

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

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

In the 2025 Rule of Law Report, one recommendation was addressed to France concerning media freedom and pluralism, namely to “complete ongoing reforms to improve the transparency of media ownership, in particular complex shareholding structures, building on the existing legal safeguards”. In follow-up to this recommendation, Arcom, the French regulatory authority for audiovisual and digital communication, has published a public database dedicated to the ownership of audiovisual media services. This database provides, for each media outlet, detailed information including the name and type of media service, the legal name of the company, its legal form, the address of the registered office of the service provider, as well as the identity of its direct and indirect owners. This initiative contributes to greater transparency.

However, Reporters Without Borders is not aware, at this stage, of any comparable project to establish an extended and comprehensive public database covering ownership structures in the print press and online news media sectors. Transparency requirements and public access to ownership information remain uneven across different segments of the media landscape.

Sources :

<https://www.arcom.fr/nous-connaitre-notre-institution/regulation-europeenne-et-internationale/base-de-donnees-sur-la-transparence-des-medias>

A. Media authorities and bodies

(Cf. Article 30 of Directive 2018/1808)

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

5000 character(s) maximum

No substantive changes to report. For further information, please consult RSF's contributions to the previous Rule of Law reports.

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

No substantive changes to report. For further information, please consult RSF's contributions to the previous Rule of Law reports.

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

5000 character(s) maximum

No substantive changes to report. For further information, please consult RSF's contributions to the previous Rule of Law reports.

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

No substantive changes to report. For further information, please consult RSF's contributions to the previous Rule of Law reports.

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

Editorial independence

Issues related to editorial independence and media concentration have continued to receive particular attention at parliamentary level. Nevertheless, no significant progress has been achieved.

A draft bill building on the conclusions of the États généraux de l'Information, a national consultation conducted between October 2023 and June 2024, remains under preparation. The bill is expected to be submitted to Parliament in 2026 and may include new safeguards aimed at strengthening editorial independence.

With regard to developments in practice during the year, some positive cases were recorded. For instance, on 13/11/2025 the management of BFMTV, RMC, and BFM Business signed a new editorial ethics charter with their newsrooms, with the stated objective of strengthening journalists' independence and reinforcing professional standards.

However, such initiatives remain very rare and uneven across the media sector. In this regard, the acquisition of Challenges magazine by the group LVMH officialised on the 30/12/2025 illustrates pertaining threats related to editorial independence, as Bernard Arnault, the owner of LVMH, reportedly refused to endorse the newsroom's internal editorial charter (<https://rsf.org/en/sale-french-magazine-challenges-luxury-conglomerate-lvmh-rsf-and-unions-launch-double-offensive>).

Independence of heads of management and members of the governing boards of PSM, Financial and operational independence, plurality of information and opinions

Legislative proposals

Debates on reforming the governance of public service media continued during the reporting period. Following its rejection at first reading by the National Assembly in July 2024, the Senate adopted, on 11/07/2025, a bill aimed at reforming the governance structure of public audiovisual media.

While the public audiovisual sector in France is currently composed of six separate entities, the proposal provides for three of them, namely Radio France, France Télévisions and INA, to be brought together under a single holding structure. The bill further specifies that the primary source of funding for public service media should be a public, tax-based resource that is sufficient, sustainable and predictable. In this context, the financing mechanism based on the allocation of a share of value-added tax (VAT) revenues—introduced on a provisional basis in 2022 to replace the former licence fee—was made permanent by a law adopted on 13 December 2024. The proposal is expected to be debated by the French National Assembly in the coming months.

As in its contribution to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, Reporters Without Borders calls to reiterated the need to establish a funding model for public service media that is stable, predictable and sustainable, in line with the requirements set out in Article 5 of the EMFA. In this context, it has notably called for the exploration of alternative financing options, including the introduction of a levy on digital platforms.

