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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

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

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

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ABSTRACT

In Romania, the Justice Laws continued to be implemented and contributed to improving the legislative framework for the independence and functioning of the judiciary, while a reflection on various concerns related to the judiciary in public debates has been put on hold following a decision of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. A selection procedure resulted in the appointments of several high-ranking prosecutors. However, no legislative steps have been taken yet to strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and for the organisation and functioning of the judicial police. Some magistrates continue to feel undue pressure from inside the judiciary and judges were recused for intending to refer cases to European Courts. The occupancy rate of positions in the magistracy increased in 2025, and measures have been taken to tackle current shortages and to improve the legal aid system, which remains underfunded. The digitalisation of the justice system is one of the priorities of the Government. The estimated time needed to resolve civil, commercial, administrative cases significantly decreased while the clearance rate improved.

The evaluation of the 2021-2025 National Anti-Corruption Strategy has been finalised and the next strategy for 2026-2030 is under preparation. The track record in prosecuting both petty and high-level corruption has been maintained compared to the previous year. Lower courts have continued to close corruption cases and annul convictions, including in high level ones, following rulings by the High Court of Cassation and Justice on the statute of limitations. While the backlog of pending cases has been significantly reduced, there have been no further measures taken to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption offenses in the judiciary. New legislation on revolving doors was adopted, including pre- and post-employment restrictions on a wide range of public officials, and a new Code of Ethics for the government is being implemented, including a prohibition on gifts. A broad legislative proposal on asset declarations, submitted by the National Integrity Agency (ANI), is currently under discussion. New rules on lobbying for Members of Parliament have been introduced. ANI is developing an IT system for whistleblower reports.

The media regulator has fewer human resources despite an increase in tasks, with digitalisation efforts initiated in 2025 progressing slowly. Self-regulation has still not been completely agreed upon by media actors. Initial steps have been taken on the reform to enhance independent governance and editorial independence of public service media. Transparency of media ownership continues to present limitations, and issues with access to information remain, pending discussions on a new Code of Administrative Procedures. The new Audiovisual Code legislates the financing of private media by political parties and state authorities and has led to a better marking of the type of content than in the past, but certain related practices remain an issue. An anti-SLAPP law is in preparation, as some further cases of threats and instances of harassment of journalists have been reported.

Less government emergency ordinances were adopted in 2025 than in 2024 and steps have been taken for effective public consultations, while a number of shortcomings remain in practice. Legislative unpredictability driven by frequent amendments to legislation and a large number of draft laws pending in Parliament remain primary concerns for businesses and CSOs. A final decision is pending regarding the accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions. Actions planned in the framework of the Strategy for Open Government in Romania 2025-2030 remain to be implemented and CSOs report increasing restrictions to their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, based on the recommendations in the 2025 Rule of Law Report, considering other developments that took place in the period of reference and in addition to recalling the relevant commitments made under the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the country-specific recommendation under the European Semester on the predictability and quality of decision-making, the Commission concludes the following:

- The Justice Laws continue to be implemented and have contributed to improving the legislative framework for the independence and functioning of the judiciary, while a reflection on various aspects related to the judiciary has been put on hold following a decision of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. It is therefore recommended to Romania to *take forward the evaluation of the implementation of the Justice Laws in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, including as regards measures to further improve the effectiveness and governance of the judiciary.*
- There has been no progress yet to strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and for the organisation and functioning of the judicial police, as the reflection on various aspects related to the judiciary has been put on hold. It is therefore recommended to Romania to *step up the legislative work to strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and for the organisation and functioning of the judicial police.*
- There has been no further progress to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption offenses in the judiciary, as no measures were taken to address remaining shortcomings. It is recommended to Romania to *take measures to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of criminal offences in the judiciary, including as regards corruption offences.*
- The recommendation to introduce rules on lobbying for members of Parliament has been fully implemented as a new law was adopted in November 2025 which obliges deputies and senators to register meetings with third parties on legislative initiatives. Some progress has been made to ensure the effectiveness of the asset declaration system, with a draft law which aims to update the existing integrity legal framework. Therefore, it is recommended to Romania to *complete the legislative process to ensure the effectiveness of the asset declaration system.*
- Some further progress has been made on the frequent use of government emergency ordinances and effective public consultations, while a number of shortcomings remain in practice. It is therefore recommended to Romania to *step up efforts to address the frequent use of government emergency ordinances and to ensure effective public consultations before the adoption of legislation.*
- There has been no progress on the accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions, as a decision remains pending, and the Government has not solved compliance issues with the Paris Principles of two organisations it proposed as National Human Rights Institutions. It is therefore recommended to Romania to *take forward the process for obtaining accreditation for the National Human Rights Institutions, taking into account the UN Paris Principles.*

As regards the other 2025 recommendations, the Commission concludes that:

- Limited progress has been made strengthening the rules and mechanisms to enhance the independent governance and editorial independence of public service media, in light of the establishment of an interministerial working group on the matter. Given that the topics of this recommendation are covered by the provisions of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), while the Rule of Law Report will continue to monitor significant developments and report on their impact, further follow-up will be ensured as part of the Commission's support to Member States and enforcement of the EMFA.

I. JUSTICE SYSTEM¹

Independence

The level of perceived judicial independence in Romania continues to be average among both the general public and companies. Overall, 41% of the general population and 43% of companies perceive the level of independence of courts and judges to be ‘fairly or very good’ in 2026². The perceived judicial independence among the general public has slightly decreased in comparison with 2025 (44%) and has significantly decreased in comparison with 2022 (48%). The perceived judicial independence among companies has significantly decreased in comparison with 2025 (51%) and has decreased in comparison with 2022 (49%)³.

The Justice Laws continue to be implemented, while a reflection on various aspects related to the judiciary has been put on hold following a decision of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. The Justice Laws adopted in 2022 have contributed to improving the legislative framework for the independence and functioning of the judiciary and corrected the amendments to these laws of 2018 and 2019, which had a serious impact on the independence, quality and efficiency of the justice system⁴. Based on the experience gained with implementation since the adoption of the Justice Laws, further legislative adjustments may be required to address remaining concerns related to judicial governance, career management and institutional safeguards, and the authorities deemed that an evaluation should be considered after a sufficient period of time since the adoption of the Justice Laws⁵. Following public debates on concerns raised within the judiciary in December 2025⁶, the President of Romania invited magistrates to share their views on the functioning of justice, the independence of magistrates and the mechanisms regarding their career⁷. In parallel, the Prime Minister set up a Committee to look at avenues to improve the effectiveness of the judiciary⁸, in particular through the review and possible amendments of the Justice Laws. The Committee discussed⁹ the concerns raised by magistrates, in particular as regards the high number of delegations of judges, including to management positions in courts¹⁰; the

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 See also January 2026, INSCOP Research, survey on the trust in the judiciary in Romania, according to which seven out of ten Romanians have very little or no trust in the judiciary, while more than two-thirds believe that the justice system is not independent. FDSC (2026), written input, p. 9.

⁴ 2023 Rule of Law Report, pp. 4-6.

⁵ 2025 Rule of Law Report, p. 4.

⁶ Discussions in the wake of the broadcasting of a documentary by an investigative media outlet.

⁷ President of Romania’s Summary of “the comments submitted by magistrates and other actors in the judicial system on the functioning of justice, the independence of magistrates and the mechanisms regarding the career of magistrates”.

⁸ Decision no. 574/2025 of the Prime Minister on the setting up, organisation and tasks of the Committee on the Review and Revision of the Justice laws. Members of the Committee are the Chancellor and the Ministry of Justice.

⁹ See press release issued by the Government with topics discussed.

¹⁰ As of January 2026, out of 657 management positions, 430 were filled by delegation, i.e. 65.44% (Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) data). Magistrates’ associations and CSOs expressed their concern that this undermines judicial independence. (Country visit). On this aspect and the following issues mentioned, see also Expert Forum (2025), Priorities of Justice; the Romanian Forum of Judges (2025), Some Effects of the New Justice Laws.

withdrawal of cases from judges, sometimes without their consent¹¹; the number of secondments of judges to other courts or panels, sometimes without their consent¹²; the procedure for high-level nominations and promotions of judges and prosecutors¹³; the composition of courts' governing boards¹⁴; and the composition and representativity of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM)¹⁵. Magistrates' associations and CSOs had highlighted that the set-up of the Committee provided a timely opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the Justice Laws in light of European standards and in close consultation with relevant stakeholders and with the Venice Commission¹⁶. In a decision of 25 March 2026, the High Court of Cassation and Justice (HCCJ) however suspended the decision that set up the Committee. As a consequence, the Committee's work was put on hold¹⁷. In July 2026, the Government published the Committee's report, which includes recommendations to improve the situation in the judiciary, including through an evaluation and possible revision of the Justice Laws¹⁸.

No progress has been made yet on the recommendation on strengthening safeguards for the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and the organisation and functioning of the judicial police¹⁹. A selection procedure was organised resulting in appointments to several high-ranking prosecutorial positions. However, pending the work of the Committee, the Government also suspended the legislative work on the draft law to further strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors. There were also no

¹¹ Country visit Romania, CSOs and magistrates' associations. Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2010), para. 9 provides that a case should not be withdrawn from a particular judge without valid reasons, unless such decision is taken on the basis of objective, pre-established criteria and following a transparent procedure. See also Judges' Forum (2025).

