Council of the European Union

Brussels, 22 July 2026
(OR. en)

11674/26
ADD 16

FREMP 239
JAI 965
AG 114
POLGEN 189

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	17 July 2026
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	SWD(2026) 915 final
Subject:	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT 2026 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Lithuania Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2026 Rule of Law Report The rule of law situation in the European Union

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2026) 915 final.

Encl.: SWD(2026) 915 final

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.7.2026
SWD(2026) 915 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

2026 Rule of Law Report
Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Lithuania

Accompanying the document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

2026 Rule of Law Report
The rule of law situation in the European Union

{COM(2026) 900 final} - {SWD(2026) 901 final} - {SWD(2026) 902 final} - {SWD(2026) 903 final} - {SWD(2026) 904 final} - {SWD(2026) 905 final} - {SWD(2026) 906 final} - {SWD(2026) 907 final} - {SWD(2026) 908 final} - {SWD(2026) 909 final} - {SWD(2026) 910 final} - {SWD(2026) 911 final} - {SWD(2026) 912 final} - {SWD(2026) 913 final} - {SWD(2026) 914 final} - {SWD(2026) 916 final} - {SWD(2026) 917 final} - {SWD(2026) 918 final} - {SWD(2026) 919 final} - {SWD(2026) 920 final} - {SWD(2026) 921 final} - {SWD(2026) 922 final} - {SWD(2026) 923 final} - {SWD(2026) 924 final} - {SWD(2026) 925 final} - {SWD(2026) 926 final} - {SWD(2026) 927 final} - {SWD(2026) 928 final} - {SWD(2026) 929 final} - {SWD(2026) 930 final} - {SWD(2026) 931 final}

ABSTRACT

Efforts are underway to improve the transparency of the system of appointments to judicial positions, as the working group tasked with proposing possible changes to the system has presented its conclusions and proposed amendments are being prepared. Changes to the requirements for appointing Constitutional Court judges are under discussion in Parliament. Lawyers continue to raise concerns regarding respect for lawyer-client confidentiality while legislative changes to strengthen the safeguards on disciplinary proceedings of lawyers are under discussion. The human and financial resources allocated to the justice system are considered insufficient by the judiciary, including in light of the preliminary ruling of the Court of Justice on the remuneration of judges in Lithuania. Discussions on the level of remuneration of legal aid providers were suspended in 2026 and the envisaged new features of the Legal Aid Information System to reduce the administrative burden for legal aid providers are planned for this year. The justice system continues to perform efficiently, and the level of digitalisation remains high, while further efforts are being made to promote the automation of tasks and improve interoperability.

The second implementation plan 2026-2029 for the National Anti-Corruption Agenda was approved by the Government in April 2026. The authorities continue to address corruption cases efficiently while the acquittal rate decreased. The offence of abuse of office was amended. Significant efforts continue to be carried out in view of addressing shortcomings in the fight against foreign bribery. While the current framework remains unchanged, efforts are being made in view of the implementation of the rules on declarations of private interests. The current lobbying framework is being used with success, and a working group was established to reflect on further improvement of the current rules. The number of reports on whistleblowing is on the rise, while numerous activities implementing the current rules are ongoing. Efforts continue in monitoring and addressing the high-risk areas of corruption.

The regulator for audiovisual media services (LRTK) operates independently. Legislative initiatives concerning the governance and leadership of the public broadcaster Lithuanian Radio and Television (LRT) raised concerns about risks to its independence and generated public protests. Changes to the funding model of LRT will be assessed by the Constitutional Court. The budget for the Media Support Fund has initially decreased slightly, while the Government has allocated extra resources to keep the previous level of financing. The situation regarding access to documents remains stable and the scope of information provided in public databases is expanding. Amendments to the legislation to combat SLAPPs were adopted in December 2025 and the possibility of state-guaranteed legal aid was maintained.

The increasing use of fast-track procedures has raised concerns about the possibility of public participation in key legislative procedures, with stakeholders, including businesses, warning about the inclusiveness of the legislative procedure. Changes to the law on the Parliamentary Ombudspersons increased the number of Ombudspersons to three, and amendments to the appointment procedure of Ombudspersons were rejected in Parliament. The civic space remains open, and efforts are made to improve effective civil society participation in decision-making, while legislative changes to the Law on Charity and Sponsorship raise concerns of civil society organisations regarding their access to financing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, based on the recommendations in the 2025 Rule of Law Report, and considering other developments that took place in the period of reference, the Commission concludes the following:

- Limited progress has been made to advance the reform of the legal aid systems, as discussions on the level of remuneration of legal aid providers were suspended and the envisaged changes to reduce the administrative burden for legal aid providers are planned to be launched in 2026. Therefore, it is recommended to Lithuania to *finalise the reform of the legal aid system, in particular by ensuring adequate conditions for the participation of legal aid providers, taking into account European standards on legal aid.*
- Some further progress has been made in stepping up efforts to improve the transparency of the system of appointments to judicial positions, notably to the Supreme Court, as the working group tasked with proposing possible changes to the system has presented its conclusions and proposed amendments are being prepared. Therefore, it is recommended to Lithuania *to step up efforts to improve the transparency of the system of appointments to judicial positions taking into account European standards on judicial appointments, in particular by following up on the proposals put forward by the working group created for this purpose.*

I. <u>JUSTICE SYSTEM</u>[1]

Independence

The level of perceived judicial independence in Lithuania is now high among the general public and companies. Overall, 66% of the general population and 70% of companies perceive the level of independence of courts and judges to be 'fairly or very good' in 2026[2]. Among the general public, this figure has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (59%), as well as in comparison with 2022 (57%). The perceived judicial independence among companies has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (58%) as well as in comparison with 2022 (61%).

