

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

Lithuanian Bar Association (Lietuvos Advokatūra)

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

www.advokatura.lt

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

REG 4739930101077-51

* 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

PAULIUS

Surname

Email Address of the organisation

paulius.griciunas@advokatura.lt

* 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

Year 2025, unfortunately, it should be seen in Lithuania as a year of denial of the principle of the rule of law and favourable to corrupt acts.

1. The shadow of political corruption

This concerns exclusively the political level. First, following the Seimas (National Parliament) elections on 30 October 2024, the chairwoman of the winning party, V. Blinkevičiūtė, stated that she would not serve as the country's Prime Minister due to her "state of health". However, she had previously publicly promised several times that if the party won the elections and were allowed to form the Government, she would be Prime Minister. For this reason, a Lithuanian lawyer sought to file a lawsuit in court for fraudulent advertising, misleading voters, and violating legitimate expectations. Still, the courts did not consider his case.

Accordingly, another person, G. Paluckas, who had been found guilty by the Supreme Court in 2012 of a corruption-related offence, became Prime Minister. However, as the media repeatedly reported on his past activities and the Prime Minister's conduct, he resigned at the end of July 2025. Moreover, the press reported that, as of mid-2025, Mr G. Paluckas had not paid part of the fine imposed by the court.

Following the resignation of the Prime Minister, on 8 August 2025, the day the party that won the elections announced its new candidate, one of the two candidates (the then Minister of Transport and Communications, E. Sabutis) withdrew his candidacy. Soon thereafter, an indictment for his abuse of office was filed. However, similar episodes of abuse are related to the unrevoked immunities of the members of the Seimas belonging to the ruling coalition.

Moreover, amendments to the Criminal Code were later adopted, which retroactively eased criminal liability for abuse of office. After the President of the Republic vetoed these amendments, the Seimas rejected the veto. A group of members of the Seimas appealed to the Constitutional Court, disputing the legality of these amendments, first of all, because the members of the Seimas, to whom the allegations have been made, were both the drafters of these amendments and voted for these amendments. The court accepted this request for consideration.

At the end of 2025, allegations of corruption crimes were filed against A. Silickienė, a member of the Central Electoral Commission, who was a legal adviser to the then Speaker of the Seimas, S. Skvernelis, until September 2025.

2. The challenges to the principle of the rule of law

In mid-2025, a tax reform was adopted, which took effect on 1 January 2026. More than 200 business organisations have appealed to the President to initiate a dialogue on the upcoming tax changes. Also, when submitting the draft of this reform to the Seimas, virtually no impact assessment was conducted.

For this reason, a public appeal was prepared by the Lithuanian Bar Association, and over 5700 people signed this appeal (petition) within 11 days. The Lithuanian Bar Association prepared this appeal to clarify that the additional funds collected would be allocated to national defence. However, the proposal was not approved by the Seimas.

Ultimately, it was decided to prepare an impact assessment for the Seimas. Still, it was carried out in violation of the procedure of laws and agreed in advance on the conclusions to be presented (this became known when the Chairman of the Committee, A. Sysas, openly coordinated the conclusions necessary for him at the meeting of the Committee on Budget and Finance, and the microphone was not switched off).

An example of legal nihilism is the State Matura Examination Evaluation Committees' decision to add 10 points to the results of graduates' matura examinations. However, it is particularly regrettable that, although the Prosecutor General's Office, after conducting an investigation, found that such protocol decisions of the meeting of the evaluation committees "contradict the imperative provisions of the law, the constitutional principles of legality and legal certainty", it decided not to bring an action in court.

Another significant problem of the rule of law became apparent when the Seimas decided to amend the Law on Radio and Television of Lithuania as a matter of urgency. There were no objective reasons for the urgent procedure. Thus, again, an attempt was made to avoid an impact assessment and lengthy discussions. The Bar Council also made a public statement regarding these violations of the legislative procedure.

Finally, the further politicisation of the Constitutional Court warrants mention. In October 2025, the Seimas appointed J. Sabatauskas, the Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs of the ruling majority, as a judge of the Constitutional Court. Representatives of the academic community began to question whether the appointee had the requisite education for the position of judge. A group of Seimas members appealed to the Constitutional Court regarding this.