¹² Country visit Romania, CSOs and magistrates' associations and documents mentioned under fn. 11. CJEU, Judgment of 6 October 2021, *Case C-487/19, W.Z.*, para. 114 provides that transfers without consent of a judge to another court or another panel can undermine the principles of the irremovability of judges and judicial independence.

¹³ A key concern raised by magistrates regards the level of transparency of such promotions, which rest on an evaluation of the candidates' judgments and an interview with the SCM section of judges, and no longer include a written competition. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 4. Country visit Romania, magistrates' associations and CSOs. See also documents mentioned under fn. 11. CCBE (2026). The nominations of high-level prosecutors by the President of Romania prompted twenty-five CSOs, supported by a number of citizens who signed a petition, to organise demonstrations, as in their view these nominations would go against efforts to strengthen judicial independence and the fight against corruption.

¹⁴ Some stakeholders consider that a majority of members should be elected by their peers, which is not the case under the Justice Laws. Country visit Romania, CSOs and magistrates' associations and documents mentioned under fn. 7.

¹⁵ The Venice Commission has reiterated the principle of broad and fair representation of all levels and types of courts in judicial councils. Venice Commission (2023, 2022, 2021). See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p.4, and Country visit Romania, magistrates' associations and CSOs.

¹⁶ Country visit Romania, Romanian Judges' Forum Association, Movement for the Defence of Prosecutors' Status Association, Initiative for Justice Association, Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC), Funky Citizens, Expert Forum.

¹⁷ See footnote nr. 8 on Prime Minister Decision no. 574/2025. The HCCJ Decision is not public yet. Decision no. 574/2025 has also been appealed in front of the Bucharest Court of Appeal (Case number 448/2/2026). On 6 July 2026, the Bucharest Court of Appeal annulled the decision to set up the Committee.

¹⁸ Government of Romania, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Report on the work of the Committee on the Review and Revision of the Justice Laws. The report recommends, among other things, to revise the legislative framework on delegations and promotions of magistrates, their disciplinary regime and the composition of management boards in courts, and to regularly audit the system of random allocation of cases.

¹⁹ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Romania to "Take forward legislative steps to strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and for the organisation and functioning of the judicial police". This was a new recommendation in 2025.

further legislative developments in the organisation and functioning of the judicial police²⁰. In addition, due to budgetary constraints, the Government put on hold the independent audit of the random case allocation system provided for in the Justice Laws²¹. Pending further reflection, there has been no progress yet to strengthen safeguards to ensure the independence of high-ranking prosecutors and for the organisation and functioning of the judicial police.

Some magistrates continue to feel undue pressure from inside the judiciary, and judges were recused for intending to refer cases to European Courts. These concerns were brought to the attention of the President of Romania by magistrates and their associations²². The transparency of case law on disciplinary sanctions has improved²³, but decisions of the disciplinary sections of the SCM are not published and their reasoning is often transmitted late to the magistrate concerned²⁴, which hampers the exercise of their right to appeal²⁵. In a case of December 2025, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights reiterated that magistrates should be allowed to speak out in defence of judicial independence²⁶. However, individual magistrates continued facing pressure²⁷ and magistrates' associations issued public statements demanding an end to disciplinary pressure on magistrates exercising their right to free speech²⁸. The Judicial Inspection concluded that the statements made by magistrates regarding disciplinary or administrative pressures were unsubstantiated²⁹. A large number of magistrates and CSOs, however, disagreed with this assessment and raised questions as to the independence of the Judicial Inspection and its report³⁰. On 1 April, the Constitutional Court (CCR) declared rules on the appointment to the position of inspector within the Judicial Inspection, provided for in Law No 317/2004 on the SCM, unconstitutional, as they should be regulated by an organic law. In parallel, the HCCJ decided that magistrates who report wrongdoings cannot be considered as whistleblowers³¹.

²⁰ Romanian Government (2026), written input, p. 2-3. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 4.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 13.

²² See Summary of the Presidency of the Republic, fn. 5. See also Country visit Romania, Concordia and Romanian Business Leaders.

²³ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 4-5.

²⁴ Romanian Judges' Forum Association, Movement for the Defence of Prosecutors' Status Association, Initiative for Justice Association, Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC), Funky Citizens, Expert Forum.

²⁵ See GRECO recommendation to Portugal (4th evaluation round, pt. 96), that information on the outcome of disciplinary procedures is published in a timely manner. And pts. 16 and 18 (right to a timely decision and right to appeal) of CCJE Opinion No. 27 (2024) on the disciplinary liability of judges.

²⁶ Judgment of the ECtHR (Grand Chamber), case No. 16915/21, *Danileț v. Romania*, para. 152. See also Communication from an NGO (Romanian Judges' Forum Association (18/05/2026)) in the case of *Danileț v. Romania* (Application No. 16915/21) to the Committee of Min. for non-implementation of the judgment.

²⁷ See notably HCCJ Decision of 27 October 2025 and Judicial Inspection Decisions of 24 April 2026, launching disciplinary proceedings against a prosecutor speaking in the documentary; and of 20 April 2026 against a judge publishing political opinions on social media. Disciplinary proceedings were also launched against magistrates replying to the President's invitation to debate about the issues in the judiciary. Judges' Forum (2026), written input.

²⁸ Romanian Judges' Forum Association, Movement for the Defence of Prosecutors' Status Association, Initiative for Justice Association. FDSC (2026), written input, p. 9.

²⁹ Judicial Inspection Report no. 25-2781/2026 (not public). Disciplinary actions were launched against magistrates issuing public statements in a documentary (see e.g. Judicial Inspection Decisions 26-127 of 4 March, of 29 April and of 14 May 2026). Other judges were moved or their delegation prematurely ended. The Report on the work of the Committee points to the concentration of decision-making powers at the level of the Inspection's management.

³⁰ Letter signed by 900 magistrates. Expert Forum (2026), written input, p. 9. FDSC (2026), written input, p. 9. Following the documentary, the Judicial Inspection initiated disciplinary checks.

³¹ See HCCJ Decision 182/2024 referring to Decision by the SCM of 28 February 2024 (not published). A legislative proposal from the Save Romania Union (USR) political party has been registered by the Senate

The Report on the work of the Committee recommends that the Justice Laws be amended so as to clarify that the rules on whistleblowers also apply to magistrates³². In addition, in 2025 and 2026, the High Court of Cassation and Justice (HCCJ) recused, in three decisions³³, some of its judges³⁴ because of their intention to refer questions to the Court of Justice of the European Union, as this reference would be such as to raise questions as to the impartiality of these judges, or to seek an advisory opinion from the European Court of Human Rights³⁵.

Quality

The occupancy rate of positions in the magistracy increased in 2025, and measures are being taken to tackle the current shortage of magistrates. The occupancy rate of magistrates' positions increased in 2025, while the SCM and magistrates consider that the number of vacancies remains an issue for the judiciary. Competitions for magistrates and clerks have been suspended in 2025 and 2026 due to country-wide budgetary restrictions³⁶, but exceptions have been provided in April 2026 for the judicial sector³⁷, and several other measures have been taken to address the shortage of staff in 2026. For instance, the reduction of the duration of courses at the National Institute of Magistracy (INM) from 3 to 2 years has been extended³⁸. The Prosecutor General, in agreement with the SCM, also proposed to reorganise the map of prosecutors' offices by establishing a single prosecutor's office unit at county level to streamline procedures³⁹. As a result, at the end of 2025, the occupancy rate increased to 85%⁴⁰ for judges' positions and to 76% for prosecutors⁴¹. Feedback to a questionnaire addressed by the SCM to all judges in office in December 2025 however highlights that the high workload and insufficient number of judges and clerks continue to directly impact their work⁴². This is also confirmed by all magistrates' associations⁴³. In

on 11 March 2026 to supplement art.2 of Law no. 361/2022 on the protection of whistleblowers in the public interest to explicitly include magistrates in the scope.

³² Government of Romania, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Report on the work of the Committee on the Review and Revision of the Justice Laws.

³³ Decisions of the HCCJ, Cases No. 2431/1/2025, No. 793/1/2025 and No. 815/59/2022. In the latter case, the same three judges were recused for proposing to submit a request for an advisory opinion to the ECtHR on the question whether a preliminary reference to the Court of Justice in the circumstances of that case constitutes a lack of impartiality under Article 6(1) ECHR.

³⁴ The same judges who requested preliminary rulings from the CJEU in cases *Lin II* and *Lin III*. Judgment of the CJEU in case C-107/23, *Lin*, and referrals C-280/25 *Lin II*, C-496/25, *Lin III*. See pillar II below.

³⁵ The CJEU underlined on several occasions the importance of the freedom to refer questions under Article 267 TFEU. See CJEU judgment in C-564/19, *IS*.

³⁶ Government Emergency Ordinance No. 156/2024 on certain fiscal-budgetary measures in the field of public expenditure for the substantiation of the consolidated general budget for 2025; extended to 2026.

