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Date: 22/01/2026 19:14:58

2026 Rule of Law Report - targeted stakeholder consultation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The annual Rule of Law Report lies at the centre of the Annual Rule of Law Cycle, which acts as a preventive tool, deepening multilateral dialogue and joint awareness of rule of law issues. So far, six editions of the Rule of Law Report have been published since 2020.

As every year, the Commission would like to invite the stakeholders to provide contributions to the 2026 Rule of Law Report. On the basis of these contributions and on-going developments, further targeted questions may be shared at a later stage of preparation of the 2026 Rule of Law Report, in particular in the context of country visits, or bilateral contacts.

The Commission invites stakeholders to provide contributions which include:

(1) developments and measures taken in relation to the recommendations in the 2025 report,
(2) developments related to topics covered in the 2025 country chapters, as well as any other new developments related to the rule of law.

The input should consist of a short summary, if possible in English, covering the areas referred to below. Legislation or other documents may be referenced with a link. Contributions should focus on significant developments since the last Rule of Law Report both as regards the legal framework and its implementation in practice.

This questionnaire also integrates the separate questionnaire on the single market from last year. In addition to these specific questions, respondents to the questionnaire are invited to consider the Single Market dimension, including any relevant cross-border issues, in all their answers.

Where questions of particular relevance under the single market dimension, this is indicated before the relevant question.

[1] Unless the information was already submitted in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Type of information to be included:

Under each of the four pillars, the replies should include references to the following types of information:

A) Legislative developments

- Newly adopted legislation
- legislative drafts currently discussed in Parliament
- legislative plans envisaged by the Government

B) Policy developments

- Implementation and enforcement of legislation
- evaluations, impact assessment, surveys
- white papers/strategies/actions plans/consultation processes
- follow-up to reports/recommendations of Council of Europe bodies or other international organisations
- important administrative measures
- generalised practices

C) Developments related to the judiciary / independent authorities

- important case law by national courts
- important decision/opinions from independent bodies/authorities
- state of play on terms, nominations and expired mandates for high-level positions (e.g. Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, Council for the Judiciary, Prosecutor General, heads of independent authorities included in the scope of the request for input[2])

D) Any other relevant developments

- National authorities are free to add any further information, which they deem relevant; however, this should be short and to the point.

Where relevant, please also indicate whether the developments reported are linked to the implementation of reforms and investments under the national Recovery Resilience Plan. To simplify your answers to the questionnaire, if there are no developments, it is sufficient to indicate this and the information covered in the contributions for the previous Rule of Law Reports does not need not be repeated.

[2] Such as: media regulatory authorities and bodies, national human rights institutions, equality bodies, ombudsman institutions, supreme audit institutions and, where they exist, transparency authorities.

About you

I am giving my contribution as

Civil society organisation/NGO

Organisation name

250 character(s) maximum

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Stefan Batory Foundation, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Free Courts
Foundation, National Federation of Polish NGOs, Citizen Network - Watchdog
Poland, Institute of Public Affairs  Responsible Politics Foundation
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Main Areas of Work

- [x] Justice System
- [x] Anti-corruption
- [x] Media Pluralism and Freedom
- [x] Checks and Balances
- [ ] Other

Please insert an URL towards your organisation's main online presence or describe your organisation briefly:

500 character(s) maximum

The coalition of CSOs led and composed by the Stefan Batory Foundation, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, the Free Courts Foundation, the National Federation of Polish NGOs, the Citizen Network - Watchdog Poland, Institute for Public Affairs and the Responsible Politics Foundation, monitors the state of the rule of law in Poland. Each year, the coalition jointly submits detailed contributions to the EU Rule of Law Report, providing the European Commission with evidence-based assessment

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is in the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making

