

Annual Rule of Law Report - Council of Europe contribution



2026

Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law (DG I)

Belgium

I Justice System

CEPEJ

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) regularly collects data on judicial systems concerning efficiency and quality of the justice system. In the framework of the CEPEJ Study for the EU Justice Scoreboard, CEPEJ prepares Country profiles annually, including [Belgium](#).

The 2024 data have been collected, quality checked and sent to DG-JUST in the framework of the 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. The publication of the country profiles based on 2024 data will depend on final acceptance of the CEPEJ Study by DG-JUST. The CEPEJ Secretariat (christel.schurrer@coe.int) remains at the disposal of European Commission for any question related to these data.

EXECUTION OF JUDGMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Official statistics on the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are published in the Committee of Ministers [Annual reports on the execution](#) (next edition to be published in March 2026). The Department for the Execution of Judgments can be consulted for any question on statistics: DGI-Execution@coe.int.

[Group of cases *Bell*, under enhanced supervision since 2009](#) : excessive length of judicial proceedings, in particular in the Brussels district area. Last review in December 2025 by the Committee of Ministers.

Extracts from last decision adopted by the Committee of Ministers:

“1. recalled that this group of cases concerns the excessive length of civil and criminal proceedings and that the judgment *Van Den Kerkhof* finds that the problems of excessive length of proceedings in the judicial district of Brussels are of a structural nature;

2. recalled also that these issues and the judicial backlog, particularly in Brussels, are long-standing problems identified by the Court as long ago as 2005, and that excessive delays in the administration of justice can pose a serious threat for the respect of the rule of law and the access to justice; (...)

4. noted with interest that significant progress has continued to be made (...), in particular as regards the long-awaited availability of data on the length of proceedings and the strengthening of the judiciary’s budget and

staffing levels, and that several initiatives are underway to continue to tackle the excessive length of proceedings, including the completion of the project to map the backlog and processing times, the continued reinforcement of the team of statisticians, a draft law to reduce the length of civil proceedings, and an action plan to reduce their length as well as to reduce the backlog at the Brussels Court of Appeal;

5. (...) reiterated however the importance of accelerating efforts and stressed in particular the need to finalise the aforementioned mapping (...);

6. with regard to statistics, noted with satisfaction the positive developments, notably at the level of the courts of appeal in civil cases and the significant reduction in the length of criminal investigations; however, (...) invited the authorities to provide updated, standardised statistics, covering developments from 2023 to 2026 on the “clearance rate” and “disposition time” for civil cases, including family cases, and criminal cases, at first instance and on appeal, and encouraged them to continue their efforts to improve the quality of statistics, (...);

7. noted with satisfaction that the authorities have continued to make substantial budgetary efforts in respect of judicial staff, while inviting them to maintain such efforts (...); also encouraged them to reinforce management tools, (...) so as to be able to support and prioritise those courts and tribunals that are most affected by heavy backlogs and high numbers of new cases, such as the Brussels Court of Appeal, and to adapt the statutory frameworks for judicial staff accordingly;

8. as regards the remedy, noted with interest the examples provided of the use of the compensatory remedy to complain about the excessive length of judicial proceedings, and the entry into force, on 1 January 2025, of the reform of the law on extra-contractual liability, which could enhance its effectiveness, (...);

9. invited the authorities to provide the Committee with updated information by June 2027 and, in the meantime, to continue their dialogue with the Secretariat, (...).

Case of Camara, under enhanced supervision since 2023: non enforcement of judicial decisions ordering the authorities to provide asylum seekers with accommodation and reception conditions in accordance with domestic and European law.

Extracts from last decision adopted by the Committee of Ministers:

“1. recalled that this case concerns a clear refusal by the authorities to comply with a July 2022 order of the Labour Tribunal of Brussels, requiring them to provide accommodation to the applicant, an asylum seeker, and to provide him with reception defined by law; and that the Court noted a systemic problem, incompatible with the rule of law, concerning the State's capacity to comply with its own legislation, including final judicial decisions ordering such compliance;

2. noted with interest that the number of asylum-seekers awaiting reception has fallen sharply in one year time, mainly as a result of an acceleration in exits from the reception network, (...); also noted with interest that, (...) the authorities have strengthened their cooperation with the European Union Agency for Asylum, extending its operational support to reducing the backlog of asylum applications, (...);