Some further progress has been made on the recommendation to improve the transparency of the system of appointments to judicial positions, as the working group tasked with proposing possible changes to the system has presented its conclusions[3]. Judicial appointments have been made without delays, and the practice of the Office of the President of the Republic to present the reasons for the appointment decisions orally during the meetings of the Judicial Council continues to be ensured[4]. The Judicial Council's working group tasked with proposing concrete changes to the selection process to improve its transparency and efficiency[5], presented its conclusions and proposals to the Judicial Council in March 2026. In particular, the working group considered that the personal competences required for appointment to judicial functions should be revised, and changes to the evaluation system (adjustments to the composition of selection points and their calculation methodology) as well as amendments to the Law on Courts regarding the inclusion of candidates in the general ranking lists were also proposed. The proposals of the working group were forwarded to the specialised committees of the Judicial Council for further evaluation, and decisions on the implementation of these changes are under consideration. The working group has also been called to assess possible measures to ensure the execution of the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, whereby the Court held that the absence of judicial review of the decision of the President of the Republic not to reappoint a judge violates the right of access to a court, as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights[6]. In this regard, the working group considered that no legislative amendments

1 An overview of the institutional framework for all four pillars can be found here.
2 Figures 48 and 50, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard and Figures 51 and 53, 2024 EU Justice Scoreboard. The level of perceived judicial independence is categorised as follows: very low (below 30% of respondents perceive judicial independence as fairly good and very good); low (between 30-39%), average (between 40-59%), high (between 60-75%), very high (above 75%).
3 The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Lithuania to: 'Step up efforts to improve the transparency of the system of appointments to judicial positions, notably to the Supreme Court, taking into account European standards on judicial appointments'. Some further progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025, 2024 and 2023.
4 Country visit Lithuania, Judicial Council; Office of the President of the Republic.
5 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 3.
6 ECtHR, *Misiūnas v. Lithuania*, case no. 38686/22. In the case of a former judge seeking reappointment to a judicial post and whose reappointment was refused by the President of the Republic without a reasoned opinion, the Court found that the domestic courts had failed to provide an effective legal remedy capable of addressing the substance of the applicant's complaint, despite him having a legitimate and reasonable expectation that his application for re-entry into the judicial profession would be given proper consideration. There had been no exceptional or compelling reasons to justify the lack of judicial review of the President's decision. See Council of Europe – Lithuania, written input, p. 1. Following the ECtHR's decision, on 16 March 2026, the Lithuanian Supreme Court granted the applicant's request to reopen the civil case and returned it to the Vilnius District Court to reconsider the acceptance of the lawsuit.

are required[7]. In view of the above, some further progress has been made in improving the transparency of the system of judicial appointments.

Changes to the requirements for appointing Constitutional Court judges are under discussion in Parliament, following a ruling of the Constitutional Court. Following the Parliament's decision to appoint three new judges to the Constitutional Court[8], a group of members of Parliament appealed before the Constitutional Court the decision concerning one of the appointees[9]. The Constitutional Court declared that the appointee in question did not meet the constitutional requirements for exercising the functions[10]. In light of the discussions triggered by this case, members of Parliament presented in September 2025 draft amendments to the Law on the Constitutional Court, aimed at clarifying in particular the level of professional experience in the legal field required for the function of Constitutional Court judge. These amendments are still pending before Parliament[11]. Another draft law concerning the grounds for self-disqualification and disqualification of Constitutional Court judges also remains pending before Parliament[12].

Lawyers continue to raise concerns regarding respect for lawyer-client confidentiality and legislative changes to strengthen safeguards in disciplinary proceedings of lawyers are under discussion. In light of previously expressed concerns regarding the role of the Minister of Justice in disciplinary proceedings of lawyers[13], the Lithuanian Bar Association submitted in December 2025 draft amendments to the Law on the Bar[14]. The draft was reviewed and discussed by the Ministry of Justice and the Lithuanian Bar Association on 15 April 2026. It was agreed that the Lithuanian Bar Association would submit the revised draft to the Ministry of Justice[15]. Lawyers also continue to raise concerns about practices they consider as amounting to violations of professional secrecy, such as video recordings of interactions with clients in detention facilities, digital copies of lawyers' devices seized in the course of criminal proceedings, and questioning lawyers about criminal acts they became aware of in the course of their professional practice[16]. According to European standards, all

[7] The execution of the case is under the supervision of the Committee of Minister of the Council of Europe, which has not assessed it yet.
[8] The appointment followed the procedure as revised in June 2025 (see 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 3, fn. 19).
[9] Country visit Lithuania, Constitutional Court.
[10] The Court held that Parliament failed to comply with the requirement, set forth in Article 103(3) of the Constitution, to appoint to the office of a justice of the Constitutional Court only such a person who has the professional experience necessary for these duties (Constitutional Court of Lithuania, ruling of 15 January 2026). The ruling is directly applicable, implying the absolute nullity of the appointment decision. The procedure for the appointment of a judge to the remaining vacant post was finalised on 17 March 2026, and all three new judges were sworn in on 19 March 2026.
[11] Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 5.
[12] Country visit Lithuania, Constitutional Court. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 4.
[13] 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 5. See also figure 58, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.
[14] The amendments discussed would remove the Minister's authority to initiate disciplinary proceedings and appoint members of the Disciplinary Court, vesting these powers exclusively in the Bar Association. At the same time, in order to safeguard the rights of complainants, it was also proposed to introduce a clear right of appeal against decisions of the Bar Association.
[15] Consideration is also being given to incorporating these amendments into the draft law being prepared for the ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer.
[16] Lithuanian Bar Association, written input, p. 11. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, pp. 4-5.

necessary measures should be taken to ensure the respect of the confidentiality of the lawyer-client relationship[17].

Quality

The human and financial resources allocated to the justice system are still considered insufficient by the judiciary, including in light of the preliminary ruling of the Court of Justice regarding the remuneration of judges in Lithuania. Despite the progress brought about by the January 2025 reform of remuneration systems for judicial and prosecutorial staff, stakeholders continue to express concerns as to the competitiveness of salaries[18], which they perceive as the cause for the high number of vacant posts in the justice system[19]. The Minister of Justice has set up a working group, focusing on improving the efficiency of the justice system, and on the developing measures to facilitate the formation of a judicial team more effectively, the composition of this working group was renewed in February 2026 to include the representatives of the Ministry of Finance. The financing needs of the judicial community were discussed in detail in March 2026. Further discussions on this issue are taking place in the format of the budget negotiations. As regards judges' salaries, new amendments to the system of indexation came into force in January 2026[20]. In line with the newly introduced rules, the previously established salary fund recalculation mechanism was abolished, and the provisions limiting the reduction of recalculated salaries were revoked[21]. The judiciary has raised concerns that these amendments will make judges' salaries increasingly less competitive, impacting on the attractiveness of the profession[22]. Following a request for a preliminary ruling from a Lithuanian court, the Court of Justice of the European Union declared that the level of remuneration of judges must be sufficiently high, having regard to the economic, social and financial situation of the Member State concerned, in particular with regard to the average salary[23]. While the budget allocated to the justice system has been increasing annually, these increases have largely stemmed from horizontal policy decisions rather than from an assessment of the actual needs of the judicial system, and the budget for the justice system remains among the lowest in the EU[24]. Also, despite recurring calls for the modernisation and renewal of court buildings, including in light of security concerns, no measures are envisaged in this regard[25].

