

2023 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 European rule of law mechanism, which acts as a preventive tool, deepening multilateral dialogue and joint awareness of rule of law issues. So far, three editions of the Rule of Law Report have been published in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

In the preparation of the first three editions of the Rule of Law Report, the Commission has relied on a diversity of relevant sources, including from Member States, country visits, and stakeholders' contributions collected through the targeted stakeholder consultation [1]. The information provided has informed the Commission's country-specific assessments in preparing the Report. Building on the positive experience from the first three editions of the Rule of Law Report, the Commission is now inviting stakeholders to provide written contributions for the preparation of the 2023 Rule of Law Report through this targeted consultation.

The contribution to be provided should include (1) information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member State in the 2022 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 2022 [2] falling under the 'type of information' outlined in the next section.

The input should be short and concise and summarise information related to one or more of the areas referred to in the template. You are invited to focus on the areas that relate to the scope of work and expertise of your organisation. Existing reports, statements, legislation or other documents may be referenced with a link (no need to provide the full text). Stakeholders are encouraged to make references to any contributions already provided in a different context or to Reports and documents already published. Contributions should focus on significant developments both as regards the legal framework and its implementation in practice.

If you wish to submit information concerning several Member States, you will have to fill-in the questionnaire separately for each Member States (due to the size of the questionnaire). There is no limit to the number of contributions submitted by a single participant. In such cases, you are not required to repeat the information in the section "about you" that is non-mandatory nor the information on horizontal developments.

Please provide your contribution by **20 January 2023**. Should you have any requests for clarifications or encounter difficulties in filling in the questionnaire, you can contact the Commission at the following email address: rule-of-law-network@ec.europa.eu.

[1] For the consultation for the 2022 Report, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2022-rule-law-report-targeted-stakeholderconsultation_en

[2] Unless the information was already submitted in the consultation for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Type of information

The topics are structured according to four pillars: I. Justice system; II. Anti-corruption framework; III. Media pluralism; and IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances. The replies could include aspects set out below under each pillar. This can include challenges, current work streams, positive developments and best practices:

Legislative developments

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

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

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, heads of independent authorities included in the scope of the questionnaire[1])

Any other relevant developments

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

If there are no changes, it is sufficient to indicate this and the information covered in the contributions for the previous Rule of Law Reports should not be repeated.

[1] 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

If "Other", please specify

* Organisation name

AEAJ, Association of European Administrative Judges

Main Areas of Work

- ☒ **Justice System**
- ☐ Anti-corruption
- ☐ Media Pluralism
- ☐ Other

If "Other", please specify

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

500 character(s) maximum

www.aeaj.org and <https://twitter.com/AEAJ2000>

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

622038240860-29

* Country of origin

Please add the country of origin of your organisation

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- ☐
- ☐ Afghanistan
- ☐ Albania
- ☐ Algeria
- ☐ Andorra
- ☐ Angola
- ☐ Antigua and Barbuda
- ☐ Argentina
- ☐ Armenia
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Azerbaijan
- ☐ Bahamas
- ☐ Bahrain
- ☐ Bangladesh
- ☐ Barbados
- ☐ Belarus
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ Belize
- ☐ Benin
- ☐ Bhutan
- ☐ Bolivia
- ☐ Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ☐ Botswana
- ☐ Brazil
- ☐ Brunei Darussalam
- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Burkina Faso
- ☐ Burundi
- ☐ Cabo Verde
- ☐ Cambodia
- ☐ Cameroon
- ☐ Canada
- ☐ Central African Republic
- ☐ Chad
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- ☐ Côte D'Ivoire
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cuba
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czechia
- ☐ Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Djibouti
- ☐ Dominica
- ☐ Dominican Republic
- ☐ Ecuador
- ☐ Egypt
- ☐ El Salvador
- ☐ Equatorial Guinea
- ☐ Eritrea
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Eswatini
- ☐ Ethiopia
- ☐ Fiji
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Gabon
- ☐ Gambia
- ☐ Georgia
- ☐ **Germany**
- ☐ Ghana
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- ☐ Grenada
- ☐ Guatemala
- ☐ Guinea
- ☐ Guinea Bissau
- ☐ Guyana
- ☐ Haiti
- ☐ Honduras



Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kiribati
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg Madagascar
Malawi
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- ☐ Nepal
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ New Zealand
- ☐ Nicaragua
- ☐ Niger
- ☐ Nigeria
- ☐ North Korea
- ☐ North Macedonia
- ☐ Norway
- ☐ Oman
- ☐ Pakistan
- ☐ Palau
- ☐ Panama
- ☐ Papua New Guinea
- ☐ Paraguay
- ☐ Peru
- ☐ Philippines
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Qatar
- ☐ Republic of Moldova
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Russian Federation
- ☐ Rwanda
- ☐ Saint Kitts and Nevis
- ☐ Saint Lucia
- ☐ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- ☐ Samoa
- ☐ San Marino
- ☐ Sao Tome and Principe

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- ☐ Saudi Arabia
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- ☐ Serbia
- ☐ Seychelles
- ☐ Sierra Leone
- ☐ Singapore
- ☐ Slovakia
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Solomon Islands
- ☐ Somalia
- ☐ South Africa
- ☐ South Korea
- ☐ South Sudan
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sri Lanka Sudan
- ☐ Suriname
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Switzerland
- ☐ Syrian Arab Republic
- ☐ Tajikistan
- ☐ Tanzania
- ☐ Thailand
- ☐ Timor-Leste
- ☐ Togo
- ☐ Tonga
- ☐ Trinidad and Tobago
- ☐ Tunisia
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Turkmenistan
- ☐ Tuvalu
- ☐ Uganda
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ United Arab Emirates
- ☐ United Kingdom
- ☐ United States of America
- ☐ Uruguay
- ☐ Uzbekistan



Vanuatu





Venezuela

Viet Nam

Yemen

Zambia

Zimbabwe

First name

Rasa

Surname

Ragulskyte-Markoviene

Email Address of the organisation (this information will not be published)

* 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.**
Xxx Public - Your personal details (name, organisation name, transparency register number, country of origin will be published with your contribution). XXXX
- ☐ 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. **I agree**

[Specific privacy statement targeted stakeholder consultation 2023 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_2023_Report.pdf](#)

Please provide any relevant information on horizontal developments here *5000 character(s) maximum*

Questions for contribution

The following four pillars (I.-IV.) are sub-divided into topics (A., B., etc.) and sub-topics (1., 2., 3., etc.). For each of the topics and sub-topics, you are invited to provide (1) information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member States in the 2022 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter of the 2022 Rule of Law Report and (2) any other significant developments since January 2022^[1]. Please include a link to and reference relevant legislation/documents (in the national language and/or where available, in English) if relevant. Significant developments can include challenges, positive developments and best practices, covering both legislative developments or implementation and practices.

If there are developments you consider relevant under each of the four pillars that are not mentioned in the sub-topics, please add them under the section "other - please specify". Only significant developments should be covered.

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.

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

Member State covered in contribution [only one choice possible]

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

- ☐ 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

I. Justice System

Please provide information on **measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2022 Report** regarding the justice system (if applicable)

3000 character(s) maximum

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)

Positive developments since 1.1-2022: Presidents of the Criminal and Civil Divisions of the Lithuanian Supreme Court were appointed in due time.

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: Appointment of the President of the Lithuanian Supreme Court is still pending since September 2019.

3000 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)

3000 character(s) maximum

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

3000 character(s) maximum

Positive developments since 1.1-2022: In November 2022 amendments to the Law on Courts were adopted (the Law No XIV-1570) introducing changes to the procedure of selection and appointment of judges of regional courts and district courts. The amendments should accelerate filling up of vacating judicial positions. They will come into force in January 2023.

