

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 to 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

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF)

Main Areas of Work

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

If "Other", please specify

Rights advocacy, combating discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech

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

500 character(s) maximum

www.abtff.org

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

63767476294-52

* 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

Halit

Surname

Habip Oğlu

Email Address of the organisation

info@abtff.org

*** 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

The ethnic Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace living in Greece is not recognised, but they are recognised as a minority on religious grounds. The ECtHR judgments of 2008 in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases concerning freedom of association are still not executed by the Greek authorities.

Although the Turkish community is autonomous in education, there are no Turkish kindergartens and their number is decreasing due to the closure of primary schools, in this context, a total of 4 primary schools were closed within the scope of the 2024-2025 academic year, while the number of primary schools was 188 in 2011, this number decreased to 86. At the secondary school level, new school principals were appointed to Xanthi Turkish Minority Secondary and High School and Komotini Celal Bayar Turkish Minority Secondary and High School by unilateral decision without consulting the board members of these schools.

Of these two secondary and high schools, the school building issue at the Xanthi Turkish Minority Secondary and High School is persisting. In 2023, despite the fact that the number of students decreased to 585 and there were no students in the school requiring double-shift schooling, the Directorate for Secondary Education in Xanthi decided to continue with double-shift schooling, which is not available in public schools. Upon this, the parents and student representatives of the students at the Xanthi Turkish Minority Secondary and High School decided to protest against the imposition of double-shift schooling at the school by the Directorate and to demand a solution to the school building issue on 15 September 2023, and the protest action started on 18 September and continued for 11 days until 28 September. The Turkish community in Western Thrace demanded the construction of a new building where education and training will be provided at EU standards and where there will be no need for double-shift schooling, or the school should be moved to a new and modern building for a definitive solution to the issue.

The 11-day “No to Double-Shift Schooling” protest action was brought to the agenda of the EP by MEPs François Alfonsi, Loránt Vincze, Herbert Dorfmann and Yana Toom with a question for written answer to the European Commission titled “Double-shift schooling in Western Thrace”. In the question for written answer, MEPs asked what actions the Commission can take to protect the rights of EU citizens who are members of a national minority and ensure equal access to quality education in the aforementioned region of Greece, thus safeguarding linguistic and cultural diversity. However, the Commission argued that education is the competence of the Member States and that the solution to the issue lies with Greece.

As a result of the protests in 2023, double-shift schooling was discontinued, but the issue of the school building has not been solved to date, despite the letters of the school board and the parent teacher’s association to the relevant authorities. In May 2024, a letter was sent to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, in which the lack of physical capacity of the school was underscored and a new school building was requested. After the issue was once again brought to the agenda with a question for written answer, the confusion of competencies came to the forefront. On 16 December 2024, Xanthi New Left MP Hüseyin Zeybek asked a question to the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports regarding the building issue of the Xanthi Turkish Minority Secondary and High School and the demand for a new building, Deputy Minister Zeta Makri explained that the existing building of the school is sufficient and safe and that there is

no need for a new school building and that the state has been supporting the school in Xanthi for 50 years, but that the authority lies with the municipality, not the ministry with respect to this particular issue.

Following the reply that the building issue of the school is not under the competence of the ministry, the issue was brought to the agenda of the Municipality of Xanthi and at the Xanthi Municipality Council meeting held on 19 December, Mayor Efstratios Kontos stated that the school is not affiliated to the Municipality, but entirely to the Ministry of Education, and therefore, it should be applied there.

Regarding the religious autonomy of the community, appointed Mufti Regents of Komotini, Xanthi and Didymoteicho , who attended the opening ceremony of the Xanthi Madrasah held on 11 October 2024 with the participation of Giorgios Kalantzis, Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, attempted to provoke during the Friday prayers at the Asağımahalle Çınar Mosque in Xanthi immediately after the ceremony. The appointed Mufti Regents had to leave the mosque after the strong reaction of the congregation to this provocation attempt, while the appointed Mufti Regent of Komotini.

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

The 2024 Greece report recommended to strengthen efforts to assess the existing legal framework on the registration system for civil society organisations and to assess whether it needs to be amended and to promote a structured dialogue with CSOs.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has been following the progress made by Greece in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases pending execution since 2008. The appointment of the members of the Committee of Experts to examine the execution of the judgments of the ECtHR in this group of cases, which was to be established in December 2023, was finalised in June, but its mandate, duration and modus operandi were not announced at that time. In the Greek letter of 27 September 2024, the timetable of the Committee of Experts was explained, and in the letter of 23 October 2024, it was stated that the Committee of Experts had contacted the applicants and would meet and exchange views with the applicant associations, but that the Committee would complete its work in June 2025.

