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Ukraine / Politics

# Tymoshenko sides with Regions

United vote steps on presidential powers

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## Volodymyr Verbyany

vv@concorde.com.ua

+380 44 391 5577

### Seats in Rada, of 450 total

Party of Regions	175
<b>BYuT</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>NU-NS</b>	<b>73</b>
Communist Party	27
Lytvyn Bloc	19

\* Bold indicates coalition partners

### Latest parliamentary poll results

BYuT	23.4%
Party of Regions	20.3%
NU-NS	4.6%
Communist Party	4.6%
Lytvyn Bloc	2.8%

Source: FOM-Ukraine, August 8-21

### Latest presidential poll results

Viktor Yanukovich	24.0%
Yulia Tymoshenko	20.4%
Viktor Yushchenko	6.6%
Other/Undecided	49.0%

Source: Sofia research agency, July 21-29

### Possible coalition configurations

Format	Votes	Chance
Tymoshenko + NU-NS	229	High
Regions + NU-NS	248	Low
Regions + Tymoshenko	331	Low

President Yushchenko issued fresh threats to dissolve parliament today, after the Our Ukraine bloc said it would walk out in response to the Tymoshenko Bloc banding with the Party of Regions to pass bills yesterday limiting presidential powers.

### MPs return from summer vacation, political jostling continues

The Verkhovna Rada reconvened yesterday after summer recess, adopting a series of laws that curtail the powers of the president. The bills were initiated by the opposition led by the Party of Regions, which voted together with the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and a few defectors from Our Ukraine (NU-NS) to gain a parliamentary majority for passage. Among other things, the laws ease the rules for impeaching the head of state and take away the president's power to veto a candidate for prime minister.

President Yushchenko has already announced that he will veto the laws, though if the Tymoshenko Bloc and Party of Regions team up, they could override the veto, which requires 300 votes.

### Our Ukraine-Self Defense votes to part ways with Tymoshenko

At a meeting last night, the Our Ukraine-Self Defense Bloc voted to leave the parliament's ruling coalition in protest of the Rada vote earlier in the day. The notion garnered 39 votes in favor (a slim margin over the simple majority of 37 votes required), with nine representatives of the Self Defense Bloc voting against and the rest abstaining. According to coalition regulations, Our Ukraine has an 11 day window after this vote in which it can recall this decision, otherwise the coalition will be officially disbanded.

### On the cusp of a new parliamentary coalition?

Two scenarios for further political developments are possible: (1) the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc finds enough supporters in Our Ukraine-Self Defense to reverse the vote to leave the coalition, or (2) The coalition falls apart and Tymoshenko's government is sacked by Yushchenko. In this event, the Constitution allows for 30 days to form a new coalition.

We view potential coalition configurations, Regions + Our Ukraine and Regions + Tymoshenko, as unlikely: these alliances would only antagonize the electorate of each political force. We also see obstacles to the dissolution of parliament and another round of early parliamentary elections, as virtually all political forces have voiced opposition to it.

We believe that the most probable scenario is that Tymoshenko will salvage the coalition with Our Ukraine, while playing both sides to elbow legislation through that limits the president's powers.

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**Concorde Capital, Head office**

2 Mechnikova Street, 21st Floor  
 Parus Business Centre  
 Kyiv 01601, Ukraine  
 Tel.: +380 44 391 5577  
 Fax: +380 44 391 5571

www.concorde.ua

**Concorde Capital**

4 Fourth Lesnoy Pereulok, 5th Floor  
 Capital Plaza  
 Moscow 125047, Russia  
 Tel.: +7 495 642 87 15  
 Fax: +7 495 225 85 00

office@concorde.com.ua

**CEO**

Igor Mazepa

im@concorde.com.ua

**Head of Equity Sales**

Roman Nasirov

rn@concorde.com.ua

**Equity Sales**

Anastasiya Nazarenko  
 Marina Martirosyan  
 Andriy Supranonok  
 Marina Cherednichenko  
 Alyona Degrik

an@concorde.com.ua  
 mm@concorde.com.ua  
 sap@concorde.com.ua  
 cmg@concorde.com.ua  
 dav@concorde.com.ua

**Director of Research**

Konstantin Fisun, CFA

kf@concorde.com.ua

**RESEARCH**
**Strategy**

Konstantin Fisun  
 Oleksandr Klymchuk

kf@concorde.com.ua  
 ok@concorde.com.ua

**Metals & Mining**

Eugene Cherviachenko  
 Andriy Gerus

ec@concorde.com.ua  
 ga@concorde.com.ua

**Utilities (Telecom, Energy)**

Alexander Paraschiy

ap@concorde.com.ua

**Oil & Gas, Chemicals,  
 Pharmaceuticals**

Vladimir Nesterenko

vn@concorde.com.ua

**Real Estate/Construction**

Andriy Gostik, CFA  
 Alexander Romanov

ag@concorde.com.ua  
 ar@concorde.com.ua

**Consumer-related**

Olha Pankiv  
 Anna Dudchenko

op@concorde.com.ua  
 ad@concorde.com.ua

**Machinery**

Inna Perepelytsya

pi@concorde.com.ua

**Financial Services, Retail**

Alexander Viktorov

av@concorde.com.ua

**Economics**

Polina Khomenko  
 Andrii Parkhomenko

pk@concorde.com.ua  
 pav@concorde.com.ua

**Fixed Income**

Oleksandr Klymchuk

ok@concorde.com.ua

**Editor**

Brad Wells

bw@concorde.com.ua

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