

IMF's benchmarks and soft commitments

Tobacco tax hike law comes into force after 106-day delay

On March 25, draft law #11090, on increasing excise tax on tobacco goods was officially published and entered into force – 106 days after it was submitted for presidential signature.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Parliament advances bill enabling financial inclusion banks, supporting Ukrposhta's entry into banking

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has passed draft law #13018-d in its first reading, laying the legal groundwork for the creation of financial inclusion banks – a new category of banking institutions operating under a limited license.

The proposed banks would be tasked with serving individuals lacking stable access to financial services, particularly those in frontline areas, recently de-occupied territories, and among socially vulnerable groups.

The legislation is a critical step for Ukrposhta, the state postal operator, to launch its own financial institution.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Obligations to the EU

Parliament to vote on ARMA reform in final reading

Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada is set to hold a final vote on draft law #12374-d, which aims to "reset" the National Agency for Tracing, Recovery and Management of Assets Derived from Corruption and

Other Crimes (ARMA) – a key component of Ukraine’s anti-corruption infrastructure.

The proposed legislation includes:

- stricter integrity and qualification standards for candidates vying to lead ARMA;
- merit-based hiring via open competition, with involvement from the ARMA Public Oversight Council and representatives of civil society organizations;
- introduction of independent external audits to assess ARMA’s operational effectiveness;
- a fixed deadline for selecting asset managers following asset seizure;
- engagement of certified professional asset managers, who will bear legal responsibility for mismanagement

The bill’s adoption and signing would allow Ukraine to meet one of the benchmarks under the Ukraine Facility, with a deadline set for the end of Q1 2025.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Lawmakers and Government submit competing bills to reform vocational education in Ukraine

Ukraine’s Parliament has registered competing bills aimed at overhauling the country’s vocational education system, one of reforms tied to the EU’s Ukraine Facility funding mechanism.

On March 14, a group of lawmakers introduced draft law #13107, followed by the Cabinet of Ministers’ alternative proposal, draft law #13107-2, submitted on March 24.

Both initiatives seek to modernize vocational education and enhance the institutional autonomy of vocational training institutions. Adoption of the legislation is required under Ukraine’s reform commitments to the EU, with a deadline set for the end of Q2 2025.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

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