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: All the issues indicated in the 2021 report are relevant (relatively high weight of subjective criteria comparing with other criteria in process of selection of candidates to judicial positions; role of the presidents of courts in the evaluation of the activity of judges and in the promotion of judges; absolute discretion of the President of the Republic in the procedure of the selection of judges without obligation to motivate the decision; lack of clear legal regulation regarding dismissal from judicial position by reason of judge's health).

Allocation of cases in courts

3000 character(s) maximum

Positive developments since 1.1-2022: Ongoing discussions on the possible way-out how to solve inequality of workload in courts of the same instance; the Council of Judges' efforts to find a better solution.

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: The geographical territories of district courts are relatively small. Judges sitting in big cities' courts (Vilnius, Kaunas) face much bigger workload in comparison with the others while receiving the same remuneration.

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) 3000 character(s) maximum

Positive developments since 1.1-2022:

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: As it was indicated in the Report 2021 members of the Council of Judges (it consists only of acting judges) are not experienced at the political level. It might be an obstacle for the best representation of judiciary interests.

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) 3000 character(s) maximum

Remuneration/bonuses/rewards for judges and prosecutors, including observed changes (significant and targeted increase or decrease over the past year), transparency on the system and access to the information 3000 character(s) maximum

Positive developments since 1.1-2022: The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has presented the package of the amendments to the laws aiming to solve the issues of salaries of the high ranked public officials, including judges. However, it is clear that there is no unified political agreement on that issue. The Parliament has postponed the consideration of the draft laws to the spring of 2023.

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: The situation related to the salaries of judges has become extremely bad in 2022. As it was indicated in 2021 Report, Lithuanian judges are the most 2008-2012 crisis-targeted group among highly ranked public officials. The salaries of judges were reduced in 2009 as part of general austerity measures. The salaries of judges have been raised only by 5 % (netto) since the reduction (with an exception of district courts' judges which salaries have been raised by 10,4 %) and in 2022 hasn't reached the 2008 level (!) notwithstanding 47 % inflation during the same period¹ and general rise of average monthly wages in the country by almost 3 times during the same period². At the same time salary coefficients of other high ranked public officials have been raised by 13 % at minimum. The lack of consistent approach lead to abnormal situations. Several examples might be provided: (i) the salary coefficient of the Chairman of the Supreme Court is 21,7 in comparison to the Prosecutor General – 22,9, the chairman of the division of the Supreme Court is 20,2 in comparison deputy of the Prosecutor General – 21,2; (ii) salary coefficient of a chancellor of the court established in the law is equal or mostly higher than the salary coefficient of a judge. E.g.

¹ <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/lithuania/inflation-rates.php> ;
<https://www.infolex.lt/portal/start.asp?act=news&Tema=49&Str=105221#>

² <https://www.tagidas.lt/savadai/9006/>

The coefficient of the official salary of the chancellor of the Supreme Court	The coefficient of the official salary of the judge of the Supreme Court
19,5–21,5	19,2

In our view, such long-term judicial salaries` policy does not correspond to the criteria established by the ECJ in the case C-64/16 *Associação Sindical dos Juizes Portugueses*. The community of judges is very much disappointed by the long-term government`s inaction to solve the issue.

First, it was an increase in number of judges who left the profession not for retirement reasons in 2022. By reasoning their decisions some of them publicly indicated that the judicial salaries had become not proportional to the workload and responsibilities³.

Second, dozens of judges sued the State for damages requiring to compensate their losses suffered as a consequence of the long-term government`s policy in the sphere of judicial salaries⁴. The court dealing with that case has recently referred the question to the Constitutional Court⁵. A big number of judges are seriously considering to join the lawsuit.