10828394017-54

Country of origin

Please indicate the country of origin of your organisation

Poland

First name

Krzysztof

Surname

Izdebski

Email Address of the organisation

kizdebski@batory.org.pl

Publication of your contribution and privacy settings

You can choose whether you wish for your contribution to be published and whether you wish your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- ○ Anonymous - Only your type of respondent, country of origin and contribution will be published. Organisation name, URL, transparency register number, first name and surname given above will not be published. **To maintain anonymity, please refrain from mentioning the name of your organisation and any details from which your organisation an be identified in the rest of your contribution as we will not be able to guarantee anonymisation of these elements.**
- ◉ Public - Your personal details (name, organisation name, transparency register number, country of origin will be published with your contribution).
- ○ No publication - Your contribution will not be published. Elements of your contribution may be referred to anonymously in documents produced by the Commission based on this consultation.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions.
Specific_privacy_statement_targeted_stakeholder_consultation_2026_rule_of_law_report.pdf (/eusurvey/files/f5c8a71d-1f43-4323-af2b-6753d5035fe4)

Questions on horizontal developments

In this section, you are invited to provide information on general horizontal developments or trends, both positive and negative, covering all or several Member States. In particular, you could mention issues that are common to several Member States, as well as best practices identified in one Member State that could be replicated. Moreover, you could refer to your activities in the area of the four pillars and sub-topics (an overview of all sub-topics can be found below), and, if you represent a Network of national organisations, to the support you might have provided to one of your national members.

Overview topics for contribution
List_of_topics_for_contribution.docx

Please provide any relevant information on horizontal developments here
5,000 character(s) maximum

Questions for contribution

Under each pillar, you are invited to provide information on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to the Member State in the 2025 Rule of Law report, as well as developments with regard to the points raised in the respective country chapter of the 2025 Rule of Law Report and any other significant developments since January 2025 and up to the date of submission[3]. Please always include a link to and reference relevant legislation/documents (in the national language and/or where available, in English). **Significant developments** can include challenges, positive developments and best practices, covering both legislative developments or implementation and practices.

Information provided in reply to the first question under each pillar, related to the follow-up to the recommendations, does not need to be repeated in subsequent parts of the questionnaire, but can be cross-referenced in the subsequent questions, where relevant. All other questions are not limited to the recommendations, but as in previous years, cover the entire scope of the Report.

[3] Unless already covered in the input for the previous Rule of Law Reports.

Member State/enlargement country covered in contribution [only one choice possible]

If you wish to submit information concerning several Member States/enlargement countries, please fill in the questionnaire separately for each country. There is no limit to the number of contributions submitted by a single participant.

- ◯ Albania
- ◯ Austria
- ◯ Belgium
- ◯ Bulgaria
- ◯ Croatia
- ◯ Cyprus
- ◯ Czechia
- ◯ Denmark
- ◯ Estonia
- ◯ Finland
- ◯ France
- ◯ Germany
- ◯ Greece
- ◯ Hungary
- ◯ Ireland
- ◯ Italy
- ◯ Latvia
- ◯ Lithuania
- ◯ Luxembourg
- ◯ Malta
- ◯ Montenegro
- ◯ Netherlands
- ◯ North Macedonia
- ◉ Poland
- ◯ Portugal
- ◯ Romania
- ◯ Serbia
- ◯ Slovakia
- ◯ Slovenia
- ◯ Spain
- ◯ Sweden

I. Justice System

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding the justice system (if applicable)

5,000 character(s) maximum

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The year 2025 did not bring any measurable changes. The work begun in 2024
continued, but it was not until the end of 2025 that draft bills were submitted
to the Sejm that could be a partial response to the Commission's
recommendations. However, none of them have been implemented yet.
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A. Independence

Appointment and selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents (incl. judicial review)

(The reference to 'judges' concerns judges at all level and types of courts as well as judges at constitutional courts)