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

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled in *Misiūnas vs Lithuania* (Application no. 38687/22), acknowledging that the national courts did not grant a defence to the former judge in order to appeal against the decision of the President of the Republic of Lithuania not to appoint this person as a judge again.

In 2015, the petitioner was appointed a judge of the Vilnius City District Court. Subsequently, from December 2016 to August 2019, the applicant served as Minister of the Interior and from August 2019 to December 2020 as the Vice-Minister of Defence. In December 2020, the petitioner, pursuant to the Law on Courts, submitted a request to be reappointed as a Vilnius City District Judge. The National Courts Administration informed the petitioner that the petition had been transferred to the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania for consideration. In public announcements in January 2021, state officials, including the President of the Republic of Lithuania, stated that the applicant would not be reappointed as a judge. No official decision has been made regarding the petitioner's request to be reappointed as a judge. By its final ruling of April 2022, the Supreme Court, based on the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, agreed with the courts that considered the case that the petitioner's claim to oblige the President of the Republic of Lithuania to appoint the petitioner to the position of a judge was not assigned to any court for consideration. However, according to the Supreme Court of Lithuania, this does not preclude a person who believes that state power has been improperly exercised from seeking compensation for the damage suffered as a result in court. After the Supreme Court of Lithuania issued its ruling, the petitioner did not remedy the deficiencies in the claim and did not specify the amount of compensation for property damage to be awarded. Therefore, the court of first instance deemed the claim not filed and returned it to the petitioner.

In September 2022, the petitioner resubmitted an application for re-appointment as a Vilnius City District Judge. The President of the Republic of Lithuania decided not to appoint the petitioner to the office of judge. The national courts refused to accept the petitioner's request to assess the President of the Republic of Lithuania's decision not to appoint the petitioner to the office of judge. Because the petitioner did not indicate in the claim the amount of compensation for property damage to be awarded, the courts held that the claim for property damage was not filed.

First, the ECtHR drew attention to the fact that, after the rejection of the petitioner's first and second applications for reappointment to the office of a judge, no official decision of the President of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted and no official reasons were given why, in the opinion of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the petitioner did not meet the requirements. In this regard, the ECtHR held that the office of a minister was only a position which the petitioner had already held and which, according to the Law on Courts, would not in itself appear to be incompatible with the reputational requirements of persons seeking to hold the office of judge.

Secondly, the ECtHR, taking into account the reasoning of the national courts, noted that the factual and legal context surrounding the President of the Republic of Lithuania's actions would not be assessed by the national courts when examining the petitioner's application for compensation for material damage.

Thirdly, the ECtHR found that the national courts did not assess the applicant's situation as a whole but examined his complaints separately. The national courts held that the petitioner should have initiated proceedings by seeking compensation for the damage caused by his nonappointment to the office of a judge. Still, the courts did not assess the essence of the petitioner's complaint, i.e., the petitioner's claim regarding the lack of effective control over the President of the Republic of Lithuania's discretion.

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

First, the limitation on the autonomy of the Lithuanian Bar Association (hereinafter - the Bar) and the

professional community, particularly their dependence on the Minister of Justice, has not changed since the beginning of 2025. At the end of 2025, the Bar prepared and submitted amendments (drafts) to the Law on the Bar for informal review. In these amendments, the Bar proposes that the Minister of Justice not be authorised to appoint members of the Court of Honour of Advocates. If the proposals were accepted, the Minister of Justice would also no longer have the right to initiate disciplinary proceedings against lawyers. The Minister of Justice could apply to the Bar to initiate disciplinary proceedings, but would not retain the privileged position it currently holds.

Second, in September of 2025, the Parliament adopted the Law on Public Administration, which regulates that the Bar, in its primary functions (such as admission to the Bar, Bar exams, lawyer ID, etc.), must comply with the terms and conditions set not by the special Law on the Bar, but by the general Law on Public Administration. Please note that the Bar opposed these amendments because the Law on Public Administration does not apply to the Bar, as it is not a public administration entity. The amendments (drafts) the Bar proposed (see paragraph above) provide for the implementation of the Law on Public Administration in a way that would not interfere with the Bar's independence. The initial response to these amendments (drafts) is expected in January 2026.

