

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

Expert Forum Association (EFOR)

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://expertforum.ro/>

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

539423895363-93

* 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

Laura

Surname

Ştefan

Email Address of the organisation

office@expertforum.ro

* 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

Three new judges were appointed at the – with the media raising concerns with regard to Mr. Busuioc who used to be the Chairperson of the Court of Accounts (<https://romania.europalibera.org/a/numire-psd-mihai-busuioc-ccr/33454623.html>). At the end of the year, the appointment of both Mr. Busuioc and Mr. Dragos was challenged to court, the applicant claiming that they do not meet the legal and constitutional requirements. The case is still pending and suspicions are raising as to the connection between this challenge and the fact that the Constitutional Court struggles to reach a decision on the draft law that reduces the pensions of judges and prosecutors (<https://romania.europalibera.org/a/amanare-curtea-constitutionala/33650362.html>). The latter has been on the agenda of the Constitutional Court since late 2025.

Ms Lia Savonea was the only judge to run for the position of President of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. The procedure was started though the mandate of Ms. Corbu was not over and would not have been finished before the date when the new appointment had to be made. This strange procedure has been criticized and was seen as an attempt by Ms. Savonea to secure her power. Given her controversial background numerous voices have positioned themselves against her appointment in the highest position in the Judiciary. The President Dan has criticized the hastily procedure and the lack of a transparent and competitive process, but appointed Ms. Savonea, while acknowledging that he has had a conversation with her to voice his concerns. President Dan also expressed dissatisfaction with the efficiency of the Prosecution office, as well as of the National Anticorruption Directorate and stressed that the selection procedures for the new heads in the prosecution office will have at the center the need to provide concrete results. (<https://www.g4media.ro/nicutor-dan-nu-sunt-multumit-de-activitatea-procurorului-general-si-a-sefului-dna.html>)

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

The Government has adopted twice reforms on the pension system of judges and prosecutors. The first reform was invalidated by the constitutional court in the autumn because the Government has not allowed for 30 days for the Superior Council of Magistracy to review the draft law, the second attempt is still pending before the constitutional court ((<https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/reforma-pensiilor-magistratilor-ar-putea-ajunge-din-nou-la-ccr-iccj-decide-astazi-daca-va-sesiza-curtea.html>)). This power struggle is telling with regard to the resistance of the judiciary to reforms aimed at reducing the benefits of judges and prosecutors. It is important to underline that unlike other individuals holding public service functions, judges and prosecutors are allowed to demand and obtain their retirement certificates when they reach the seniority level, but, unlike others, they do not have to ask for their retirement to become effective. This means that in practice when magistrates reach the retirement seniority, they secure the value of the pension by obtaining a retirement certificate, while continuing to work. They alone will decide when to demand the enforcement of the retirement certificate and leave the judiciary. This brings into the system an element of uncertainty that is undermining any meaningful effort to build a human resource strategy for the judiciary. Indeed, at the High Court of Cassation and Justice more than 80% of judges hold such retirement certificates and may unilaterally decide to leave the system at any moment in the future. Other courts and prosecution services suffer from the same vulnerability. It follows that it is impossible to plan for any mitigation measure to replace magistrates that might decide to leave. It also follows that the

negotiation power of the judiciary in relation to other state powers is extremely high since at any point the Judiciary might threaten to block its operations with a tsunami of retirements (<https://expertforum.ro/en/the-priorities-of-the-romanian-justice-system-yesterday-and-today/>).

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

Allocation of cases in courts

5000 character(s) maximum

The Recorder documentary (Recorder, Captured justice, 2025, Romania, <https://recorder.ro/documentar-recorder-justitie-capturata/>) has exposed concerns regarding the manipulation of the random allocation system and the practice of replacing independent judges with more obedient colleagues in sensitive cases. The law provides for an audit to be performed of the random allocation system – to date no audit was ever performed. The minister of justice said he is considering opening a procurement process for this audit.