5,000 character(s) maximum

The National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ)
In 2025, no legislative changes regarding the National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ) entered into force. The Council continued to operate under its existing term of office, and the 2017 model whereby judicial members are elected by the Sejm remained applicable.
In June 2025, the Ministry of Justice proposed a draft law to amend the rules for appointing judges to the NCJ, aiming to restore the election of judicial members by their peers. The proposal envisaged separate elections within individual judicial groups, namely judges of district courts, regional courts, administrative courts, military courts, and the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the draft provided for the termination of the current NCJ's term and sought to exclude judges appointed via the post-2017 procedure from passive voting rights. During the legislative process, the Venice Commission and the CoE Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law issued an opinion stating that a blanket exclusion of such judges would be disproportionate.
The President of Poland subsequently referred the amendment to the Constitutional Tribunal. On 20 November 2025, the Tribunal found the amendment unconstitutional insofar as it deprived specific judges of passive voting rights, provided for the premature termination of the NCJ's term, and enabled judicial review of National Electoral Commission decisions by the Supreme Administrative Court. The government has not published this judgement.
By the end of the year, the Ministry of Justice presented a revised draft. This version abandoned the termination of the NCJ's term and the exclusion of certain judges from passive voting rights. Instead, it introduced eligibility restrictions based on seniority and professional experience. The revised model proposed nationwide elections, allowing each judge to cast as many votes as there are seats to be filled. The draft was submitted to the Sejm at the end of 2025.
Court Presidents: Appointment, Dismissal, and Judicial Review
The legal framework governing the appointment and dismissal of court presidents and vice-presidents remained unchanged in 2025. The Minister of Justice retained exclusive competence over the appointment of court presidents, while vice-presidents were appointed by the Minister upon the request of the relevant president. The rules for dismissal also remained static, requiring a positive opinion from the court's board or, failing that, the consent of the NCJ.
Public Prosecutors: Selection and Challenges
In 2025, the rules regarding the appointment of prosecutors remained unchanged. Prosecutors within ordinary organisational units continued to be appointed by the Prosecutor General upon the request of the National Prosecutor. During this period, isolated cases were reported where courts questioned the authority of prosecutors appointed via this route due to disputes regarding the legality of the National Prosecutor's own appointment. This controversy centres on Prosecutor Dariusz Barski, whom the Prosecutor General deemed in early 2024 to have been improperly reinstated into prosecutorial service. This move was viewed by some as an attempt to circumvent the requirement for presidential consent when dismissing a National Prosecutor.

Irremovability of judges, including transfers, (incl. as part of judicial map reform), dismissal and retirement regime of judges, court presidents and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5,000 character(s) maximum

The Legal Status of "New" Judges

Throughout 2025, public and institutional debate continued regarding the legal status of individuals appointed to judicial office, with the involvement of the National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ), as reconstituted in 2017 (the "new NCJ"). In June 2025, the Ministry of Justice presented a draft law to regulate the status of these individuals, which the Council of Ministers adopted with minor modifications at the end of the year.

The explanatory memorandum to the draft argued that following the 2017 amendments, the NCJ lost its constitutional identity. Consequently, the drafters maintained that appointments made upon its motion possessed an exclusively statutory, rather than constitutional, basis. Under this reasoning, such individuals would not hold the status of judges within the meaning of the Constitution, unless they had already served as judges in lower-instance courts before their contested appointment. This interpretation was used to justify legislative intervention that departed from constitutional guarantees, most notably the principle of judicial irremovability.

The draft law proposed the neutralisation of all NCJ resolutions concerning judicial appointments issued after 6 March 2018. It introduced a three-tier classification system for the affected judges.

The "Green" Group: This group would remain in their current positions and included former judicial trainees (assessors), court referendaries, and judicial assistants.

The "Yellow" Group: This group comprised judges who were already judges before being promoted via the "new NCJ". They would be subject to an automatic transfer by operation of law back to their previously held positions, followed by a delegation back to the positions they had lost.

The "Red" Group: This group concerned individuals appointed as judges for the first time after 6 March 2018 from other legal professions, such as advocates,attorneys, prosecutors, and academics. These individuals would lose their judicial positions and either return to their previous professions or be appointed as court referendaries.

Critics raised significant concerns regarding the compatibility of these measures with the Constitution, specifically the removal of judges by legislative means. Stakeholders also argued that the draft exceeded the limits established by the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights. Furthermore, the draft was criticised for lacking procedural safeguards; affected individuals could only contest the Minister of Justice’s classification decision, but not the underlying legal consequences, such as reassignment or removal from office.

Court Presidents and Vice-Presidents

In 2025, the legal framework for the appointment and dismissal of court presidents and vice-presidents remained unchanged. The Minister of Justice retained the power to appoint presidents, while vice-presidents were appointed upon the request of the relevant president. Dismissal continued to require a positive opinion from the court board or, in its absence, the consent of the NCJ.

