

2026 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, six 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 2026 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 2026 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) developments and measures taken in relation to the recommendations in the 2025 report,
(2) developments related to topics covered in the 2025 country chapters, as well as any other new developments related to the rule of law.

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.

This questionnaire also integrates the separate questionnaire on the single market from last year. In addition to these specific questions, respondents to the questionnaire are invited to consider the Single Market dimension, including any relevant cross-border issues, in all their answers.

Where questions of particular relevance under the single market dimension, this is indicated before the relevant question.

[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 and enforcement 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.

Where relevant, please also indicate whether the developments reported are linked to the implementation of reforms and investments under the national Recovery Resilience Plan. To simplify your answers to the questionnaire, if there are no developments, it is sufficient to indicate this and the information covered in the contributions for the previous Rule of Law Reports does not need not be repeated.

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

* 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

Reporters Without Borders / Reporters sans frontières (RSF)

Main Areas of Work

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

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

500 character(s) maximum

<https://rsf.org/en>

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

612547127497- 45

* 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

Julie

Surname

Email Address of the organisation

secretariat@rsf.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 as we will not be able to guarantee anonymisation of these elements.**
- ☒ 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 2026 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 for contribution.docx](#)

Please provide any relevant information on horizontal developments here

5000 character(s) maximum

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 2025 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter of the 2025 Rule of Law Report and any other significant developments since January 2025 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 2025 Report regarding the justice system (if applicable)

5000 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)

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

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)

[single market relevance] 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

[single market relevance] Training of justice professionals (including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff, clerks/trainees)

5000 character(s) maximum

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

[single market relevance] Specialisation (of judges/specific courts/chambers within courts) and training for the judiciary to deal with commercial cases, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and mediation as regards commercial 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 in the introduction)

[single market relevance] Developments related to efforts to improve the efficiency of the justice system (e.g. as regards length of proceedings, to address backlogs)

5000 character(s) maximum

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 2025 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/specialised 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 in particular as regards high-level officials (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 if available to you**, 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

[single market relevance] 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, investor residence schemes, large-scale investments of national interest and the spending of EU funds, urban planning.*
- *In particular, measures to mitigate high risks of corruption in the area of public procurement, such as enhancing transparency and oversight (for example through digital technologies) and promoting fair competition and accountability in public procurement (e.g. targeted actions to address the high share of single bids) and measures to guarantee the effective and independent functioning of the public procurement review bodies.*

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Measures for the prevention of corruption in relation to the issuing of official permits (e.g. related to environment, energy, service provision and various types of construction)

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 2025 Report regarding media pluralism and media freedom (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

Since the publication of the last report, there have been no significant changes. Both the ruling parties and the opposition focused on an intensive election campaign, as elections to the Chamber of Deputies took place in early October 2025. No substantial developments occurred in the area of administrative decisions either. The previous report recommended that Czechia make progress with further reforms relating to the transparency of information on media ownership. However, political decision-making in this area has stagnated. No new rules regarding the control of media market concentration were adopted. No obligation to publish amounts allocated for state advertising was imposed. No measures to increase the transparency of media ownership were taken. All these recommendations depend on the implementation act for the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which the government prepared and discussed only in autumn 2025, and which had not been discussed in Parliament by the end of the year.

Since May 2025, a comprehensive amendment to media laws has been effective; it increased television and radio licence fees intended to fund the operations of Czech Television and Czech Radio. It also introduced their regular indexation based on inflation trends. The amendment also expanded the scope of fee payers and introduced a blanket obligation for legal entities with more than 25 employees, which must now pay fees calculated according to the number of employees (possession of receivers is no longer the decisive factor).

<https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/119?zalozka=text>

This amendment was positively received by international organizations, including Reporters Without Borders (RSF), and recommended as a model example for the independent financing of public service media in Eastern Europe. <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-publishes-new-report-protect-europe-s-public-media> However, following the elections in October 2025, a new government was formed by three entities, two of which intend to abolish television and radio licence fees and replace them with a subsidy from the state budget. Such changes could occur as early as 2027, and international organizations, including RSF, warn that such a development would threaten the independence of public service media. <https://rsf.org/en/czechia-rsf-and-partners-urge-prime-minister-and-culture-minister-guarantee-public-media-s>

The upper chamber of Parliament, the Senate, prepared a constitutional amendment that would enable the Supreme Audit Office (NKÚ) to audit the financial management of Czech Television and Czech Radio. This amendment was supported by both the former government of Prime Minister Petr Fiala and the new government of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, but the Chamber of Deputies will only begin discussing it in January 2026.

