

European Rule of Law Mechanism: input from Estonia

2025 Rule of Law Report

1. 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 national contact points to provide contributions to the 2025 Rule of Law Report. On the basis of these contributions, 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, as well as the consultation on the draft country chapters prior to the Report's adoption.

The 2025 Rule of Law Report will continue to deepen the assessment under the existing four pillars, and will also follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations to Member States, that were issued as part of the 2024 Rule of Law Report. In line with the Political Guidelines for the 2024-2029 Commission, the 2025 Report will also include a single market dimension. A parallel reflection has been launched with Member States and business stakeholders with a view to collecting views about the scope of the issues to be covered. A further request for contribution will follow specifically on this dimension.

Nature of the contribution

The Commission invites contact points to provide contributions which includes:

- (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 and up to the date of submission falling under the 'type of information' outlined in section 2.**

The input should preferably be in English and not exceed 30 pages. Relevant legislation or other documents may be referenced with a link (no need to provide the full text). The contributions will be published on the Commission's website upon explicit agreement of the Member States. In order to avoid duplication and excessive administrative burden, please include where applicable explicit references to any relevant contribution already provided by your Member State in a different context (including under Council of Europe, OECD, OSCE and UN bodies or procedures as well the input provided for previous editions of the Report) or to the previous Rule of Law Reports. Contributions should focus on significant developments since the last Rule of Law Report both as regards the legal framework and its implementation in practice.

Please send us your replies by **24 January 2025** to the following email address: rule-of-law-network@ec.europa.eu. In case you would have any questions or requests for clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission at the same email address.

2. 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 input¹)

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, you can now simply tick the relevant box**

3. 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 submission². 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.

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.

² Unless already covered in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

I. Justice System

Recommendation received in the 2024 report: *Continue the efforts to reform the Council for the Administration of Courts, taking into account European Standards on councils for the judiciary.*

Information on measures taken: The Government decision of the October 10, 2024, was to acknowledge the change proposals of the Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs regarding to the court administration model, which involve transferring the court administration tasks for first and second instance courts from the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs to the courts, as constitutional institutions. The draft law is planned to be submitted to the Government in February 2025.

A. Independence

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the independence of justice, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

Please see the information about the follow-up to the recommendation (above).

B) Policy developments

The Council for Administration of Courts adopted in September 2024 “The Court Development Plan 2030”. It is a long-term strategy that includes the goals of the courts, and the activities required to achieve them.

C) Developments related to the judiciary/independent authorities

At the beginning of 2024, the terms of office of the presidents of the Tartu District Court and the Tallinn Circuit Court ended. The Minister of Justice established a competition commission for selecting new presidents, which consisted of three judges and two ministry officials. There is a new president of the Tallinn Circuit Court since May 17, 2024, and respectively the new president of the Tartu District Court since April 5, 2024. The term of office of court presidents lasts seven years. The procedure for appointing court presidents has not changed.

D) Any other relevant developments

At the beginning of 2024, there were 10 vacant judge positions. The Minister of Justice at that time announced a competition on May 30, 2024, to appoint four new judges. In connection with the government's goal, which took office on July 23 2024, to reduce personal and administrative costs, as well as operational and targeted grants in the public sector by 10 percent over the next three years — 5 percent in 2025, 3 percent in 2026, and 2 percent in 2027 — the incumbent Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs declared the Minister of Justice's directive of May 30, 2024, invalid. One participant of the competition filed a complaint to the Administrative Court and the complaint is currently unsolved.

The Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs announced a competition on December 10, 2024, to appoint nine new judges. The deadline for submitting applications was January 10, 2025. As of December 31, 2025, 14 judge positions remains vacant. The procedure of appointing and selecting judges has not changed.

