

The Commission's 2024 Rule of Law report

2024/2078(INI) - 18/06/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 405 votes to 210, with 36 abstentions, a resolution on the Commission's 2024 rule of law report.

Members recalled that the Union is founded on the common values, enshrined in Article 2 of the EU Treaty, of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. When these values are weakened, the Union faces a systemic threat, as do the rights and freedoms of the people living within its territory.

Independence of the judicial system

Parliament recalled that **fair and accessible** justice is a fundamental principle of the rule of law, which requires an independent judicial system. However, while some judicial systems may appear reliable on the surface, this is not always the case in reality.

Members stressed the need for judges to remain impartial and the important role played by national councils of the judiciary in safeguarding judicial independence. They called for disciplinary proceedings concerning judges and prosecutors to be entrusted to independent bodies, free from political influence. The Commission is invited to proactively monitor and respond swiftly to risks of backsliding on the rule of law in the areas of judicial independence and access to justice. Parliament regretted the tendency of some Member States to fail to implement judgments of the CJEU and the ECHR and reaffirmed its strong support for the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Anti-corruption framework

Parliament called on Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries, and EU institutions to **improve transparency and accountability** in public institutions by strengthening anti-corruption and conflict of jurisdiction legal frameworks and monitoring processes to ensure effective investigations and prosecutions in corruption cases, including high-level corruption cases. Members deplored the lack of relevant progress and stressed that final convictions and dissuasive sanctions are necessary to demonstrate genuine commitment to tackling corruption. Member States are urged to ensure transparency and accountability in lobbying activities and to join the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

Parliament welcomed the Commission's proposal for a directive on combating corruption, which harmonises the definition of corruption offences in the public and private sectors and the corresponding penalties.

Media pluralism and freedom

Parliament welcomed initiatives to promote free, independent and pluralistic media and a safe and enabling environment for journalists, such as the European Media Freedom Act, and called for its swift implementation. It called on the Commission and the Member States and candidate countries to **ensure the safety and protection of journalists**, including investigative journalists and fact-checkers, who are particularly at risk. Member States and candidate countries must protect and promote media freedom and pluralism, ensure the transparent allocation of public funds, prevent the concentration of media ownership, protect editorial independence and combat disinformation.

Members called for **stricter enforcement of media regulations** to combat hate speech, stressing that freedom of expression must be exercised within the law and should not be exploited as a shield for hate speech and hate crimes.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Parliament expressed deep concern about the **shrinking civic space** and the increasing persecution of civil society organisations and human rights defenders in the EU, particularly those fighting against racism, for climate justice, LGBTIQ rights, women's rights, and supporting migrants. It called on Member States to refrain from taking disproportionate legal measures against peaceful activists and called for increased EU funding for civil society actors fighting racism and working for other fundamental rights. Member States are urged to create an **enabling environment** for civil society organisations and human rights defenders and to adopt the anti-SLAPP directive.

Equality and non-discrimination before the law

Concerned about the lack of progress and the lack of progress in implementing equality and anti-discrimination legislation in some Member States, Members deplored the Commission's intention to **withdraw the proposal for a horizontal directive on equal treatment** and urged the Council to adopt the directive as soon as possible. Parliament called on the Council to extend the current list of 'EU crimes' in Article 83(1) TFEU to include **hate crime and hate speech** and called on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal on hate crime and hate speech.

The Commission and Member States are called upon (i) to take action against gender-based violence, both online and offline, (ii) to protect the rights of LGBTIQ people by presenting a new LGBTIQ Strategy, (iii) to present legislative proposals to combat hate crimes and hate speech based on gender identity, sex characteristics and sexual orientation, and (iv) to step up efforts to monitor, prevent and prosecute hate crimes and to protect Jewish and Muslim communities from harassment and violence.

Rule of law toolbox

Parliament criticised the Council's inaction in advancing the ongoing procedures under Article 7 of the EU Treaty and urged the Council to unblock the next steps in the procedure under Article 7 of the EU Treaty with regard to **Hungary**. It urged the Commission to ensure that EU funds reach the Hungarian population, including through mechanisms for direct or indirect financing of beneficiaries independent of the Hungarian government.

While welcoming the preventive tools in the Rule of Law Toolbox, Parliament stressed the need to introduce a **closer link between the findings of the 2024 Rule of Law Report** and the allocation of financial support from the EU budget, in terms of milestones, so that EU funds are conditional on the implementation of the necessary reforms. It called on the Commission to strengthen the direct link between preventive and reactive instruments and therefore, on the basis of the findings of the annual Rule of Law Reports, to launch infringement procedures swiftly and in a coordinated manner.

Members support the presentation of relevant proposals broadening the scope of this toolbox and a **stricter application of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation**, with cross-cutting conditions in EU funding programmes.