Throughout the year, the Minister of Justice initiated dismissal procedures. In July 2025, procedures began for 46 court presidents and vice-presidents, and in September, a further 25 were dismissed. In several instances, these dismissals occurred without a positive opinion from the competent court board or consent from the NCJ. Despite the requirements established by the ECtHR judgement in

Broda and Bojara v. Poland, those dismissed were denied access to judicial review. The Minister justified these actions by claiming that court boards had lost their independence due to compositions favoured by the previous Minister - Zbigniew Ziobro, and that the NCJ failed to provide sufficient independence guarantees.

Promotion of judges and prosecutors (incl. judicial review)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Promotion of Judges
Due to ongoing doubts regarding the composition of the NCJ, the Minister of Justice continued to withhold announcements for judicial vacancies in common, military, and administrative courts. As a result, judges could only be appointed to these positions via delegation by a court president or the Minister of Justice.
Promotion of Prosecutors
The promotion system within the prosecution service also remained unchanged. The appointment of a prosecutor remains at the discretion of the Prosecutor General upon the request of the National Prosecutor. However, such a request does not obligate the Prosecutor General to act; he is not required to issue a formal refusal or provide a justification for his decision, and no judicial appeal is available.
In December 2025, media reports (https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,32472808,awans-nie-dla-lodzkiego-rzecznik-dyscyplinarnego-prokurator.html) highlighted the case of Prosecutor Dawid Jackowski, who, acting as a deputy disciplinary spokesperson, led proceedings against one of prosecutor who was also a councillor in the Ministry of Justice and close associate of the Minister of Justice. The proceedings concerned a verbal attack by Prosecutor Wrzosek against a junior prosecutor over a procedural decision. Although the disciplinary court found Prosecutor Wrzosek guilty, subsequent reports linked Prosecutor Jackowski’s lack of promotion to his role in prosecuting this high-profile associate.

Allocation of cases in courts

5,000 character(s) maximum

In September 2025, the Minister of Justice amended the Regulation on the Rules of Procedure for Common Courts (https://www.prawo.pl/prawnicy-sady/nowy-regulamin-urzedowania-sadow-powszechnych-bez-ziobrolotka,535223.html) regarding the designation of multi-person judicial panels. The new version of the regulation introduced a provision allowing heads of departments to bypass the random selection of an entire panel. Instead, they may limit the use of the Random Case Allocation System to the selection of the judge-rapporteur only. In such instances, the remaining two judges are selected by the head of the department according to rules established by the court president after consulting the relevant court board.

The regulation states that such actions may be taken to improve the efficiency of a department's work. Officially, the change was justified as a means to enhance court productivity, particularly within appellate departments. However, this narrative appeared to conflict with public statements made by the Minister of Justice, who indicated that these changes align with the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. The Minister suggested the measures serve to eliminate the risk of rulings being issued by unlawfully constituted panels, which may represent an attempt to prevent judges appointed after 2018 via the "new NCJ" from adjudicating alongside judges appointed prior to those reforms.

Furthermore, the regulation capped the case inflow for certain officials, including the Disciplinary Commissioner for Common Court Judges and his Deputies, at a maximum of 10% of the regular workload. It is worth noting the volatility of this coefficient: until September 2024, it stood at 10%, subsequently rose to 90%, and has now been lowered again to between 5% and 10%. This most recent reduction coincided with the Minister of Justice's decision to dismiss the existing Disciplinary Commissioner and his Deputies and appoint new judges to these roles.

The Random Case Allocation System (or any equivalent) still does not operate within the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Tribunal, military courts, or administrative courts. In these institutions, panels continue to be assigned by specific individuals, such as the Presidents of the Supreme Court Chambers, heads of departments in the Supreme Administrative Court and regional administrative courts, or the President of the Constitutional Tribunal.

