

2025 Rule of Law Report - targeted stakeholder consultation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The annual Rule of Law Report lies at the centre of the Annual Rule of Law Cycle, which acts as a preventive tool, deepening multilateral dialogue and joint awareness of rule of law issues. So far, five editions of the Rule of Law Report have been published since 2020.

As every year, the Commission would like to invite the stakeholders to provide contributions to the 2025 Rule of Law Report. On the basis of these contributions and on-going developments, further targeted questions may be shared at a later stage of preparation of the 2025 Rule of Law Report, in particular in the context of country visits, or bilateral contacts.

The Commission invites stakeholders to provide contributions which include:

- (1) information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member State in the 2024 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter and**
- (2) any other significant developments since January 2024^[1] and up to the date of submission falling under the ‘type of information’ outlined below.**

The input should consist of a short summary, if possible in English, covering the areas referred to below. Legislation or other documents may be referenced with a link. Contributions should focus on significant developments since the last Rule of Law Report both as regards the legal framework and its implementation in practice.

If you would like to provide further specific **input related to the single market dimension in the Rule of Law report**, you can also respond to the additional targeted consultation available [here](#).

^[1] Unless the information was already submitted in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Type of information to be included:

Under each of the four pillars, the replies should include references to the following types of information:

A) Legislative developments

- Newly adopted legislation
- legislative drafts currently discussed in Parliament
- legislative plans envisaged by the Government

B) Policy developments

- Implementation of legislation
- evaluations, impact assessment, surveys
- white papers/strategies/actions plans/consultation processes
- follow-up to reports/recommendations of Council of Europe bodies or other international organisations
- important administrative measures
- generalised practices

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

- important case law by national courts
- important decision/opinions from independent bodies/authorities
- state of play on terms, nominations and expired mandates for high-level positions (e.g. Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, Council for the Judiciary, Prosecutor General, heads of independent authorities included in the scope of the request for input[2])

D) Any other relevant developments

- National authorities are free to add any further information, which they deem relevant; however, this should be short and to the point.

Please also indicate whether the developments reported are linked to the implementation of reforms and investments under the RRP, where applicable. To simplify your answers to the questionnaire, **if there are no developments, it is sufficient to indicate this** and the information covered in the contributions for the previous Rule of Law Reports does not need not be repeated.

[2] Such as: media regulatory authorities and bodies, national human rights institutions, equality bodies, ombudsman institutions, supreme audit institutions and, where they exist, transparency authorities.

About you

* I am giving my contribution as

- ☐ Academic/research institution
- ☐ Business association
- ☒ Civil society organisation/NGO
- ☐ International organisation
- ☐ Judicial association or network
- ☐ Media organisation or association
- ☐ Public authority or network of public authorities

☐ Other

* Organisation name

250 character(s) maximum

Amnesty International Bulgaria

Main Areas of Work

- ☐ Justice System
- ☐ Anti-corruption
- ☐ Media Pluralism
- ☐ Checks and Balances
- ☒ Other

If "Other", please specify

Human Rights

Please insert an URL towards your organisation's main online presence or describe your organisation briefly:

500 character(s) maximum

<https://www.amnesty.bg/>

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is in the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making

207228082

* Country of origin

Please indicate the country of origin of your organisation

- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium
- ☒ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czechia
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy

- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovak Republic
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Other - please specify

First name

Nayden

Surname

Rashkov

Email Address of the organisation

hi@amnesty.bg

*** Publication of your contribution and privacy settings**

You can choose whether you wish for your contribution to be published and whether you wish your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- ☐ Anonymous - Only your type of respondent, country of origin and contribution will be published. Organisation name, URL, transparency register number, first name and surname given above will not be published. **To maintain anonymity, please refrain from mentioning the name of your organisation and any details from which your organisation can be identified in the rest of your contribution.**
- ☒ Public - Your personal details (name, organisation name, transparency register number, country of origin will be published with your contribution).
- ☐ No publication - Your contribution will not be published. Elements of your contribution may be referred to anonymously in documents produced by the Commission based on this consultation.

☒ I agree with the personal data protection provisions.