³⁷ A legislation of 16 April 2026 allows the organisation of competitions in duly justified cases, with the approval of the Government.

³⁸ Government Emergency Ordinance No. 93/2025 regarding certain temporary measures in the field of justice, as well as for the amendment of certain normative acts. See also Romanian Government (2026), written input, p. 27.

³⁹ Romanian Government (2026), written input, p. 45. Country visit Romania, Prosecutor General and SCM. The idea is to establish a single prosecutor's office at county level to operate alongside the first instance courts, and to transform the other prosecutor's offices attached to the first instance courts in the county into secondary offices. A draft law was published on 24 February on the website of the Ministry for public consultation.

⁴⁰ At the beginning of 2025, it was of 83%. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 5.

⁴¹ At the beginning of 2025, it was of 74%. Ibidem.

⁴² Decision of the Section for Judges no. 144/06.02.2026. The most frequently signaled issues relate to the excessive volume of activity, encompassing insufficient staffing, a high number of vacancies, and an acute need for a workload regulation mechanism. SCM(2026) additional input.

⁴³ Country visit Romania, Magistrates' associations. See also EAJ(2026), p. 26.

parallel, annual statistics related to the competitions for admission to the National Institute of Magistracy reflect a steady decrease in the attractiveness of the judicial profession⁴⁴. A reform of magistrates' pensions was adopted on 27 February 2026, which gradually increases their retirement age over a period of 15 years⁴⁵. The aim is to improve equity in the pension system and better align pension contributions paid during the working life and pension benefits. While the reform could lead to early retirement of some magistrates⁴⁶, requiring new recruitments, it will also help keeping more experienced magistrates in activity, which will be beneficial for the functioning of the judicial system⁴⁷.

Measures have been taken to improve the legal aid system, which remains underfunded.

These measures include a new procedure for judicial assistance (SAJ) and the development of a national digital platform for managing legal aid, aimed at improving transparency, uniformity and timeliness of payments. According to the Ministry of Justice, the amount paid for legal aid in civil and criminal matters in 2025 was of approximately EUR 30 million⁴⁸. The Romanian Union of Bar Associations (UNBR), however, considers that the legal aid system is still severely underfunded and payments often delayed, but reports that a dialogue is taking place with the Ministry of Finance to address these delays and agree on uniform billing rules⁴⁹. Romania has one of the lowest number of beneficiaries per capita (around 12 000 in total in Romania in 2025)⁵⁰ and its income level ceiling for applicants for legal aid is among the lowest in the EU⁵¹. Data on the number of beneficiaries, their profile and the amounts received is not published, which according to civil society does not allow for public scrutiny⁵².

The digitalisation of the justice system is one of the priorities of the Strategy for the Development of the Judicial System and Justice as a Public Service 2025–2029. The Ministry of Justice completed one of 4 sub-investments financed under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)⁵³, including the establishment of technical facilities for hosting the critical IT infrastructure of the Ministry of Justice, the development and optimisation of the data infrastructure for the judicial sector and the implementation of a private cloud infrastructure for the justice system⁵⁴. Discussions between the Ministry of Justice and the SCM are still underway to ensure that changes in the IT infrastructure are consistent with the imperative to preserve the independence of the judiciary⁵⁵. The current

⁴⁴ 2583 judges participated in the consultation process, representing 56.50% of all active judges. Romanian Government (2026), written input, p. 22.

⁴⁵ Currently, retirement with full pension rights is possible after 25 years of service upon reaching the age of 49. The retirement age will increase by one year annually, reaching 64 in 2041, at which point full pension rights will be granted to those with at least 25 years of service and a minimum of 34 years of total work experience.

⁴⁶ Romanian Government (2026), written input, pp. 10ff. and country visit Romania, SCM.

⁴⁷ Country visit Romania, the Government.

⁴⁸ EUR 26 million in 2024.

⁴⁹ CCBE (2026), written input, p. 17 and 20.

⁵⁰ According to the UNBR, the total number of beneficiaries (of 41 counties - 2 missing as they didn't send the requested data) in 2025 was 12 093.

⁵¹ 49% below the Eurostat poverty threshold. Figure 22, EU Justice Scoreboard, data collected by CCBE.

⁵² CSOs.

⁵³ The electronic access of case files/e-files (positively assessed under payment request 4), while the ECRIS V system, the data centre for the judiciary and the IT&C equipment will be completed by August 2026 and assessed under the payment request 6.

⁵⁴ @just.ro.

⁵⁵ See 2025 Rule of Law, Romania, p. 5. SCM(2026), additional input.

single domain which serves the courts is under the supervision of the ministry⁵⁶, while appropriate solutions are being discussed in order to safeguard the independence of the judiciary and the principle of separation of powers⁵⁷. The SCM developed an artificial intelligence system that automatically anonymises court decisions and will replace the previous system by the end of 2026. The *registratura.rejust.ro* portal, which allows citizens to file a complaint and pay the court fee online, benefited from the implementation of new functionalities⁵⁸. ECRIS V, the electronic case management system for judges, was further developed, while prosecutors have now access to their case files through the new National Electronic Case File (DEN)⁵⁹. The UNBR highlighted both opportunities and risks of the digitalisation of justice systems, including cybersecurity concerns, illegal online services, and the need for safeguards when adopting AI tools⁶⁰. At the initiative of the President of Romania, the Just.AI Forum – a first permanent national platform for institutional dialogue on AI in justice – was established and operationalised, with dedicated working groups involving courts, prosecution services and other key public institutions⁶¹.

Efficiency

The estimated time needed to resolve civil, commercial, administrative and other cases decreased significantly and the clearance rate has improved. The time needed to resolve civil, commercial, administrative and other cases significantly decreased from 228 days in 2023 to 180 days in 2024, and the clearance rate of civil, commercial, administrative and other cases increased from 87% in 2023 to 99% in 2024. Romania is still the Member State with the highest number of incoming civil and commercial litigious cases, a number which has been constantly increasing in previous years⁶². According to the Prosecutor General, this would also be linked, in criminal matters, to the fact that an investigation must be opened for every complaint (no opportunity assessment)⁶³. According to businesses, the duration of proceedings remains an important concern, especially in complex commercial, administrative or tax disputes. They also report that the reasoning of judicial decisions, which should be communicated within 30 days after the adoption of the decision, sometimes reaches the parties after 2 or 3 years⁶⁴.

II. ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

The perception among experts, citizens and business executives is that the level of corruption in the public sector remains high. In the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Romania scores 45/100 and ranks 25th in the European Union and

⁵⁶ According to the SCM, access of the executive to documents linked to specific court cases could raise questions with regard to the independence of the judiciary. See 2025 Rule of Law Report, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Romanian Government (2026), written input, p. 37.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵⁹ SCM(2026), additional input.

⁶⁰ CCBE(2026), written input, p. 22.

⁶¹ These working groups are focusing on identifying practical use cases, assessing operational needs and developing common principles and future regulatory solutions, building on with the overarching objectives of enhancing the security, efficiency and transparency of judicial activities. See: www.justai.presidency.ro .

⁶² Figures 2, 5 and 10, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

⁶³ Romanian Government (2026), written input p. 47. Country visit Romania, Superior Council of Magistracy and Prosecutor General. The Prosecutor General explained that it is not possible to prioritise cases over others which are less grounded, repetitive, or abusive.

⁶⁴ Foreign Investors' Council Romania (2026) written input, p. 1. Country visit Romania, Romanian Business Leaders and Concordia.

70th globally⁶⁵. This perception has remained stable over the past five years⁶⁶. The 2026 Special Eurobarometer on Corruption shows that 71% of respondents consider corruption widespread in their country (EU average 71%) and 55% of respondents feel personally affected by corruption in their daily lives (EU average 30%). As regards businesses, 94% of companies consider that corruption is widespread (EU average 65%) and 73% consider that corruption is a problem when doing business (EU average 37%). Furthermore, 52% of respondents find that there are enough successful prosecutions to deter people from corrupt practices (EU average 38%), while 30% of companies believe that people and businesses caught for bribing a senior official are appropriately punished (EU average 31%)⁶⁷.

The evaluation of the 2021-2025 National Anti-Corruption Strategy has been finalised, and the next strategy is under preparation. The evaluation of the implementation of the measures and specific objectives set out in the Strategy was carried out by an external contractor and the final report has been published⁶⁸. It notably recommends establishing clear budgetary planning and focussing the next anti-corruption strategy on a limited number of programmes. The Ministry of Justice is coordinating the preparation of the next strategy covering the 2026–2030 period. Consultations of public institutions and stakeholders have taken place in 2025 and have continued in the first half of 2026. The envisaged priority areas include prevention, notably through youth engagement, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms⁶⁹. In October 2025, Romania adopted Law No. 156/2025⁷⁰, strengthening its legal framework for preventing and combating corruption in international business transactions in order to align it with the recommendations of the OECD Working Group on Bribery (WGB)⁷¹.

The track record in prosecuting to both petty and high-level corruption has been maintained compared to the previous year. This concerns both the General Prosecutor's Office for petty corruption⁷² and the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) for the prosecution of high-level corruption⁷³. The workload of the DNA remains high with a similar

⁶⁵ The level of perceived corruption is categorised as follows: low (above 79); relatively low (between 79-60), relatively high (between 59-50), high (below 50).