Due to the elections held in October 2025, no new legislation was created to respond to the Constitutional Court's decision annulling part of the Conflict of Interest Act. Current laws therefore do not prevent politicians from owning media outlets.

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

The major media amendment, which entered into force in May 2025, includes a clarification of provisions concerning the Czech Television Council and the Czech Radio Council. These changes are primarily technical adjustments addressing ambiguities in the interpretation of the existing legislation.

Regarding the Czech Television Council, the Act now stipulates a fixed number of two Vice-Chairs and mandates that the three-member leadership of the supervisory body must include one member representing the councillors elected by the upper chamber of Parliament (the Senate). The frequency of the supervisory body's meetings was specified as at least one session per month. The definition of quorum was also clarified (at least 10 members must be present at the meeting).

The Act also specifies decisions for which a simple majority of votes is insufficient, requiring either a minimum specified number of votes or a two-thirds majority. For example, the dismissal of the Director General requires the concurrence of 12 out of 18 votes, and the adoption of long-term plans requires at least 10 out of 18 votes. Similar changes apply to the Czech Radio Council (taking into account that, compared to the Czech Television Council, it is a supervisory body of half the size).

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

Based on amendments to the laws on Czech Television and Czech Radio, effective from May 2025, if the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate decides to dismiss a Council member, this resolution must be duly reasoned.

However, even after the 2025 amendment, certain ambiguities remain regarding the interpretation of requirements placed on members of public service media supervisory bodies. For instance, the Act states that a

member of the supervisory body "may not participate in business activities in the field of mass media, nor represent commercial interests that could be in conflict with the performance of their function." However, there is no definition of what this entails precisely—for example, whether a Council member is prohibited from being an entrepreneur in this sector, a partner, a beneficiary, or even an employee. Currently, some Council members act as the main faces of commercial online projects, including projects that are openly critical of public service media. Whether this constitutes a conflict of interest remains solely a matter of discretionary interpretation by Members of Parliament.

Although during the previous parliamentary term the government majority proposed the dismissal of Czech Television Council member Lubomír Veselý due to his use of vulgar language in an online stream and repeated chauvinistic remarks, it failed to bring the matter to a vote in the Chamber of Deputies.

The voting process was blocked by opposition MPs who support this Council member and appear as guests in his online programmes. Following the elections in October 2025, the principle of discontinuity applies to unfinished procedures of the previous Chamber. Consequently, the proposal would have to be resubmitted from the beginning; however, the likelihood of such a step is currently nil.

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

5000 character(s) maximum

On the occasion of the entry into force of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), Czech media associations and public service media presented a set of ten self-regulatory principles, reflecting the requirements of this European regulation.

This initiative originated from a joint discussion among media market stakeholders, including professional media associations (Association of Commercial Television, Association of Online Publishers, Association of Private Broadcasters, Czech Publishers Association, Association for Internet Development), journalists' associations (Czech National Committee of the International Press Institute, Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic), and public service media (Czech Radio, Czech Television, Czech News Agency). The aim was to create a self-regulatory mechanism for media activities in the Czech Republic, inter alia for the purposes of Article 18(1)(d) of the European Media Freedom Act. https://www.spir.cz/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/EMFA_desatero_PS10_final.pdf

It is too early to assess the practical effect of this self-regulation, as nothing significant has happened since the commitment was published in August 2025.

In October 2025, the Czech Radio obtained its Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) certification, an international standard for trustworthy journalism launched in 2019 by RSF. The JTI is an ISO-type standard that serves as a way for newsrooms to ensure their content production processes are professionally and ethically rigorous. The certification process has three main steps: a self-evaluation of the media using JTI criteria, which RSF has made easily accessible to all via a dedicated platform on jti-app.com; public disclosure of the self-assessment results in a transparency report; and an audit by an external, independent firm. JTI helps structure and strengthen the overall journalistic production process, thereby improving the quality and reliability of published content. It also helps citizens, donors, authorities, international media and many other stakeholders identify the most professional, reliable and rigorous sources. <https://rsf.org/en/czech-radio-jti-certification>

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

[single market relevance] Measures taken to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of state advertising

5000 character(s) maximum

Currently, there is no monitoring of state advertising allocated to media outlets. In accordance with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), this new obligation is to be introduced into Czech legislation by the forthcoming Act on the Provision of Certain Media Services. However, the Act was not adopted by the end of 2025, and its legislative process is still in its very early stages.