[Specific privacy statement targeted stakeholder consultation 2025 rule of law report.pdf](#)

Questions on horizontal developments

In this section, you are invited to provide information on general horizontal developments or trends, both positive and negative, covering all or several Member States. In particular, you could mention issues that are common to several Member States, as well as best practices identified in one Member State that could

be replicated. Moreover, you could refer to your activities in the area of the four pillars and sub-topics (an overview of all sub-topics can be found below), and, if you represent a Network of national organisations, to the support you might have provided to one of your national members.

Overview topics for contribution

[List of topics - 2025 Rule of Law Report.pdf](#)

Please provide any relevant information on horizontal developments here

5000 character(s) maximum

Over the past year Bulgaria saw the failure of the rotating government, which caused two rounds of snap elections – one in June 2024 and one again in October 2024. The voting activity remained rather low with an aggregated percentage of 38.94%.

Since the last parliamentary elections in October, Bulgaria is struggling to form a permanent government. The political divisions appear so deep that we saw an extra long first plenary meeting, which continued from 11 November to 10 December 2024 when there has been an extraordinary plenary meeting. The blockage of the work of the Parliament related in essence to the appointment of a President of the National Assembly and his vice-presidents, which illustrates just how complicated the political situation remains.

After the last parliamentary election in October 2024, there were no parliamentary commissions established until 22 January 2025 and no state budget approved to date. Instead there are draft propositions for the creation of ad hoc commissions such as a Temporary commission for establishing the facts surrounding foreign influence of the United States of America in Bulgaria, including related and originating from NGOs, foundations, associations and other subjects: https://parliament.bg/pub/plenary_documents/51-454-02-37_.pdf. As relates to the state budget a Law on the Collection of Revenues and the Execution of Expenditures in 2025 until the adoption of the Law on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2025, the Law on the State Social Security Budget for 2025 and the Law on the Budget of the National Health Insurance Fund for 2025 was adopted on 7 January 2025.

Questions for contribution

Under each pillar, you are invited to provide information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member State in the 2024 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter of the 2024 Rule of Law Report and any other significant developments since January 2024 and up to the date of submission^[3]. Please always include a link to and reference relevant legislation/documents (in the national language and/or where available, in English). **Significant developments** can include challenges, positive developments and best practices, covering both legislative developments or implementation and practices.

Information provided in reply to the first question under each pillar, related to the follow-up to the recommendations, does not need to be repeated in subsequent parts of the questionnaire, but can be cross-referenced in the subsequent questions, where relevant. All other questions are not limited to the recommendations, but as in previous years, cover the entire scope of the Report.

^[3] Unless already covered in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Member State/enlargement country covered in contribution [only one choice possible]

If you wish to submit information concerning several Member States/enlargement countries, please fill in the questionnaire separately for each country. There is no limit to the number of contributions submitted by a single participant.

- ☐ Albania
- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium
- ☒ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czechia
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Montenegro
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ North Macedonia
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Serbia
- ☐ Slovakia
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden

I. Justice System

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the justice system (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

A. Independence

Appointment and selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents (incl. judicial review)

(The reference to 'judges' concerns judges at all level and types of courts as well as judges at constitutional courts)

5000 character(s) maximum

The procedure for electing a Prosecutor General and introducing a ban for this composition of the Supreme Judicial Council to open new ones and to elect chairmen of the supreme courts and Prosecutor General, due to the expired mandate of its members, have been promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 6, 21 January 2025.

As a result, the Supreme Judicial Council Plenum held an extraordinary meeting on 23 January 2025 to terminate the only pending procedure - for electing a Prosecutor General, in which only the Acting Prosecutor is a candidate.

This means that only when new members of the Supreme Judicial Council are elected, (both parliamentary and the judiciary quotas), there will be a new Prosecutor General, but also a new Chairman of the Supreme Administrative Court.

This is because with the changes introduced in the Judiciary Act it is stipulated that the SJC Plenum may initiate a procedure and elect chairpersons of the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Supreme Administrative Court and the Prosecutor General, but only elected members whose mandate has not expired by the date of the decision may participate in the vote. The current personnel officers do not meet the latter condition, because their mandate expired on October 3, 2022.