Limited progress was made on the recommendation regarding the reform of the legal aid system, as discussions on the level of remuneration of legal aid providers were

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17 Council of Europe (2025), para. 3(b); Council of Europe (2000), para. 6.

18 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 9; p. 17.

19 As of 31 December 2025, 8.4% of the judges' posts and 15.2% of court staff posts remained vacant; at the level of the Supreme Court, 16 out of 104 of the non-judicial posts were vacant (Country visit Lithuania, Judicial Council). No additional funding was received to increase the salaries of prosecution staff in 2025, despite the legislative changes (Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 17).

20 Law No. XV-640 of 9 December 2025.

21 Under the legal framework in force until the end of 2025, the indexation of the salary fund was to be applied according to the mechanism set out in the law, linked to economic indicators, for the first time when preparing the 2026 State Budget. According to the previous system, an estimated 2.5% increase was expected for 2026, corresponding to the projected growth of GDP (3.3%), average wages (7.3%), and inflation (approximately 3%). Country visit Lithuania, Judicial Council. ENCJ (2026), written input, pp. 65-66. Country visit Lithuania, Judicial Council.

22 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 16; Country visit Lithuania, Judicial Council.

23 Judgment of the CJEU of 25 February 2025, joined cases C-146/23 and 374/23. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 5.

24 In 2026, the budget allocated to courts increased from EUR 122,595 million to EUR 123,959 million (Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 17). See figures 33 and 34, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

25 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 10. Country visit Lithuania, Ministry of Justice.

suspended in 2026, and the envisaged new features of the Legal Aid Information System to reduce the administrative burden are planned to be launched still this year[26]. Lawyers who completed special training continue to benefit from higher remuneration when providing legal aid in specific areas[27], and additional funds have been allocated to provide training to more lawyers[28]. Following the assessment of the pilot project which ran from March until May 2025 to ensure an even workload distribution among legal aid providers, it was agreed that there is currently no need to adopt the proposed legal act, as the existing case allocation method is effective, while the situation will continue to be monitored[29]. Also, new features of the Legal Aid Information System to reduce the administrative burden for legal aid providers are planned to be launched in 2026[30]. Despite proposals by the Ministry of Justice, the remuneration of legal aid providers has not changed in 2026, and remains for defence lawyers in criminal cases among the lowest in the EU[31]. However, the Ministry of Justice has further proposed to increase the hourly base rate for lawyers providing legal aid in 2028 and 2029, while a final decision depends on the available financial resources[32]. The Constitutional Court has recently declared unconstitutional a provision of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid pertaining to secondary legal aid[33]. The Bar Association has presented proposals to address persisting concerns regarding the strict limitations of the number of hours payable under the legal aid system, as well as regarding the impact of the value-added tax on legal aid providers' remuneration[34]. According to European standards, an appropriate level of remuneration needs to be ensured for legal aid providers[35]. Overall, limited progress has been made in implementing this recommendation.

The level of digitalisation remains high, and further efforts are being made, including to promote automation of tasks and improve interoperability. Electronic communication tools continue to be widely available, both for courts and the prosecution service. As a new information system for prosecution is being developed, efforts are underway to ensure interoperability with the courts' information system, in particular regarding data and documents exchange[36]. While a significant number of digital solutions to initiate and follow proceedings in civil, commercial, and administrative cases are in place, these are noticeably less developed for criminal cases. In particular, confidential communication between

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26 The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Lithuania to: 'Finalise the reform of the legal aid system, in particular by ensuring adequate conditions for the participation of legal aid providers, taking into account European standards on legal aid'. Some further progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025, 2024, and 2023.

27 EUR 50 per hour (in comparison to the standard rate of EUR 25 per hour). See also 2024 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 10.

28 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 3. Cases have been reported of restrictions to the application of the higher tariff. Following an intervention by the Bar, the Ministry of Justice acknowledged the error and agreed to compensate for unpaid fees (Lithuanian Bar Association, written input, p. 12).

29 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 6.

30 In 2026, development of the Legal Aid Information System (TEISIS) is planned in order to reduce the administrative burden for lawyers providing state-guaranteed legal aid (for example, improvements of the functionality for submitting remuneration requests).

31 Figure 24, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

32 The current rate is EUR 25 per hour. It is proposed to increase it to EUR 30 in 2028 and to EUR 35 in 2029. The proposals will be discussed during the budget negotiations with representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Government.

33 The Constitutional Court's ruling of 26 November 2025 requires amendments to the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid, to ensure full compliance with the constitutional right of access to a court (Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 14).

34 Lithuanian Bar Association, written input, p. 12.

35 Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2021), para. 22. See also CCBE (2023), point 3.

36 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 20.

defendants and their lawyers during remote hearings remains impossible, and electronic access to cases remains limited, both for victims and defendants[37]. A new project for the automation of tasks in court proceedings is being implemented, which is expected to reduce the duration of judicial proceedings[38].

Efficiency

The justice system continues to perform efficiently, and discussions are ongoing to improve efficiency in administrative cases. In 2024, the disposition time in first instance civil and commercial cases (127 days), as well as in administrative cases (140 days) remained among the lowest in the EU, despite significant increases in administrative cases[39]. The number of pending non-criminal first instance cases remained stable and comparatively low. However, regarding administrative cases, courts received more cases than they were able to resolve, leading to a negative rate of case resolution. While stakeholders do not report concerns regarding the absence of commercial courts, there are calls for stronger specialisation of judges in commercial matters[40]. With the aim of improving efficiency in administrative cases, the Ministry of Justice has proposed legislative changes extending the categories of cases subject to mandatory pre-trial proceedings, as well as extending the deadline to appeal administrative decisions before court[41]. The judiciary was not formally involved in the preparation of these proposals[42]. However, the amendments proposed were officially submitted to the Judicial Council and administrative courts for consideration under the ordinary legislative procedure. After the consultation process, the modified amendments were submitted to the Government in May 2026. The judiciary is also preparing proposals to improve efficiency, namely concerning the removal of non-judicial functions attributed to courts[43].

II. ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

The perception among experts, citizens and business executives is that the level of corruption in the public sector is relatively low. In the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Lithuania scores 65/100 and ranks 12th in the European Union and 28th globally[44]. This perception has improved over the past five years[45]. The 2026 Special Eurobarometer on Corruption shows that 86% of respondents consider corruption widespread in their country (EU average 71%) and 25% of respondents feel personally affected by corruption in their daily lives (EU average 30%). As regards businesses, 59% of companies

[37] Figures 41 and 46 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.
[38] The project is financed by the Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI). It focuses on improving three key areas: automated assistance in completing templates to support routine tasks and reduce the volume of manual work and the number of errors; automated proposals for hearing schedules, automatically suggesting hearing times and optimizing time management; automated management of case-related processes.
[39] Figures 5 and 7, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. In first instance administrative cases, the disposition time increased from 64 days in 2023 to 140 days in 2024.
[40] Country visit Lithuania, Investors' Forum.
[41] Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 25.
[42] Country visit Lithuania, National Courts Administration.
[43] Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, pp. 26-27. ENCJ (2026), written input, pp. 32-33.
[44] The level of perceived corruption is categorized as follows: low (above 79); relatively low (between 79-60), relatively high (between 59-50), high (below 50).
[45] In 2021 the score was 61, while, in 2025, the score is 65. The score significantly increases/decreases when it changes more than five points; improves/deteriorates (changes between 4-5 points); is relatively stable (changes from 1-3 points) in the last five years.

consider that corruption is widespread (EU average 65%) and 23% consider that corruption is a problem when doing business (EU average 37%). Furthermore, 49% of respondents find that there are enough successful prosecutions to deter people from corrupt practices (EU average 38%), while 42% of companies believe that people and businesses caught for bribing a senior official are appropriately punished (EU average 31%)[46].

The second implementation plan 2026-2029 for the National Anti-Corruption Agenda was approved by the Government in April 2026. According to the monitoring and progress evaluation report issued by the Special Investigation Service (STT) on the National Anti-Corruption Agenda 2022-2033[47], approximately 90% of the planned activities included in the first implementation plan 2023–2025 were implemented. [48]. The second implementation plan[49] focuses on, among others, whistleblowing, raising awareness, as well high-risk areas for corruption[50].

The authorities continue to address corruption cases efficiently and the acquittal rate decreased. In view of addressing the length of investigations, including those on corruption, the draft amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure were considered by the Parliament and sent back to the Ministry of Justice[51]. In 2025, the STT opened 98 pre-trial investigations and transferred 51 pre-trial investigations to court[52]. Overall, three high level and complex corruption cases were investigated by the STT, and five cases of corruption falling were initiated by the EPPO[53]. Ninety persons were convicted in the first instance in 2025 while 20 persons were acquitted[54]. In terms of final court judgments in corruption cases, there were 156 convictions for both natural and legal persons, against 17 acquittals[55]. In 2025, the Prosecutor General’s Office registered 38% less cases than in 2024. In proceedings concerning corruption by local government politicians initiated in 2023, the courts had convicted 31 politicians, while six were acquitted or had their cases dismissed[56].

The offence of abuse of office was amended, reducing the maximum term of imprisonment and reclassifying the offence as a medium-gravity crime. At the initiative of Members of Parliament, which sparked a public debate[57], Parliament adopted amendments

[46] Data from Special Eurobarometer 573 (2026) and Flash Eurobarometer 582 (2026).
[47] Monitoring and evaluation report of the National Anti-Corruption Agenda 2022-2033 – implementation in 2024, STT website.
[48] The implemented measures focus, among others, on high-risk sectors, prevention of conflicts of interest and whistle-blowers. The 2026 monitoring and progress evaluation report is expected to be published by 30 June 2026. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 62.
[49] Resolution No. 313
[50] Country visit Lithuania, STT. In June 2025, a working group was created in view of preparing the second implementation plan for the period of 2026–2029. Order of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania No. 1R-195.
[51] Country visit Lithuania, General Prosecutor’s Office. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p.8.
[52] In 2024, the STT opened 103 pre-trail investigations and transferred 75 of pre-trail investigations to court. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 44. STT (2026), p. 17.
[53] EPPO (2026), p. 37.
[54] Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 44.
[55] In 2024, out of 126 examined cases, there were 123 convictions for both natural and legal persons against 22 acquittals. Those were based on Articles 225 (bribery), 226 (bribery of an intermediary), 227 (graft) and 228 abuse of office). Lithuanian Government (2026a), written input.
[56] Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 45. In 2025, 43 pre-trial investigations were conducted against 31 municipal counsellors. STT (2026), p. 23.
[57] Article 228 of the criminal code is used for **numerous ongoing criminal proceedings involving politicians**. The legislative votes were taken in a context where some members of Parliament could be perceived as having a **direct personal or political stake** in the outcome; consequently, a group of Members

to the offence of abuse of office that came into force in October 2025[58]. As a result, the maximum term of imprisonment was reduced and the offence was reclassified from a ‘serious crime’ to a ‘medium-gravity crime’[59]. The amendment has retroactive effect, namely it now applies both to pending cases in courts and to those with final judgments not yet fully executed.

Substantial efforts continue to be carried out with a view to addressing shortcomings in the fight against foreign bribery[60]. In October 2025, the STT published tailored guidelines intended for all companies, institutions and organisations involved in international transactions or financial flows in view of identifying potential cases of bribery of foreign officials, and to provide information on how to report on such incidents[61]. The OECD acknowledged Lithuania’s progress in implementing its recommendations of 2023[62], in view of addressing shortcomings in the fight against foreign bribery. According to the follow-up report, Lithuania has fully implemented 27 recommendations, partially implemented 14, and not implemented 8[63].

While the current framework remains unchanged, efforts are being made to better implement rules on declarations of private interests. Despite the continued lack of systemic checks of declarations of private interests[64], the Chief Official Ethics Commission (COEC) carries out monthly checks targeting the highest-risk positions to ensure compliance under the Law on the Adjustment of Public and Private Interests. In 2025, based on those checks, an in-depth assessment was conducted in two cases[65]. Overall, according to COEC, the implementation of the rules on integrity is efficient[66]. In 2025, COEC conducted 23 investigations under the current rules which resulted in four fines imposed. COEC introduced a digital solution integrating the gift-registration function into the Register of Private Interests which offers a centralised digital platform accessible to compliance officers and public-sector officials, ensuring uniform standards, traceability and effective oversight of reporting obligations. Additionally, a new decentralised oversight model was launched. It is based on cooperation agreements with public-sector institutions on the basis of which institutions may independently review their officials’ declarations of private interests, compare them with national-register data, and manage conflict-of-interest risks[67].

