

Enhancing the EU's Rule of Law Framework: Evaluation of the Council's Annual Dialogue Mechanism



News

Anna Pingen

On 12 December 2023, the Council [reviewed](#) its annual rule of law dialogue: a commitment by EU Member States to uphold and strengthen the rule of law as a foundational value of the EU. The dialogue is a structured political exercise aimed at evaluating the state of the rule of law within the Member States and the EU at large.

The background of this mechanism dates back to 16 December 2014, when the Council's annual rule of law dialogue was formally established through Council conclusions. Since its inception, the dialogue has fostered a spirit of sincere cooperation among all EU Member States, contributing to a collective effort to monitor and promote the rule of law within the bloc. Over the years, the dialogue has evolved to include:

- Horizontal discussions that address general developments concerning the rule of law in the EU;
- Country-specific discussions that provide detailed assessments of the rule of law situation in individual Member States.

These discussions are fed by the European Commission's annual rule of law reports, which serve as a critical resource for the evaluations.

The Council discussed a set of conclusions. Despite a lack of unanimous agreement on the recently proposed text, the Spanish Council Presidency issued a presidency conclusion stating that the content was either supported by or not objected to by 25 delegations. On 20 December 2023, in a meeting of EU Member States' permanent representatives (Coreper), Poland also stated its support for the Presidency conclusions of 12 December 2023 on evaluation of the annual rule of law dialogue.

The recent conclusions not only reaffirm the importance of the annual rule of law dialogue as a cornerstone of the EU's efforts to safeguard fundamental values but also signal a commitment to enhancing its efficiency and impact. By fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive process of review, the Council aims to strengthen the rule of law across the European Union, ensuring that it remains a fundamental pillar supporting the Union's stability and integrity.

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