The long-lasting and targeted “freezing” of judicial salaries caused a significant damage to the prestige of the profession of a judge. Recent latest (2022) selections of candidates to judicial positions revealed the lack (if any) of competition. For instance only 18 candidates expressed their interest in the call for applications for 12 vacant judicial positions at Vilnius district court; only 9 candidates (some of these candidates at the same time were also applying to Vilnius district court) expressed their interest in the call for applications for 12 vacant judicial positions at Kaunas district court.

The Bureau of the consultative Council of European Judges provided in the Report on judicial independence and impartiality in the Council of Europe Member States of 30 March 2020, provided that “*Remuneration of judges in Lithuania is not commensurate with their profession and responsibilities and that as a result they may not be sufficiently protected in terms of their independence and vulnerability to external pressure*”⁶. However, the problem remains and the situation is getting worse. The Lithuanian Association of Judges indicated that in its public statement of 4 July 2022⁷. The Society of Lithuanian Lawyers (which is the oldest and most influential non-governmental organisation of all persons working in the field of law) expressed the same concern in November 2021⁸.

Independence/autonomy of the prosecution service

3000 character(s) maximum

³ <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-valdymas/personalo-valdymas/2022/08/26/del-per-mazo-atlygio-is-darbo-traukiasi-3-teisejai> ; <https://madeinvilnius.lt/naujienos/miestas/vilniaus-teisejas-pareiske-besitraukiantis-is-darbo-del-mazos-algos/> ; <https://kaunas.kasvyksta.lt/2022/08/26/politika/prezidentas-kauno-teiseju-pasitraukimus-is-darbo-vadina-pavojingais/>

⁴ <https://www.teismai.lt/lt/kauno-apygardos-teismo-teiseju-pareiskimas-del-zalos-atlyginimo-paskirtas-teismo-posedis-rasytinio-proceso-tvarka/10393> ; <https://www.teismai.lt/lt/regionu-apygardos-administraciniame-teisme-gautas-dar-vieno-teisejo-pareiskimas-atsakovei-lietuvos-valstybei-del-zalos-atlyginimo/10305>

⁵ <https://www.teismai.lt/lt/kauno-apygardos-teismo-teiseju-pareiskimas-del-zalos-atlyginimo-teismas-stabdo-by-la-ir-kreipiasi-i-lietuvos-respublikos-konstitucini-teisma/10616>

⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/ccje-report-2019-situation-of-judges-en/16809e0d05>

⁷ <https://lrta.lt/viesas-pareiskimas-teiseju-atlyginimu-klausimu/>

⁸ <http://ltdraugija.lt/?p=1681>

Independence of the Bar (chamber/association of lawyers) and of lawyers 3000

character(s) maximum

Significant developments capable of affecting the perception that the general public has of the independence of the judiciary 3000 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 under section 2)

Accessibility of courts (e.g. court/legal fees, legal aid, language) 3000

character(s) maximum

Resources of the judiciary (human/financial/material)

(Material resources refer e.g. to court buildings and other facilities)

3000 character(s) maximum

Positive developments since 1.1-2022:

Negative developments since 1.1-2022: The problem concerning salaries of the assistant of judges and secretaries remains the same as indicated in 2021 Report and the situation is getting worse. Consequently, the lack of qualified staff in the court system is becoming more and more evident.

Training of justice professionals (including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff) 3000

character(s) maximum

Digitalisation (e.g. use of digital technology, particularly electronic communication tools, within the justice system and with court users, including resilience of justice systems in COVID-19 pandemic) 3000 character(s) maximum

Use of assessment tools and standards (e.g. ICT systems for case management, court statistics and their transparency, monitoring, evaluation, surveys among court users or legal professionals) *3000 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)

Length of proceedings

3000 character(s) maximum

Other - please specify

3000 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 2022 Report regarding the anti-corruption framework (if applicable)

3000 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 authorities. Indicate any relevant measure taken to effectively and timely cooperate with OLAF and EPPO (where applicable)

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 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 *3000 character(s) maximum*