3. noted with concern, however, the steady reduction in the number of reception places since the end of 2024, while in many cases the authorities are unable to grant asylum seekers the reception to which they are entitled, and the number of applications for protection and their average processing time remain high; also noted with concern, in this context, the effects of other planned measures, in particular, major cuts in the federal budget for the reception of asylum-seekers and in the long term capacity of the reception network, as well as the removal of legal solutions which could help to respond to the crisis;

4. (...) invited the authorities to use, as soon as possible, all possible means to find a lasting solution to the reception crisis, so as to be able to enforce all judicial decisions, and to provide a sufficient budget and a precise timetable for this purpose; also invited them to provide (...) more detailed information on the enforcement of judicial decisions (...) (in particular, average enforcement rates and timescales, and the remedies available);

5. (...) invited the Belgian authorities to intensify their dialogue with the Secretariat between now and the next examination of the case at their DH meeting in September 2026”.

[Group of cases *Mugemangango*, under enhanced supervision since 2020](#): lack of an effective remedy and of sufficient procedural guarantees concerning electoral disputes.

“1. recalled that the *Mugemangango* case concerns the absence of an effective remedy and of a procedure offering adequate and sufficient safeguards to prevent arbitrariness regarding the complaint of the applicant, (...), who sought a recount of ballot papers from his constituency; the *G.K.* case also concerns the absence of procedural safeguards in respect of the Senate's acceptance in 2010 of the applicant's resignation, who alleged that she had been forced to resign by members of her party;

2. recalled that democracy constitutes a fundamental element of the “European public order” and that the rights guaranteed under Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 are crucial to establishing and maintaining the foundations of a genuine democracy governed by the rule of law (...);

3. with regard to the *Mugemangango* judgment, noted with satisfaction that, as a result of the amendments made to the rules of procedures of seven Belgian parliamentary assemblies, similar violations of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 should no longer occur in the future (...);

4. also noted with interest that a declaration of revision of the Belgian Constitution now allows for the implementation of the (...) judgment concerning Article 13 of the Convention and invited the authorities to make progress in this regard without delay, all the more so as further legislative and regulatory amendments will be still required afterwards to complete the overall reform of the verification of the credentials of elected representatives of the Belgian parliamentary assemblies;

5. with regard to the *G.K.* judgment, noted with satisfaction that all Belgian parliamentary assemblies now provide for a procedure and guarantees (...) in the event of a complaint concerning the validity of a resignation or withdrawal, with the exception of the Brussels Parliament; (...) decided to transfer this case from the enhanced to the standard procedure (...) and invited the authorities to take the necessary measures with regard to the Brussels Parliament (...), to close this case in the near future;

6. decided to resume consideration of the *Mugemangango* case at their 1569th meeting (September 2026) (DH) and invited the authorities to keep the Committee regularly informed (...).”

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN DIGNITY

The joint European Union - the Council of Europe Child-friendly Justice project aims to improve the protection of children in contact with the law – as offenders, victims or witnesses in non-judicial, judicial (such as civil and criminal cases) and administrative proceedings – across Europe at national and local level. Focus countries of the project are Belgium, Slovenia and Poland. These countries have undergone assessments on child-friendly justice using the Child-Friendly Justice Assessment Tool (in [English](#), [French](#), [Slovenian](#), [Dutch](#)). Recommendations were formulated to improve the justice systems in this regard.

[Project website](#)

[Final self-assessment on child-friendly justice in Belgium](#) (French version)

[Final Conclusions and Recommendations for Belgium](#) (French version)

[Final Conclusions and Recommendations for Belgium](#) (Dutch version)

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

In autumn 2025, approximately one hundred Belgian staff members from equality bodies, public authorities, and independent regulatory bodies participated in a new training course on "Artificial Intelligence and the Fight Against Discrimination." The second edition of this training will take place from March to June 2026. It is open to civil servants and civil society organizations. The course covers the European law on AI and the Council of

Europe Framework Convention on AI and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, as well as European and national legislation on AI, equality and non-discrimination, and the identification and redress of discrimination in AI systems used in public administration and the private sector.

This training is developed and delivered in collaboration with the Belgian equality promotion body UNIA as part of the project entitled "[Defence of equality and non-discrimination by equality promotion bodies regarding the use of artificial intelligence \(AI\) in public administrations](#)", co-financed by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission.

II Anti-corruption framework

GRECO

[Second Addendum to the Second Compliance Report](#) (12 December 2025)

4th round: Prevention of corruption in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors

[Addendum to the Second Compliance Report](#) (12 December 2025)

5th round: Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies

III Media pluralism

N/A

IV Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

N/A