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of Parliament submitted the claim **to the Constitutional Court** alleging, *inter alia*, potential breaches of public and private interest rules and constitutional principles in the adoption of these amendments, and the Constitutional Court has accepted the request for examination.

58 Law No. XV-474.

59 Article 228(1): the maximum term of imprisonment was reduced from 5 years to 4 years. Article 228(2): the maximum term of imprisonment was reduced from 7 years to 6 years. In this context, amendments were adopted to the Law on Criminal Intelligence in October 2025, to mitigate the risk of restricting the use of criminal intelligence measures. Law No. XV-475.

60 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, pp. 8-9.

61 Guidelines for Identifying and Reporting Cases of Money Laundering Related to the Bribery of Foreign Officials, Special Investigation Service, 2025, STT official website.

62 OECD (2023).

63 OECD (2025).

64 The Law on the Adjustment of Public and Private Interests. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 9.

65 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 36.

66 While the number of persons checked remains similar to the previous years (5942 in 2025, against 5876 in 2024), the number of persons checked has doubled between 2020 and 2025. In 2025, there was a significant increase in the number of reports concerning infringements of integrity rules and in the number of complaints submitted to the COEC. Overall, about 80% of the investigations opened and carried out confirm the existence of an infringement. COEC (2026), pp. 23, 9.

67 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 36.

While the current lobbying framework is working well, a working group was established to reflect on further improvement of the current rules. According to COEC, in 2025, the number of notifications on potential infringements of the Law on Lobbying Activities[68] received was similar to previous years[69] and in 2025, COEC carried out 13 investigations in this context. Following an analysis of lobbying activities and its implementation, the STT recommended modifying the Law on Lobbying Activities[70]. In particular, the results showed gaps and exceptions in the regulation, allowing a wide range of actors to influence legislative processes without having to submit to transparency requirements. In addition, according to the STT, the implementation of the regulation and its oversight proved to be deficient and under-resourced. Following discussions and feedback from various stakeholders, COEC, responsible for the oversight of the lobbying activities, established a working group with the aim to discuss the issues at stake and propose possible improvements[71].

The number of reports on whistleblowing continues to increase and numerous activities implementing the current rules are ongoing. The whistleblowing reports for the last years continue to be on the rise with 97 reports received in 2025[72]. The Prosecutor General's Office provided 280 consultations to whistleblowers and representatives of internal channels through the whistleblower consultation hotline (in comparison to 286 in 2022, 259 in 2023 and 258 in 2024)[73]. The survey organised in 2025 on the Whistleblower Protection in Healthcare Institutions concluded that despite high awareness of the obligation to establish internal channels, gaps remain, particularly in the private sector[74]. A targeted awareness-raising campaign was also carried out regarding the rules in place[75]. In 2020, the Office of the Prosecutor General developed recommendations on the initiation of criminal proceedings in cases arising from whistleblower reports. Building on this work, in 2025 the Office continues to develop additional guidance in view of ensuring effectiveness and consistency in handling of cases across all stages of the criminal investigation procedure.

Efforts continue in monitoring and addressing the high-risk areas of corruption. Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU show that 26% of companies in Lithuania (EU average 30%) think that corruption has prevented them from winning a public tender in practice in the last three years[76]. 65% of businesses perceive the level of independence of the public procurement review body (district courts) as very or fairly good which has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (49%)[77]. The Single Market and Competitiveness Scoreboard on access to public procurement in Lithuania reports 11% of single bids for 2025 (27% EU average). Based on public perceptions, the sectors most

68 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 36.
69 The lobby declarations are submitted through SKAIDRIS which is the platform for lobbying transparency, Chief Official Ethics Commission.
70 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 35.
71 There is no deadline for the group to deliver its report. Country visit Lithuania, COEC. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 35.
72 In comparison to 80 in 2024 and 76 in 2023 and 53 in 2022. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 37.
73 In 2025, a total of 7120 participants from the public and private sectors took part in training on the whistleblower protection framework and internal reporting channels. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 37.
74 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 37.
75 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 37.
76 Flash Eurobarometer 582 on Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU (2026). This is 4 percentage points above the EU average.
77 Figure 59, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

commonly regarded as affected by corruption include the justice system[78], healthcare, management of public funds and budget spending, energy, environment, territorial planning, and construction[79]. In 2025, the STT conducted anti-corruption risk assessments of legislation and draft legislation as well as corruption risk analyses[80]. The completion date of the new electronic public procurement system has been postponed, while the current temporary IT solution is proving to function efficiently[81]. In 2025, all newly appointed Members of Government received Strategic anti-corruption guidelines from the STT[82]. Additionally, the STT delivered the first set of individual anti-corruption guidelines at local level[83]. COEC conducted independent audits of the Ministry of National Defence and the Defence Resources Agency and, as a result, issued recommendations to both institutions aimed at further strengthening the management of conflict-of-interest risks. Also, shortcomings in the public procurement linked to the defence sector were identified. In addition, COEC prepared guidance on the identification and assessment of such risks[84].

III. MEDIA PLURALISM AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The ownership for audiovisual media services continues to operate independently and is sufficiently funded. The regulator, *Lietuvos radijo ir televizijos komisija* (LRTK) gained new competences regarding accessibility of media services and continues to monitor the ban of retransmission or internet distribution of television and radio channels and programmes that can be linked to Russia or Belarus[85]. Even with the additional competences, LRTK continues to consider it is independent in its functioning as well as adequately funded and equipped with enough human resources to support its expanded responsibilities[86]. The Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) reports a continuously very low risk (3%) for the independence and effectiveness of the media authority[87].

The situation regarding the governance and funding framework of the public broadcaster is challenging, with discussions ongoing on possible legislative reforms, and

78 Regarding initiatives to fight corruption in the justice system, see 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 4.

79 STT, Lithuanian Map of Corruption 2025. According to STT, the experience of corruption is significantly lower than the estimated prevalence – 11% of residents report having paid a bribe in the past 12 months. The proportion of residents who have paid a bribe has not changed significantly since 2020. STT, Lithuanian Map of Corruption 2025.

