

Ukraine in global indices of political regimes and democratic quality

Selected values for the period 1991 – 2024

Documentation of Data Collection (as of 19 July 2025)

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Abstract

This data collection contains the values for Ukraine in global overall indices of political regimes / democratic quality as well as global indices assessing elections / electoral integrity and those assessing media freedom.

The data collection covers indices published by Bertelsmann Foundation, Economist Intelligence Unit, Electoral Integrity Project, Freedom House, Polity5, Reporters without Borders, V-Dem Institute.

This data collection contains an excel file with 6 sheets presenting the country values for Ukraine from 1991 to 2024 in the different indices (including a country comparison for one democracy index).

The value is always indicated for the year it relates to, not the year in which the respective index was published. For the BTI, this means a difference of two years, i.e. the value of the BTI 2024 evaluates the year 2022 and was therefore used here for the year 2022.

Scope

This data collection aims to cover all global indices of political regimes (democratic quality), of elections and of media freedom which include Ukraine. It presents exclusively the values for Ukraine in the period from 1991 to 2024, i.e. starting with the country's independence and up to the present time (with no newer values being available at the time of publication of this data collection).

The following indices have been included in the data collection (source indicated in brackets):

Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) - Democracy Status / Free and fair elections / Freedom of Expression, <https://bti-project.org/en/index/political-transformation>

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU): Index of Democracy / Electoral Process and Pluralism, <https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>

Electoral Integrity Project: Perceptions of Electoral Integrity v9.0, <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/pei>,

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/file.xhtml?fileId=7224858&version=1.0>

Freedom House (FH): Freedom in the World / Nations in Transit Index - Electoral Process / Freedom of the Press, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>, <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/publicationarchives>,

<https://freedomhouse.org/freedom-press-research-methodology> and

<https://doi.org/10.48320/C8777922-2F73-431E-9FCE-A43789A12027>

Polity5: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets - Institutionalized Democracy,

<https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>

Reporters without Borders: Press Freedom Index, <https://rsf.org/en/index>

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) v14: High-Level Democracy Indices (electoral democracy, liberal democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, egalitarian democracy) / Clean elections index / Freedom of Expression and Alternative Sources of Information, <https://www.v-dem.net/>

For a descriptive overview of the indices see Pleines, Heiko (2020): Non-Academic Political Regime-Related Country Rankings 1992-2017, v. 1.0, Discuss Data, <https://doi.org/10.48320/C8777922-2F73-431E-9FCE-A43789A12027>

For a brief, critical discussion of validity concerns (with references to further literature) see Pleines, Heiko (2014): Political Country Rankings, Caucasus Analytical Digest No. 63.

Data included

The data collection consists of one Excel file with 6 sheets.

Next to the cover page the remaining 8 sheets present

sheet 2: indices assessing democratic quality / political regime overall (original scores)

sheet 3: V-Dem electoral democracy: Ukraine and neighbouring countries in comparison

sheet 4: indices assessing elections and electoral integrity (original scores)

sheet 5: indices assessing media freedom (original scores)

sheet 6: all indicators used for V-Dem "Polyarchy" (electoral democracy) - Ukraine 2013-2019 (original and converted scales)

Apart from sheet 3, all sheets contain exclusively the values for Ukraine from 1991 to 2024 (as available).

Sheet 3, additionally, gives the values for all countries with a direct land border with Ukraine plus Turkey, i.e. next to Ukraine, Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia (since independence in 1993), Turkey.

Sheet 6, in reaction to criticism voiced by Levitsky and Way that

„V-Dem coded Ukrainian democracy as declining after the 2014 Euromaidan protests toppled Viktor Yanukovych, an autocratic president who jailed major rivals. The new regime was characterized by relatively free and fair elections, a pluralistic media environment, and no arrests of opposition leaders. So why did V-Dem code Ukrainian democracy as declining? Were VDemcoders responding to the emergence of local mini-dictatorships (e.g., the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic) in a few Russian-controlled breakaway regions of Ukraine? Was it the fact that Russian TV was shut down after Russia invaded Crimea? We can only guess.“ Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2024. The Resilience of Democracy’s Third Wave, in: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57(2): 198–201, quote: 199)

contains all 36 indicators of the V-Dem "Polyarchy" (electoral democracy) for Ukraine from 2013 to 2019 in order to assess the coding decisions and index construction.

Analysis

A simple line graph covering all data points has been included in the sheet containing the country comparison based on one index and in three sheets containing adjusted data.

Publications including an analysis based on this data collection will be listed in the "Publications" section of this data collection as soon as they have been published