# 2025 Rule of Law Report

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*Amélie Lacourt*
*European Audiovisual Observatory*

The sixth edition of the European Commission's Rule of Law Report was published on 8 July 2025. It examines developments in the 27 EU member states and in four enlargement countries (Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia) in four key areas: the justice system; the anti-corruption framework; media pluralism and freedom; and other institutional issues related to checks and balances. Based on contributions and country visits, the report delivers qualitative information on each country's situation since the previous edition.

Alongside the report, the European Commission also published recommendations to all member states and assessed how the previous year's recommendations had been implemented. This year's report sees the Commission giving particular emphasis to the Single Market dimension.

With regard to media pluralism and freedom in particular, the report reaffirms the importance of these principles for democracy and the Single Market. Although some Member States have introduced improved legal protections, the report still raises growing concerns across the EU with regard to implementation gaps, threats of political interference to the independence of public service media, transparency of media ownership, access to public information and fair distribution of state advertising, the independence of regulators as well as the protection of journalists.

Notably, the report notes that concerns about the independence or impartiality of regulators persist in several member states. Tasks and competences of national media regulators have been or are being expanded, following the requirements and rules of the Digital Services Act and the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). The report emphasises the importance of ensuring independence of regulators in such a context.

Regarding the protection of journalists, the Commission highlights the 2025 findings of the Media Pluralism Monitor, which reveal deteriorating conditions for journalists in several countries, with increased physical violence during protests, more online harassment and smear campaigns by politicians. The report further discusses the impact of EU legislation, including the adoption of the Directive to protect journalists and whistleblowers against abusive lawsuits (SLAPPs) in cross-border situations, and encourages supportive measures at the national level, such

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as training, awareness campaigns and support mechanisms.

The report also emphasises the importance of the EMFA, which came into force on 8 August 2025. It thereby urges member states to ensure the effective application of the new EU provisions and to address the specific risks to media freedom, pluralism and the safety of journalists on a national level.

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https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/annual-rule-law-cycle/2025-rule-law-report_en

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