The Commission’s 2025 Rule of Law report

2025/2239(INI) - 29/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 387 votes to 191, with 46 abstentions, a resolution on the Commission’s 2025 Rule of Law report.

Justice systems

Parliament urged Member States and candidate countries to ensure **independent, efficient and impartial judicial systems**, including access to free legal aid, to guarantee equal access to justice. It highlighted ongoing structural challenges in some countries and called for stronger monitoring, particularly in those advanced in the accession process.

Member States are also called on to invest in judicial training, digitalisation, legal aid, and access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Parliament underlined serious concerns regarding excessive political influence over judicial appointments, disciplinary panels, promotions and case allocation, including through newly created judicial structures that bypass existing safeguards and facilitate executive interference, especially in Hungary.

Member States are called on to:

- refrain from making excessive use of accelerated procedures or emergency decrees, as these negatively impact the stability and quality of lawmaking and democracy;

- set up transparent lawmaking processes following systematic consultation with various stakeholders;

- take measures to ensure that detention conditions in prisons, including juvenile facilities, are in line with fundamental rights standards.

Anti-corruption framework

Parliament is deeply concerned by corruption cases that have emerged within European institutions and stressed that the rule of law requires that persons holding public office cannot act arbitrarily or abuse their power for personal gain. The EU institutions are called on to fully apply the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and integrity.

The Commission is called on to:

- swiftly conclude the negotiations on the EU’s full membership of Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO);

- accelerate the revision of the EPPO Regulation in order to enhance operational cooperation and data-analysis support between the EPPO and Europol;

- systematically report on, and differentiate between, the track record of investigations, indictments and final convictions in high-level corruption cases in each Member State;

- identify situations of **persistent impunity** as structural vulnerabilities with significant implications for the protection of the EU budget.

The resolution called for the reinforcement of preventive measures against **revolving-door practices** in judicial systems, in particular in candidate and potential candidate countries, to prevent judges and prosecutors from taking up governmental and political positions that could lead to conflicts of interest and harm the integrity and impartiality of the judicial system.

Parliament stressed the need to ensure that **whistleblowers** are effectively protected against retaliation and harassment.

Media pluralism, freedom and civic space

Parliament warned that attacks on investigative journalists, including killings, threats and abusive lawsuits, undermine the rule of law and restrict media freedom. It condemned **spyware** use and highlighted risks from political interference, state advertising, media concentration and pressure on public service media.

It also raised concerns about **shrinking civic space** due to administrative burdens, funding cuts, smear campaigns and the criminalisation of civil society, stressing that any restrictions must be justified, proportionate and respect fundamental rights.

Fundamental rights

Parliament cited concerns over discrimination, hate speech, racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-LGBTIQ+ measures, minority rights gaps, gender-based violence, migration and asylum policies, and barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Members also warned that EU funds may have been linked to rights violations and call for payment suspensions where deficiencies persist.

The rule of law and the EU budget

Parliament is concerned about reports from civil society organisations indicating that certain rule of law and fundamental rights violations may have been linked to the use of some EU funds in some Member States. It called on the Commission to thoroughly investigate whether such violations are occurring in EU-funded programmes or projects and, where such violations are established, to consider the relevant enabling conditions and Recovery and Resilience Facility milestones as unfulfilled.

Members welcomed the suggestion in the Commission’s proposal for the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework to make nearly half of funds conditional upon compliance with the rule of law and the Charter before their approval, as it strengthens the EU’s capacity to ensure that EU funding supports policies grounded in fundamental rights and democratic principles.

Lastly, Parliament asked the Commission to strengthen the **follow-up mechanism for non-implemented recommendations** by introducing measurable benchmarks, noting that 93 % of recommendations are repeated from previous years and only 6 % were fully implemented in 2025.