Criticism of the public service broadcaster

Public service broadcasting has been the subject of significant criticism from both the media and the political sphere, notably concerning its alleged lack of impartiality and its budgetary management. On 28/10/2025, a parliamentary inquiry committee on the funding, functioning and neutrality of public service audiovisual media was therefore established by the National Assembly, at the initiative of the right-wing party Union des droites

pour la République. A number of senior executives from public audiovisual media companies, as well as journalists and RSF, have already been heard, and further hearings are scheduled to take place during the first quarter of 2026. While justified criticism is normal, this inquiry commission is taking place in the context of a worrying media and political offensive against public service media, which in France, as elsewhere, are essential to citizens' right to information

Sources

<https://www.vie-publique.fr/loi/289882-reforme-audiovisuel-public-holding-fusion-proposition-de-loi-lafon-dati>

<https://rsf.org/fr/financement-de-l-audiovisuel-public-en-france-rsf-d%C3%A9ploie-une-discussion-l%C3%A9gislatif-dict%C3%A9-par-l>

Legal provisions and procedures applying to media service providers

On 19/02/2025, the Conseil d'État upheld ARCOM's December 2024 decision not to grant broadcasting frequencies to the channels C8 and NRJ12 as part of the renewal of the allocation of digital terrestrial television frequencies.

On 14/10/2025, MP Taillé-Polian proposed, through a member's bill, to reform the control of concentration movements in the media and publishing sector in order to prevent the formation of monopolies. She proposes assessing each media group's overall "power of influence" across all media channels, including print, audiovisual, digital media and online platforms (https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/17/textes/l17b1925_proposition-loi.pdf).

[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

Arcom, the French regulatory authority for audiovisual and digital communication, has published a public database dedicated to the ownership of audiovisual media services. This database provides, for each media outlet, detailed information including the name and type of media service, the legal name of the company, its legal form, the address of the registered office of the service provider, as well as the identity of its direct and indirect owners. This initiative contributes to greater transparency.

However, Reporters Without Borders is not aware, at this stage, of any comparable project to establish an extended and comprehensive public database covering ownership structures in the print press and online news media sectors. Transparency requirements and public access to ownership information remain uneven across different segments of the media landscape.

Sources :

<https://www.arcom.fr/nous-connaître-notre-institution/regulation-europeenne-et-internationale/base-de-donnees-sur-la-transparence-des-medias>

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 2025, protecting the confidentiality of journalists' sources continues to be one of the priorities in the fight for press freedom in France.

One of the most emblematic and concerning cases is that of Ariane Lavrilleux, a journalist who investigated

France's arms sales. In 2023, she was subjected to significant pressure from the authorities, including house searches, police custody and legal intimidation, after refusing to disclose her sources. The case remains ongoing, as the investigating judge in charge of the matter decided on 23/10/2025 to appeal the decision to dismiss the case (non-lieu) from which the journalist had benefited.

On 01/07/2025, journalist Enzo Rabouy was arrested and placed in police custody just two weeks after covering militant action on the sidelines of the Paris Air Show (Salon du Bourget).

In response to these developments, Reporters Without Borders, with 131 organisations, have called on the Ministers of Justice and the Interior to better safeguard the protections of journalistic sources, notably thanks to: stricter limits on the conditions on which source confidentiality may be lifted, which is currently possible in the vaguely defined case of "overriding public interest." ;

a requirement that any lifting of source confidentiality be authorised by an independent judge ;

an extension of source confidentiality to media collaborators, filmmakers, and authors of investigative books or documentaries ;

a legal remedy enabling all journalists to challenge violations of source confidentiality ;

better legal recourse and tougher sanctions for breaches of source confidentiality.

