

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

Artistic Freedom Initiative

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://artisticfreedominitiative.org/>

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

405691597591-41

* 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

If "Other", please specify

Please indicate the country of origin of your organisation

United States of America

First name

Kersty

Surname

McCourt

Email Address of the organisation

info@artisticfreedominitiative.org

* Publication of your contribution and privacy settings

You can choose whether you wish for your contribution to be published and whether you wish your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- ☐ Anonymous - Only your type of respondent, country of origin and contribution will be published. Organisation name, URL, transparency register number, first name and surname given above will not be published. **To maintain anonymity, please refrain from mentioning the name of your organisation and any details from which your organisation can be identified in the rest of your contribution as we will not be able to guarantee anonymisation of these elements.**
- ☒ Public - Your personal details (name, organisation name, transparency register number, country of origin will be published with your contribution).
- ☐ No publication - Your contribution will not be published. Elements of your contribution may be referred to anonymously in documents produced by the Commission based on this consultation.

☒ I agree with the personal data protection provisions.

[Specific_privacy_statement_targeted_stakeholder_consultation_2026_rule_of_law_report.pdf](#)

Questions on horizontal developments

In this section, you are invited to provide information on general horizontal developments or trends, both positive and negative, covering all or several Member States. In particular, you could mention issues that are common to several Member States, as well as best practices identified in one Member State that could be replicated. Moreover, you could refer to your activities in the area of the four pillars and sub-topics (an overview of all sub-topics can be found below), and, if you represent a Network of national organisations, to the support you might have provided to one of your national members.

Overview topics for contribution

[List of topics for contribution.docx](#)

Please provide any relevant information on horizontal developments here

5000 character(s) maximum

Eroding Artistic Freedom Across Europe

Recent years have witnessed a marked deterioration in artistic freedom across several EU Member States. Governments have increasingly instrumentalised culture as a political tool, reshaping cultural sectors through legislative, administrative, and personnel changes that consolidate political control and weaken institutional autonomy. These developments mirror broader rule of law backsliding observed in the justice and media sectors and directly undermine core democratic freedoms, in particular freedom of expression, association, and cultural participation.

Hungary and Poland (under the former PiS government) pioneered far-reaching restructurings of their cultural sectors through constitutional, legal, and policy interventions that placed cultural institutions under direct political oversight.⁽¹⁾ More recently, similar dynamics have rapidly intensified in Slovakia and Italy, where politicised interventions have led to the dismantling of safeguards for artistic autonomy and professional governance.

Across the Union, recurring patterns of interference in the cultural sphere can be identified:

- Bureaucratic encroachment on cultural institutions: Politically motivated managerial appointments, institutional restructuring, and weakened appointment procedures that centralise control over cultural governance at the expense of artistic merit and professional expertise.
- Politicisation of arts funding: Centralised funding mechanisms that reward political loyalty, marginalise independent and critical voices, and deprive experimental, minority, or socially engaged programmes of support.
- State media control: The transformation of public broadcasters into instruments of government influence, increasingly used to discredit independent artists, cultural organisations, and critical cultural journalism.
- Restrictions on civil society: Legal, administrative, and financial measures that impose disproportionate burdens on independent organisations, stigmatise NGOs, and deter cultural engagement and cross-border cooperation.
- Censorship and chilling effects on artistic expression: Direct and indirect forms of censorship, including smear campaigns, politically motivated dismissals, funding withdrawals, police interventions, and legal actions against artists and cultural workers.

These restrictions both reflect and reinforce wider democratic decline and the erosion of the rule of law. In many instances, infringements on artistic freedom are instigated or endorsed by ruling parties themselves, leaving artists and cultural organisations with little effective recourse to national legal protections.

While this submission expands in detail on developments in Slovakia, similar concerning trends have been observed in numerous other European countries, including but not limited to Austria ⁽²⁾, Serbia ⁽³⁾, Italy ⁽⁴⁾, Lithuania ⁽⁵⁾, Germany ⁽⁶⁾, and Belgium ⁽⁷⁾, underscoring the need for an EU-wide approach.

As these regional trends became increasingly clear, artists and civil society actors convened in Bratislava in May 2025. This process culminated in the adoption of the Bratislava Declaration, which calls on EU institutions to work in partnership with the cultural sector to develop a European Artistic Freedom Act (EAFA). The proposed EAFA would establish a coherent legal framework guaranteeing artistic freedom throughout the Union. It would draw inspiration from the recently adopted European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which for the

first time provides an EU-wide legal framework recognising the right to reliable information.(8)

There is an urgent need to include freedom of artistic expression within the scope of the European Commission's Rule of Law Report in order to ensure that violations are systematically monitored at EU level.