The transitional and final provisions of the Judiciary Act stipulate that within six months of the law entering into force, the National Assembly and the judicial authorities shall begin a procedure for the election of members of the SJC (i.e. by 21 July, 2025).

Irremovability of judges, including transfers, (incl. as part of judicial map reform), dismissal and retirement regime of judges, court presidents and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Allocation of cases in courts

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Independence (including composition and nomination and dismissal of its members), and powers of the body tasked with safeguarding the independence of the judiciary (e.g. Council for the Judiciary)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Accountability of judges and prosecutors, including disciplinary regime and bodies and ethical rules, judicial immunity and criminal/civil (where applicable) liability of judges (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Independence/autonomy of the prosecution service

5000 character(s) maximum

The changes in the Judiciary Act restore the Supreme Cassation Prosecutor's Office, and limit the number of deputies to the Prosecutor General to two. Currently, the Acting Prosecutor has exactly that many. The former acting Minister of Justice, was also Deputy Prosecutor General, but it is expected to be restored to her previous position as an investigator in the National Investigation Service.

With regard to the National Investigation Service, the amendments provide for greater independence of its director. The head of the investigation retains his status as Deputy Prosecutor General for the investigation, but now they will directly lead the service and appoint the heads of the departments in the investigation.

Independence of the Bar (chamber/association of lawyers) and of lawyers

5000 character(s) maximum

In 2024 there was an attempt to adopt an Act on Amendments and Supplements to the Bar Act. The draft bill was introduced in August 2024 and on 11 September 2024 the National Assembly voted to adopt the amendments to the Bar Act, which introduced new rules for objections to excessive attorney fees, regulated the possibilities for attorneys' advertising and mediation, and also adopted changes for the appointment of special representatives. The act was later vetoed by the President, which meant it is to return for further discussion of the National Assembly.

On 13 January 2025 the Council of Ministers introduced for adoption again a draft Act on Amendments and Supplements to the Bar Act. It was developed in connection with the Infringement Procedure No. 2020/4006 against the Republic of Bulgaria by sending a Letter of Formal Notice C (2020) 3857 final regarding the incompatibility with EU law of Art. 41 and Art. 42 of the Bar Act, which contain prohibitions on lawyers to advertise their activities and attract clients through the use of an intermediary.

Significant developments capable of affecting the perception that the general public has of the independence of the judiciary

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

B. Quality of justice

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined in the introduction)

Accessibility of courts (e.g. court/legal fees, legal aid, language)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Resources of the judiciary (human/financial/material), remuneration/bonuses/rewards for judges and prosecutors, including observed changes (significant and targeted increase or decrease over the past year)

(Material resources refer e.g. to court buildings and other facilities. Financial resources include salaries of staff in courts and prosecution offices.)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Training of justice professionals (including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff, clerks/trainees)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Digitalisation (e.g. use of digital technology, including electronic communication and AI tools, within the justice system and with court users, procedural rules, access to judgments online)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Use of assessment tools and standards (e.g. ICT systems, including AI-based systems, for case management, court statistics and their transparency, monitoring, evaluation, surveys among court users or legal professionals)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Geographical distribution and number of courts/jurisdictions (“judicial map”) and their specialisation, in particular specific courts or chambers within courts to deal with fraud and corruption cases.

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

C. Efficiency of the justice system

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined under section

2)

Developments related to efforts to improve the efficiency of the justice system (e.g. as regards length of proceedings)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Any other developments related to the justice system - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

II. Anti-Corruption Framework

Where previous specific reports, published in the framework of the review under the UN Convention against Corruption, of GRECO, and of the OECD address the issues below, please make a reference to the points you wish to bring to the Commission's attention in these documents, indicating any relevant updates, changes or measures introduced that have occurred since these documents were published.

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the anti-corruption framework (if applicable):

5000 character(s) maximum

Although two separate state commissions to deal with combating corruption were established in 2023 (Anti-Corruption Commission and Commission for the Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property and Commission) at present they operate under expired mandates. Moreover, the Anti-Corruption Commission has only deputy chairperson but no acting chairperson at the moment.