80 Overall, 47 assessments were conducted in high-risk areas, such as public procurement in healthcare, construction, transport/infrastructure, defence, agriculture, environment, spending of EU funds, urban planning. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 42. STT (2026), pp. 29-31.

81 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 11. The new central public procurement information system is expected to be operational in the fourth quarter of 2027. Country visit Lithuania, Public Procurement Office.

82 The main aim of this STT initiative, which has been carried out since 2024, is to manage corruption risks in the whole area of the responsibility of each minister, by providing timely information on the corruption risks in the policy areas of the ministers, as well as to discuss possible recommendations or solutions. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 10. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 33.

83 The guidelines include information on existing corruption risks in each municipality based on outputs of investigation, analytics, corruption prevention, anti-corruption awareness raising. In this context, six workshops were organised, including specialised workshops for corruption prevention specialists in municipalities. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 34.

84 The guidance defines various levels of likelihood and intensity of conflict of interest risks and sets out detailed criteria applicable to each level. It describes risk categories and their core indicators, identifies circumstances that may give rise to each type of risk, and provides practical examples of how such risks may be detected. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 36.

85 Country visit Lithuania, LRTK.

86 Country visit Lithuania, LRTK.

87 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, country report for Lithuania, p. 10.

changes made to its funding model. The annual budget of the *Lietuvos nacionalinis radijas ir televizija* (LRT) for the period 2026-2028 was set at the 2025 level of EUR 79.6 million[88]. As of 2029, LRT will receive 0.75% of personal income tax revenue and 0.8% of excise tax revenue collected the previous year, down from the current levels of 1% and 1.3%. According to LRT Council[89], this decision was justified by the increase in the defence budget in response to the geopolitical situation. The Constitutional Court will assess the changed funding law against constitutional provisions on media independence, pluralistic democracy and responsible governance[90]. The Venice Commission recommended to Lithuania to amend the financing model of LRT based on a comprehensive assessment, carried out in close consultation with the LRT and other stakeholders concerned, of whether the current funding model is adequate to enable the LRT to fulfil its public service remit effectively[91]. A parliamentary working group established to re-assess LRT governance proposed a new financing model of LRT, based on a 10-year public service contract with a government-designated body, which would define LRT's tasks and objectives, ensuring that LRT services are distinct from those provided by commercial media.

Legislative initiatives concerning the governance and leadership of the public broadcaster LRT raised concerns about risks to its independence and generated public protests. In November 2025, a group of Members of Parliament proposed a bill to change LRT Law, that would significantly weaken the dismissal safeguards for the Director General of LRT, allowing the current LRT Council to dismiss the current LRT Director-General[92]. The bill in question would have allowed for simple majority to dismiss the LRT Director-General without specific reason, while current rules require a two-thirds majority to take such action. The bill was initially discussed in expedited procedure. Due to strong criticism[93] and public protests, that stakeholders qualified to be of unprecedented dimension, the parliamentary works were halted. Parliament established a working group to prepare a new draft law on LRT governance. In February 2026, the working group submitted for the consideration of Parliament the draft law covering the extension of the membership and powers of the Council, introduction of a new governing body - the board, as well as the dismissal grounds and procedure for the Director-General[94]. In March 2026, the Venice Commission issued an opinion[95] on the draft amendments to the LRT Law. Following the opinion, further amendments were introduced by the Parliamentary Committee, while a follow-up opinion from the Venice Commission was requested by the LRT administration[96].

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88 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 30.

89 Country visit Lithuania, LRT Council.

90 Constitutional Court of Lithuania, Case No KT9-S8/2026.

91 Venice Commission Opinion, para. 102 (B).

92 In the course of the parliamentary debate over the bill presented in November 2025, the LRT journalists, the Prime Minister and the President supported the resignation of the LRT Council as a solution for resolving the conflict between the Council and the Director-General; however, the LRT Council remained in function. Country visit Lithuania (2026), LRT Council.

93 Critical opinions came, among others, from the Ministry of Culture, Parliamentary Legal Office, European Broadcasting Union and media associations. The European Parliament adopted a resolution of 22 January 2026 on the attempted takeover of Lithuania's public broadcaster and the threat to democracy in Lithuania (2026/2568(RSP)).

94 Country visit Lithuania, Ministry of Culture.

95 Venice Commission recommended, i.a., that Lithuania review the LRT funding framework and retain stronger safeguards for the dismissal of the Director-General. Venice Commission Opinion, para 102 (C-D).

96 On 29 April 2026, the Parliamentary Committee on Culture postponed further consideration of the draft law pending the Venice Commission's follow-up assessment. The Follow-up Opinion was issued on 6 May 2026 and is to be submitted for endorsement at the Venice Commission's June 2026 plenary session. On 13 May 2026, the parliamentary Committee on Culture approved revised amendments to the LRT Law.

On 2 June 2026, the Seimas adopted a new version of the law. The adopted law retains the requirement of a two-thirds majority of the LRT Council for the dismissal of the Director-General before the expiry of the term of office and limits such dismissal to specific grounds[97]. The National Audit Office's audit[98] to assess the activities of LRT for 2021–2024 in terms of economy, effectiveness and efficiency was concluded in November 2025 with nine recommendations to several institutions[99]. LRT administration responded positively to the Audit Office recommendations issued and undertook measures for their implementation[100].

Following an initial reduction, the budget for the Media Support Fund was restored to the previous level of financing. The budget allocated to the Media Support Fund for 2026 was initially reduced by EUR 0.6 million compared to 2025, setting the Fund's allocation at EUR 9.9 million. Subsequently, the Government announced that additional resources had been secured to restore the Fund's financing to its previous level. The Media Support Fund awarded grants to investigative journalists. The Lithuanian Journalists' Union continuously reports that the fund awarding rules still favour existing and larger media service providers, making it difficult for smaller and new media service providers, which directly affects editorial independence and sustainability, while the Media Support Fund framework includes dedicated support schemes for regional, local, cultural and minority-language media, as well as operational support measures aimed at strengthening the sustainability of smaller media outlets[101]. The data from a public information system (VIRSIS), continuously shows that state advertising is not distributed to a diverse range of media service providers and the Government is working on a solution to enhance balance between media outlets. There were no changes made to VIRSIS which still does not account for ownership via proxies, but the Government is working on legislative changes to the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public as regards transparency of the ownership and to ensure that data on state advertising of public sector entities and other transactions with media organisations be automatically uploaded into this database. According to the MPM 2026, media ownership transparency is at low risk (18%)[102]. News media concentration remains very high and Lithuanian law still does not provide for specific rules on market concentration in the media sector.