As articulated by Culture Action Europe in its sector Blueprint of the Cultural Compass: "The Rule of Law Report's chapter on media freedom and pluralism should be expanded to cover the full spectrum of freedom of expression, explicitly including artistic and academic freedoms. Together, artistic, media, and academic freedoms form a mutually reinforcing 'triangle of expression' that is integral to democratic governance. The inclusion of artistic freedom in the Rule of Law Report would help document the growing threats to cultural expression and provide a structured basis for response. Monitoring of infringements on Artistic Freedom as part of the Rule of Law Report could be supported by regular research and reporting mechanisms coordinated with a European observatory on artistic freedom."(9)

For endnotes see final section

Questions for contribution

Under each pillar, you are invited to provide information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member State in the 2025 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter of the 2025 Rule of Law Report and any other significant developments since January 2025 and up to the date of submission[3]. Please always include a link to and reference relevant legislation/documents (in the national language and/or where available, in English). **Significant developments** can include challenges, positive developments and best practices, covering both legislative developments or implementation and practices.

Information provided in reply to the first question under each pillar, related to the follow-up to the recommendations, does not need to be repeated in subsequent parts of the questionnaire, but can be cross-referenced in the subsequent questions, where relevant. All other questions are not limited to the recommendations, but as in previous years, cover the entire scope of the Report.

[3] Unless already covered in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Member State/enlargement country covered in contribution [only one choice possible]

If you wish to submit information concerning several Member States/enlargement countries, please fill in the questionnaire separately for each country. There is no limit to the number of contributions submitted by a single participant.

- ☐ Albania
- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium

- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czechia
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Montenegro
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ North Macedonia
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Serbia
- ☒ Slovakia
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden

I. Justice System

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

5000 character(s) maximum

A. Independence

Appointment and selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents (incl. judicial review)

(The reference to 'judges' concerns judges at all level and types of courts as well as judges at constitutional courts)

5000 character(s) maximum

Irremovability of judges, including transfers, (incl. as part of judicial map reform), dismissal and retirement regime of judges, court presidents and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

Allocation of cases in courts

5000 character(s) maximum

Independence (including composition and nomination and dismissal of its members), and powers of the body tasked with safeguarding the independence of the judiciary (e. g. Council for the Judiciary)

5000 character(s) maximum

Accountability of judges and prosecutors, including disciplinary regime and bodies and ethical rules, judicial immunity and criminal/civil (where applicable) liability of judges (incl. judicial review)

5000 character(s) maximum

Independence/autonomy of the prosecution service

5000 character(s) maximum

Independence of the Bar (chamber/association of lawyers) and of lawyers

5000 character(s) maximum

Significant developments capable of affecting the perception that the general public has of the independence of the judiciary

5000 character(s) maximum

B. Quality of justice

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined in the introduction)

[single market relevance] Accessibility of courts (e.g. court/legal fees, legal aid, language)

5000 character(s) maximum

Resources of the judiciary (human/financial/material), remuneration/bonuses/rewards for judges and prosecutors, including observed changes (significant and targeted increase or decrease over the past year)

(Material resources refer e.g. to court buildings and other facilities. Financial resources include salaries of staff in courts and prosecution offices.)

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Digitalisation (e.g. use of digital technology, including electronic communication and AI tools, within the justice system and with court users, procedural rules, access to judgments online)

5000 character(s) maximum

Use of assessment tools and standards (e.g. ICT systems, including AI-based systems, for case management, court statistics and their transparency, monitoring, evaluation, surveys among court users or legal professionals)

5000 character(s) maximum

Geographical distribution and number of courts/jurisdictions (“judicial map”) and their specialisation, in particular specific courts or chambers within courts to deal with fraud and corruption cases.

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

C. Efficiency of the justice system

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined in the introduction)

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

5000 character(s) maximum

Any other developments related to the justice system - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

II. Anti-Corruption Framework

Where previous specific reports, published in the framework of the review under the UN Convention against Corruption, of GRECO, and of the OECD address the issues below, please make a reference to the points you wish to bring to the Commission's attention in these documents, indicating any relevant updates, changes or measures introduced that have occurred since these documents were published.