A. The institutional framework capacity to fight against corruption (prevention and investigation / prosecution)

List any **changes** as regards relevant authorities (e.g. national agencies, bodies) in charge of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption and the resources allocated to each of these authorities (the human, financial, legal, and technical resources as relevant), including the cooperation among domestic and with foreign authorities. Indicate any relevant measures taken to effectively and timely cooperate with OLAF and EPPO

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Safeguards for the functional independence of the authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Information on the implementation of measures foreseen in the strategic anti-corruption framework (if applicable). If available, please provide relevant objectives and indicators

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

B. Prevention

Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector (including as regards incompatibility rules, revolving doors, codes of conduct, ethics)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Measures to enhance general transparency of public decision-making (including rules on lobbying, asset and interest disclosure rules, gifts policy, transparency of political party, financing)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Measures to prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector. Please specify the features and scope of their application (e.g. categories of officials concerned, types of checks and corrective measures depending on the category of officials concerned)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

--> For the three previous points, **please also provide information and figures on their application/enforcement**, such as number of detected breaches/irregularities of the various rules in place and the follow-up given (investigations, sanctions, etc.)

Measures to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption, including their application (i.e. number of reports received, and the follow-up given)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Specific measures to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in sectors with high risks of corruption, with a view to monitor and prevent corruption and conflict of interests, and where applicable measures to prevent and address corruption committed by organised crime groups.

Such high-risk sectors could include: public procurement, including construction, transport/infrastructure, defence, cohesion, agriculture, environment, healthcare, citizen/residence investor schemes, large-scale investments of national interest and the spending of EU funds, urban planning.

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

C. Repression

The legal framework on the criminalisation and sanctions for corruption and related offences, including foreign bribery

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Official data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, final judgments and the application of sanctions for corruption offences (differentiated by offence if possible). Please indicate whether the cases: involve legal persons; are related to the implementation of EU or national funds; involve high level corruption. Please indicate which data is publicly available and how policy-making is informed by the data

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Potential obstacles identified in law or in practice to the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases (e.g. political immunity regulation, procedural rules, statute of limitations, cross-border cooperation, pardoning)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Information on effectiveness of criminal and non-criminal measures and of sanctions (e.g. recovery measures and administrative sanctions) on both public and private offenders

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Any other developments related to the anti-corruption framework - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

III. Media pluralism and media freedom

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding media pluralism and media freedom (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

A. Media authorities and bodies

(Cf. Article 30 of Directive 2018/1808)

Measures taken to ensure the independence, enforcement powers and adequacy of resources (financial, human and technical) of media regulatory authorities and bodies

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Conditions and procedures for the appointment and dismissal of the head / members of the collegiate body of media regulatory authorities and bodies

5000 character(s) maximum

The decision to rotate the chairpersons of the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) every six months was made at the beginning of 2024, after four unsuccessful votes for a permanent chairperson of the media

regulator.

Since 31 October 2024 the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) has a new acting chairperson, who will hold the position until 28 April 2025.

Existence and functions of media councils or other self-regulatory bodies

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

B. Safeguards against government or political interference and transparency and concentration of media ownership

Measures taken to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of state advertising

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Safeguards against state / political interference, in particular:

- safeguards to ensure editorial independence of media (private and public)
- specific safeguards for the independence of heads of management and members of the governing boards of public service media (e.g. related to appointment, dismissal), safeguards for their financial and operational independence (e.g. related to reporting obligations and the allocation of resources) and safeguards for plurality of information and opinions
- information on specific legal provisions and procedures applying to media service providers, including as regards granting/renewal/termination of licenses, company operation, capital entry requirements, concentration and corporate governance

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

C. Framework for journalists' protection, transparency and access to documents

Rules and practices guaranteeing journalists' independence and safety, including as regards protection of journalistic sources and communications, referring also, if applicable, to follow-up given to alerts lodged with the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Law enforcement capacity, including during protests and demonstrations, to ensure journalists' safety and to investigate attacks on journalists

