

# Council: Debate on Rule of Law from Justice Perspective



Thomas Wahl

## News

In light of a [discussion paper](#) by the Finnish Council Presidency, the Ministers of Justice of the EU Member States held a policy debate on strengthening the rule of law – from the perspective of the justice sector – at their [informal meeting in Helsinki on 19 July 2019](#). Strengthening the rule of law has regularly been on the agenda of the General Affairs Council, but it also has particular importance for judicial cooperation in criminal matters. As Justice Ministers also have a valuable role in strengthening the rule of law, the Finnish Presidency aims to promote regular thematic discussions among Justice Ministers on developments at the EU and national levels, as well as in the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU.

The discussion paper also reflects on the importance of the rule of law for access to justice and sustainable development. It summarises the EU tools supporting a common judicial culture, among them the annual EU Justice Scoreboard (see [eucrim 1/2019](#), p. 7), which is considered “a useful tool for providing comparable information that can support national projects aiming at improving the justice systems.” The EU acquis on the procedural rights of suspects and accused persons is highlighted. Against this background, the ministers were invited to discuss, *inter alia*, the following issues:

- Contribution of Justice Ministers to strengthening the rule of law in the EU in the field of justice affairs;
- Regular issues of rule-of-law debates in the JHA Council;
- EU tools considered most effective in supporting a common European judicial culture;
- Further development of EU tools;
- Best practices as regards the rule of law in the field of justice affairs.

Strengthening the rule of law is one of the top priorities of Finland’s Council Presidency. The Presidency promotes a comprehensive approach, meaning that the EU’s rule-of-law instruments will be regarded as mutually complementary.

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