⁶⁶ In 2021, the score was 45 and in 2025, the score remains 45. The score significantly increases/decreases when it changes more than five points; improves/deteriorates (changes between 4-5 points) and is relatively stable (changes from 1-3 points) in the last five years.

⁶⁷ Data from Special Eurobarometer 573 (2026) and Flash Eurobarometer 582 (2026).

⁶⁸ Final report of the evaluation of the 2021-2025 National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

⁶⁹ Romanian Government (2026a), written input, p. 57-58. Country visit Romania, Ministry of Justice.

⁷⁰ The legislative changes include the extension of the scope of the offence of corruption of foreign public officials; an increase of the amount of daily fines, if imposed in addition to imprisonment; the introduction of a judicial mitigating circumstance for the legal persons adopting and implementing effective corporate policies in order to prevent corruption acts, and assigning jurisdiction to the DNA for conducting the criminal investigation also in the case of certain related offences (money laundering, forgery of documents, tax evasion), when they are committed in connection with the offence of foreign bribery. DNA (2026), written input, p. 73.

⁷¹ Romanian Government (2026b). The reforms resulted in the issuance of Formal Opinion no. 17 in the OECD accession process. Such an opinion refers to the evaluation adopted by the OECD, during a country's accession process and determines if a candidate country meets the OECD standards.

⁷² In 2025, as regards petty corruption, a total of 1 997 (1 702 in 2024, 1 843 in 2023) cases were settled of which 286 (209 in 2024, 259 in 2023) indictments and plea agreements were issued. There were 125 (164 in 2024, 159 in 2023) final judgements, by which 147 (179 in 2024, 154 in 2023) individuals were convicted, See input from Romania for the 2025 Rule of Law Report, Annex 10.

⁷³ In 2025, in cases referred to by the National Anticorruption Directorate, the courts handed down 289 final convictions (391 in 2024) and 34 final acquittals (147 in 2024), see DNA (2026) written input, p. 74.

number of cases as last year⁷⁴. According to the DNA, the staffing level remains stable and sufficient⁷⁵. Since 2022, the DNA has been investing in modernising its technical infrastructure, supporting the digital transformation, notably in the field of computer forensic searches⁷⁶. The DNA indicates that notifications about possible corruption cases received from other national authorities which would allow it to conduct its work more efficiently are low⁷⁷. In 2025, the EPPO investigated 43 corruption cases, which accounts for 8% of the total number of EPPO cases in Romania⁷⁸.

Lower courts have continued to close corruption cases and annul convictions following rulings by the High Court of Cassation and Justice on the statute of limitations. The closing of corruption cases, including high level ones, and the release of defendants due to the statute of limitations, has continued, negatively affecting the perception by the public of the judiciary's ability to effectively fight corruption⁷⁹. Certain magistrates' associations have nevertheless highlighted that limitation periods are, as such, sufficiently long to conduct a case, despite the impact of these rulings⁸⁰, whilst others have reported transfers of cases to other panels or courts, resulting in further delays leading to the case reaching its limitation period⁸¹. These rulings neutralise the interruption effect on the statute of limitations of procedural acts carried out before and after the 2018-2022 period, thereby exacerbating the systemic risk that a certain number of criminal cases escape criminal penalty⁸² and raising certain questions under EU law⁸³. According to the EPPO, the High Court of Cassation and Justice's (HCCJ) rulings could affect its ability to carry out effective investigations regarding criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the Union in Romania⁸⁴. At the same time, the HCCJ submitted referrals for preliminary rulings on this topic to the Court of Justice of the European Union⁸⁵. On 16 July 2026, the Court of Justice clarified certain questions under EU law raised by the current situation.

There has been no further progress on the recommendation to take measures to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption offenses in the judiciary⁸⁶. Such offences are of the competence of delegated prosecutors within the Prosecutor's Offices

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 74. The number of pending cases was 5 556 (compared to 5 443 in 2024) with 2 599 new criminal cases registered in 2025 (similar to 2023 and 2024). In 2025, a total of 792 defendants were brought to trial (683 in 2024, 651 in 2023). Of those 539 were prosecuted by indictment (445 in 2024, 481 in 2023) and 253 by plea agreement (238 in 2024).

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 32. Two competitions were organised in 2025 to fill executive positions.

⁷⁶ Romanian Government (2026a), written input, DNA, Annex 3, funded notably under the European Union Anti-Fraud Programme (EUF), for example 2025-RO-FORENSIQ.

⁷⁷ Country visit Romania, DNA.

⁷⁸ EPPO (2026), Annual Report 2025, p. 49.

⁷⁹ Country visit Romania, CSOs and media reporting, notably on the SCM who regrets the closure of corruption cases due to the ruling of the HCCJ (see sources).

⁸⁰ Country visit Romania, UNJR, AMR, APR.

⁸¹ Country visit Romanian, Romanian Judges' Forum Association, Movement for the Defence of Prosecutors' Status Association, Initiative for Justice Association. A new legislative proposal initiated by Save Romania Union (USR) parliamentarians provides for the increase of the special limitation period for criminal liability. The measure is intended to give authorities more time to complete investigations and bring perpetrators to justice, especially in complex cases.

⁸² 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p.7-8.

⁸³ Judgement of the CJEU, case C-107/23, *Lin*. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Romania, p.7-8.

⁸⁴ EPPO (2026), written input, p. 59-61.

⁸⁵ Cases C-280/25, *Lin II* and C-496/25, *Lin III*. The latter case is still pending.

⁸⁶ In the 2025 Rule of Law Report, the Commission recommended to Romania to: 'take measures to ensure efficient investigation and prosecution of criminal offences in the judiciary, including as regards corruption offences'. Some progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

attached to the HCCJ and to courts of appeal⁸⁷. Delegated prosecutors attached to the HCCJ issued two indictments in 2025, and those attached to courts of appeal did not issue any⁸⁸. Efforts have continued to resolve the pending cases transferred from the former Section for the Investigation of Offences within the judiciary (SIJ)⁸⁹. The General Prosecutor underlined the insufficient number of police officers seconded to his office and their lack of expertise on corruption cases⁹⁰, as well as the continued difficulty to fill vacancies⁹¹ due to the nomination procedure, and in particular the requirement of approval by both the judges' and prosecutors' sections of the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM)⁹². These issues were raised with the Committee for the Review and Revision of the Justice Laws, and the Committee's report recommends to strengthen the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions of corruption offenses by magistrates, including by returning this competence to the DNA⁹³. As no measures were taken to address remaining shortcomings, there has been no further progress in ensuring the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption offenses in the judiciary.

New legislation on revolving doors was adopted in November 2025. The law⁹⁴ harmonises pre- and post-employment restrictions which apply over a 12-month period to a wide range of public officials⁹⁵. The system is based on individual declarations which are examined by the National Integrity Agency (ANI). ANI monitors compliance with the restrictions and, when relevant, may impose administrative penalties provided by the law, applicable to both individuals and public institutions. Its inspectors have also conducted information campaigns and training. ANI is currently adapting its e-DAI platform to integrate such declarations and include an automatic alert system of potential breaches. As from 2027, the Agency will publish statistics annually (e.g. number of breaches and notifications), based on information provided by public institutions and authorities⁹⁶.

⁸⁷ For further details on this system specific to offenses committed by magistrates see 2023 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 12.

⁸⁸ Input from Romania for the 2026 Rule of Law Report, General Prosecutor's Office, p. 53. There were six indictments in 2024, see 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Government of Romania (2026b). The number of pending case files reached its lowest level since the abolition of the SIJ, particularly within the Criminal Investigation Section. In 2025, 1 424 cases were resolved out of a total of 3 188 pending cases, while in 2024 1 997 cases were resolved out of a total of 4 566 pending cases.

⁹⁰ Country visit Romania, General Prosecutor's Office.

⁹¹ At the end of 2025, the occupancy rate was 76.28%, while it was 75.65% at the end of 2024. Input from Romania for the 2026 Rule of Law Report, General Prosecutor's Office, p. 31.

⁹² Country visit, Romania, General Prosecutor's Office: according to the General Prosecutor's office, the nominations of delegated prosecutors should be done only by the prosecutors' section of the SCM. On the procedure to recruit delegated prosecutors and the role of the SCM, see 2025 Rule of Law report, p. 8-9.

⁹³ Country visit Romania. The work of this Committee was suspended following a decision of the HCCJ – see Pillar I. Government of Romania, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Report on the work of the Committee on the Review and Revision of the Justice Laws.

⁹⁴ Law no. 189/2025 published in the Official Journal no. 1065 of 19 November 2025. The reform was assessed by the OECD Working Party on Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption and contributed to the subsequent adoption of Formal Opinion no. 22 by the OECD Public Governance Committee.

⁹⁵ Input from Romania for the 2025 Rule of Law Report, Ministry of Justice and ANI, p. 4. Official falling under the scope are determined based on the nature of the powers and responsibilities exercised and include senior officials, local elected representatives, and personnel involved in procurement, auditing, concessions, regulation, accreditation and authorisation.