B. Prevention

Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector and their application (including as regards incompatibility rules, revolving doors, codes of conduct, ethics training). Please provide figures on their application *3000 character(s) maximum*

General transparency of public decision-making, including rules on lobbying and their enforcement, asset disclosure rules and enforcement, gifts policy, transparency of political party financing

3000 character(s) maximum

Rules and measures to prevent conflict of interests in the public sector. Please specify the scope of their application (e.g. categories of officials concerned) *3000 character(s) maximum*

Measures in place to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption. *3000 character(s) maximum*

Any other relevant measures to prevent corruption in public and private sector *3000 character(s) maximum*

C. Repressive measures

Criminalisation, including the level of sanctions available by law, of corruption and related offences, including foreign bribery

3000 character(s) maximum

Data on investigation and application of sanctions for corruption offences, including for legal persons and high level and complex corruption cases and their transparency, including as regards to the implementation of EU funds

(Please include, if available the number of (data since 2019): indictments; first instance convictions; first instance acquittals; final convictions; final acquittals; other outcomes (final) (i.e. excluding convictions and acquittals); cases adjudicated (final); imprisonment / custodial sentences through final convictions; suspended custodial sentences through final convictions; pending cases at the end of the reference year)

3000 character(s) maximum

Potential obstacles to investigation and prosecution as well as to the effectiveness of criminal sanctions of high-level and complex corruption cases (e.g. political immunity regulation, procedural rules, statute of limitations, cross-border cooperation, pardoning)

3000 character(s) maximum

Information on effectiveness of non-criminal measures and of sanctions (e.g. recovery measures and administrative sanctions) on both public and private offenders *3000 character(s) maximum*

Other - please specify

3000 character(s) maximum

III. Media Freedom and Pluralism

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2022 Report regarding media freedom and pluralism (if applicable)

3000 character(s) maximum

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 *3000 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 *3000 character(s) maximum*

Existence and functions of media councils or other self-regulatory bodies *3000 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 (including any rules regulating the matter)

3000 character(s) maximum

Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners, as well as any rules regulating the matter

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

Rules and practices guaranteeing journalist's independence and safety, including as regards protection of journalistic sources and communications *3000 character(s) maximum*

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Access to information and public documents (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)

3000 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

3000 character(s) maximum

Other - please specify

3000 character(s) maximum

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2022 Report regarding the system of checks and balances (if applicable) *3000 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 (particularly consultation of judiciary and other relevant stakeholders on judicial reforms), and transparency and quality of the legislative process

[1] *This includes also the consultation of social partners*

3000 character(s) maximum

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)

3000 character(s) maximum

Regime for constitutional review of laws

3000 character(s) maximum

COVID-19: provide update on significant developments with regard to emergency regimes/measures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

- judicial review (including constitutional review) of emergency regimes and measures in the context of COVID-19 pandemic
- oversight (incl. ex-post reporting/investigation) by Parliament of emergency regimes and measures in the context of COVID-19 pandemic
- processes related to lessons learned/crisis preparedness in terms of the functioning of checks and balances

3000 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#>)

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 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)

3000 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)

3000 character(s) maximum

Follow-up by the public administration and State institutions to final (national/supranational) court decisions, as well as available remedies in case of non-implementation

3000 character(s) maximum

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 and dissolution rules) *3000 character(s) maximum*

Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This includes measures for protection from attacks – verbal, physical or online –, 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. *3000 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)

3000 character(s) maximum

Rules and practices on the participation of civil society organisations and human rights defenders to the decision-making process (e.g. measures related to dialogue between authorities and civil society, participation of civil society in policy development and decision-making, consultation, dialogues, etc.) *3000 character(s) maximum*

E. Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

Measures to foster a rule of law culture (e.g. debates in national parliaments on the rule of law, public information campaigns on rule of law issues, contributions from civil society etc.) *3000 character(s) maximum*

Other - please specify

3000 character(s) maximum