Thirdly, there is a growing tendency for advocates to be fined or threatened with fines for filing recusal motions against judges. In our view, this situation is cause for serious concern, and, except in cases where the right of recusal could be abused, advocates should not be penalised for making procedural motions in a case.

Fourth, the requirement for lawyers to submit special medical certificates, as noted in the responses from the beginning of 2025, remains in effect. The Bar considers this requirement to be discriminatory. Judges or prosecutors who fall ill must submit a medical certificate of incapacity for work, which automatically excuses them from work and professional duties. Meanwhile, advocates must submit special medical certificates confirming that they are unable to attend in person or participate remotely. This means that, for example, a judge who falls ill with COVID-19 will not report to work and will not hold a court hearing. Under this regulation, a lawyer must participate in the court hearing remotely, regardless of their ability to perform their professional duties.

Fifth, advocates' concerns rise from practices such as the digital copy of advocates' devices seized during criminal proceedings, the video recordings of interactions with clients in detention facilities, and the alleged use of broad language in search warrants, allowing for the seizure of documents and materials that can be covered by professional secrecy, as well as information leaks. Moreover, there have been instances in which advocates were questioned about criminal acts they became aware of while practising their profession. In this way, law enforcement authorities seek to obtain information that is protected by the attorney-client privilege. For example, in 2025, law enforcement demonstrated "ingenuity" by summoning the client's advocate in case A to testify as a witness during a formal interrogation regarding circumstances unrelated to those being examined in the court case (e.g., in case B). If the advocate refuses to testify, this is recorded and the advocate in case A is removed from the legal defence because he was questioned as a witness in case B. The courts supported and justified this practice.

Sixth, advocates were highly dissatisfied with the court president's individual decision to require that persons and their belongings be searched upon entering the Vilnius City District Court. However, neither the judges themselves, nor court employees, nor armed officers are searched. These measures were implemented to ensure judges' safety. The Bar supports the goal of protecting judges but questions why advocates are being searched when, over the country's entire period of independence (more than 35 years), there has not been a single incident in which advocates posed any threat to judges. In the opinion of the Bar, such checks must be established by law, not by order of the president of the court. Such checks must be non-discriminatory and, ultimately, conducted by police officers, not security service employees.

Finally, persons detained in police custody may under no circumstances meet confidentially with their lawyers. All detainees' conversations are recorded, and, according to the Bar knowledge, audio recordings may also be made. This is a particularly gross violation of both the presumption of innocence and the right to legal counsel,

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

The Lithuanian Bar Association (hereinafter - the Bar) has consistently raised concerns about the adequacy of payments for state-guaranteed legal aid and their direct impact on the accessibility of justice. This issue has been identified as a priority in the European Commission's Rule of Law Country Chapter for Lithuania for four consecutive years.

State-guaranteed legal aid constitutes a core element of access to courts, particularly for vulnerable persons. However, inadequate payment levels and strict payment restrictions directly affect the quality, sustainability and real accessibility of legal assistance. Low payments undermine legal aid providers' ability to devote sufficient time and resources to cases, creating structural barriers to effective access to justice.

Practical experience further demonstrates that the formal entitlement to state-guaranteed legal aid does not automatically translate into effective representation. Legal aid lawyers are routinely required to perform a significant amount of unpaid work, including travel time, brief client consultations, telephone calls with investigators or detention facilities, and procedural preparation that exceeds statutory limits. These elements are either excluded from payment altogether or subject to strict rounding rules, resulting in a substantial discrepancy between the work performed and the time compensated.

A limited positive development has been the introduction of a doubled tariff in specific specialised fields, applicable to lawyers who have completed specific training (e.g. cases involving minors). In practice, however, this mechanism has been applied inconsistently. The State Guaranteed Legal Aid Service unilaterally restricted the application of the double tariff to selected categories of cases without sufficient justification. Following an intervention by the Bar, the Ministry of Justice acknowledged the error and agreed to compensate for unpaid fees.

In addition, while specific administrative improvements have been introduced, including efforts to simplify the Legal Aid Information System and pilot measures to balance the workload of legal aid providers, these changes have not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in payments. Moreover, administrative requirements imposed on legal aid advocates remain disproportionately burdensome, requiring extensive reporting and documentation that is not compensated for as legal work.

