

# Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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**News**

On 8 July 2025, the European Commission published its [sixth annual Rule of Law Report](#), the first under its new mandate. It examined developments in all 27 EU Member States and, as in 2024, in four enlargement countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) and across four pillars: justice, anti-corruption, media freedom, and institutional checks and balances.

The Rule of Law Report (published in the form of a [Commission Communication](#)) is accompanied by several [additional documents](#), such as [country chapter abstracts and recommendations](#), country chapters on each individual state, factsheets, and the Eurobarometer surveys on [citizens'](#) and [business'](#) attitudes towards corruption in the EU.

Euclid has reported on the previous Rule of Law Reports: The first Rule of Law Report was presented on 30 September 2020 (→ [euclid 3/2020, 158–159](#)); the second report on 20 July 2021 (→ [euclid 3/2021, 134–135](#)); the third on 13 July 2022 (→ [euclid 3/2022, 166–167](#)); the fourth on 5 July 2023 (→ [euclid 2/2023, 110–111](#)); and the fifth on 24 July 2024 (→ [euclid 2/2024, 82–83](#)).

The 2025 report focuses on significant developments rather than comprehensive coverage, drawing on EU law, CJEU case law, and Council of Europe standards. Country chapters have been streamlined for clarity, with additional context made available online.

The Commission confirmed that, despite advanced reforms, the scope and pace of reforms varied in many states. Some countries still face persistent or serious concerns. It underscored the preventive, dialogue-based nature of the reform process and its importance for safeguarding democracy, security, and economic stability.

For the first time, the report placed a strong emphasis on the Single Market dimension, underlining that sound law-making, transparent procurement, and a stable regulatory framework are essential for business confidence and cross-border investment, especially for SMEs. The Commission stressed that adherence to rule-of-law principles was key to maintaining a predictable environment for economic activity.

Among the key findings:

- **Justice systems:** Many countries have strengthened judicial councils, appointment safeguards, and prosecutorial independence, yet some continue to suffer from resource shortages and political influence. Similar issues persist in enlargement countries.

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- **Anti-corruption frameworks:** Several states have adopted new strategies, reinforced institutions, and increased resources, but preventive measures on lobbying, conflicts of interest, and high-level prosecutions are still lagging.
- **Media freedom:** Legislative changes have aligned national laws with the European Media Freedom Act, and reforms improved the governance of public service media and journalist safety. Concerns remain, however, over regulator independence, ownership transparency, and the fairness of state advertising.
- **Checks and balances:** Some states have improved legislative quality and stakeholder participation, but others still passed fast-changing laws with little consultation. Civil society generally operates freely, though space for it is shrinking in countries such as Hungary, Slovakia, and Serbia.

Journalist safety remains uneven: Belgium decriminalised defamation, and Greece, Ireland, and Luxembourg adopted stronger protections, but intimidation, online harassment, and abusive lawsuits persist, with stalled reforms in Italy and Slovakia.

Reforms on constitutional and institutional issues are underway in several countries, though Hungary's extensive use of emergency powers continued to undermine legal certainty. Constitutional courts played decisive roles in Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechia, while vacancies and political disputes hindered their functioning in Serbia and Montenegro. A number of national human rights institutions have been strengthened, yet Italy and Malta still lack bodies meeting international standards.

The report also monitored the use of spyware, with investigations or concerns raised for Greece, Italy, Poland, Hungary, and Serbia. In Greece, a judicial inquiry cleared state agencies of involvement in the Predator spyware case, but a planned presidential decree to strengthen privacy protections has yet to be adopted. In Italy, reports that journalists had been targeted with Paragon spyware prompted a parliamentary investigation, which concluded in June 2025 that intelligence services had not used it against domestic journalists. In Poland, the parliamentary committee examining the use of Pegasus spyware continued its work. In Hungary, concerns persisted over inadequate safeguards and oversight for surveillance outside criminal proceedings. In Serbia, civil society organisations alleged that authorities had unlawfully used spyware to target journalists, environmental activists, and other individuals.

The Commission concluded that, while engagement and reform momentum remain strong, progress has been uneven. It appreciates the new economic lens for shedding light on how governance weaknesses impact investment and growth. Looking ahead, it announced two complementary initiatives for 2025: a European Democracy Shield to strengthen democratic institutions, elections, media, and civic resilience, and the EU's first Civil Society Strategy to protect and empower non-governmental organisations.

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