee were shot.¹³

06/22/1941 End Part of Other Country [of USSR, Communist Ideocracy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: On this date, the invasion of Ukraine by Nazi Germany began as part of Operation Barbarossa. German forces quickly advanced into Ukrainian territory, and many major cities, including Kyiv, were occupied by the German Army. At first, some of the Ukrainian population welcomed the Germans as liberators.¹⁴ However, this changed quickly. Following the initial occupation, Ukraine was divided into several administrative regions. The Reichskommissariat Ukraine was established, and it included both the territory of modern-day Ukraine and parts of Belarus and Russia. Erich Koch served as the Reichskommissar. The German occupation was brutal and marked by the Holocaust, mass killings, and widespread destruction. In mid-1943 the Germans began their slow retreat from Ukraine, leaving wholesale destruction in their wake. In November the Soviets reentered Kyiv. With the approach of the front, guerrilla activity in western Ukraine intensified, and bloody clashes that claimed large numbers of civilian victims occurred between Ukrainians and Poles.¹⁵ No data was provided by LIED for this period.

10/31/1944 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Part of Other Country [of USSR, Communist Ideocracy]: By the end of October 1944 all of Ukraine was again under Soviet control.¹⁶ The Soviet victory, the Red Army's presence in Eastern Europe, and diplomatic negotiations among the Allies led to a lasting reconfiguration of Ukraine's western boundaries. In exchange for obtaining German territories in the west, Poland agreed to relinquish control of Volhynia and Galicia. A mutual population exchange ensued, during which the remaining Ukrainian population was deported by Poland to its newly acquired western territories. This event marked a significant historical development, establishing a distinct ethnic and political Polish-Ukrainian border, for the first time in centuries.¹⁷ Ukraine, as the USSR's second-most populous republic and a crucial agricultural and industrial hub, was constantly subjected to direct oversight and strict controls from Moscow. The depth of Russification and the magnitude of the Holodomor set Ukraine apart from other republics, as did the scale of both Ukrainian cultural resilience and repression. Armed resistance in Western Ukraine was among the most persistent against Soviet authority.¹⁸ Between 1944 and 1960, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) waged a guerrilla war against the Soviet Union, at times collaborating with retreating German forces.¹⁹ LIED does not include Ukraine in its data before 1992, and V-Dem does not include it before 1990. For the end of this regime period, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous (1990 and 1991) regarding the status of political liberties.

08/24/1991 End Part of Other Country [of USSR, Communist Ideocracy]/Start Democratizing Regime: On this date the independence of the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from the Soviet Union was declared. The Ukraine's declaration of independence came in direct response to the coup attempt on 08/19/1991 when conservative Communist leaders sought to restore central Communist party control over the USSR. "The proclamation was succeeded by a proposition for a national referendum, jointly announced by majority leader Oleksandr Moroz and opposition leader Ihor Yukhnovsky. The referendum garnered widespread support, achieving an overwhelming victory with 90% of the votes cast (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 65). Per FH, for this regime period, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive.

12/01/1991 End Democratizing Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date Leonid Kravchuk was elected in direct presidential elections.²⁰ The 1994 election led to a victory for former minister Leonid Kuchma over President Leonid Kravchuk (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 66). Presidential elections in 2004 were won by Kuchma's chosen successor, Viktor Yanukovych. He defeated Viktor Yanushchenko in the