⁹⁶ Country visit Romania, ANI.

A new Code of Ethics for the government introduced by law in April 2025 is being implemented⁹⁷. It covers a wide range of officials, from the Prime Minister and their advisors to Ministers and Secretaries of State and their equivalents in ministries or specialised central bodies. The new law includes a prohibition on gifts (above EUR 100), monitored by a special committee, and provisions on publication. Ethics advisors may provide guidance upon request⁹⁸. ANI is mandated to give training on the Code of Ethics to members of government when they take office. There are still no clear rules on gifts, hospitality, favours and other benefits of members of Parliament⁹⁹.

Some progress has been made on the recommendation to ensure the effectiveness of the asset declaration system¹⁰⁰. The e-DAI platform managed by ANI continues to be used to streamline the process for filling in and submitting asset declarations in digital format, which are no longer published¹⁰¹. ANI submitted a broad legislative proposal on integrity to the Ministry of Justice in November 2025. The draft aims to clarify ambiguities, harmonise certain provisions and update the existing legal framework, in particular on asset declaration formats. It currently does not regulate asset declarations by spouses and children, where the rules had been declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in a decision reported upon last year¹⁰². The draft is currently under discussion and the Ministry of Justice intends to carry out further consultations¹⁰³. In light of these developments, Romania has made some progress in ensuring the effectiveness of the asset declaration system.

Romania has fully implemented the recommendation to introduce new rules on lobbying for Members of Parliament¹⁰⁴. A new law of November 2025¹⁰⁵ obliges deputies and senators to register meetings with third parties on a legislative initiative in the transparency register (RUTI), which is already used by members of government and high-level government officials. Members of Parliament may only hold meetings with third parties registered in RUTI. They must publish information on such meetings in advance or, in the case of unplanned meetings, within 48 hours after they take place, indicating the participants, the date and place, and the purpose of the meeting. RUTI is managed by the Secretaries General of the two Chambers, who publish an annual report on its operation. Failure to comply with the new obligations will result in a written warning issued to the deputy or senator¹⁰⁶. Stakeholders have underlined the lack of basic functionalities of RUTI (search

⁹⁷ Law no. 49/2025. See also earlier Law No. 251/2004 on goods received free of charge in the context of protocol activities during the exercise of a mandate or public office establishes obligations for holders of public dignity offices to declare gifts received in connection with official duties. The law provides for the evaluation and inventory of such gifts, rules on their retention or transfer, and annual public disclosure and their destination. The implementing provisions are set out in Government Decision No. 1126/2004.

⁹⁸ Country visit Romania, Ministry of Justice.

⁹⁹ 2024 Rule of Law Report Romania, pp 17-18 and 2025 Rule of Law Report Romania, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended to Romania to “... ensure the effectiveness of the asset declaration system”. This was a new part of the recommendation.

¹⁰¹ Romanian Government (2026a), written input.

¹⁰² 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 9. The Constitutional Court held that the rules requiring that officials declare their spouses’ and children’s assets are unconstitutional on grounds that such declaration of assets, being a declaration under oath, entails the criminal liability of the declarant and can only be made in one’s own name.

¹⁰³ Country visit Romania, Ministry of Justice and ANI.

¹⁰⁴ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Romania to “Introduce rules on lobbying for Members of Parliament ...”. No progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹⁰⁵ Law no. 197/2025 amending Law no. 96/2006 on the Status of Deputies and Senators, published in the Official Journal no. 1106 of 28 November 2025.

¹⁰⁶ Romanian Government (2026a), written input.

functions, filters), as well as its insufficient use by the government so far¹⁰⁷. Despite certain limitations of RUTI, Romania has successfully introduced new rules on lobbying for the Members of Parliament and fully implemented the recommendation.

There have been no further developments to improve the transparency of political party financing as the legislation is still pending in Parliament. Draft legislation from the Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) to improve the transparency of political party financing and the enforcement of related rules has been pending before the Chamber of Deputies since October 2023, with no set date for adoption¹⁰⁸. The Court of Accounts had confirmed the need to better regulate the funding of political parties in Romania and recommended that the PEA initiates legislative amendments¹⁰⁹. The PEA did not conduct the annual audit of political parties, which had already been postponed in 2024¹¹⁰. Concerns raised in previous Rule of Law reports remain, particularly as regards the lack of thorough auditing, investigation and enforcement of the rules and low penalties for non-compliance¹¹¹. In February 2025, the Parliament dismissed the PEA President on integrity related grounds, and a new President was nominated in December. CSOs criticised the lack of transparency in the nomination process¹¹².

ANI performs the role of main external whistleblower channel and is developing an IT system to receive and manage whistleblower reports, with the aim of increasing efficiency and the communication workflow. Training sessions were held for public and private entities covering both internal and external reporting channels. The new IT system will be accessible to all entities which have an external reporting channel, and they will be able to manage reports using the platform¹¹³. ANI received 167 reports in 2025, managed by four inspectors¹¹⁴. No reports were on corruption. It also provided confidential and non-confidential counselling, upon request, to individuals and entities. The Agency monitored the implementation of the law, specifically regarding the establishment and operation of internal reporting channels by public and private entities¹¹⁵.

Public procurement remains a high-risk area with additional measures taken to address corruption risks, including the launch of a new National Public Procurement Risk Map. Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU show that 38% of companies in Romania (EU average 30%) think that corruption has prevented them from winning a public tender in practice in the last three years¹¹⁶. 57% of businesses perceive the level of independence of the the National Appeals Settlement Council as very or fairly good when it is reviewing public procurement cases¹¹⁷. The Single Market and Competitiveness Scoreboard on access to public procurement in Romania reports 49% of single bids for 2025 (27% EU average). The Court of Accounts reports that 80% of the public interest whistleblowing notifications

¹⁰⁷ Written input, Centre of Public Innovation, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ Country visit Romania, Court of Accounts. See also 2025 Rule of Law report, p. 11.

¹¹⁰ Expert Forum, Monitoring Report 2024, 8 September 2025. This evaluation should be done annually.

¹¹¹ 2024 Rule of Law Report Romania, p. 18-19 and 2025 Rule of Law Report Romania, p. 11.

¹¹² Country visit Romania, Expert Forum, Civic Radauti Association, Apador-CH, Public Innovation.

¹¹³ Country visit Romania, ANI.

¹¹⁴ Last year, ANI reported that there were five integrity inspectors. However, the decrease in inspectors is compensated by the positive impact of IT solutions which resulted in an approximately 100% increase in efficiency in terms of cases resolved per inspector. Romania Government, ANI (2026), written input.

¹¹⁵ Romanian Government (2026a), written input.

¹¹⁶ Flash Eurobarometer 582 on Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU (2026). This is 8 percentage points above the EU average.

¹¹⁷ Figure 59, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

registered in 2025 concerned suspicions of breaches of public procurement legislation¹¹⁸. A National Public Procurement Risk Map launched in 2025 by the Ministry of Justice and the National Agency for Public Procurement (ANAP), with OECD support, was published on the website of ANAP. It identifies corruption-vulnerable functions, high-risk sectors and critical stages of public procurement procedures and serves as a reference for policymakers, contracting authorities and oversight bodies¹¹⁹. ANI continues to analyse public procurement procedures using the PREVENT system¹²⁰ to identify ex ante conflicts of interest. It issued 15 integrity warnings in 2025¹²¹. Other highlighted high-risk areas include regulatory oversight and certification and human resources management¹²².

III. MEDIA PLURALISM AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The National Audiovisual Council (CNA) has fewer human resources than reported last year, with digitalisation efforts progressing slowly. According to the 2025 Rule of Law report, the CNA carried out its activities with 118 members of staff on average¹²³. This year, the media regulator reported 116 members of staff out of the 153 approved positions, alongside increased tasks with regards to overseeing the digitalisation project¹²⁴. The Government reportedly considered a possible merger between CNA and ANCOM, the national communications and postal services regulator, as part of austerity policies taken in 2025, which were strongly opposed by stakeholders¹²⁵ due to a possible risk of undermining CNA's role. As part of the changes introduced by the Government, the CNA's 2025 budget was initially increased compared to 2024, only to be later adjusted in October 2025 with a EUR 250 000 cut¹²⁶. Digitalisation efforts commenced in 2025 through a EUR 20 million EU funded project, but this is reported to be challenging and progressing slowly, with no clear timeline for finalisation¹²⁷. The CNA considers the current sanctions and penalties system in the context of orders for the removal of audiovisual content to have a positive impact overall¹²⁸, but stakeholders have criticised the Council for frequently failing to fulfil its mandate of defending the public interest. However, they noted that in 2025 the media regulator showed more determination in sanctioning television and radio broadcasters for serious violations of the audiovisual legislation¹²⁹. A new Regulatory Code of Audiovisual Content was adopted on 25 June 2025¹³⁰. The 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) reports a medium-low risk (37%) for the independence and effectiveness of the media authorities, remaining stable since last year.

¹¹⁸ Country visit Romania, Court of Accounts.

¹¹⁹ Romanian Government (2026a), written input, ANAP.