At its meeting of 3-5 December 2024, the Committee reiterated the fundamental importance of the right to freedom of association in a democratic State in relation to the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, criticised the non-execution by Greece of the aforementioned judgments for the past 17 years and decided to continue its examination of the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases at its meeting in June 2025 to review the progress made, encouraging the Greek authorities to make full use of the Council of Europe's assistance and expertise in this field to ensure that any proposed measures are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

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

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

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

Allocation of cases in courts

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

Independence/autonomy of the prosecution service

5000 character(s) maximum

On 28 May 2024, the Civil Court of First Instance of Rodopi ruled for the dissolution of the fans' association founded in Komotini in 2022 under the name "Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Culture and Sports Association". After the hearing on 6 September 2023, the Civil Court of First Instance with a Single Judge of the Prefecture of Rodopi ruled on 28 May to revoke the registration of the "Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Association". A lawsuit was filed for the revocation of the registration of the fans' association established in Komotini under the name of "Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Culture and Sports Association" with the claim that the name of the association was against the law, and the objection was withdrawn at the hearing on 14 June 2023. On 16 June 2023, the second lawsuit was filed by the Prosecutor's Office of Rodopi, and it was claimed in the indictment that the expression "Western Thrace" in the name of the association was against the law and public order. The hearing of the case for the dissolution of the association, which was brought before the court for the third time in nine months, was held on 6 September 2023, and the Court of First Instance with a Single Judge of the Prefecture of Rodopi decided to dissolve the Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Sports and Culture Association on 28 May 2024. The decision to dissolve the Western Thrace Fenerbahçe Association was met with great disappointment. The dissolution of this association, which has never violated its statute, under conditions where the ECtHR judgments regarding the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases have not been executed by Greece for the past 17 years, is a step taken to punish not only our association but also our community. This is one step further in the usurpation of our rights and freedoms by the state.

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe strongly urged Greece to adequately staff the Ombudsman, to implement his recommendations and to strengthen disciplinary proceedings. In addition, the Committee of Ministers has consistently recommended the Greek authorities to take additional measures to disseminate the case-law of the ECtHR in the country and to systematically train domestic judges at all levels to ensure that national courts take decisions on the registration or dissolution of associations in full and effective conformity with the case-law of the ECtHR, but as yet there has been no concrete action in this regard. In light of the conclusions of 3-5 December 2024 in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group of cases, the Committee of Ministers welcomed the Greek authorities' expression of readiness to work with the Council of Europe on the Committee of Experts established by the Greek authorities on the matter and encouraged the Greek authorities to make full use of the Council of Europe's assistance and expertise in this field to ensure that any proposed measures are in conformity with the Convention.

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

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

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

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

The Turkish and Greek signboards at the entrance of the association building of the Xanthi Turkish Union, the first Turkish association in Western Thrace, founded in 1927, were removed on 7 December 1983, and shortly afterwards the Governor of Xanthi of that period noted the following: "There are no Turks in Western Thrace". A dissolution case was filed against our association with the claim that it "posed a threat to public order and national security". A long judicial process started and the legal struggle in domestic law lasted 22 years. At the end of this long process, in February 2005, the General Assembly of the Greek Court of Cassation approved the dissolution of the Xanthi Turkish Union. The Xanthi Turkish Union took the case before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Court, in its judgment in 2008 ruled that Greece violated the European Convention on Human Rights with the aforementioned decision. However, Greece insists on not executing the ECtHR judgments regarding the Xanthi Turkish Union and other Turkish minority associations for the last 17 years. Greece, which ignores the calls and pressures of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and other international organisations for the execution of the ECtHR judgments, is in great contradiction with its own statements. As the Xanthi Turkish Union, we struggle for the execution of the ECtHR judgments, the restoration of the legal status and legal personality of our association, and the end of 40 years of anti-democratic practices, oppression and discrimination.