According to the draft bill, public administration entities would be required to publish, by 31 March of each year, an overview of advertising allocated to media in the preceding calendar year. Consequently, if the Act were to be adopted in 2026, the first data would be available in 2027 at the earliest.

The information system providing data on the amount of funds allocated for advertising is to be administered by the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV). Under the forthcoming Act, public administration authorities will be required to establish transparent, objective, proportionate, and non-discriminatory criteria for the allocation of advertising.

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
- **[single market relevance]** 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

In May 2025, the major media amendment entered into force, increasing licence fees for households and businesses for Czech Television and Czech Radio after two decades. At the same time, a mechanism for the automatic indexation of these fees based on inflation was incorporated into the law. This measure is intended to ensure long-term financial stability and predictability of public service media management without political interference in their budgets. Concurrently, in autumn 2025, both Czech Television and Czech Radio approved binding memoranda on the fulfillment of their public service mission for the next five years, including specific verifiable parameters.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) welcomed and supported these changes, recommending the Czech model of financing public service media as a model for other countries in the former Eastern Bloc. Czechia ranked 10th in the 2025 RSF World Press Freedom Index, representing a year-on-year improvement of 7 positions. At the same time, however, RSF warned that this progress could easily collapse due to pressure from populist parties. However, following the elections in October 2025, political parties formed a new government and pledged in their policy statement to abolish the existing system of television and radio licence fees. Provisionally starting from 2027, the main source of funding for Czech Television and Czech Radio should be funds from the state budget. The new coalition government also announced it would preserve the independence of public service media and eliminate unspecified duplications and inefficient spending. Based on a broad political consensus between coalition and opposition parties, the financial management of Czech Television and Czech Radio will be subject to auditing by the Supreme Audit Office (NKÚ).

In spring 2025, the Czech Television Council dismissed Director General Jan Souček from his post after only a year and a half in office. Despite objective failings in the management of the broadcaster, the decision appeared to be a disproportionate and hasty punishment that weakened the broadcaster's reputation as an institution. It became clear that the position of Director General can be relatively fragile.

Prior to the vote, the Director General announced that he had faced coercion from certain members of the supervisory body because he refused to dismiss the host of the main political discussion programme. Another alleged reason for the coercion was that he began to seek damages from certain members of the supervisory body, which, according to a final court judgment, they caused to Czech Television by their unlawful decision in 2020. However, the majority of the supervisory body members concluded that the Director General should be dismissed due to poor performance, for which he had received a formal warning. The Director General filed a lawsuit against his dismissal, but the court rejected it.

A new Director General of Czech Television was elected by the Council in June 2025 and took office in July 2025. In 2026, the Chamber of Deputies is due to replace a total of 7 out of 18 members of the supervisory body. It must also fill 2 vacant seats in the Czech Radio Council (out of a total of 9) and elect a successor to another member whose mandate expires in the autumn. It remains unclear whether and how the potential changes in funding will affect the position of the public service media supervisory bodies.

[single market relevance] Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners

5000 character(s) maximum

The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended that Czechia "[make] progress with further reforms relating to transparency of information on media ownership." However, no tangible progress was achieved in 2025. The legislative process for the act responding to the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) was not completed prior to the parliamentary elections held in October 2025. The outgoing coalition government approved the draft Act on the Provision of Certain Media Services only at its session on 22 October 2025. It recommended that the Chamber of Deputies adopt the act under the accelerated procedure (i.e., approval in the first reading). The bill was included on the agenda for the parliamentary session in January 2026. Should this legislation be adopted, the Ministry of Culture would be required to make a registry of media owners publicly accessible directly on its website. <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=10&T=10>

Previously, access to information regarding indirect and beneficial owners of media outlets could also be verified via the Register of Beneficial Owners (Evidence skutečných majitelů), an online database maintained by the Ministry of Justice. However, general public access to this database was officially terminated on 17 December 2025, following decisions by national courts and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Access is now restricted to authorized registered entities. <https://esm.justice.cz/ias/issm/download/ESMuzavreni.pdf>

The reasoning of both the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court refers to the CJEU judgment in joined cases WM and Sovim (C-37/20 and C-601/20), which invalidated the provision of the AML Directive requiring public access to information on beneficial ownership. The CJEU held that unrestricted public access to information on beneficial owners constitutes a disproportionate interference with the rights to respect for private life and to the protection of personal data, enshrined in Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

In light of the aforementioned case law, the Ministry proceeded to suspend public access to the register. The Ministry further argues that under the new EU legislation (Directive (EU) 2024/1640 of the European Parliament and of the Council), beneficial ownership data can no longer be made publicly available unconditionally. This EU requirement is to be transposed into Czech law through a forthcoming legislative amendment.