B. Quality of justice³

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the quality of justice, please specify which, regarding

³ Under this topic, Member States are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined under section 2.

in particular topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

The **draft law amending the State Fees Act**⁴ was submitted to the Government of the Republic on September 16, 2024. The draft law proposes increasing state fees based on the value of the claim in the business register, the register of non-profit associations and foundations, the commercial pledge register, the ship mortgage register, the land register, and civil case claims. In civil proceedings, state fees based on the value of the claim will increase by an average of 18%. State fees for entries in the land register, commercial pledge register, and ship mortgage register will increase by an average of 56%. State fees for registration activities will increase by 25-50%.

The increase in fee rates is necessary to update the state fees related to court operations so that the established fee rates partially cover the growing operating costs of the courts and the registry departments, as well as to prevent malicious or clearly futile cases from being brought to court and encourage parties to seek out-of-court resolutions.

On January 14, 2025, the Riigikogu opened the **proceedings of amendments of the Criminal Procedure Code and other laws** (optimizing court proceedings and ensuring the public access to court decisions). As part of the changes in the draft legislation, decisions pending enforcement in criminal proceedings will now also be made public. There will be no changes regarding the publication of the name of the convicted person, which will continue to be disclosed. The regulation of access to case files after the decision becomes final will also be addressed. As a result of these amendments, public access to court proceedings will improve.

The amendments to the Salaries of the Higher State Servants Act (KRAPS) § 172 entered into force on 15.03.2024.

The Salaries of Higher State Servants Act is amended by providing for higher state servants whose salary is subject to the specification of indexation of the highest salary rate from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028. According to KRAPS, the highest salary rate for higher state servants is 5200 euros. The salary rate is indexed by 1 April each year with the highest salary rate index, which is obtained from the annual index of the consumer price index to the extent of 20% and from the annual growth index of the receipt of the pension insurance part of social tax to the extent of 80%. The salary of a specific civil servant provided for in the KRAPS is obtained by multiplying the highest salary rate by the coefficient for that civil servant position, which is between 0.25 and 1.0. According to the Bill, the increase in the salary of the Prime Minister, members of the Supreme Court (except the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), the Prosecutor General, ministers, the State Secretary, district, county and administrative court judges, the Public Conciliator and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner will be reduced so that the increase would amount to half of the salary increase calculated according to the current methodology over a period of 4 years. The index of the highest wage rate temporarily reduced is obtained by adding 1 to the index calculated in accordance with KRAPS and dividing the result by 2. For the forecast salary index for 2024, such an operation would result in $(1.110+1) = 2.110/2 = 1.055$, i.e. an increase of 5.5%, which is exactly half of the increase under the current KRAPS.

The post-index salary rate has been called the highest salary rate of the group of state employees, and each year the highest salary rate of the previous year is indexed. The methodology for calculating the increase in salary shall not be changed for members of the Riigikogu, the President of the Republic, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Auditor General, the Chancellor of Justice and members of the Supervisory Board of Eesti Pank. The amendments proposed by the Bill will also have an impact on the salaries of state servants, which are related to the salary of some of the higher state servants named in the KRAPS. These include chancellors (related to the salary of a minister), prosecutors (related to the salary of a public prosecutor), assistant judges and advocates-general (related to the

⁴ The draft law is waiting for the Government's approval and therefore cannot be linked here at the moment.

salary of a first instance judge), chairmen of a labour dispute committee (related to the salary of a public conciliator) and members of a public procurement appeals committee (related to the salary of a county and administrative court judge). The temporary specification of indexation according to the Bill is valid until 31 March 2028. Recovered from April 1, 2028.

Judges, who believe that the legal basis for determining a judge's salary is in conflict with the Constitution, have filed complaints to the Administrative Court and the complaints are currently unsolved.

The draft legislation was submitted to the Government on September 16 2024 with proposed changes — the highest salary rate for judges will be indexed again starting April 1, 2025, according to the general procedure set out in the law, meaning the temporary exception for judges will end at that point⁵. Additionally, a transitional provision is included, stipulating that during the period from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, the pension calculation for judges will be based on the general statutory salary rate corresponding to their last position (i.e., the temporary salary index will not apply). These changes will provide judges with certainty regarding a sufficient income, considering the responsibilities of their position and restrictions on earning other income.