¹²⁰ Ibidem p.70, Since January 2023, ANI is implementing a project entitled "*The development of the PREVENT IT system in order to increase the interoperability of the electronic systems of public institutions for the ex-ante verification of conflicts of interest in the process of awarding public procurement contracts*", financed through Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan.

¹²¹ In 10 cases, the leaders of the contracting authority removed the cause of the potential conflict of interest. The remaining cases are still pending. Ibidem, p. 68.

¹²² Romanian Government (2026a), written input, p. 58.

¹²³ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p.12.

¹²⁴ Country visit Romania, National Audiovisual Council.

¹²⁵ Centre for Independent Journalism (*Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent*) (2025), open letter.

¹²⁶ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p. 15.

¹²⁷ Country visit Romania, National Audiovisual Council (*Consiliul Național al Audiovizualului*).

¹²⁸ Ibidem.

¹²⁹ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p. 15; Country visit Romania, Journalist associations.

¹³⁰ The new Code was adopted in the context of the transposition of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU. National Audiovisual Council (2026), written input, p.79.

Self-regulation has still not been completely agreed by media actors, though some elements have been established. Whilst various initiatives to introduce ethics codes have so far failed to gather enough support among professional journalists¹³¹, an alliance consisting of over 20 members, to be officially launched later this year, is currently working on a code of ethics for journalists¹³². A form of self-regulation was also reported between the CNA and the Romanian Advertising Council who coordinate on advertising issues. The CNA flags problematic advertising to the Advertising Council who analyses them based on their codes of conduct¹³³. The Council's assessment is then used in CNA discussions.

Initial steps have been taken on the reform to enhance the independent governance and editorial independence of public service media¹³⁴. The Government has set up an interinstitutional working group to compare legal assessments, carry out technical consultations and a comprehensive evaluation of the current legislative framework with the aim of improving the independent governance of public service media and aligning with EMFA, but a draft has yet to be issued. A new Director-General of the national TV broadcaster TVR was appointed. TVR is currently changing its main news programme, which attracted positive reactions from stakeholders who consider that it better serves the public interest¹³⁵. Journalist associations criticised the appointment of the Government's Spokesperson to the management board of the Romanian national radio broadcaster¹³⁶. There has therefore been limited progress on improving the framework for the independent governance and editorial independence of public service media.

There are no developments on the transparency of media ownership. Access to most ownership information is still only available through the National Commercial Registry database, which requires the payment of a fee and is not readily searchable. The interinstitutional group set up by the Government to identify legislative requirements to ensure further transparency has not yet delivered results¹³⁷. The CNA continues to publish information on the shareholding structure of companies holding audiovisual licenses¹³⁸. Stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of legal requirements for assessing media market concentrations that could have a significant impact on media pluralism and editorial independence, particularly as the largest media groups in the country hold dominant positions across TV, radio and online¹³⁹. Stakeholders highlighted as most concerning in terms of ownership concentration, a trend towards the convergence and merger of media outlets and

¹³¹ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p.16.

¹³² Alianta a Patra Putere is a newly founded organisation focusing on self-regulation; Country visit Romania, Journalist associations.

¹³³ Country visit Romania, National Audiovisual Council (*Consiliul Național al Audiovizualului*).

¹³⁴ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended that Romania “steps up efforts to strengthen the rules and mechanisms to enhance the independent governance and editorial independence of public service media taking into account European standards on public service media”, p. 13. No progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025, 2024 and 2023.

¹³⁵ Country visit Romania, Journalist associations.

¹³⁶ Active Watch and Centre for Independent Journalism Romania (*Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent*) (2026), open letter, citing the incompatibility of the position with media independence and risks of political influence.

¹³⁷ Romanian Government (2026a), written input, p. 80.

¹³⁸ List published by the CNA (2026).

¹³⁹ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p.20.

large telecommunications companies¹⁴⁰. According to the Media Pluralism Monitor, transparency of media ownership is now ranked at very high risk (85%)¹⁴¹.

The new Audiovisual Code legislates the situation with regards to the financing of private media by political parties and state authorities, but certain related practices remain an issue. Political parties reportedly spent half of their total public subsidies on media and publicity (over EUR 22.2 million) in 2025¹⁴², a slight decrease from the amount reported last year¹⁴³. The practice of media presenting statements by politicians as journalistic content and not as paid-for advertisement continues in the form of paid-for interviews and debates conducted by journalists in programmes with an editorial appearance¹⁴⁴. However, the new Regulatory Code of Audiovisual Content, adopted last year by CNA, that prohibits the sponsoring of news and political affairs programmes, has reportedly helped reduce the practice on the main television channels and led to a better marking of this type of content than in the past¹⁴⁵. Issues with state advertising remain, with public authorities awarding funds to media outlets without a tender and no general oversight on allocations, according to stakeholders¹⁴⁶.

Issues on access to information remain, and the draft of a new Code of Administrative Procedures is still pending. The Government reported no progress on this file. Journalists and CSOs continue to express concerns about plans to include civil society in the Code's scope, subjecting them to the same obligations as public authorities in terms of access to information. CSOs indicated that the right to information was not always respected by public authorities¹⁴⁷. Judicial review of negative replies is described as involving lengthy procedures, which is felt to discourage challenging these decisions. Remedies were also described as being limited to modest fines rather than reversal of the refusal to provide information. Exceptions for 'classified' or 'commercial secret' information were considered by journalists and CSOs to be overused¹⁴⁸.

An anti-SLAPP law is in preparation as threats and instances of harassment of journalists continue. Since the publication of the 2025 Rule of Law Report, three new alerts have been issued on the Safety of Journalists Platform of the Council of Europe. The first signals a smear campaign and death threats¹⁴⁹, the second points at defamation lawsuits¹⁵⁰ and the third raises awareness about a draft law requiring NGOs, including media, to publish donor identities¹⁵¹. There are currently four active Strategic lawsuits against public

¹⁴⁰ IPI-MJRC Report (2025), Media Capture Monitoring Report: Romania, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, Romania, p. 20-21.

¹⁴² Expert Forum Report (2025), Financing of political parties in 2025 and the need for urgent reform, p. 4.

¹⁴³ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Country visit Romania, Journalist Associations.

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem. 2025 Rule of Law Report, p.13.

¹⁴⁶ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p.17; IPI-MJRC Report (2025), Media Capture Monitoring Report: Romania, p.25.

¹⁴⁷ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p.22.

¹⁴⁸ Country visit Romania, Apador-CH, Public Innovation, PressHub, Freedom House, Funky Citizens, Civic Radauti, Expert Forum, FDSC.

¹⁴⁹ Council of Europe, Safety of Journalists Platform Alert: Smear Campaign, Death Threats and Harassment Against Journalist Emilia Șercan Over Report – no state reply.

¹⁵⁰ Council of Europe, Safety of Journalists Platform Alert: Investigative Journalist Brîndușa Armanca and PressHub Face Multiple Defamation Lawsuits Over Reports - no state reply.

¹⁵¹ Council of Europe, Safety of Journalists Platform Alert: Draft Law requiring NGOs, including Media, to publish donor identities. On the third alert, see also pillar IV. State reply expected 02 September 2026.

participation (SLAPP) cases involving journalists¹⁵², of which two date back to 2022. Claiming disproportionate compensation for moral or material damage allegedly resulting from defamation is the main mechanism by which a civil dispute becomes a SLAPP-type action¹⁵³. Journalists reported that they are not always fully supported by their employers when faced with a court case for their publications, which can deepen their vulnerability to SLAPPs¹⁵⁴. Law enforcement has faced criticism from stakeholders for slow action in prosecuting longstanding cases of harassment against journalists¹⁵⁵. Representatives of the profession fear that this situation disincentivises in particular local media who have fewer resources at their disposal to seek justice. Moreover, concerns about the impact on the mental health of journalists have also been raised¹⁵⁶. More broadly, SLAPPs continue to be widely employed by various actors not just against journalists and media outlets, but also against civic activists or CSOs, with over 40 documented cases of civil actions with SLAPP characteristics, as well as eight criminal cases¹⁵⁷. The Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR) was designated by the Ministry of Justice as the national focal point for the follow-up to the Anti-SLAPP Recommendation¹⁵⁸. In this capacity, the RIHR is entrusted with organising training programs for media professionals and human rights defenders, conducting information and awareness campaigns regarding SLAPP procedures, providing information on the support available to individuals targeted by SLAPP proceedings, as well as collecting judicial statistical data relating to SLAPP procedures¹⁵⁹. The draft law transposing the Anti-SLAPP Directive, which has been finalised and submitted for interinstitutional endorsement, covers both cross-border and domestic cases¹⁶⁰. The draft law was approved by the Government on 5 February 2026, adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on 20 April and forwarded to the Romanian Senate. The Media Pluralism Monitor for 2026 ranks the protection and standards of the journalistic profession at medium-low risk (46%)¹⁶¹.

IV. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO CHECKS AND BALANCES

Some further progress has been made to implement the recommendation on the frequent use of government emergency ordinances and effective public consultations, while a number of shortcomings remain in practice¹⁶². The number of government emergency ordinances (GEOs) has decreased in 2025, but GEOs continue to be frequently

¹⁵² Romanian Government (2026a), written input, Annex no. 12.