Consequently, the current suspension of access is viewed as the initial step in the transposition of the new EU rules.

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

In September 2025, the very first platform monitoring various forms of attacks on journalists was established in Czechia. It also offers legal and psychological assistance to journalists in such cases.

RSF welcomes the project Safe Journalism (Bezpečná žurnalistika) launched by the Czech National Committee of the International Press Institute (CZ IPI). Journalists can report specific incidents of insults, threats, legal pressure, or physical intimidation (including anonymously) via the website bezpecnazurnalistika.cz. The project was preceded by a CZ IPI survey, which revealed that current attacks most frequently involve online verbal abuse, primarily targeting women.

According to Vladimír Lukášek, Director of the Office of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service, the police also expect the project to be beneficial: "The police do not have statistical coverage of attacks on journalists; the project could provide new data. This is an area of latent criminal activity, which makes its detection crucial." <https://www.syndikat-novinaru.cz/aktuality/vznikla-linka-bezpeci-pro-novinare/>

At the governmental or general political level, no systematic attention is paid to attacks on journalists. According to its statement from spring 2025, the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic joined the Council of Europe's campaign "Journalists Matter", which advocates for the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec (2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors. <https://rm.coe.int/czechia-reply-en-neovlivni-editor-in-chief-sabina-sloukova-under-polic/1680b5163a>

It remains a problem that leading politicians also commit verbal attacks against journalists and, furthermore, fail to moderate the behavior of their supporters towards journalists. These attacks were more intense during the election year than previously, and journalistic organizations repeatedly called on politicians to exercise restraint in their statements. Among the most discussed cases, one can mention threats by supporters of the non-parliamentary movement Stačilo! against Novinky.cz editor Karolína Brodničková, threats by MEP Filip Turek against journalist Vojtěch Dobeš, a smear campaign by supporters of the Motorists party against journalist Apolena Rychlíková, or insults and threats by supporters of the same party against journalist Zdislava Pokorná.

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

5000 character(s) maximum

On 6 February 2025, it was reported that the investigative journalist and editor-in-chief of the online news outlet Neovlivní.cz, Sabina Slonková, and her family were placed under police protection after a man broke into the property near her house, someone tried to follow her child, and Slonková received threatening emails. At the time, Slonková was working on several serious cases, according to media reports. The police assigned security to Slonková and her family and caught the suspected man a few weeks later. The man reportedly had a criminal record, and according to the journalist, was unable to sufficiently explain his actions. According to media reports, the man had said that he wanted "to collaborate" with the journalist.

In October 2025, the Police of the Czech Republic issued a public statement in support of Deník N journalist Zdislava Pokorná, who faced cyberbullying following her investigative articles concerning Filip Turek, a leading politician of the new parliamentary party Motoristé sobě.

In its statement, the Police declared: "On the one hand, there are the journalist's findings, which are of inherent

interest to us and which we are addressing; on the other hand, there are 'internet heroes' fighting against investigative journalism. We remind all actors that the online environment is of interest to us, we monitor it, and we certainly take no pleasure in the surprised expressions of aggressive posters when we appear at their doorsteps. [...] We have spoken with journalist Zdislava Pokorná, and she knows who to contact if necessary. However, this does not change the fact that threats against journalists due to their work are definitely unacceptable.” <https://x.com/PolicieCZ/status/1976991321027174596>

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

In April 2025, influential MP Radek Vondráček (ANO) submitted an unexpected proposal to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, which would have prohibited journalists from disclosing the identity of suspects and prosecuted persons in high-profile cases.

Currently, the legislation essentially stipulates that neither the police nor public authorities may disclose information enabling the identification of a prosecuted person prior to the indictment. The amendment proposed by the MP would have modified this wording to a stricter formulation stating that such information "must not be disclosed by anyone".