B) Policy developments

On December 6, 2024 the Council for Administration of Courts gave its consent to the Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs to change the regulation that determinate the exact location of courts and courthouses. Starting from January 1, 2025, the Tartu District Court's Võru courthouse will merge Võru and Põlva buildings, and starting from June 30, 2025, the Pärnu District Court's Pärnu courthouse buildings at different addresses in the same city will be merged. Additionally, the Pärnu courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court will be closed starting from June 30, 2025. The Council for Administration of Courts stressed that if it becomes necessary to decide on the closure of more court buildings in 2026 to meet the cost-cutting requirements, the topic must be a part of the agenda of the councils meeting on March 14, 2025, to discuss the matter.

The **removal of personal data from court decisions** is automatic. The court user selects whose names should be anonymized in the decision, and the program identifies the correct names. Individuals who should remain anonymized (judges, officials, legal entities, convicted persons, etc.) are automatically selected.

In February 2024, the **digitalization of criminal proceedings** was initiated. The entire process, from the police to the court, is conducted exclusively in digital form. The implementation began with minor criminal cases (fast-track procedure). The aim was to identify deficiencies in information systems and workflows and to equip investigators with the necessary hardware and software. Gradually, all other criminal proceedings will also be digitalized.

In February 2024, we replaced the previous justice sector statistics environment with a more advanced **data warehouse “JAAK”**, which provides higher-quality data and is more user-friendly. JAAK is a shared data warehouse for the entire justice system. It is a convenient analysis environment with workspaces designed to meet the needs of different users, including pre-developed reports for users in the prosecution service and courts. Among other things, JAAK allows for data visualization and the display of open data. The data presentation is similar to the courts' public reports website.

An important difference compared to the previous environment is that JAAK does not contain personalized data. This principle significantly broadens the range of users for justice system data. The new JAAK allows for the interanalysis of data from different stages of proceedings, enabling faster and more thorough policy-making decisions.

⁵ Currently waiting for the Governments's approval, therefore no link to public draft law to share.

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

No changes.

D) Any other relevant developments

The budget for 2024 is 60 808 912 euros. This is 2 781 708 euros more compared to 2023 when it was 58 027 204 euros.

Every year the round table meeting of prosecutors dealing with corruption cases takes place. On this meeting all legal and practical issues regarding investigation and prosecution of corruption cases will be discussed.

Online course „Avoiding corruption and conflicts of interests in public sector“ is available for prosecutors.

C. Efficiency of the justice system⁶:

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to efforts to improve the efficiency of the justice system (e.g. as regards length of proceedings), please specify:

A) Legislative developments

On January 14, 2025, the Riigikogu opened the proceedings of amendments of the Criminal Procedure Code and other laws (optimizing court proceedings and ensuring the public access to court decisions). Beside the objective to ensure the public access of court proceedings, the objective of the draft is to make the use of procedural resources in criminal proceedings more efficient, without compromising people's fundamental rights, and to prevent the malicious delay of proceedings.

Similar legislations, to make the use of procedural resources in civil and administrative proceedings more efficient, are in drafting, but in 2024 the drafts of legislation concerning efficiency of civil and administrative proceedings, has not been envisaged by the Government.

B) Policy developments

No changes.

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

No changes.

D) Any other relevant developments

According to the procedural statistics of 2024:

- 1) civil cases were resolved in district courts on average in 123 days,
- 2) criminal cases were resolved on average in 298 days in general criminal proceedings, 47 days in simplified proceedings and 43 days in misdemeanour cases,
- 3) administrative cases were resolved in the first instance courts on average in 153 days,
- 4) the average processing time for appeals was 248 days in civil cases, 33 days in criminal cases and 322 days in administrative cases.

II. Anti-corruption framework⁷

⁶ Under this topic, Member States are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined under section 2.