Furthermore, the payment framework fails to reflect the real structure of legal aid work. Short but necessary actions, such as multiple telephone consultations, communication with detained clients, or coordination with investigators, are frequently not compensated due to minimum time limits or rounding rules. This

disproportionately affects criminal defence advocates, whose work is characterised by fragmented yet essential legal actions that are crucial for safeguarding the rights of suspects and accused persons.

The data presents the gross hourly payment (before taxes; effective tax burden approx. 40%) for legal aid advocates from 2020 and 2026:

Year / Hourly remuneration (EUR)

2020 / 16

2021 / 18

2022 / 20

2023 / 20

2024 / 25

2025 / 25

2026 / 25

When assessed on an effective hourly basis, taking into account unpaid travel time, preparation exceeding statutory limits, and the exclusion of certain activities from payment, the real net income of legal aid advocates is significantly lower than the nominal hourly rates suggest. This gap between formal payment and actual compensation further worsens the unattractiveness of legal aid work, particularly for experienced practitioners. According to the Bar, payment for legal aid is inadequate. Moreover, advocates with annual income exceeding EUR 45,000 are also subject to value-added tax (VAT). As a result, advocates providing legal aid services may receive different net payments solely on the basis of their VAT status, despite performing identical work. The Bar has repeatedly addressed the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance with proposals to regulate VAT in the context of legal aid payment. However, these proposals have not been taken into account. Furthermore, the legal aid system applies strict payment limits, setting a maximum number of hours payable by the State. For example, in cases concerning serious and very serious criminal offences, the State reimburses no more than 11 hours of legal aid during the entire pre-trial investigation. The preparation of an appeal is limited to 6 hours. Any additional legal assistance must therefore be provided on a pro bono basis. Such limitations are particularly problematic in complex cases, where effective defence requires sustained legal involvement over extended periods. In practice, this significantly limits defence advocates' ability to provide effective, comprehensive representation.

The existence of strict limits provides a purely formalistic approach to defence.

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

In May 2025, the Lithuanian Bar received a letter from the Minister of Justice regarding the Strategic Anticorruption Guidelines prepared by the STT (Special Investigation Service, law enforcement agency responsible for tackling corruption). In these Guidelines, each Minister of the Government was instructed on specific vulnerable areas within their areas of political responsibility. The Minister of Justice referred part of these Guidelines to the Bar for consultation and opinion. The Bar was surprised that the STT pointed out the examination procedure as an artificial barrier to admission to the Bar. The Bar Council met with the Deputy Director of STT responsible for these Guidelines. It described a legal dispute in court several years ago, in which an STT agent who failed the Bar exam claimed that the examination procedure was unfair and inappropriate, and that his evaluations were incorrect. However, after reviewing the examination recordings, the court found that the Bar Examination Commission acted reasonably and that the applicant failed the exam. Later, this applicant became a judge. On the contrary, the Bar raised doubts about the STT employees' reasonable success rate on the judges' exam.

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

A. Media authorities and bodies

(Cf. Article 30 of Directive 2018/1808)

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Conditions and procedures for the appointment and dismissal of the head / members of the collegiate body of media regulatory authorities and bodies

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Safeguards against state / political interference, in particular:

- safeguards to ensure editorial independence of media (private and public)
- specific safeguards for the independence of heads of management and members of the governing boards of public service media (e.g. related to appointment, dismissal), safeguards for their financial and operational independence (e.g. related to reporting obligations and the allocation of resources) and safeguards for plurality of information and opinions
- **[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

[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

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

Rules and practices guaranteeing journalists' independence and safety, including as regards protection of journalistic sources and communications, referring also, if applicable, to follow-up given to alerts lodged with the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Access to information and public documents by public at large and journalists (incl. transparency authorities where they exist, procedures, costs/fees, timeframes, administrative/judicial review of decisions, execution of decisions by public authorities, possible obstacles related to the classification of information)

5000 character(s) maximum

Lawsuits (incl. SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation) and convictions against journalists (incl. defamation cases) and measures taken to safeguard against manifestly unfounded and abusive lawsuits

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

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