Any other developments related to the justice system - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

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

--> 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

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

C. Repression

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

Concerns regarding media independence and transparency persist. Examples of marginalisation, discrimination and stigmatisation of the Turkish community in Western Thrace were found in media outlets, but no new measures were taken by the authorities. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne recognises the Turkish identity of the Turkish community in Western Thrace in Greece, which has been granted “minority” status and autonomy in the educational and religious spheres, and it is noted that MPs and members of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, all of whom are Greek citizens, are subjected to serious hate speech in the mainstream Greek media as a reflection of official state policy. Unfounded and defamatory news are published about the rights defenders of the Turkish community in Western Thrace and Turkish MPs are scapegoated just because of their participation in the activities of Turkish organisations in Western Thrace or because of their work in Parliament to protect the rights of the Turkish community. For example, in an article written by Thanos Tzimeros in the Capital newspaper on 5 June 2024, referring to an interview given to the Turkish news agency Anadolu by Çiğdem Asafoğlu, the President of the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party, the political party of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, it was noted that “at a time when the freedom of self-identification is at its peak, Asafoğlu’s tragedy will not affect anyone, because if she feels herself to be a Turk, she can renounce her Greek citizenship and go to Türkiye”. Furthermore, in an article published in Kalimera Arkadia on 4 July 2024, following the June 2024 EP Elections, it was noted that university lecturers demanded that the FEP Party be banned for mentioning the Turkish minority.

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

The 2023 Greece Country Report Human Rights Practices, published by the U.S. Department of State, noted that local and international agencies, journalists and media organisations are under pressure to refrain from criticising the government or reporting on scandals. While the government does not censor the media, many NGOs note that major media outlets tend not to publish unfavourable news about the government, including allegations of human rights violations, which hinders informed civic engagement.

The media continue to be used as a tool of provocation and manipulation for the wider society, a trend that has continued in the case of the Turkish community in Western Thrace.

During the period in question, individuals belonging to the Turkish community in Western Thrace continued to be the direct target of some media organisations and critical opinions and news on this issue were not published. There is continuity in regular hate speech in the media. On 28 June 2024, on the website Newsbreak, Christos Bolosis, Secretary General of the National Defence Personnel Association, wrote in his article titled "What is happening in Xanthi?" that there are no Turks in Western Thrace and that "the ears of the unconscious Muslims in Thrace should be pulled". Drawing attention to the motto "Newspaper of Western Thrace Turks" under the Millet newspaper of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, Bolosis claimed that there were no Turks in Western Thrace and claimed that according to the Treaty of Lausanne, those living in the region were Muslims, not Turks. In addition to this, Bolosis wrote that the population in the region participated in the elections with "Turkish" parties, published "Turkish" newspapers and established "Turkish" associations and called on the authorities to do what international agreements require and foresee.

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

The issues faced by the Turkish community in Western Thrace, whose religious autonomy is recognised in accordance with international treaties, in the religious field and the current problems regarding freedom of religion continue. Although the Greek Orthodox Church is the dominant religion in the country and the Greek authorities do not interfere in the internal affairs of the Jewish Community of Greece, which is the other recognised religion, the freedom of religion and autonomy of the Muslim Turkish community in Western Thrace continued to be violated by laws and governmental practices despite the recognition of religious autonomy in accordance with international treaties.

Since 1991, the government has been violating the religious autonomy of the Turkish community in Western Thrace by appointing muftis or mufti regents in Western Thrace and not recognising the muftis elected by the Turkish community. It is indicated that the religious autonomy of the Turkish community is further weakened with the "Law on the Modernisation of the Mufti Offices" adopted by the Greek Parliament in August 2022 despite all the objections of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, and it is emphasised that the boards of directors of the foundations belonging to the Turkish community have been appointed by the government since 1967, and a law enacted in 2008 paved the way for the sale and transfer of foundation immovables to local administrations. The Turkish community in Western Thrace has continuously called on Greece to restore the educational and religious autonomy of the Turkish community in Western Thrace guaranteed by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and to respect the religious rights and freedoms of the Turkish community in the country.

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Regime for constitutional review of laws

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is worth recalling that the judgments of the ECtHR in the Bekir-Ousta and Others group in 2008 of cases have still not been executed by Greece in the past 17 years. The monitoring process of the Committee of Ministers is pending, but there is still no follow-up mechanism for the public administration and state institutions in case of non-execution of the ECtHR judgments.

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

The report recommends strengthening efforts to assess the existing legal framework on the registration system for civil society organisations and to assess whether it needs to be amended, and to advance a structured dialogue with CSOs.

Rules and practices that have an impact on the effective work and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This includes measures to protect from attacks (verbal, physical or online), intimidation, legal threats, including SLAPPS (strategic lawsuits against public participation), negative narratives or smear campaigns, measures that may affect public perception of civil society organisations, etc. It also includes measures to monitor threats or attacks and specialised support services.

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

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

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Supporting document upload

If you would like to submit any supporting document(s) to your contribution, please upload your file(s) here
01e6fb29-0716-4ccb-a1a0-ccf1c3f25152/E-9-2023-003346_EN.pdf

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