⁷ Where previous specific reports, published in the framework of the review under the UN Convention against Corruption,

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

Not applicable.

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

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the institutional framework capacity to fight corruption, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

B) Policy developments

In 2024, the [District Prosecutor's Office for Economic Crime and Corruption](#) was established. The new district prosecutor's office employs 45 staff members, including 22 district prosecutors and 11 deputy prosecutors. The office consists of three departments.

- The first department focuses on criminal proceedings conducted by the Tax and Customs Board.
- The second department oversees investigations by the Central Criminal Police's economic and corruption crime bureaus, as well as corruption investigations by the Internal Security Service and the Police and Border Guard Board.
- The third department manages economic crime investigations within police prefectures.

Background: economic and corruption-related crimes are constantly evolving as criminals change their methods and focuses, which means that law enforcement agencies must continually refine their objectives and working models. As a result, two years ago, the prosecutor's office adopted a course towards the creation of the new District Prosecutor's Office for Economic Crime and Corruption. This change is primarily driven by the belief that no crime should go unpunished, and the consolidation of specialists in this field into a single unit allows for more effective leadership in the fight against white-collar crime. The new district will implement a team-based approach, resulting in the involvement of legal and field experts in managing resource-intensive economic and corruption cases. A nationwide perspective will also allow for more efficient management of the resource needs of economic and corruption crime cases, with the ability to reallocate resources as necessary.

B. Prevention

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the prevention of corruption, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

The [Act on the Protection of Persons Who Report Work-Related Breaches of European Union Law](#) entered into force on September 1, 2024.

As to the political party financing, draft of the Political Parties Act went through the public consultation round in the summer 2024. According to the workplan of Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs the draft should be submitted to the Government in March 2025.

C. Repression

☐ No developments regarding the repression of 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.

☒ If there have been developments related to the repression of corruption, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

On May 23, 2024, the Government of the Republic submitted a [draft law amending the Anti-Corruption Act](#) to the Parliament, which partially addresses sanctions. For example, according to the proposed wording in the draft law, public officials listed in § 13(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act, such as members of Parliament, local government council members, judges, ministers, ministry chancellors, and others, could face a fine of up to 300 penalty units for knowingly violating the conditions of procedural restrictions or failing to apply them. In contrast, the maximum fine for other public officials is set at 200 penalty units. Corruption crimes committed by senior officials cause greater societal harm and undermine public trust to a greater extent, which is why it is important to distinguish the violations they commit and impose a harsher sanction. This draft law is still under consideration by Parliament, and after the first reading, discussions on the substantive issues of the draft are ongoing.

B) Policy developments

No changes.

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

No changes.

D) Any other relevant developments

Official data on the statistics of corruption offences:

Crime	Registered crimes	Statements of charges sent to the court	Number of crimes sent to the court
§ Accepting of bribe	9	6	16
§ Arranging of receipt of gratuities	2	2	10
§ Giving of bribe	14	6	15
§ Influence peddling	1	0	0
§ Counterfeiting or falsification of documents by officials	3	5	5
§ Violation of requirements of public procurement	7	0	0
§ Violation of procedural restrictions	6	2	4

III. Media pluralism and media freedom

Recommendation received in the 2024 report: *Advance with the efforts to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the right of access to information taking into account European standards on access to official documents.*

Information on measures taken: please see below the answer to the C. B) Policy developments.

A. Media authorities and bodies⁸

☒ No developments

☐ If there have been developments related to media authorities and bodies, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below: ...

⁸ Cf. Article 30 of Directive 2018/1808.

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

☒ No developments

☐ If there have been developments related government or political interference or transparency and concentration of media ownership, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below: ...

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

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the framework for journalists' protection or transparency/access to documents, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

Estonia will create civil procedural measures during the transposition of the Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the council on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation') in accordance with the requirements of the Directive. The deadline for transposition of the Directive is 7 May 2026.