¹⁵³ Such claims have reached record amounts: EUR 3,465,000 requested from the independent media platform Context, following a journalistic investigation about a businessman and his company. Active Watch report (2026): SLAPPS and Freedom of Expression in Romania.

¹⁵⁴ Active Watch report (2026): SLAPPS and Freedom of Expression in Romania, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ Reporters Without Borders and Active Watch (2026), written input, p.21; Country visit Romania (2026), Journalist associations.

¹⁵⁶ Country visit Romania, Journalist associations.

¹⁵⁷ See Active Watch (2026), Report on SLAPPs and Freedom of Expression in Romania. FreeEx Digest No 11. Country visit Romania, Journalism associations.

¹⁵⁸ (EU) 2022/758 of 27 April 2022.

¹⁵⁹ See pillar IV on the resources of the Romanian Institute for Human Rights.

¹⁶⁰ Country visit Romania, Ministry of Justice

¹⁶¹ 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, Romania, p. 12-13.

¹⁶² The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Romania to “step up efforts to address the frequent use of government emergency ordinances and to ensure effective public consultations before the adoption of legislation”. While there was no progress on the recommendation to ensure effective public consultations in 2023 and 2024, some progress had been made in 2025. On these topics, see also in the context of the European Semester, the Commission has proposed that the Council recommends that Romania “improve[s] (...) the predictability and quality of decision-making, through appropriate stakeholder consultations, (...)”.

used, including for important measures like tax reforms¹⁶³. In 2025, they accounted for 25,5% of all primary legislation adopted¹⁶⁴, compared to 29,3% in 2024 and 21,6% in 2023. They still represent a challenge for businesses and CSOs and often cover more than one legislative area¹⁶⁵. The Consultative Council for the Impact Assessment of Normative Acts (CCEIAN) examined 34 GEOs considered to have an impact on society and the business environment. In 26 cases, CCEIAN concluded that there was insufficient justification for the use of a GEO as the appropriate legal instrument. The e-Consultare platform, which aims to centralise public consultations on draft legislation, was further improved through new features. This platform is however still considered non-user friendly by CSOs and businesses¹⁶⁶. In their view, public consultation often remains a box-ticking exercise, with very tight deadlines and little consideration for their comments¹⁶⁷. Often, the public consultation is carried out too late in the drafting process, when political choices have already been made¹⁶⁸. The RIHR is rarely consulted on draft laws impacting human rights¹⁶⁹. Overall, however, while certain shortcomings are noted, some further progress has been made to decrease the use of GEOs in practice and ensure effective public consultations before the adoption of legislation.

Legislative unpredictability, driven by frequent amendments to legislation and a large number of draft laws pending in Parliament, remain primary concerns for businesses and CSOs. Businesses, judges and CSOs consistently report that lack of legislative predictability is a major concern for them¹⁷⁰. Key challenges include frequent amendments to legislation¹⁷¹, the lack of impact assessment or insufficient documentation, the frequent use of government ordinances and ineffective consultations¹⁷². Despite legal requirements, the potential impact of proposed legislation on human rights is rarely addressed¹⁷³. Legislative backlog amounted to 2 500 draft laws when the new parliament was elected in December

¹⁶³ See e.g. Government Emergency Ordinance No. 89/23.12.2025 amending and supplementing Law No. 227/2015 on the Fiscal Code, regulating certain fiscal and budgetary measures, as well as amending and supplementing certain normative acts. It modified the Fiscal Code, the Fiscal Procedure Code and other laws and ordinances. Other topics include public procurements, energy market, prices of food products, labour law, etc. Country visit Romania, CSOs.

¹⁶⁴ 93 Government Emergency Ordinances were adopted in 2025, meaning that every 4 days Romanians were in an “extraordinary situation whose regulation [could] not be postponed” (Article 115(4) of the Constitution).

¹⁶⁵ Country visit to Romania, Concordia and Romanian Business Leaders; Foreign Investors’ Council Romania (2026), written input, p. 2. It is also a challenge for magistrates, see EAJ (2026), p. 42.

¹⁶⁶ All draft laws are not yet uploaded in the system. A possibility for citizens, CSOs and businesses to register for notifications on certain topics has not yet been implemented. Ibidem, and Country visit, the Government and CSOs (Apador-CH, Public Innovation, PressHub, Freedom House, Funky Citizens, Civic Radauti, Expert Forum, FDSC).

¹⁶⁷ Country visit, CSOs, FRA(2026), written input, pp. 272-273 and Coalition NGOs for Citizens (2025).

¹⁶⁸ FDSC (2026), written input, p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ ENNHRI(2026) Romania country report, p. 15. Nor are LGBTI organisations: ILGA (2026), written input, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰ On this aspect, see also OECD(2026), Report on Romania, which draws attention to the high frequency with which legislation is adopted. As a result, investors and the businesses would face a high level of uncertainty, which would discourage long-term decisions. See also result of the consultation of judges, which mention the legislative instability as their second concern after the high workload, in fn. 44. FRA(2026), written input, p. 273 and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2025).

¹⁷¹ The Romanian Fiscal Code would be the most amended law, with at least one amending law per month.

¹⁷² Foreign Investors’ Council Romania (2026) written input, p. 1. Concordia, CNIPMMR and Romanian Business Leaders (2026), written input to European Semester. Country visit Romania, Romanian Business Leaders and Concordia. See also FDSC, written input, p. 21 and American Chamber Romania 2025 Business Climate Survey. Country visit Romania, Apador-CH, Public Innovation, PressHub, Freedom House, Funky Citizens, Civic Radauti, Expert Forum, FDSC.

¹⁷³ Resource Centre for Public Participation and Coalition NGOs for Citizens (2026), written input, p. 19.

2024¹⁷⁴. Leaders of the parliament's committees decide on the agenda of the plenary and can pick any draft law from previous legislatures, which contributes to the unpredictability of law-making. In addition, the Government plays a significant legislative role. Out of a total of 248 laws adopted in 2025, 124 were simple or emergency government ordinances¹⁷⁵, which are not part of the public policy planning. Thus, 50% of the primary legislation was adopted by the executive, in rapid procedures, with no parliamentary debate and limited or no public consultation, reinforcing the unpredictability of legislation¹⁷⁶. Romania's recovery and resilience plan includes the adoption of a Plan for Better Regulation 2026-2030 aimed at improving public policy planning, impact assessment and stakeholder consultations¹⁷⁷.

More than half of companies surveyed in Romania express confidence in the effectiveness of investment protection. 53% of companies are very or fairly confident that investments are protected by law and courts, a figure which has decreased in comparison with 2025 (58%)¹⁷⁸. As regards authorities relevant for economic operators, 57% perceive the level of independence of the national competition authority (The Competition Council) as very or fairly good, a figure which has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (49%)¹⁷⁹. The Legislative Council has jurisdiction in several business-related cases, including in cases related to public concessions, 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 joint examination of similar cases¹⁸⁰.

There has been no progress on the recommendation on the accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions, as a decision is still pending¹⁸¹. The accreditation process is still paused following questions from GANHRI's¹⁸² Sub-committee on Accreditation (SCA) pertaining to the accreditation of more than one National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) from one United Nations member state, with the same geographical scope¹⁸³. In addition,

¹⁷⁴ Pending drafts automatically transit to the next legislature. Country visit, CSOs, FRA(2026) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2025).

¹⁷⁵ Figures published by the Chamber of Deputies.

In 2025, 248 laws were adopted by the Parliament and promulgated by the President of Romania. Out of them: 92 were laws for the approval of emergency ordinances (37%); 23 were laws for the approval of simple ordinances (9%); 6 were laws for amending and supplementing the government's emergency ordinances; 2 were laws for empowering the government to issue ordinances; 1 was a law rejecting an emergency ordinance. The only difference between GEOs and other ordinances is that the latter are adopted when the Parliament is not in session.

¹⁷⁶ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2026), written input p. 2. Liberties (2026), written input, p. 28. Centre for Public Innovation (2026), written input, p. 17.

¹⁷⁷ Romanian Government (2026a), written input to the 2026 European Semester.

¹⁷⁸ Figures 52 and 53, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. 34% and 22% 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.

¹⁷⁹ Figure 60, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

¹⁸⁰ 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.

¹⁸¹ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Romania to "take forward the process for obtaining accreditation for the National Human Rights Institutions, taking into account the UN Paris Principles". While some progress was assessed on this recommendation in 2024, there was no progress in 2023 nor 2025.

¹⁸² Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

¹⁸³ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, pp. 17-18. So far, the same Member State can have several NHRIs when they cover different geographical areas (e.g. NHRIs for different regions). The novelty with Romania is that the 2 NHRIs would cover the same geographical area i.e. the whole territory of Romania.

while the SCA, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) identified non-compliance issues with the Paris Principles for both institutions, regarding the institutional independence, sufficient resources and institutional capacity, no action has been taken by the public authorities in this regard¹⁸⁴. The resources of the RIHR have been divided by two in 2025 and have not increased in 2026, leading to important staff cuts, despite the RIHR's new responsibilities as the Anti-SLAPP Focal Point and calls from ENNHRI and UN bodies¹⁸⁵. The mandate of the Ombudsperson expired in June 2024 and Parliament has not yet launched a new appointment procedure. CSOs criticize an untransparent process and the threat to the independence of this institution. The mandates of 4 out of 9 members of the Equality Body¹⁸⁶ have also expired, and their seat remains unoccupied¹⁸⁷. Since the process is still paused, no progress has been made regarding the accreditation of NHRIs.