Sources :

<https://rsf.org/en/rsf-urges-french-authorities-immediately-release-investigative-journalist>

https://www.blast-info.fr/articles/2025/un-journaliste-interpelle-et-place-en-garde-a-vue-pour-avoir-couvert-une-mobilisation-contre-le-salon-du-bourget--EtNBX8uQJSKd2r_mGOx2Q

<https://rsf.org/en/france-rsf-and-131-organisations-call-government-take-immediate-action-violations-source>

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Journalists have continued to be the target of police violence as well as physical attacks by protesters. During the year, the organisation documented several confirmed violations of press freedom in the context of protests, notably involving physical obstruction by law enforcement:

on 01/05/2025, at least three journalists were assaulted in Paris ;

on 10/09/2025, the organisation recorded seven cases of journalists being physically obstructed by law enforcement officers, including one case involving choking ;

on 17/11/2025, at least two journalists were assaulted by police officers while covering a blockade action at an industrial facility.

These incidents appear to run counter to the Schéma national du maintien de l'ordre (SNMO), adopted in 2021 by the French Ministry of the Interior, which guarantees journalists the right to cover law enforcement operations and to be protected by security forces while doing so. Furthermore, on 04/09/2025, RSF issued an alert regarding the publication of a new operational framework for law enforcement during urban protests, the Schéma national des violences urbaines (SNVU). This document seriously undermines previous progress made in protecting journalists covering demonstrations.

Sources :

<https://rsf.org/en/france-paris-international-workers-day-protest-marked-police-violence-towards-journalists>

<https://rsf.org/en/france-press-freedom-hampered-police-violence-during-block-everything-protests>

<https://rsf.org/fr/france-la-couverture-m%C3%A9diatique-d-une-op%C3%A9ration-de-blocage-contre-un-g%C3%A9ant-agrochimique-asphyxi%C3%A9>

<https://rsf.org/fr/modification-du-cadre-de-protection-des-journalistes-en-manifestation-en-france-ni-la-m%C3%A9thode-ni-le>

<https://snpps.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/SNVU.pdf>

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

An increasing number of journalists report difficulties in accessing administrative documents, often due to refusals by the relevant public authorities. While appeals may be lodged with the Commission d'accès aux documents administratifs (CADA), an independent administrative authority, procedures are frequently lengthy and its opinions are not legally binding. Journalists must therefore initiate court proceedings in order to obtain access to the requested information. These judicial procedures can be time-consuming and burdensome, and may have a dissuasive effect, preventing some journalists from investigating matters of public interest. As such, they constitute a significant obstacle to journalists' work and to the public's right to information. For instance, journalists from the investigative media outlet Splann!, based in Brittany, have reported repeated refusals by regional hospitals to grant them access to certain administrative documents.

Sources :

<https://splann.org/enquete-hopital-transparence-documents-administratifs/>

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

Journalists in France continue to face legal actions that raise concerns regarding the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), which may have a chilling effect on investigative journalism and public-interest reporting. Although limited quantitative data are available, numerous journalists and observers report an increase in the use of SLAPPs, particularly targeting independent media outlets. For instance, the investigative news website StreetPress has been targeted by 13 complaints, including 12 for defamation. Concerns have also been raised regarding legal proceedings initiated by the actor Gérard Depardieu against the production company Hikari and the public broadcaster France Télévisions, following investigative reporting broadcast as part of the programme Complément d'enquête.

In this context, Reporters Without Borders has reiterated its call on the French legislator to urgently transpose the European anti-SLAPP Directive, adopted on 11/04/2024, into domestic law. RSF has notably stressed the importance of a broad definition of abusive lawsuits, covering both civil and criminal proceedings.

On 13/02/2025, the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH), the French National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), published an opinion in which it argues in favour of an ambitious implementation extending to cases of purely national SLAPPs, as well as to SLAPP cases falling under criminal law. This opinion also recommends amending the Civil Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in order to ensure effective protection against SLAPPs, in particular by providing for fines against claimants, a mechanism for the early dismissal of proceedings, as well as the creation of a nationwide monitoring and recording system. As a member of the CNCDH's civil society branch, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) was involved in the drafting of this opinion from the outset.