He presented his proposal only orally at a meeting of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies, which he chaired. Consequently, the text did not appear in the standard electronic system for amendments, was not discussed in advance, and was not consulted with any stakeholders, including media organizations. Nevertheless, with a single exception, it was supported by all members of the Committee across the political spectrum. <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-poslanci-vyrobili-nebezpecny-paskvil-chystany-nahubek-pro-novinare-i-verejnost-cupuji-odbornici-40516383>

The Czech Publishers Association, the Association for Internet Development, the Association of Online Publishers, the Czech National Committee of the International Press Institute, and the Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic objected to the planned proposal in a joint statement. <https://www.spir.cz/navrh-poslance-radka-vondracka-ohrozuje-svobodu-medii/> Reporters Without Borders (RSF) also took a critical stance.

The practical impact of this problematic proposal would be the criminalisation of journalists, bloggers, and even participants in online discussions. A secondary impact would be a "chilling effect" and self-censorship, discouraging the publication of information under the threat of up to five years of imprisonment.

The MP defended his proposal by stating that "there is a factual loophole in the law, and leaks and disclosures of personal data repeatedly occur in the Czech Republic." He argued that sensitive information leaks from investigation files to the media. Following strong media criticism, he withdrew his proposal and ceased to promote it. <https://www.lupa.cz/aktuality/vlivny-poslanec-ano-vzdal-nahubkovy-paragraf-chce-debatu-s-kritiky/> However, he was re-elected to the Chamber of Deputies in the October elections; it thus remains to be seen whether he will reintroduce the proposal.

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

Former Deputy Minister of Justice Antonín Stanislav sought a court-ordered apology for articles concerning his affairs published on the news portal Seznam Zprávy. However, instead of suing the publisher, he filed a lawsuit

directly against one of the authors, Lukáš Valášek. He demanded an apology for the journalist's post on social network X and his appearance on an episode of the editorial podcast "5:59", in which the reporter summarized the editorial findings.

However, the District Court for Prague 5 dismissed the defamation case, as did the appellate Municipal Court in Prague. "I perceive Mr. Stanislav's conduct as an attempt to pressure the journalist through a lawsuit which legal experts classify as a so-called SLAPP, the aim of which is, inter alia, to discourage journalists from publishing information and to burden them with baseless proceedings. The courts indirectly confirmed this view by dismissing the lawsuit with final effect," stated the journalist's attorney, Sebastian Mach. <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-kauzu-soud-zamitl-zalobu-byvaleho-namestka-stanislava-na-reportera-seznam-zprav-283876>

It is paradoxical that the official suing the journalist was an employee of the very same Ministry that provides guidance on its official website on how to counter SLAPPs. <https://msp.gov.cz/web/msp/ochrana-proti-slapp> At the legislative level, a government draft amendment to the Civil Procedure Code has been prepared to transpose Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings. The bill passed the inter-ministerial comment procedure in mid-October 2025 and has been ready for discussion by the Government of the Czech Republic since December 2025. However, as of January 2026, the process has not advanced. <https://odok.gov.cz/portal/veklep/material/ALBSDLNEPCL2/>

Threats of legal action against the media have also been issued by certain parties of the new government coalition. In October, the Motoristé sobě party announced that it would file a criminal complaint against Deník N and the authors of an article concerning the past of its MP, Filip Turek. Deník N reported that the former MEP and (since October 2025) Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Filip Turek, had repeatedly published openly racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks on Facebook, as well as numerous references to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. According to the newspaper, the politician also downplayed a case of a racist arson attack on a Roma family from 2009. <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/motoriste-trvaji-na-vyslani-poslancu-do-vlady-daji-trestni-oznameni-na-denik-n/2733266>

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

5000 character(s) maximum

In early September 2025, one month prior to the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic, a coalition of national and international press freedom organizations, led by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), presented ten priority recommendations to Czech political parties. The proposed measures aim to prevent disproportionate restrictions on media freedom and access to information, enhance the protection of Czech and exiled journalists, strengthen the independence of public service media, and create fair and transparent conditions for the functioning of the media market. <https://rsf.org/en/czechia-rsf-coalition-call-political-parties-curb-press-freedom-restrictions-ahead-general-election>

The recommendations, developed through consultations with experts and stakeholders, drew inspiration from European Union legislation, particularly the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), as well as standards established by the Council of Europe. The proposed measures addressed tackling attacks on journalists, preventing restrictions on press freedom, protecting media from SLAPPs, respecting the role of self-regulation, ensuring effective protection of the confidentiality of journalistic sources and communications, improving access to public information and political events, protecting media copyright, strengthening the independence and prominence of public service media, creating suitable conditions for a diverse private media market, and supporting press freedom in non-democratic countries.