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Access to information and public documents by public at large and journalists (incl. transparency authorities where they exist, procedures, costs/fees, timeframes, administrative/judicial review of decisions, execution of decisions by public authorities, possible obstacles related to the classification of information)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Lawsuits (incl. SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation) and convictions against journalists (incl. defamation cases) and measures taken to safeguard against manifestly unfounded and abusive lawsuits

5000 character(s) maximum

In the case *Bosev v. Bulgaria* (application no. 62199/19) the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Bulgaria violated the freedom of expression of a journalist, by allowing his conviction of defamation in violation of the right of a fair trial. The case concerned the conviction of a journalist for defamation of a senior Government official and, more specifically, doubts as to the impartiality of one of the judges having ruled on the charges laid against him on appeal. The Court held that the appellate court had not constituted an "impartial tribunal" and that the manner in which the sanction had been imposed on the applicant in the present case had fallen short of securing one of the essential guarantees of a fair trial. It further held that the restriction on the applicant's right to freedom of expression had not been accompanied by effective and adequate safeguards against arbitrariness.

Furthermore, another journalist and his colleague were sentenced to pay a total of 3 000 Bulgarian leva to a politician. The court decision sets a precedent where authors are being punished for a third-party's statements. The decision is subject to appeal.

Any other developments related to media pluralism and freedom - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the system of checks and balances (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

A. The process for preparing and enacting laws

Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'[1]/public consultations (including rules and practices on the transparent participation of civil society to policy development and decision-making processes), and transparency and quality of the legislative process both in the preparatory and the parliamentary phase

[1] This includes also the consultation of social partners

5000 character(s) maximum

In 2024 the involvement of stakeholders in existing formats such as thematic national councils and coordination mechanisms under the Council of Ministers (for example the Council for the Implementation of the National Coordination Mechanism for the Rule of Law; National Council on Social Inclusion; National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and other) was rather limited. Due to the string of snap elections there was a situation of constant rollout of members to the mentioned formats and the number of actual meetings, if any was lower than what is provided in their respective rules of procedure. For instance, for 2024 the National Coordination Mechanism for the Rule of Law held only one extraordinary meeting on 19 February 2024. With Decree No. 245 of 5 July 2024 the previous Decree No. 240 on the establishment of a National Coordination Mechanism for the Rule of Law and a Council for its Implementation was amended and supplemented to include new paragraphs 11 and 12, which further regulate on the composition of the Citizen's Council giving the right to each of the co-chairs to propose organizations that meet the requirements for inclusion in the composition of the council, as well as upon the proposal of the Minister of Justice or the members of the Citizens' Council, representatives of the academic community to also be able to participate in the meetings.

Three months later (on 19 April 2024) an Order appointing an expert working group for the media environment and access to information to the Council for the Implementation of the National Coordination Mechanism for the Rule of Law was adopted. One of the points on the agenda is directly related to measures addressing the recommendations on media freedom in the Rule of Law report for 2024. However, the public was never informed on the proposed measures and results.

In addition, a total of 16 commissions and other government bodies with specific functions (among them the Supreme Judicial Council) are operating under expired mandates, which raises the issue of the legitimacy of their decisions. In addition, the positions of Ombudsperson and Deputy Ombudsperson became vacant in the beginning of 2024. To date there is no appointed Ombudsperson nor Deputy Ombudsperson.

Rules and use of fast-track procedures and emergency procedures (for example, the percentage of decisions adopted through emergency/urgent procedure compared to the total number of adopted decisions)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Rules and application of states of emergency (or analogous regimes), including judicial review and parliamentary oversight

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Regime for constitutional review of laws

5000 character(s) maximum

In 2024 there were 42 cases before the Supreme Court. One of them submitted by 68 members of the 51 National Assembly concerned the expired mandate of the Supreme Judicial Court and whether it could

execute its functions in full. The opinion of the Supreme Court was to decline the request. In the course of the year there have been requests submitted by the President of Bulgaria and groups of parliamentarians to rule on the constitutionality of certain provisions of the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (SG, issue 106 /22 December 2023/) and on the legality of the results of the early parliamentary elections held on 27 October 2024. Since there is no Ombudsperson appointed to date, there was no natural avenue to consider the constitutionality of topics of public interest such as the enacted controversial amendments to the Pre-school and School Education Act.