second-round run-off. But observers claimed the election failed to meet democratic standards and in Kyiv widespread protests came to be known as the 'Orange Revolution'. After the poll was declared invalid, Yushchenko was elected president in a repeat of the run-off. In February 2010 Yanukovych was elected president, defeating Yuliya Tymoshenko, a figurehead of the 2004 protests. Tymoshenko alleged fraud and initially refused to resign the premiership as requested by Yanukovych in order for him to install a new government. However, international observers characterized the poll as generally fair (Lansford 2021). Tymoshenko was imprisoned in October 2011 for alleged abuse of power in relation to a 2009 gas deal with Russia.²¹ In April 2013 the European Court of Human Rights declared her arrest and detention unlawful (Macmillan 2022e). Unsuccessful attempts to implement judicial reforms and intensified assaults on anti-corruption bodies from 2019 to 2020 reached a climax with a constitutional crisis in late 2020. While there were alternations in power, the quality of democracy was overall low. FH classifies Ukraine as partly free and the V-Dem as an electoral autocracy. However, most other data sets classify Ukraine as being a democracy in this period. According to this dataset Ukraine constitutes an electoral hybrid regime. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukraine has faced significant challenges that have impacted its political landscape. The conflict has led to a state of war, dramatically altering the daily lives of Ukrainians and placing immense pressure on the country's institutions and governance. Despite these challenges, Ukraine has continued its efforts to maintain democratic processes and resist authoritarian influences. The resilience of Ukraine's democratic institutions during this period is notable, as the country has held more or less onto its democratic status despite the ongoing war and external pressures. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. From 1991 to 1993 the elections were not competitive according to LIED. Since 1994 constant competitiveness is scored. Regarding the V-Dem's CEI scores for the election process since the country's independence in 1991, multiple changes are observed. From 1991 to 1997 the elections score with a somewhat cleanliness. 1998 marks the change to an ambiguous cleanliness. The following seven years the elections are classified by not really cleanliness levels and irregularities. From 2006 to 2013 there is a return towards ambiguous cleanliness outcomes. In 2014 the scores changed to not really electoral cleanliness until 2016. For the following three years the scores indicate ambiguous cleanliness again. Since 2020 the elections are considered as somewhat clean. Furthermore, according to V-Dem's EF&FI the elections were free and fair from 1991 to 1993, before they were classified as somewhat free and fair up to 1997. In 1998 the overall conditions scored ambiguous levels until 2003. For the next two years the election were not really free and fair. In 2006 there was a return towards somewhat free and fair conditions until 2013. Again, a change to ambiguous levels is given for five years. Since 2019 the election score freedom and fairness levels. According to the Polity5 indicator, during this period, the executive faced substantial limitations on decision-making power. As classified by FH for 1992, the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. In 1992 and 1995, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. From 1993 to 1994, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. From 1996 to 2002, in 2013, in 2018, from 2021 to 2021 and in 2023, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. From 2003 to 2009, in 2019 and in 2022, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. Per FH's scoring for 1993, the country is classified as partly free with a score of 8, which we categorize as rather not free. According to FH, a score of 6 to 7 for the years 1994 to 1999 designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. As per FH, for the years 2000 to 2003, the country receives a score of 8, which we interpret as falling into the rather not free category. As classified by FH for 2004, the country

is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. As per FH's classification for 2005-2009, the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. According to FH, a score of 6 to 7 for 2010-2021 designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. Per FH's scoring since 2022, the country is classified as partly free with a score of 8, which we categorize as rather not free. Besides, according to LIED no political liberties were present for the entire time. However, V-Dem's PCLI indicates somewhat political liberties are present from 1991 to 1994, 1996 to 2004 and 2010 to 2021. In 1995 and between 2005 and 2009 full political liberties were achieved. Since 2022, the outcomes are ambiguous. In addition, the LDI indicates that the regime was not really a liberal democracy since 1991. Throughout the entire regime period, the country fluctuates between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime based on our criteria. Due to the persistent regime instability, which is a significant issue in itself, the regime is ultimately classified as an electoral hybrid regime.

Electoral Hybrid Regime as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Åslund/McFaul 2006, Beichelt 2004, Gilka-Bötzow 2007, Kubicek 1994, Prizel 1997, Way 2005)

Notes

- ¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left-bank_Ukraine
- ² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annexation_of_the_Crimean_Khanate_by_the_Russian_Empire
- ³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-bank_Ukraine#:~:text=In%201793%20right%20Dbank%20Ukraine,Polish%20or%20Polonized%20Ukrainian%20nobility.
- ⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Partition_of_Poland
- ⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_People%27s_Republic
- ⁶ <https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CU%5CK%5CUkrainian6SovietWar1917hD721.htm> ;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_People%27s_Republic
- ⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage
- ⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_People%27s_Republic
- ⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_People%27s_Republic
- ¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Hetman_Uprising
- ¹¹ <https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CH%5CE%5CHetmangovernment.htm>
- ¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic
- ¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/Ukraine-in-the-interwar-period>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Nazi-occupation-of-Soviet-Ukraine>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Nazi-occupation-of-Soviet-Ukraine>
- ¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic
- ¹⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Nazi-occupation-of-Soviet-Ukraine>
- ¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic
- ¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Soviet_resistance_by_the_Ukrainian_Insurgent_Army
- ²⁰ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ukraine_2019?lang=en
- ²¹ <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/UKR>

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