The situation regarding access to documents is stable and the scope of information provided in public databases is expanding. Overall, the current legal framework provides effective measures for oversight, appeal and enforcement, even though statistical data on

97 The law also establishes a new five-member Board of the LRT, expands the composition of the LRT Council from 12 to 15 members, shortens Council members'' terms from six to four years, and introduces a dedicated office to support the LRT Council's work. Bill No XVP-1247(4).

98 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 6.

99 Country visit Lithuania (2026), National Audit Office. Out of nine recommendations three were addressed to the Government, one to the Ministry of Culture, four to the administration of LRT, and one to the LRT Council. Towards LRT administration the National Audit Office identified, among others, the LRT's administration need to improve employee management and social guarantees (to strengthen the human resource management process by revising the guidelines for personnel search and selection), increase accessibility and diversity of content (by establishing annual targets and implementation schedules for programs with Lithuanian subtitles, adapted for persons with visual impairments and translated into Lithuanian sign language, in accordance with the objectives set out in the law), reduce reliance on paid broadcasts, strengthen procurement controls, and enhance institutional oversight. LRT's administration agreed with all of the recommendations.

100 Country visit Lithuania (2026), LRT.

101 Lithuanian Government (2026), additional written input.

102 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, country report for Lithuania, p. 16.

refusals or delays is not collected centrally[103]. Following the amendments to the Law on Political Organisations[104], journalists now have the right to receive data concerning members of political organisations free of charge from the register, which became operational in April 2026[105]. Although the MPM 2026 refers to some issues about public institutions withholding information in response to requests based on personal data protection, it considers the protection of the right to information a low -risk area (32%)[106].

The professional environment for journalists in Lithuania remains stable and state-guaranteed legal aid was introduced. Amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure to implement the anti-SLAPP Directive were adopted in December 2025[107]. The new legislation also applies to domestic cases. In parallel, amendments to the Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid provide that people defending lawful public participation who request the application of the early dismissal procedure for manifestly unfounded claims are entitled to state-guaranteed legal aid[108]. At the same time, some stakeholders report an increase in legal proceedings involving journalists and media outlets in recent years[109]. While not all cases are considered as SLAPPs, certain characteristics, including their duration and the nature of the claims, have raised concerns among stakeholders about the potential use of legal action to discourage journalistic activity. According to stakeholders, this may have a chilling effect on media freedom, particularly affecting investigative journalism as well as smaller and regional media outlets[110]. Since the publication of the 2025 Rule of Law Report, the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists published one new alert about Lithuania, related to the independence and effective functioning of the public broadcaster[111]. Mapping Media Freedom platform issued two new alerts, including one also in the context of LRT-related reforms [112].The 2026 MPM indicator for journalistic profession, standards, and protection remains stable at medium-low risk (35%)[113].

IV. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO CHECKS AND BALANCES

The increasing use of fast-track parliamentary procedures has raised concerns from businesses and the civil society about the possibility of public participation in key legislative procedures. Stakeholders report concerns regarding the increasing use of expedited procedures for the adoption of legislation in particularly sensitive areas, such us public service media, the national human rights institution, tax matters, or the Criminal Code[114]. According to stakeholders, such practices limit the possibility of public scrutiny and debate. Moreover, concerns have been expressed regarding the limited consideration given to

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103 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 30.
104 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 6.
105 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 30.
106 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, country report for Lithuania, p. 10.
107 Ministry of Justice, written input.
108 Ministry of Culture written input.
109 These cases concerned issues such as defamation, personal data protection and commercial interests, and in some instances involved lengthy judicial procedures. Country visit Lithuania (2026), Lithuanian Journalists' Union.
110 Country visit Lithuania (2026), Lithuanian Journalists' Union.
111 Council of Europe Safety of Journalist Platform (2026). The Lithuanian authorities have not replied to the alert.
112 Mapping Media Freedom (2026). One new alert concerning statements by a politician questioning the impartiality and transparency of the public broadcaster LRT and referring to ongoing audits related to its activities.
113 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, country report for Lithuania, p. 10.
114 Country visit Lithuania, National NGO Coalition, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Investors' Forum.

expert opinions, in particular on economic legislation[115], and the difficulty to follow the decision -making process. There is no mandatory requirement for conducting regulatory impact assessments for primary laws initiated by Parliament, while the use of impact assessments for laws initiated by the executive is comparatively high[116]. According to European standards, the legislative process needs to be efficient, transparent, inclusive and democratic, and the legislature should follow the standard legislative procedure and avoid resorting to expedited adoption of legal acts on a regular basis[117].

More than half of companies surveyed in Lithuania express confidence in the effectiveness of investment protection. 56% of companies are very or fairly confident that investments are protected by law and courts, a figure which has slightly decreased in comparison with 2025 (59%) [118]. As regards authorities relevant for economic operators, 59% of companies perceive the level of independence of the national competition authority (The Competition Council of the Republic of Lithuania) as very or fairly good, a figure which has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (41%)[119]. The Supreme Administrative Court has jurisdiction in several business-related cases, including in cases related to public procurement, public contracts and economic regulation. A number of judicial mechanisms to improve efficiency are available in these cases, including the possibility to apply interim measures and the consolidation of multiple appeals[120].

On 1 January 2026, Lithuania had 11 leading judgments of the European Court of Human Rights pending implementation, a decrease of 9 compared to the previous year[121]. At that time, Lithuania's rate of leading judgments from the past 10 years that had been implemented was at 83% (compared to 68% in 2025; 17% remained pending), the average time that the judgments had been pending implementation was 5 years and 8 months (compared to 4 years and 7 months in 2025)[122], and the oldest leading judgment has been pending implementation for almost 18 years[123]. As regards the respect of payment deadlines, on 31 December 2025 there were no cases awaiting confirmation of payments (same as in 2024)[124]. By 17 June 2026, the number of leading judgments pending implementation had decreased to 9[125]. In June 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe closed the examination of the judgment *Macatė v Lithuania*, having considered that the necessary individual and general measures were taken, and the Constitutional Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of the impugned legal provision rendered it inapplicable[126].