B) Policy developments

In 2024 the Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs prepared an analysis regarding the implementation of the Public Information Act (PIA). It was published on the [Ministry's webpage](#) on 21st of January 2025 (in Estonian only). Based on this analysis Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs will prepare legislative intent by the end of May 2025 to start public discussion how to change the PIA to resolve problems raised in the above-mentioned analysis. Although it is found in the Baseline Evaluation Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on access to official documents (CETS No. 205 –Tromsø Convention) that PIA is in line with the Convention in most parts, some recommendations were made.

Those recommendations include above all proposals to ensure that PIA is in accordance with the qualification of official documents and the principle of the overriding public interest. These issues will be dealt also in the abovementioned legislative intent. Access to information and public documents was also enhanced last year by making around 900 datasets available on our national open data portal, including high-value datasets. The number of organizations publishing open data has also increased, with approximately 130 organizations now contributing. In addition to publishing open data, we actively promote its reuse by popularizing open data topics through events, hackathons, public communication, and collaboration with academia and the private sector.

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

Recommendation received in the 2024 report: *Ensure effective public consultation in the context of the legislative process.*

Information on measures taken: In 2024 Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs conducted an analysis of consultation periods during the preparatory phase of legislation and identified most critical factors contributing to insufficient consultation times for certain draft laws (mainly laws directly linked to state budget). Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs provides various trainings for law drafts, which inter alia include guidance on stakeholder engagement. However, the challenge of ensuring stakeholders sufficient time to express their opinion on legislative initiatives remains a concern that will need to be further addressed.

All developments regarding the co-creation platform are also contributing in following-up on the recommendation to endue effective public consultation. We have provided more detailed overview of the state of play of co-creation platform below (under part A., B) policy developments).

In terms of the recommendation, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner has expressed his concerns about the declining of transparency and engagement in the public consultation process of legislative proposals. He has pointed out that the processes are inclined to rushing and not giving the relevant partners and stakeholders, including civil society organizations sufficient time for communication and opinions.

More specifically the Commissioner is worried about recent developments regarding the proposal to merge Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Acts. The proposal was drafted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications while engaging the civil society and relevant partners. However, the bill was halted in September 2024 by Ministry of Justice, and the ministry contracted a private law firm to develop a new bill. The new draft has not been consulted with civil society nor with the Commissioner's office. The Commissioner is deeply concerned of what these developments might mean for the equality policy field as well as the general health of the Rule of Law.

Comment by the minister of Justice and Digital Affairs on the process regarding the proposal of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Act:

The promotion and coordination of equal treatment and gender equality, including accessibility, belongs to the scope of governance of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (according to § 63 (1) of the Act on the Government of the Republic). Last year, together with the formation of the new government, the preparation of the draft law on gender equality and equal opportunities was assigned to the responsibility of the minister of Justice and Digital Affairs by [order of the Prime Minister](#) (p 2 of the order).

The proposal of the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Act prepared in 2024 by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications undoubtedly deserves recognition for thorough involvement of stakeholders. Unfortunately, this draft received numerous legal criticism and contradictory feedback during the consultations. Given the circumstances and to obtain a different legal perspective on the unification of laws and the transposition of the European Union directive, the minister of Justice and Digital Affairs involved the private sector in the process. The aim of this step is still to ensure broad protection of people in accordance with the Constitution, but without unnecessary administrative burden. The minister of Justice and Digital Affairs can assure that all stakeholders will be involved and can provide their feedback. The minister is ready for comprehensive cooperation with both the relevant state authorities and civil society organizations.

A. The process for preparing and enacting laws

☐ No developments

☒ If there have been developments related to the process for preparing and enacting laws, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

On 18 October 2024, [amendments to the Emergency Act entered into force](#), transposing Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC into Estonian law. The primary objective of the directive is to ensure the continuity of essential service providers under all circumstances, thereby safeguarding the lives and health of the population, as well as the functioning of society and the state during various types of crises.

New sectors were added to the list of essential services, along with new essential service providers and competent authorities responsible for organizing essential services. As a result of the directive's

transposition, all local governments became competent authorities.