B. Independent authorities

Independence, resources, capacity and powers of national human rights institutions ('NHRIs'), of ombudsman institutions if different from NHRIs, of equality bodies if different from NHRIs and of supreme audit institutions

(Cf. the website of the European Court of Auditors: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/SupremeAuditInstitutions.aspx#>)

5000 character(s) maximum

In accordance with the Paris principles, the Ombudsperson institution is accredited as Status 'A' NHRI. Every year the budget of the institution is being increased with small percentage. However, the entity entered in a 'crisis mode' since January 2024 when the then Ombudsperson Deyana Kostadinova left to become justice in the European Court of Human Rights and the Deputy Ombudsperson resigned two months later. Their positions were never filled by the National Assembly. In October 2025 the institution is due to undergo the reaccreditation procedure before GANHRI. To date the Commission for Protection against Discrimination is labelled as status 'B' NHRI (partially compliant with the Paris Principles).

Statistics/reports concerning the follow-up to recommendations by National Human Rights Institutions, ombudsman institutions, equality bodies and supreme audit institutions in the past two years

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

C. Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

Transparency of administrative decisions and sanctions (incl. their publication and rules on collection of related data)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Judicial review of administrative decisions: short description of the general regime (in particular competent court, scope, suspensive effect, interim measures, and any applicable specific rules or derogations from the general regime of judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Rules and practices related to the application by all courts, including constitutional jurisdictions, of the preliminary ruling procedure (Art. 267 TFEU)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Implementation of final judgments by the public administration and State institutions and follow-up given to supranational judgments, including decisions from the European Court of Human Rights, as well as available remedies in case of non-implementation

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

D. The enabling framework for civil society

Measures regarding the framework for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. legal framework and its application in practice incl. registration, transparency and dissolution rules)

5000 character(s) maximum

After every election we saw the introduction over and over again of a Draft Law on the Registration of Foreign Agents by a particular political party. Each time the draft law has seemingly minor changes included, however the scope and restrictions is ever increasing. These relate to definitions of "foreign agent" and "persons related to foreign agents".

The definition of the former equates the activities of political parties and non-governmental organizations: "... that natural or legal person (NGOs, associations and political parties) that receives cash or other financial assistance from foreign sources, directly or indirectly in connection with the activity they carry out, from which they derive: – exerting influence on the free formation of opinion and/or beliefs of members or groups of society; – formation of public opinion; – public dissemination of an opinion or position; – publicly presenting or defending foreign ideologies."

There are explicit exceptions of "funds received through commercial transactions, gambling or from the European Union, as well as "donations for treatment, training and others of this type", which appear vague and selective.

As for the definition of "persons related to foreign agents", such are "the founders, representatives and participants in the management of organizations defined as foreign agents, as well as the owners, partners, representatives and persons in the management bodies of commercial companies defined as foreign agents, as well as the recipients of payments or gratuitous material assistance from persons defined as foreign agents for the purpose of financing their activities under Art. 3, paragraph 1", meaning it covers, in addition to the current management of the "foreign agent" its founders, regardless of whether they have any relationship with it at the time, as well as some of the people who received support from the "foreign agent."

Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This includes measures to protect them from attacks – verbal, physical or on-line –, intimidation, legal threats incl. SLAPPs, negative narratives or smear campaigns, measures capable of affecting the public perception of civil society organisations, etc. It also includes measures to monitor threats or attacks and dedicated support services, as well as available remedies

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Organisation of financial support for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. framework to ensure access to funding, and for financial viability, taxation/incentive/donation systems, measures to ensure a fair distribution of funding)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

E. Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

If there have been developments related to initiatives to foster a rule of law culture, please specify, which (e.g. debates in national parliaments on the rule of law, public information campaigns on rule of law issues, contributions from civil society, education initiatives, etc.)

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Any other developments related to the system of checks and balances - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

No significant developments.

Supporting document upload

If you would like to submit any supporting document(s) to your contribution, please upload your file(s) here

Contact

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