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding the anti-corruption framework (if applicable):

5000 character(s) maximum

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

List any **changes** as regards relevant authorities (e.g. national agencies, bodies) in charge of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption and the resources allocated to each of these authorities (the human, financial, legal, and technical/specialised resources as relevant), including the cooperation among domestic and with foreign authorities. Indicate any relevant measures taken to effectively and timely cooperate with OLAF and EPPO

5000 character(s) maximum

Safeguards for the functional independence of the authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption

5000 character(s) maximum

Information on the implementation of measures foreseen in the strategic anti-corruption framework (if applicable). If available, please provide relevant objectives and indicators

5000 character(s) maximum

B. Prevention

Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector in particular as regards high-level officials (including as regards incompatibility rules, revolving doors, codes of conduct, ethics)

5000 character(s) maximum

Measures to enhance general transparency of public decision-making (including rules on lobbying, asset and interest disclosure rules, gifts policy, transparency of political party, financing)

5000 character(s) maximum

Measures to prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector. Please specify the features and scope of their application (e.g. categories of officials concerned, types of checks and corrective measures depending on the category of officials concerned)

5000 character(s) maximum

--> For the three previous points, **please also provide information and figures on their application /enforcement if available to you**, such as number of detected breaches/irregularities of the various rules in place and the follow-up given (investigations, sanctions, etc.)

Measures to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption, including their application (i.e. number of reports received, and the follow-up given)

5000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Specific measures to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in sectors with high risks of corruption, with a view to monitor and prevent corruption and conflict of interests, and where applicable measures to prevent and address corruption committed by organised crime groups.

- *Such high-risk sectors could include: public procurement, including construction, transport/infrastructure, defence, cohesion, agriculture, environment, healthcare, investor residence schemes, large-scale investments of national interest and the spending of EU funds, urban planning.*
- *In particular, measures to mitigate high risks of corruption in the area of public procurement, such as enhancing transparency and oversight (for example through digital technologies) and promoting fair competition and accountability in public procurement (e.g. targeted actions to address the high share of single bids) and measures to guarantee the effective and independent functioning of the public procurement review bodies.*

5000 character(s) maximum

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

5000 character(s) maximum

C. Repression

The legal framework on the criminalisation and sanctions for corruption and related offences, including foreign bribery

5000 character(s) maximum

Official data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, final judgments and the application of sanctions for corruption offences (differentiated by offence if possible). Please indicate whether the cases: involve legal persons; are related to the implementation of EU or national funds; involve high level corruption. Please indicate which data is publicly available and how policy-making is informed by the data

5000 character(s) maximum

Potential obstacles identified in law or in practice to the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases (e.g. political immunity regulation, procedural rules, statute of limitations, cross-border cooperation, pardoning)

5000 character(s) maximum

Information on effectiveness of criminal and non-criminal measures and of sanctions (e.g. recovery measures and administrative sanctions) on both public and private offenders

5000 character(s) maximum

Any other developments related to the anti-corruption framework - please specify

5000 character(s) maximum

III. Media pluralism and media freedom

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding media pluralism and media freedom (if applicable)

5000 character(s) maximum

The situation in Slovakia demonstrates that artistic freedom is not a peripheral cultural issue but a core component of the rule of law. The absence of recommendations on artistic freedom in previous Rule of Law Reports has left significant violations unaddressed, allowing deterioration to accelerate.

We are submitting information on artistic freedom in Slovakia under the heading of Media Freedom and Pluralism only because the Rule of Law Report currently lacks a dedicated section addressing infringements related to artistic freedom. Freedom of artistic expression merits a specific and standalone section in the Report, particularly given its preventive purpose and its close connection to democratic resilience.

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

Artistic Freedom Initiative submitted information to the European Commission in January 2025 concerning artistic freedom in Slovakia, based on preliminary findings. Despite this, no recommendations on artistic freedom were included in the 2025 Rule of Law Report. Since then, the situation has considerably worsened.

In April 2025, AFI published in collaboration with Open Culture! its report, Early Warning: The Politicization of Arts and Culture in Slovakia.(11) The report documents the alarming transformation of Slovakia's cultural sector since the parliamentary elections of October 2023, under the coalition government led by Prime Minister Robert Fico, with the Ministry of Culture controlled by the Slovak National Party (SNS).