Independence (including composition and nomination and dismissal of its members), and powers of the body tasked with safeguarding the independence of the judiciary (e.g. Council for the Judiciary)

5,000 character(s) maximum

The National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ)
In 2025, the rules governing the appointment of the National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ) remained unchanged. Consequently, the reservations expressed regarding the NCJ by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) remained valid throughout the year.
The amendment to the Act on the NCJ, adopted in July 2025, included provisions to terminate the terms of office of judges currently serving in the "new NCJ". This solution was justified by the necessity to implement the judgements of the ECtHR and the CJEU and to limit the legal damage caused by the involvement of the new NCJ in the judicial appointment process, particularly regarding the ability to contest rulings issued by such judges. This issue became one of the primary reasons for the President of Poland decision to reffer the amendment to the Constitutional Tribunal. The Tribunal upheld the challenges against this provision, ruling that it violated the constitutional regulation regarding the four-year term of office for NCJ members.
In November 2025, the Minister of Justice presented a new draft for amendments to the Act on the National Council of the Judiciary. This project again seeks to introduce mechanisms allowing for the election of the judicial members of the Council by the judges themselves. The proposed electoral system stipulates that NCJ members would be elected in a nationwide vote, with each judge receiving as many votes as there are seats to be filled. Simultaneously, the draft limits passive voting rights to candidates with appropriate seniority within the judiciary and in their specific judicial position. Crucially, this version does not contain provisions to terminate the terms of office of the current NCJ. In December 2025, the Ministry submitted the draft for parliamentary proceedings.
In the meantime, in a ruling delivered on 4 September 2025 (C-225/22), the CJEU further clarified the consequences of adjudications involving a Supreme Court judge appointed with the participation of the new NCJ. The Court of Justice held that EU law requires judicial decisions to be treated as non-existent if they were issued by a court including a person appointed to the Supreme Court upon the motion of the new NCJ.

Accountability of judges and prosecutors, including disciplinary regime and bodies and ethical rules, judicial immunity and criminal/civil (where applicable) liability of judges (incl. judicial review)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, no statutory amendments regulating the disciplinary liability of judges were adopted, despite numerous draft laws and proposals aimed at reforming the judicial disciplinary system. The multiplicity and fragmentation of the proposed solutions into separate legislative acts hinder a comprehensive assessment of their potential impact on the functioning of the judiciary.
Changes continued at the personnel level, in particular through successive appointments of ad hoc disciplinary ombudsmen pursuant to Article 112b § 1 of the ustawa – Prawo o ustroju sądów powszechnych, as well as through the dismissal of the Disciplinary Ombudsmen for Judges of Common Courts and their deputies. These dismissals, effected by decisions of the Minister of Justice prior to the expiry of their term of office, gave rise to controversy, as the applicable provisions do not provide for the premature termination of their mandates.
As regards legislative work, in January 2025 a draft ustawa o zmianie ustawy – Prawo o ustroju sądów powszechnych oraz niektórych innych ustaw (UD206) was prepared. It provided, inter alia, for the repeal of disciplinary delicts consisting in "refusal to administer justice," "acts or omissions that could prevent or significantly hinder the functioning of an authority of the administration of justice," and "acts questioning the existence of a judge's service relationship, the effectiveness of a judicial appointment, or the authority of a constitutional body of the Republic of Poland." The draft was not submitted to the Council of Ministers.
On 3 February 2025, the Codification Commission for the System of Courts and the Prosecution Service published two draft statutes aimed at restoring citizens' right to an independent and impartial court established by law. On their basis, the Ministry of Justice published a further draft dated 13 May 2025, indicating that it covered, inter alia, changes to disciplinary liability, restoration of judicial self-governance, transparent selection of court authorities, and the elimination of delicts introduced by the so-called muzzle law. This draft likewise did not proceed.
Another draft, dated 15 September 2025, sought to amend certain acts in order to implement the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 23 November 2023 in Wałęsa v. Poland (application no. 50849/21). It was negatively assessed by the Codification Commission, which criticised the fragmentary approach to disciplinary liability and the lack of regulation of its grounds, scope, and the second-instance disciplinary court, currently the Chamber of Professional Liability.
Ultimately, on 29 December 2025 the Government submitted to the Sejm a draft ustawa o przywróceniu prawa do niezależnego i bezstronnego sądu ustanowionego na podstawie prawa przez uregulowanie skutków uchwał Krajowej Rady Sądownictwa podjętych w latach 2018–2025. The draft does not, however, eliminate the provisions of the so-called "muzzle law" so as to comply with the judgment of the CJEU of 5 June 2023 in case C-204/21.
Nevertheless, the need for reform in this area appears undisputed, and the absence of such provisions at this stage should not be understood as a complete abandonment of regulation.
During the past year, alternative proposals concerning the functioning of the Chamber of Professional Liability were presented. The Chamber currently consists of eight members, only three of whom are Supreme Court judges appointed through a procedure not giving rise to doubts (SSN B. Skoczkowska, SSN Z. Korzeniowski, and SSN P. Grzegorczyk). By a non-final judgment, the Voivodship Administrative