On 1 January 2026, Romania had 84 leading judgments of the European Court of Human Rights pending implementation, a decrease of 27 compared to the previous year¹⁸⁸. At that time, Romania's rate of leading judgments from the past 10 years that had been implemented was at 50% (compared to 40% in 2025; 50% remained pending), and the average time that the judgments had been pending implementation was 6 years and 7 months (compared to 6 years and 3 months in 2025)¹⁸⁹. The oldest leading judgment, pending implementation for 16 years, concerns structural deficiencies in the mechanisms set up for the restitution of, or compensation for, properties nationalised during the communist period¹⁹⁰. As regards the respect of payment deadlines, on 31 December 2025 there were 55 cases in total awaiting confirmation of payments (compared to 99 in 2024)¹⁹¹. On 17 June 2026, the number of leading judgments pending implementation had decreased to 82¹⁹².

Actions planned in the framework of the Strategy for Open Government in Romania 2025-2030 remain to be implemented and CSOs report increasing restrictions to their work. Actions planned in the Strategy for Open Government by the end of 2025 have not been implemented. Civic space continues to be rated as 'narrowed' by Civicus¹⁹³, with a reported growing trend of political, administrative and institutional constraints on the fundamental rights of association, expression and peaceful assembly and of intimidation targeting civil society actors, especially organisations working in areas like minority rights,

¹⁸⁴ Liberties (2026), written input, p. 29. ENNHRI(2026) Romania country report, pp. 4-5 and its corresponding recommendations to Romania. FRA(2026), written input, p. 272. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, pp. 17-18.

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁶ National Council for Combating Discrimination.

¹⁸⁷ Centre for Public Innovation (2026), written input, p. 18. Concerns have been raised as to the increased potential risk that the lack of secure tenure accentuates the potential political influence over decisions of some of these authorities.

¹⁸⁸ For an explanation of the supervision process, see the [website](#) of the Council of Europe.

¹⁸⁹ 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, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ Judgment of the ECtHR, 30767/05, *Maria Atanasiu and others v. Romania*, pending implementation since 2010.

¹⁹¹ Council of Europe (2026), p. 163. See also the December 2025 Council of Europe report, which emphasizes that Romania continues to face serious unresolved structural problems in the execution of ECtHR judgments, despite legislative and policy reforms.

¹⁹² Data according to the online database of the Council of Europe (HUDOC).

¹⁹³ Romania's score is 61/100. Ratings by Civicus are on a five-category scale defined as: open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed and closed.

environment and anti-corruption¹⁹⁴. ENNHRI notes structural challenges for CSOs and human rights defenders, such as barriers to participation in policy making, excessive administrative controls and audits political and reputational pressures, including through public negative narrative as well as a lack of adequate funding¹⁹⁵. CSOs report that attacks by media or politicians have increased, resulting in a chilling effect on civic engagement. According to them, SLAPPs are being used against activists and CSOs working in areas which are seen as likely to endanger or stand in opposition to corporate or state interests. CSOs report that the draft law to transpose the EU Anti-SLAPPs Directive¹⁹⁶ incorporates very few of their recommendations¹⁹⁷. CSOs also raise concern that legislation simplifying certain procedures for their functioning is stalled in the Chamber of Deputies, and that the draft law to amend the law governing the right to peaceful assembly, is pending in Parliament since 2021¹⁹⁸. In February, the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) proposed, as part of discussions on the revision of the Code of Administrative Procedures, that CSOs could be created and dissolved through administrative decisions, and not through court orders as is currently the case, thereby possibly weakening oversight¹⁹⁹. The draft amendments would also include CSOs in the scope of the Code, subjecting them to the same obligations as public authorities in terms of access to information²⁰⁰. In May, the Romanian Senate voted on a draft legislation²⁰¹, which, if adopted, would impose a general obligation on associations and foundations, including media outlets, to publicly disclose the identity of their donors. The draft text triggered important reactions, including from institutional committees and CSOs²⁰². In a decision of 9 June 2026, the SCM's Judges Section²⁰³ considered that criticism expressed about the judiciary by some magistrates' associations, media and CSOs would amount to attacks against judicial independence. A large number of CSOs and media outlets published an open letter, considering this decision as an abuse of authority and an attempt to intimidate and censor²⁰⁴. A group of CSOs is also challenging the decision in court²⁰⁵. Finally, a new

¹⁹⁴ Civicus, Romania (2025), ENNHRI(2026), p. 7; FRA(2026), written input, pp. 267-268. Resource Centre for Public Participation and Coalition NGOs for Citizens (2026), written input, p. 22. Intimidation actions consist of claims for damages, the incurring and subsequent recovery of huge legal costs, demands for the dissolution or even requests for criminal prosecution.

¹⁹⁵ ENNHRI(2026), pp. 6–7 and its corresponding recommendations; and tracking by the RIHR.

¹⁹⁶ Written input (2026a) Romanian Government, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Resource Centre for Public Participation and Coalition NGOs for Citizens (2026), written input, p. 22. Country visit Romania, Apador-CH, Public Innovation, PressHub, Freedom House, Funky Citizens, Civic Radauti, Expert Forum, FDSC.

¹⁹⁸ Draft law of 2021 amending Law 60/1991 on public assemblies, approved by the Senate in 2024. Resource Centre for Public Participation and Coalition NGOs for Citizens (2026), written input, p. 22. FRA(2026), written input, pp. 268-269. several civil society organisations have drawn attention that the imprecise legislative mechanism was used to limit the right to peaceful assemblies or to harass participants.

¹⁹⁹ See also pillar 3 on access to information.

²⁰⁰ Draft law for the approval of the Administrative Procedure Code, 3 November 2025. FRA(2026), written input, pp. 270-271, Liberties (2026), written input, p. 27. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Romania, p. 14.

²⁰¹ Draft law supplementing Government Ordinance No. 26/2000 on associations and foundations (L233/2026).

²⁰² A large number of CSOs have expressed strong concerns about the proposed measures, considering that the sanctions proposed for not complying with the obligations —i.e., the suspension of activities, followed by automatic dissolution- are disproportionate. The Economic and Social Council, the Legislative Council, and the Senate Committee on Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, Religions and Minorities also raised concerns on the draft law, referring to increased suspicion towards CSOs and unnecessary administrative burden for the CSOs. The President of Romania indicated that the publication of the names would inhibit support for CSOs by citizens and, thereby, affect civil society as a whole.

²⁰³ Decision no. 1348/2026 of 9 June 2026.

²⁰⁴ Open letter signed by 110 organisations.

²⁰⁵ Declic website.

law of 18 September 2025²⁰⁶ provides for a risk-based supervisory mechanism of the activity of associations and foundations, and for monitoring of the measures that associations and foundations need to implement in accordance with anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism legislation. This has raised concerns as to the potential burden that would be placed on associations and foundations with lower capacity²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁶ Supervision Mechanism, Order 145/2025 of 18 September 2025 by the National Office for preventing and combating Money Laundering.

²⁰⁷ FDSC (2026), written input, p. 25. The risk-based supervisory mechanism for associations and foundations stems from the implementation of Law No. 129/2019, which transposes the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directives (AMLD4 and AMLD5).

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Annex II: Country visit to Romania

The Commission services held virtual meetings in February 2026 with:

- Active Watch
- Agentia Nationala pentru Achizitii Publice (ANAP)
- ANABI
- Asociația Forumului Judecătorilor din România
- Asociația „Inițiativa pentru justiție”
- Asociația Judecătorilor pentru Apărarea Drepturilor Omului
- Asociația Magistraților din România
- Asociația Mișcarea pentru apărarea statutului procurorilor
- Asociația Procurorilor din România
- Centrul de Resurse Juridice
- Center for Public Innovation
- Civic Radauti Association
- Consiliul National al Audiovizualului
- Court of Accounts
- Expert Forum
- Freedom House
- Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile (FDSC)
- Funky Citizens
- G4Media
- High Court of Cassation and Justice
- Judicial Inspection
- Legislative Council
- Ministry of Justice
- National Directorate against Corruption (DNA)
- National Institute of the Magistracy
- National Integrity Agency
- National Radio (RRA)
- National TV (TVR)
- Ombudsperson
- Prosecutor General attached to the HCCJ
- Romanian Business Leaders
- Romanian Institute for Human Rights (IRDO)
- Secretariat General of the Government
- Superior Council of the Magistracy
- Uniunea Nationala a Judecatorilor din Romania (UNJR)

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

- Civil Liberties Union for Europe
- Civil Society Europe
- End FGM EU
- European Civic Forum

- European Partnership for Democracy
- Human Rights Watch
- ILGA-Europe
- International Federation for Human Rights
- Philea - Philanthropy Europe Association
- Transparency International EU