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

Recorder has released at the end of 2025 a documentary about the mechanisms used to hijack judicial processes (Recorder, Captured justice, 2025, Romania, <https://recorder.ro/documentar-recorder-justitie-capturata/>) stressing that the current head of the Supreme Court has built a network of power to influence the outcome of high-level corruption cases in courts. Several magistrates speak up in the documentary revealing their first-hand experience of being pressured and threatened. Expert Forum's views were also featured in the documentary. One of the magistrates interviewed in the documentary is the President of the Prosecutors' Section of the SCM, Claudiu Sandu. The magistrates explain the types of methods used by courts to dismiss high corruption cases such as that of former mayor of District 5 in Bucharest, Marian Vanghelie. For example, judges are taken out of panels by the decision of the president of the court and replaced with the purpose of making sure that cases are dismissed. The documentary also raised concerns about the management style of Mr. Voineag, the head of the National Anticorruption Directorate. The documentary was widely viewed and protests in the streets were organized to demand mitigation measures. While Ms. Savonea has dismissed the documentary, more than 700 magistrates have signed a public letter raising concerns about power capture in the judiciary (TVR Info, Romania, <https://tvrinfo.ro/creste-numarul-magistratilor-solidari-cu-judecatorii-laurentiu-besu-si-raluca-morosanu-mesajul-semnat-de-pest-650-de-magistrati-in-frunte-cu-laura-codruta-kovesi/>) . They requested protection against reprisals for colleagues who spoke out or acted as whistleblowers. Several professional associations of judges and prosecutors also issued public statements in response (Agerpres, Romania, <https://agerpres.ro/justitie/2025/12/11/amasp-orice-incercare-de-a-reduce-la-tacere-vocile-critice-din-magistratura---atac-la-adresa-statulu--1511212>), The Prime Minister has set-up a working group bringing together justice institutions and NGOs (Expert Forum is part of the group) to propose legislative measures to address the vulnerabilities identified. The position of Expert Forum is that actions should be phased in two stages – first urgencies should be addressed, later the other issues that have proven problematic should be discussed. Expert Forum believes that the urgencies are:

- Effective transparent and merit based competitions for all promotions (promotions of judges and prosecutors to higher courts and prosecution office, promotion to all management positions in courts and prosecutors office,

promotion to the High Court of Cassation and Justice). Interviews are mechanisms that bring significant subjectivity to the promotion process and cannot guarantee alone that objective decisions are taken with regard to key steps in the magistrates career.

- Return of the competence to investigate magistrates to the DNA (for corruption), DIICOT (for organized crime) and regular prosecution offices for the rest of crimes.
- Revision of disciplinary practice
- A solution to the problem of retirement certificates obtained by magistrates
- A thorough audit of the case allocation and management system

More details here (<https://expertforum.ro/en/the-priorities-of-the-romanian-justice-system-yesterday-and-today/>).

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

Cristi Danilet, who was a judge until he retired in 2024, was also sanctioned with dismissal on the same grounds on multiple occasions. Danilet won his freedom of expression case at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2024 (ECHR, Danilet v Romania, [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-231394%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-231394%22]})). The former judge sued the Romanian state at the European Court of Human Rights in 2021 after he was sanctioned by the SCM in 2020 with a pay cut following Facebook posts in which he criticised the attacks of the Social Democrat Party (PSD) on the rule of law in Romania (PressHub, Romania, <https://www.presshub.ro/fostul-judecator-cristi-danilet-a-castigat-la-cedo-procesul-pe-libertatea-de-exprimare-309815/>). In December 2025, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights delivered its final judgment in Danilet v. Romania, finding that the Romanian authorities violated Cristi Danilet's freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and ruling in his favour.

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

In May 2025, the CCR declared unconstitutional key provisions governing the publication of asset and interest declarations, including the obligation to disclose the assets and interests of family members. This decision effectively ends public transparency regarding officials' financial interests, allowing politicians to conceal assets through family members and limiting scrutiny of declarations to investigations conducted solely by the National Integrity Agency (NIA), without public or media oversight.