In addition, key and significant topics introduced with the transposition of the directive included the development of a strategy on the resilience of critical services and a national risk assessment. This risk assessment comprehensively addresses all hazards and includes cross-sectoral risks as well as those identified in the risk assessments of local governments.

B) Policy developments

The obstruction situation in the Parliament which caused considerable delays to the legislative process in 2023 did not occur in 2024. This allowed regular legislative procedures to resume, including stakeholder consultations and parliamentary debates. The constitutional provision which allows the Government to bind the adoption of a law to a confidence vote, was not applied in 2024.

The table below illustrates the effect of obstruction situation on the number of laws adopted by the Parliament.

Table. Number of laws adopted by the Parliament in 2020–2024.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of laws	98	97	125	74	95

Co-creation Platform

As a result of developing the Co-creation Platform, a modern user interface for public consultations will be created. This interface will reduce the administrative burden for both stakeholders and draft proposal authors, enhance user-friendliness, and foster better conditions for stakeholder engagement. Documenting meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders as part of the legislative drafting process will increase the transparency of lawmaking.

The development of the Co-creation Platform is a continuation based on the prototype created in 2019. Since 2022, the following development phases have been implemented: internal and public collaboration cycles, the processing of European Union matters, and the public-facing view.

As of December 2024, the Co-creation Platform is being used in the processing of European Union matters to enhance collaborative efforts within ministries, and the public view development procurement process is nearing completion. The public view will allow users to see draft proposals under preparation in various institutions, track their processing stages, monitor the legislative process, provide comments on initiatives in public collaboration cycles, and compare documents.

The Co-creation Platform is being developed using an agile development methodology, starting with the creation of a minimum viable product (MVP) and progressively enhanced based on feedback from testing. However, with the launch of the public view, all meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders related to a specific draft proposal will be visible in the proposal's processing timeline. This provides information on who met with whom, when, and on what topic, as long as the meeting has been added to the initiative's timeline.

In addition, The Co-creation Accelerator, launched in spring 2024, supports the implementation of activities outlined in ministries' engagement plans and enhances the skills of those involved.

Grant application rounds are held twice a year. As of the time of this report, funding has been approved for eight initiatives. The accelerator primarily targets ministries that have planned or are planning initiatives involving a wide range of stakeholders. It supports cross-sectoral engagement, development activities that promote intersectoral collaboration, innovative solutions and experimentation, the cost of expertise necessary for engagement and co-creation (up to 20% of the budget), and expenses directly related to the implementation of engagement and co-creation plans.

In addition to financial support, all ministry teams with approved applications participate in a three-day development program organized by the Government Office, where participants gain practical experience and skills in planning engagement processes. These activities are funded by the Technical Assistance for the 2021–2027 period. The total budget for these activities is €2.5 million, of which 72.2% is financed by the European Union and 27.8% by national co-financing.

The purpose of the grant is to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the European Union's Cohesion and Internal Security Policy Funds Operational Program for the 2021–2027 period. It also aims to enhance the capacity of social partners, stakeholders, and civil society organizations to contribute to policy-making and effectively utilize the available support.

B. Independent authorities

☐ No developments regarding independent authorities

☒ If there have been developments related to independent authorities, please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below:

A) Legislative developments

Chancellor of Justice

The state budget law was amended to guarantee the Chancellor of Justice (along other constitutional institutions) greater budgetary independence from the executive power. Amendments entered into force in June 2024. As of then, the budget of the Chancellor is discussed directly in the Parliament Financial Committee and no longer needs a prior review of the Government. See [State Budget Act](#), § 25¹ subsection 3 clause 12 and § 38 subsection 2¹ (in English).

The Chancellor of Justice's 2025 budget was prepared for the first time using new principles. Despite the challenging economic situation and the Government of the Republic's plans to reduce the budgets of state institutions, this decision did not impact the budgets of constitutional institutions, including the Chancellor of Justice.