In an investigation published on 18/03/2025, RSF has also highlighted cases of legal proceedings linked to confidentiality clauses imposed on journalists upon leaving media outlets acquired by the group controlled by Vincent Bolloré (Vivendi group). The scope of such clauses is often disproportionate, effectively imposing a duty of silence on journalists and placing corporate interests above the public's right to information. For instance, a former investigative journalist at Canal+ was convicted in February 2024 on the basis of such confidentiality

clauses and was ordered to pay EUR 151,000 in damages after publicly denouncing the practices of the Bolloré group in an investigative documentary. The organisation considers this case illustrative of the deterrent effect that overly broad confidentiality clauses may have on journalistic freedom and whistleblowing.

Sources :

<https://rsf.org/en/french-media-outlet-streetpress-gagged-13-lawsuits-urgent-need-anti-slapp-law-france>

<https://rsf.org/en/france-g%C3%A9rard-depardieu-lawsuit-against-public-broadcaster-violates-press-freedom>

<https://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/2025-02/A%20-%202025%20-%202%20-%20CNCDH%20-%20Avis%20Proc%C3%A9dures-b%C3%A2illons%2C%20f%C3%A9vrier%202025.pdf>

<https://rsf.org/en/rsf-investigation-confidentiality-clauses-silencing-french-journalists>

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Several concerning developments for media pluralism occurred in 2025, namely a trend towards further concentration of the media in the hands of a few actors, as well as breaches of the legal provisions requiring internal pluralism within audiovisual media.

Trends towards further concentration in the media sector continued in 2025, raising serious concerns for media pluralism. The growing concentration of private-sector media groups in the hands of a small number of wealthy businessmen remains a major issue. In September 2025, billionaire shipping magnate Rodolphe Saadé, who already owns the daily newspaper La Provence, La Tribune, and the audiovisual group BFMTV–RMC, further expanded his media portfolio by acquiring the online video outlet Brut.

Media concentration is particularly pronounced in the economic and financial press. In this segment, the LVMH group—already controlling 75 companies across six business sectors—significantly strengthened its position in 2025. On 2 July 2025, Bernard Arnault, owner of LVMH, acquired the Bey Médias group, which publishes two leading economic daily newspapers, L’Opinion and L’Agefi. Later that year, in December 2025, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), together with several journalists’ unions (SNJ, SNME-CFDT and SNJ-CFDT), issued an alert regarding the announced acquisition by LVMH of the economic magazine Challenges, warning of its potential impact on editorial independence and pluralism.

Concerns regarding respect of pluralism also relate to compliance with pluralism obligations in broadcasting. Under a 1986 law, respect for pluralism in France requires that all “currents of thought and opinion” be represented in radio and television programmes, and that on-air debates remain balanced. This requirement refers to internal pluralism, the diversity of viewpoints within a single media outlet, as opposed to external pluralism, understood as the diversity of outlets within the broader media landscape. Following a complaint filed by Reporters Without Borders, the Council of State instructed the broadcasting regulator Arcom in February 2024 to ensure effective enforcement of internal pluralism obligations among broadcasters.

In an investigation published in November 2025, RSF has highlighted that the continuous news channel CNews was found to be in blatant breach of these rules, raising further concerns regarding editorial balance and pluralism.

Sources :

https://www.lemonde.fr/economie-francaise/article/2025/09/12/le-media-brut-rachete-par-cma-cgm_6640603_1656968.html

<https://rsf.org/en/sale-french-magazine-challenges-luxury-conglomerate-lvmh-rsf-and-unions-launch-double-offensive>

<https://rsf.org/en/france-press-freedom-hampered-police-violence-during-block-everything-protests>

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000512205>

<https://rsf.org/en/how-french-channel-cnews-cheating-its-way-out-new-pluralism-rules-broadcasters>

France is ranked 25 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

rule-of-law-network@ec.europa.eu