Decision 297 of the Constitutional Court of 29 May 2025 regarding the publicity and content of asset and income declaration had a significantly negative impact on transparency and in fact nullified the public nature of this information, which was significant for a range of external stakeholders, including CSOs and journalists. No legislative measures have been undertaken by the Parliament to issue new regulations, which could reduce further on the capacity of external stakeholders to detect potential corruption.

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

A new Code of Ethics for the members of government was adopted in 2025. This was a milestone assumed by Romania under the NRRP . The milestone was implemented by the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) with support from the Ministry of Justice and the National Integrity Agency. An interministerial committee was set up in 2023 to support the implementation of this milestone. The committee consisted of multiple institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, the National Integrity Agency, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, the National Civil Servants Agency and the National Institute of Public Administration. GSG also benefited from technical assistance from the World Bank Group in the process of drafting the law on the code of ethics for members of the Government . This resulted in a law amending the Administrative Code which was adopted in April 2025 and contains provisions regarding the Code of ethics for members of government. It applies to members of the government (Prime Minister and ministers), the head of the Prime Minister's Office; the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretaries General of the government; secretaries and undersecretaries of state, as well as their equivalents within the Government, ministries, and other specialised central bodies subordinate to the Government or ministries; state advisors within the Prime Minister's Office .

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

The legal framework regulating political party and campaign finance remained mostly unchanged in 2025, despite the annulled presidential elections of November 2024, that have exposed significant deficiencies in transparency and oversight mechanisms. No amendments were introduced concerning third-party campaigning, disclosure of donation sources, transparency of expenditure from state subsidies or interim financial reporting during the campaign, while the transparency of annual revenues was, de facto, reduced even further. No amendments were introduced after the decisions of the Constitutional Court for a full recount of votes and cancellation of elections or in line with the subsequent Venice Commission opinion ([https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2025\)003-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)003-e))

The Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA), the body responsible for supervising political finance, continued to face strong criticism following its failure to ensure the financial integrity during the 2024 elections. The institution lacks capacity to perform oversight, initiate in-depth investigations and cope with the novel threats, including those generated by the online advertising. In spite of legal requirements, the PEA did not initiate the annual audit of political party finances within the prescribed timeframe for 2024 and postponed it to 2025. This delay constitutes a vulnerability in light of the considerable political revenues recorded over the past two years; in 2024 the income of political parties reached some 200 million EUR, an historic high. EFOR's analysis of the highest contributions has raised concerns regarding the source of some loans or donations and the limited activity of the PEA in verifying these aspects (https://expertforum.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PB223_marii_donatori.pdf). This brings an increased risk to the integrity of the process, especially due to the fact that the PEA reimburses all the competitors from the state budget which receive more than 3% of the valid votes.

In February 2025, the Parliament dismissed the PEA President, Toni Greblă, ahead the end of his mandate on integrity-related grounds. Several civic organizations have requested his resignation for mis-management of the electoral finance oversight and failure to initiate investigations in the case of Calin Georgescu. However, the insufficient performance of the institution in supervising campaign finance was not cited as a cause for dismissal. A new president was appointed by the Parliament in December, disregarding civil society's demands for a transparent nomination process and a non-political appointment (<https://expertforum.ro/alegeti-noul-presedinte-aep-responsabil/>)

For the repeated presidential elections held in May 2025, candidates reported income of approximately EUR 45 million and expenditures of EUR 41 million (<https://www.banipartide.ro/campanie.html#2025PR>) predominantly financed through private sources such as loans and donations. Although the PEA verified these financial reports, details on the contributors to the campaign are not made public, in line with the law. This lack of disclosure undermines public confidence in the electoral process and restricts the ability of independent observers to identify potential irregularities. Interim reporting during the campaign period remains unregulated; however, the PEA published as a practice weekly summaries of income and expenditure. The PEA imposed sanctions on several candidates (See statistics <https://expertforum.ro/sanctiuni-partide-2024-2025/>), including George Simion (AUR), for whom the authority decided not to reimburse EUR 3.5 million due to potential irregularities in television advertising expenditures, including inflated costs and payments in instances where the candidate was not featured (<https://snoop.ro/aur-pentru-realitatea-george-simion-a-dat-un-milion-de-euro-pentru-o-zi-de-promovare-si-aproape-jumatate-pentru-o-emisiune-cu-anca-alexandrescu-dar-fara-el/>)