Court in Warsaw (case no. VI SA/Wa 8158/22) annulled the decision of the President of the Republic of Poland designating judge Grzegorczyk to adjudicate in that Chamber.
However, the draft statute submitted to the Sejm on 29 December 2025 provides for the retention of the Chamber of Professional Liability (with the reservation that persons appointed in a defective procedure would cease to perform the function of Supreme Court judge), while modifying the rules for selecting its members. The process of selecting candidates for the – similarly to the current framework – is to be based on random selection from among all judges of the Supreme Court. The mechanism consisting in drawing a number of Supreme Court judges equal to three times the number of positions to be filled, from whom the President of the Republic of Poland makes the final selection, has been abandoned. Instead, the draft provides for the drawing of judges in a number corresponding to the number of vacancies, with the designation to be made not by the President of the Republic of Poland, as is currently the case, but by the First President of the Supreme Court.
While this change strengthens the Chamber’s independence from the executive, random selection from among all Supreme Court judges may still raise concerns in light of the principle of judicial independence.

Independence/autonomy of the prosecution service

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, the National Prosecutor's Office published extensive reports summarising hundreds of investigations conducted between 2016 and 2023. The findings of these reports pointed to systemic violations of prosecutorial independence, describing instances of manual steering of investigations and the conduct of trawling enquiries. These involved in-depth analyses of the conduct of political opponents in the hope of uncovering compromising material. The reports also highlighted the issuance of orders and suggestions by the leadership of the National Prosecutor's Office aimed at discontinuing criminal proceedings that were inconvenient for the parliamentary majority of the time. As a consequence of this audit, the prosecutorial authorities decided to reopen several discontinued cases and initiated disciplinary proceedings against some prosecutors.

At the same time, the Ministry of Justice failed to present a draft for a new Act on the Prosecution Service in 2025 that would comprehensively regulate the institution's functioning. Legislative work in this area, conducted by the Codification Commission for the System of the Judiciary and the Prosecution Service, did not reach finalisation. Furthermore, the draft law prepared by the Ministry of Justice to separate the offices of the Prosecutor General and the Minister of Justice did not advance beyond the initial governmental legislative stage. Work on this reform was likely suspended in anticipation of the new legislation being prepared by the Codification Commission.

Furthermore, the National Prosecutor indicated during the meeting of the National Council of Prosecution that during his first year in office, he rescinded approximately 50 orders and instructions issued by the previous prosecutorial leadership. One of the revoked orders had instructed prosecutors to ignore a Supreme Court resolution that excluded the possibility of using evidence obtained in violation of the law, known as the fruit of the poisonous tree, in criminal proceedings.

Conversely, at the end of 2025, the prosecution service announced the discontinuation of criminal proceedings concerning the abuse of power by a prosecutor who serves as a general councillor at the Ministry of Justice and is a close associate of the Minister of Justice. This investigation concerned the submission of motions for injunctions to courts across the country intended to block changes in public media. The prosecution's findings revealed that these motions were technically and substantively prepared by specific individuals working for a Warsaw law firm. Subsequently, using the infrastructure of that firm, some of the motions were printed, scanned, signed electronically by the prosecutor and sent to the courts electronically. According to investigators, these actions violated several sub-statutory regulations defining the scope of a prosecutor's duties and the procedures for handling official documents.

Significantly, media publications suggest that the prosecutor assigned to the case intended to bring charges and submit a motion to lift the associate's immunity. However, the proceedings were discontinued by the head of the department where the case was being handled due to the negligible social harm of the act. The official statement from the prosecution service indicates that the department head considered the identified violations to be primarily formal and organisational in nature, relating to sub-statutory regulations and internal rules of the prosecution service. Consequently, he determined that the criminal proceedings should be dropped and that the act should instead be assessed solely within the framework of disciplinary proceedings.