B) Policy developments

Chancellor of Justice

In 2024, the Chancellor of Justice submitted 16 proposals to the Parliament, ministries, and local governments, urging alignment with the Estonian Constitution or initiating legislative measures. Two of these proposals have been implemented, while the rest are still in progress. The Chancellor submitted one new request to the supreme Court for constitutional analysis in 2024 and provided 11 opinions during ongoing constitutional review proceedings.

In addition, the Chancellor of Justice made 75 recommendations to state and local authorities on legality and good administration principles. Generally, the recommendations are acknowledged and implemented but some require more substantial reforms for follow-up.

Furthermore, 48 cases brought to the Chancellor's attention were resolved during proceedings. If an authority promptly rectifies unconstitutional provisions or adjusts practices, proceedings are concluded without issuing formal proposals or recommendations.

In this reporting period, the Chancellor did not find reason to initiate disciplinary proceedings in respect of a judge in any of the cases reviewed.

The annual report about the activities of the Chancellor of Justice can be found [here](#) (in Estonian).

Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner

In 2024, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner focused on the topic of racial discrimination. The Commissioner's office released a [report that provided fresh data on racial discrimination experiences in Estonia](#). To discuss the results of the report, Commissioner organised a conference "[What Colour is Equality?](#)" in December 2024, focusing on discrimination experiences due to skin colour.

In 2024, the Commissioner also released a [report on equality in 2023](#) (available only in Estonian), reflecting on the situation of equality in Estonia that presented statistics on different grounds of discrimination. The report also included interviews with people who had experienced discrimination referring, that discrimination is heavily underreported in Estonia.

The Commissioner received 230 cases in 2024, which is a slight increase in numbers since 2023 (198 cases).

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

Gender Equality and Equal treatment Commissioner

In line with the general austerity measures introduced by the Government of Estonia, there are cuts in funding of the Commissioner's office in from 2025 onwards. These cuts have a significant impact on the ability of the office to fulfil its mandate.

C. Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

☒ No developments

☐ If there have been developments related to the accessibility and judicial review of judicial decisions please specify which, in particular regarding topics listed below: ...

D. The enabling framework for civil society

☒ No developments

☐ If there have been developments related to the enabling framework for civil society, please specify

which, regarding topics listed below: ...

E. Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

☐ No developments

☒ 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.):

On the 18th of November 2024, the Constitutional Committee, Culture Committee and Social Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) held a joint public session to discuss the development of Estonian civil society, the state of democracy and direct democracy. These sessions are held bi-yearly, as part of the the concept of the development of Estonian civil society as a national issue of great importance at the initiative of the Parliament's Constitutional Commission.

At the session, Minister of the Interior Lauri Läänemets gave an overview of the development of civil society and challenges in Estonia. Dr. Mari-Liis Jakobson, Associate Professor of Political Sociology at the Institute of Social Sciences of Tallinn University, discussed the health of democracy in Estonia in her presentation and Dr. Külli Taro, Head of Knowledge Transfer at the Ragnar Nurkse Institute of Innovation and Governance at Tallinn University of Technology, spoke at the session about the right to collective appeals as a form of participatory democracy, including the obstacles that have emerged in the use and implementation of collective appeals. Dr. Taro is also a member of the board of the Estonian Cooperative Assembly, which manages the [Rahvaalgatus.ee](https://rahvaalgatus.ee) portal. Proposals can be made to the Riigikogu or local government through rahvaalgatus.ee. A recent opinion poll shows that 27% of Estonians have signed an initiative at least once. According to Taro, civic education in Estonia is a concern in general, because there is no understanding of which issues are within the competence of the Parliament and which are not. The processing of initiatives by local governments has been difficult.

A follow-up public session to discuss these matters at a plenary session of the Estonian Parliament will be held on the 18th March 2025, with a goal to propose concrete steps for improving the quality and impact of collective appeals which can be made through the rahvaalgatus.ee portal.