Based on policy analysis and interviews with Slovak artists and cultural workers, the report identifies the following key developments:

- Takeover of Cultural Funding Institutions: Legislative amendments have enabled the Ministry of Culture to assert control over the Audiovisual Fund (AVF) and the Slovak Arts Council (FPU) through increased ministerial appointments and politically aligned oversight, allowing ideological interference in funding decisions.
- Reduction of Transparency in Cultural Leadership: Amendments to legislation governing museums and galleries removed public hearings and protections against unfair dismissals, enabling arbitrary removal of directors and increasing political control over cultural institutions. (Act No. 206/2009 Coll. on Museums and Galleries)
- Mass Purge of Ministry Staff: Over 70% of staff at the Ministry of Culture were removed, the Institute of Cultural Policy was dissolved, and abrupt dismissals created a climate of fear and institutional instability.
- Politicisation of Cultural Institutions: Leadership changes at major national institutions, including the Slovak National Theatre, Slovak National Gallery, and Slovak National Museum. Many new appointees, lacking cultural management experience have triggered mass resignations among staff and widespread public protests.
- Targeting of LGBTQ+ Initiatives: The Ministry of Culture has censored LGBTQ+ representation through funding cuts, bans on exhibitions and performances, removal of artworks, and the prohibition of a children's book addressing gender identity.

- Escalating (Self-)Censorship and Suppression: Smear campaigns, dismissals, funding cuts, police interventions, and legal actions against artists are producing a chilling effect, discouraging expression that diverges from government ideology.

Since the publication of the report in April 2025, the situation has further deteriorated. Developments include the appointment of politically aligned members to the Board of Media Services (12); the effective paralysis of the Slovak Arts Council, causing significant delays in grant allocations; and a policy change excluding cultural centres from Slovak Arts Council funding as of 2026.(13) As this funding represents their primary source of public support, the exclusion leaves many centres without access to public funding and at risk of closure. These measures are compounded by a significant reduction in staff across institutions under the Ministry of Culture.

A particularly emblematic case involves the former director of the Slovak National Theatre, who has been barred by a regional court from making public statements about the Minister of Culture following an emergency injunction linked to a defamation complaint.(14) Such measures illustrate the expanding use of legal tools to silence critical cultural voices.

Recent constitutional and legislative developments further these risks. Constitutional amendments emphasize Slovakia's sovereignty in matters of "national identity," including "fundamental cultural and ethical issues."(15) While amendments criminalising certain forms of foreign-funded activity have been suspended by the Constitutional Court and are currently inapplicable, their introduction signals continued pressure on civil society.(16)

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

See the references for information in the prior sections:

- (1) See Artistic Freedom Research on Poland and Hungary <https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/our-programs/advocacy-for-artistic-freedom/research-2/>
- (2) Artistic Freedom Initiative - Austria UPR Submission 2025
- (3) <https://creativesunite.eu/article/upheaval-in-belgrade-artists-blockaded-the-ministry-of-culture> and <https://www.mimeta.org/mimeta-news-on-censorship-in-art/2025/10/30/bitef-2025-a-festival-under-pressure> and <https://defendnotdefund.art/index.php/front-page-for-signing/>
- (4) <https://mondediplo.com/2024/07/14italy>
- (5) <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/10/05/lithuanian-arts-community-protests-controversial-takeover-of-culture-ministry>
- (6) Freemuse State of Culture Report 2025, p.51 https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SAF-2025_web.pdf
- (7) AFI Open Letter M HKA Antwerp <https://museumatrisk.be/en/news/afi-open-letter-to-minister-of-culture-caroline-gennez-concerning-the-future-of-m-hka/>
- (8) "Why Europe Needs a European Artistic Freedom Act" https://at-festwochen.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/2025/PDFs/Why-Europe-Needs-a-European-Artistic-Freedom-Act_RN.pdf
- (9) <https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Towards-the-Culture-Compass-A-Sector-Blueprint.pdf>, p.9 See also Liberties Gap Analysis 2025 <https://www.liberties.eu/f/uw2pr> p.18
- (10) https://www.ietm.org/system/files/publications/PAC_Report_06.pdf, p.10
- (11) <https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/our-programs/advocacy-for-artistic-freedom/research-2/slovakia-2/>
- (12) <https://dennikn.sk/4926972/koalicia-zvolila-do-medialnej-rady-youtuberku-riabovu-kandidovala-za-sns-obhajuje-dannyho-kollara-a-utocila-na-kuciakov-pamatnik/>
- (13) <https://www.finreport.sk/agenturne-spravy/rada-fpu-schvalila-strukturu-podpornej-cinnosti-na-rok-2026-ma-prerozdelit-30-milionov-eur/>
- (14) <https://spectator.sme.sk/culture-and-lifestyle/c/slovakia-just-invented-a-real-life-she-who-must-not-be-named>
- (15) <https://www.ceaclaw.org/post/slovakia-2025-constitutional-amendment#viewer-32tb7757>
- (16) <https://www.predemokraciu.sk/2025/12/18/ustavny-sud-zrusil-rusky-zakon-proti-mimovladkam/>

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

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Contact

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