The response from the addressed political parties was formal and rather tepid. The outgoing coalition parties offered assurances of their support for media freedom, while opposition entities did not respond at all.

The newly formed government, consisting of the populist ANO movement, the nationalist Freedom and Direct Democracy party (SPD), and the right-wing populist Motoristé sobě party, presented a Policy Statement

announcing its intention to abolish television and radio licence fees financing public service media. <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/vlada/programove-prohlaseni/programove-prohlaseni-vlady-224629/> The statement did not clearly specify how these financial resources would be replaced; however, funding from the state budget, which is already running a deep deficit, is assumed.

In connection with the planned changes, concerning statements have emerged from leading representatives of the new government, such as the Vice-Chair of the Chamber of Deputies Media Committee, Jaroslav Foldyna (SPD), who openly speaks of the ruling parties' dissatisfaction with Czech Television's news coverage as the reason for the changes. <https://www.lupa.cz/aktuality/ministr-klempir-redukci-verejnopravnich-medii-zatim-nemame-v-umyslu/> There are also indications that the new government could substantially reduce public service media budgets, for example, by exempting seniors from paying fees. This would mean that Czech Television would suddenly lose 47% of its budget, and it would have a similarly significant structural impact on the budget of Czech Radio. <https://www.lupa.cz/aktuality/reditel-ceske-televize-varuje-pred-rusenim-poplatku-pro-seniory-bylo-by-likvidacni/>

The legal dispute between Seznam.cz, the publisher of the news portal Seznam Zprávy, and the Office for the Protection of Competition (ÚOHS) continues. In May 2025, the Regional Court in Brno ruled that the Office had acted unlawfully when it conducted an on-site inspection at the company's headquarters in October 2024. <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/judikat/ksbr/31-a-83-2024-152> According to Seznam.cz, the company had been in regular contact with the Office's representatives for several years, providing full cooperation. The sudden on-site inspection occurred just two months after Seznam Zprávy published an article regarding the contacts of the ÚOHS Chairman with a businessman indicted in a subsidy fraud scandal. In a press release issued by the Office at the time, Seznam.cz was accused of publishing articles tendentiously because the ÚOHS was taking an interest in the firm. <https://blog.seznam.cz/2025/05/mistni-setreni-uohs-ve-spolecnosti-seznam-cz-bylo-nezakonne-konstatoval-soud/>

The Regional Court in Brno also ruled on another lawsuit filed by Seznam.cz against the Antimonopoly Office. According to the judgment, the ÚOHS also committed an unlawful act in this case by disclosing non-public information regarding the ongoing administrative proceedings against Seznam.cz. The ÚOHS has filed a complaint against the judgments of the Regional Court in Brno, which must be decided by the Supreme Administrative Court.

Czechia is ranked 10 out of 180 countries in RSF's World Press Freedom Index for 2025.

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding the system of checks and balances (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

A. The process for preparing, enacting and implementing laws

[single market relevance] Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'*/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 in the preparatory, the parliamentary and implementation phase (including guidance on how to implement legislation)

** This includes also the consultation of social partners*

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] 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

[single market relevance] Safeguards to ensure legal certainty, the stability of the legal framework and non-discrimination.

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 (including effective access to relevant data) 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 year

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Safeguards to ensure the effective independence of supervisory and regulatory authorities with a direct impact on economic operators such as national economic oversight, enforcement and competition authorities

C. Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

[single market relevance] Transparency of administrative decisions and sanctions (incl. their publication and rules on collection of related data) and respect of the good administration principle (including the obligation of the administration to give reasons for decisions)

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] 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

[single market relevance] Safeguards (other than judicial review) regarding decisions or inaction of administrative authorities, including remedies (e.g. administrative review)

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] 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

[single market relevance] 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

Oversight, including by courts, of the use of intrusive surveillance software by national authorities

5000 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, transparency and dissolution rules)

5000 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 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

Cross-pillar elements: cross-border rule of law issues related to the Single Market

If there are any significant challenges concerning the Single Market you have been facing in a cross-border context relating to any of the four pillars of the report, including for example issues with market access and the conditions for economic activities, that you would like to highlight, please do so here.

Given the cross-cutting nature of this question, it is included as a separate section in the questionnaire. Information collected under this question will however be integrated under the relevant existing pillar(s) of the Report.

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

Contact

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