**Question guide for semi-structured interview with a People’s Deputy of the Russian State Duma**

[In practice, a tailored question guide was produced for each respondent, but the following acted as a basis for the areas being investigated. In addition, I tried to respond to the specifics and interests of each respondent as it became apparent in the course of the interview]

* The interview is purely for academic research and my project is looking at the Federal Assembly’s activities that seek to monitor the government’s activities and the implementation of legislation.
* I am interested to hear your opinion as an experienced and active Duma deputy. We sent you a Participant Information Sheet 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 my 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?

*Conceptions*

1. My project is concerned with the Federal Assembly’s activities concerned with monitoring and control of the executive’s activities, including the implementation of laws. In the West we call such activities as Government hour, zaprosy and parliamentary investigations ‘parliamentary control’, but in interviews here people have told me this is a Western conception and that there is no parliamentary control in Russia. Do you agree with this view?

2. What do *you* understand by the term parliamentary control?

3. In your opinion, does the Duma have sufficient opportunities to oversee the activities of the government?

4. Which is the most effective forum for obtaining information from the government about its activities? [e.g.Government Hour, control of the budget, zaprosy, investigations, parliamentary hearings, other]

5. Do these activities influence the government’s behaviour? Can you give an example?

*Motivations*

6. As a deputy, how much of your time is spent on such oversight activities?

7. As a rule, are you spending more or less time on oversight activities this convocation compared to last? [If so, why?]

8. What motivates deputies to conduct such activities?

9. In the West, opposition deputies engage much more in oversight activities. Do you think that there is a similar trend in Russia?

10. Does a deputies’ mandate type (single mandate or party list) affect how interested he is in oversight?

*Committees*

11. This convocation you are a member of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ committee. Could you estimate how much of the committee’s time is spent on activities that monitor/oversee the government’s activities?

12. What sorts of activities does the committee use to oversee the executives’ activities?

13. Does the committee have enough resources to conduct effective oversight (for example, enough staff)? [How many staff does the committee have?]

*Government responses*

14. How would you characterise the committee’s relations with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ministry?

15. Do ministers and government experts regularly attend committee meetings?

16. I read in the newspapers that many deputies do not receive answers to their zaprosy [interpellations], and if they do, they are not very informative. Does this coincide with your experience of zaprosy?

17 Is the government more responsive to questions in Government Hour, for example? OR b) How far are there opportunities for deputies to ask tough questions in government hour?

18. What is the role of the Duma leadership is guiding the conduct of oversight? [How far does it influence which questions/issues are examined?]

*Impact*

19. In your opinion, are activities that monitor and control the government becoming more or less important over time? [In what respect?]

20. Some observers here have told me that there is no possibility for the Duma to influence the government by using such activities as government hour, zaprosy etc, and that this is part of ‘virtual politics’ in Russia, i.e. activities that look democratic but actually cover the reality that the Duma is just a ‘rubber stamp’ for the presidential administration. How far would you agree with this suggestion?

**Concluding Questions**

1. Do you have any questions you’d like to ask me about the project?
2. Do you have any colleagues who are particularly interested in oversight and might be interested in speaking to me?
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?