In 2025 investigations were initiated for several criminal violations against former presidential candidate Calin Georgescu, including false statements related to the financing of the electoral campaign. He was indicted for conspiring to overthrow the constitutional order and in violation of laws against promoting fascist, racist, or xenophobic ideologies(https://www.mpublic.ro/ro/content/c_02-07-2025-15-07), while no court decision has been issued so far. No relevant public report was issued by state authorities related to the overall irregularities related to political finance which contributed to the cancellation of elections.

(cont. in next section)

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

(cont. from previous section)

In January 2025, the Government adopted, without prior public consultation, Emergency Ordinance No. 1/2025 to regulate political advertising following the deficiencies observed in 2024(<https://expertforum.ro/decizii-bec-campanie-libertate-exprimare/>). The ordinance introduced the obligation to label all political advertising—whether paid or unpaid—and established sanctions of up to EUR 10,000 for non-compliance. While the GEO drew some of its principles from the EU Regulation 2024/900, its extensive application created lack of clarity. Civil society organizations criticized the measure for its legal ambiguity and potential chilling effects on public debate. The Central Electoral Bureau was designated to handle complaints regarding violations, receiving over 52,000 submissions, with more than half dismissed due to insufficient processing capacity and potential abuse of this mechanism(<https://expertforum.ro/publicitatea-politica-2025/>). This outcome highlighted both the inadequate institutional response to illegal advertising and the potential for misuse by certain stakeholders. On the other side, extensive coordinated campaigns involving inauthentic online behavior were neither effectively monitored nor sanctioned. EFOR's monitoring reports illustrate that several candidates used promotion

methods which included inauthentic behaviour and opaque boost mechanisms for the online campaign, which potentially infringed over the campaign finance regulations and thresholds.<https://expertforum.ro/en/how-do-the-presidential-candidates-accounts-grow-overnight-on-tiktok/>, <https://expertforum.ro/en/preliminary-conclusions-presidential-elections-2025-firstround/> .

--> 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

The independence of the media landscape remains an increasing concerning issue due to the control political parties exert over the media market through expenditure from state subsidies, as well as through ownership and editorial influence. In 2025, eight political parties collectively continued to receive approximately EUR 47 million in public subsidies, with nearly half of these funds (some 23 million EUR spent between January and November 2025 - See detailed statistics here <https://www.banipartide.ro/subventii>

) allocated to political advertising, including media contracts — a practice strongly criticized for its lack of transparency, as the beneficiaries of the contracts are not made public (<https://expertforum.ro/opriti-privilegiile-partidelor-politice/>). Despite reductions to the state budget for party financing in 2025 and 2026, the overall amounts remained high - some 42 million EUR in 2026. The lack of transparency regarding beneficiaries of publicly funded contracts further diminishes accountability, while the extensive use of subsidies in pre-campaign periods, often without proper reporting or classification as electoral spending, contributes to an uneven electoral playing field. A draft law which would have imposed reporting on the beneficiaries of state subsidies, initiated by the Permanent Electoral Authority has been blocked in the Chamber of Deputies for more than two years(https://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/upl_pck2015.proiect?idp=21125).

While the EU Regulation 2024/900 on political advertising entered into force on 10 October 2024, its implementation in Romania remained limited due to the absence of specific national sanctions and a designated oversight authority. The regulation was applied for the first time in an electoral period during the partial local elections held in December 2025 (<https://expertforum.ro/raport-locale-partiale-7decembrie/>), with generally satisfactory results. However, outside the electoral periods, transparency notifications of contacts by political actors remains very limited and hampers the transparency of money in politics.

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

449dec7d-1626-4272-afb2-97c8b4d160bb/PB_230_Priorities-of-Justice_14dec2025__1_.pdf

Contact

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