**Sample Questions for Ukraine – e.g. Verkhovna Rada staff**

**[NB** The questions for each interview were drafted specifically for that individual and related to their committee and faction membership and length of service, so below is only a broad indication of the questions asked]

* The interview is purely for academic research and my project is looking at parliamentary oversight.
* You were sent a PIS that explains the purpose of my project and how I intend to use the data from interviews. You have the right to withdraw at any time [indicate contact details]. I would like to ask your permission to cite you? May I use your name in such citations?
* Is it OK to record the interview?
* How much time do we have?

1. Firstly, the very idea of parliamentary control is intrinsic to Western liberal democracy – so in your opinion, what does it mean here in Ukraine?
2. Do you consider that the VRU has sufficient powers to oversee the activities of the executive?
3. What have been the most important changes as a result of the politreform [the constitutional changes of 2004], the new Reglament [standing orders] and new law on standing committee in the sphere of control?
4. Does VRU in your opinion make full use of the oversight powers available to it?
5. Which is the most effective forum for obtaining information from the government about its activities? [Government Hour, control of the budget, zaprosy, investigations, parliamentary hearings, other]
6. Do these activities influence the government’s behaviour? Can you give an example?
7. I heard that the holovne orhanizatiyne upravlinniia [Main organisational department] keeps statistics on the number of committee hearings held, and the number of requests made by the VRU (deputies, committees and factions) to the Accounting Chamber for information. Would it be possible to get hold of these figures for the last two convocations – if possible on a session by session basis?
8. If we look at the official statistics on the number of questions examined by committees, approximately 13% were control questions in the last 2 convocation, but for several committees up to 50% were control questions. How would you account for this kind of variation?
9. Does the composition of a committee affect this, and especially whether the chair (holova) belongs to the opposition or not?
10. What sorts of activities do committees use to oversee the executives’ activities?
11. Hearings are increasingly being used by VRU. What is the difference between committee and Rada hearings in terms of their aims and outcomes?
12. Are hearings able to impact on the quality of legislation and improve implementation? [Can you give an example?]
13. Most hearings are held on humanitarian issues, but are there cases where they are organised for lobbying purposes – to accelerate the adoption of some legislation or for additional resources to a specific industry?
14. How effective are ‘control’ hearings?
15. What role does the budget hearing play?
16. What are the main activities of the Rada in the oversight of the budget? *Probes*: Is there a hearing or Government Day on budget implementation? What are the results of this (a resolution)? Are the results overseen by deputies? How would you assess deputies’ interest in budget oversight? [can give Russian example to explain…]
17. How would you describe the relationship between the Accounting Chamber and the Rada?
18. What are the main dimensions of interaction?
19. How often does the committee request information or reports from the Accounting Chamber? [do you have any figures on this?]
20. Does the Rada or committees examine or consider Accounting Chamber reports? If so what is the purpose of this activity?
21. Is this an effective form of control over the budget?
22. How would you describe the Rada’s interaction with the Human Rights ombudsman? [frequency, via committees/factions/individual deputies, problem of politicisation?]
23. I observed Government Day [specify which] – they are rather in depth when there is only one question on agenda. But what is the purpose/aim of Government Day? [oversight, informational for deps, public]
24. Who decides who is invited – which NGO representatives etc?
25. Is Government Day an effective way of holding the government to account?
26. Are the results (e.g. if a resolution is passed) followed up and controlled by committees?
27. Is one government day per month sufficient?
28. Temporary investigatory commissions have always been controversial in the Rada. There have been many failed attempts to pass a law to regulate their activity. Why is it so controversial? Is it just due to the inclusion of the impeachment procedure?
29. Temporary investigatory commissions often seem to be created for political purposes (e.g. on Naftohaz, on bribery of deputies). Can they be a real instrument of control that changes rules and officials behaviour for the better?
30. Are there any examples of TIKs leading to the instigation of a legal (criminal or civil) case and a prosecution or a change in the law?
31. *Government responses*
32. How would you characterise the Rada’s relations with the executive?
33. Do ministers and government experts regularly attend committee meetings?
34. The number of deputies’ zapyty (interpellations) is increasing all the time. Why?
35. Given that a large majority of deputies have business interests, how does this impact on the use of parliamentary oversight tools?
36. What is the role of the Rada leadership is guiding the conduct of oversight? The speaker said the development of oversight is a priority when opening the session. What is planned as a result of this prioritisation?
37. Have you noticed the impact of any international technical assistance bodies that try to encourage parliamentary institutionalisation/democracy promotion, for example in the conduct of hearings?
38. What role do parliamentary parties/factions play in oversight? Do they monitor/take an interest in their members’ oversight activities?

*Impact*

40. In your opinion, are activities that monitor and control the government becoming more or less important over time? [In what respect?]How important is the ‘politreform’ in this respect?

41. If you could instantly change 3 things in the Rada, what would they be?

**Concluding Questions**

1. [Here there was usually a question about additional information or assistance from the respondent e.g. for statistical information, advice on observing a forthcoming committee meeting/hearing etc]
2. Do you have any questions you’d like to ask me about the project?
3. As part of the stipulations of the university ethics committee, I have to ask once more – can I cite you? May I use your name in such citations?