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115 Country visit Lithuania, Investor's Forum.
116 OECD (2025), p. 163.
117 Venice Commission, Updated Rule of Law Checklist (December 2025), para. 34.
118 Figures 52 and 53, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. 29% and 28% of the surveyed investors respectively perceive the frequent changes in legislation or concerns about the quality of the law-making process and concerns about quality, efficiency or independence of justice as a reason for the lack of confidence in investment protection.
119 Figure 60, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.
120 Figures 66 and 67, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. The data presented reflects exclusively the mechanisms in place at the level of the highest administrative jurisdictions; the same or other mechanisms may be in place at lower instance administrative courts.
121 For an explanation of the supervision process, see the website of the Council of Europe.
122 All figures calculated by the European Implementation Network (EIN) and based on the number of cases that are considered pending at the annual cut-off date of 1 January 2026. EIN (2026), written input, pp. 6-7.
123 Judgment of the ECtHR, 27527/03, *L.v Lithuania*, pending implementation since 2007.
124 Council of Europe (2026), p. 163.
125 Data according to the online database of the Council of Europe (HUDOC).
126 Committee of Ministers (2025), Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)134.

Changes to the law on the Parliamentary Ombudspersons increased number of the Ombudspersons to three. In June 2025, Parliament adopted, through the expedited procedure, amendments to the Law on the Parliamentary Ombudspersons, which is the national human rights institution, accredited with 'A' status[127]. The amendments increased the number of Ombudspersons to three. While the law does not expressly include a thematic specialisation for the third Ombudsperson, the preparatory works, parliamentary hearings and public communications presented the new position as an 'Ombudsperson for Small and Medium Enterprises'[128], although the Legal Department of Parliament alerted to the unconstitutionality of including a specialised Ombudsperson defending the interests of only a narrow group of applicants[129]. Concerns were raised with regard to the appointment procedure of the third Ombudsperson, as the appointment of two nominees failed in Parliament[130]. To address such concerns, draft amendments were presented in Parliament, which were ultimately rejected[131]. A new Ombudsperson was appointed on 23 April 2026. At the time of the latest reaccreditation of the institution, the accreditation committee had recommended to ensure the formalisation of a clear, transparent, and participatory selection and appointment process of Ombudspersons[132]. In 2026, additional state budget funding was allocated to the institution.

The civic space remains open and efforts are made to improve effective civil society participation in decision-making, while legislative changes may impact Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) access to financing. The civic space continues to be rated as 'open' by Civicus[133], and civil society has been particularly active during the reporting period, notably regarding the proposed changes to the LRT law[134]. However, CSOs report increasing concerns regarding negative narratives on advocacy activities and civil society[135]. Obstacles to the right of access to information also continue to be reported[136]. The Government is implementing the project 'Strengthening the role of NGOs and increasing their transparency' in partnership with CSOs, with the aim to improve effective civil society participation, and improve accountability and trust[137]. While the project is positively assessed by CSOs[138],

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127 Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) (2024).

128 Ministry of Economy and Innovation (2025).

129 Public communications also indicate that the third Ombudsperson would be tasked with proposing legal amendments to prevent excessive regulation and implementing the legitimate interests of SMEs. Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, pp. 53-54.

130 In the first case, due to the fact that the candidate did not meet the applicable statutory eligibility requirements of necessary education; in the second case, the process was halted due to concerns as to the political neutrality of the candidate, who had close links to the ruling political party and had held senior posts in the current Government, including Vice-Minister of Health and, later, Chancellor of the Ministry of Justice (Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 54). Stakeholders also express concerns that the attempt to nominate candidates linked to the Government may tamper with the institution's independence (Country visit Lithuania, Investors' Forum).

131 In line with the proposed amendments of the first draft, a person would not be eligible for appointment as an Ombudsperson if, during the five years preceding the submission of their candidacy to Parliament, they held the status of a state politician (Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 54). Following the rejection of this draft, a second one was submitted, omitting the prohibition to participate in political activities, but adding the requirement for political party members to suspend their party membership before nomination, which was rejected as well.

132 GANHRI (2024).

133 Lithuania's score is 85/100. Ratings by CIVICUS are on a five-category scale defined as: open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed and closed.

134 Country visit Lithuania, National NGO Coalition, Human Rights Monitoring Institute.

135 Ibidem.

136 Country visit Lithuania, National NGO Coalition, Human Rights Monitoring Institute. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 15.

137 Lithuanian Government (2026), written input, p. 65.

concerns remain regarding the possibility for meaningful participation in decision-making processes, especially at local level[139]. Proposed changes to the Law on Charity and Sponsorship aim at broadening the entities to whom taxpayers can allocate a certain percentage of their income tax, which are currently limited to non-governmental organisations and trade unions, and may therefore have an impact on the access of CSOs to funding, as such allocations represent one of their main sources of financing[140].

[138] Country visit Lithuania, National NGO Coalition.
[139] See also paragraph on legislative procedures.
[140] The draft proposes the inclusion of religious communities, communities and religious centres, state and municipal schools among the entities who can benefit from the allocations. These changes revert from the legislation introduced in 2023, which came into force in 2025, and had been welcomed by civil society (see 2023 Rule of Law Report, Lithuania, p. 23).

Annex I: List of sources in alphabetical order*

** The list of contributions received in the context of the consultation for the 2026 Rule of Law Report can be found at https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-rule-law-report-targeted-stakeholder-consultation_en.*

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Annex II: Country visit to Lithuania

The Commission services held virtual meetings in November 2025 and February 2026 with:

- Bar Association
- COEC
- Constitutional Court
- Human Rights Monitoring Institute
- Investors' Forum
- Judicial Council
- Lithuanian Journalists Union
- Lithuanian Radio and Television
- Media Authority – Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- National Audit Authority
- National Courts Administration
- National NGO Coalition
- Office of the President of the Republic
- Office of the Prosecutor General
- Office of the Seimas Ombudspersons
- Online Media Association
- Public Information Ethics Association
- Public Procurement Service
- Special Investigation Service
- Supreme Court
- Transparency International Lithuania

* The Commission also met the following organisations in a number of horizontal meetings:

- Amnesty International
- Araminta
- Civil Liberties Union for Europe
- Civil Society Europe
- European Civic Forum
- European Partnership for Democracy
- European Youth Forum,
- International Commission of Jurists
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- JEF Europe
- Philea – Philanthropy Europe Association.
- Transparency International