

Hungary and Poland Impede Conclusions on Rule-of-Law Evaluation

News

Thomas Wahl

Hungary and Poland blocked the adoption of Council conclusions on evaluation of the rule-of-law dialogue. The rule-of-law dialogue was established in 2014. It consists of a structured dialogue between the Commission and Member States that disrespect the rule of law and the Annual Dialogues on the Rule of Law, allowing national governments to discuss rule-of-law related issues within the Council. In 2016, the General Affairs Council agreed to reevaluate the framework by the end of 2019.

At its [meeting on 19 November 2019](#), the General Affairs Council discussed the evaluation and the draft conclusions. Ministers also exchanged views with FRA Director, Michael O’Flaherty. The Finnish Presidency stated that 26 delegations supported [the conclusions as published in Council Document 14173/19](#). They advocate a yearly stocktaking exercise revolving around the state of play and key developments in the rule of law. Such an annual stocktaking could draw on the Commission’s annual rule-of-law reports, which would in turn create synergies between the institutions. Furthermore, ministers wish “for the dialogue to be stronger, more result-oriented and better structured, for preparations for the dialogue to be more systematic, and for proper follow-up to be ensured.” The organisation and in-depth discussion of rule-of-law related issues in other Council configurations is also encouraged.

Strengthening the rule of law is one of the top priorities of Finland’s Council Presidency during the second half of 2019. The Finnish Presidency welcomed the Commission’s new concept to strengthen the rule of law, as presented on 17 July 2019 (see [eucrim 2/2019](#), p. 79). It also supports the proposal by Belgium and Germany for a periodic peer review mechanism on the rule of law, which could reinforce mutual understanding and unity among the EU Member States.

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