Independence of the Bar (chamber/association of lawyers) and of lawyers

5,000 character(s) maximum

Pursuant to the ustawa o Sądzie Najwyższym, whose provisions remained unchanged in 2025, cassation appeals in disciplinary cases concerning advocates and legal advisers fall within the jurisdiction of the Chamber of Professional Liability (IOZ) of the Supreme Court. This Chamber was established by the amendment of 9 June 2022, replacing the Disciplinary Chamber, whose status as an independent and impartial court had been repeatedly challenged by domestic and international courts, including the European Court of Human Rights in Reczkowicz v. Poland, Tuleya v. Poland and Juszczyszyn v. Poland, as well as by the Court of Justice of the European Union (C-791/19). Despite the formal establishment of the IOZ, its status as an independent and impartial body continues to raise serious concerns, particularly in light of personnel changes introduced in the Chamber over the past year.

In 2025, several lawfully appointed Supreme Court judges retired, including the then President of the IOZ, Wiesław Kozielewicz, who had overseen the Chamber’s work. In the vote to select a new President, three candidates were nominated, two of whom had been defectively appointed by the National Council of the Judiciary after 2018. The only lawfully appointed candidate is Justice Barbara Skoczkowska, who also adjudicates in the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court. The decision on the appointment of the new President will be taken by the newly elected President of the Republic of Poland, Karol Nawrocki, who will also designate three judges to currently vacant positions in the Chamber. This decision, however, requires the countersignature of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who may block the appointment of defectively appointed Supreme Court judges to the IOZ, thereby effectively paralysing the Chamber’s work. At present, the IOZ has only seven members performing adjudicatory duties, including just two lawfully appointed Supreme Court judge - Justice Barbara Skoczkowska and Justice Zbigniew Korzeniowski. Under such circumstances, it is not possible to constitute a full three-judge panel to hear certain cases. The risk of institutional paralysis, combined with the predominance of defectively appointed judges, may significantly affect the effectiveness and recognition of the Chamber’s decisions, thereby weakening guarantees of a fair disciplinary process for members of the legal professions. A preliminary reference concerning the status of the Disciplinary Chamber was submitted in 2024 by the Judges’ Disciplinary Court at the Court of Appeal in Gdańsk to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Disciplinary cases of advocates and legal advisers are therefore examined by a body whose independence and impartiality are seriously contested, which directly affects the level of legal protection afforded to the parties and public trust in the justice system. Review by an independent court is a core element of the right to a fair trial, and its absence may lead to restrictions on the effective protection of professional rights and the professional autonomy of advocates.

In parallel, on 28 June 2025, during the National Congress of Advocates (Krajowy Zjazd Adwokatury – KZA), the highest body of the Bar self-government, a number of resolutions were adopted addressing challenges and threats to the independence of the legal profession. In particular, Resolution No. 48 concerned reform of the remuneration system for advocates providing ex officio legal aid. It called on the Minister of Justice to introduce clear and indexed fee rates, timely payments from the state budget, an advance payment mechanism, and remuneration for duty service and all procedural activities. The resolution also postulated the establishment of a compensation mechanism for past underpayment and the collection of detailed statistics on the costs of providing legal aid. These measures aim not only to ensure effective access to justice for citizens, but also to strengthen the financial and organisational independence of the Bar and the professional standing of advocates within the justice system.

On 13 May 2025, Poland acceded to the Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer adopted within the framework of the Council of Europe. The Convention establishes minimum standards for the protection of lawyers, including safeguards against pressure and reprisals, protection from unjustified interference by public authorities, and guarantees of professional secrecy. Accession constitutes an important signal of the State’s commitment to safeguarding the autonomy of the legal professions and respecting their role in the justice system. While ratification alone does not automatically resolve existing systemic problems, it provides a normative basis for further reforms and a benchmark for assessing draft legislation affecting the independence of the legal profession.

Significant developments capable of affecting the perception that the general public has of the independence of the judiciary

5,000 character(s) maximum

Perception of the general public

A public opinion poll published in September 2025 by the Rzeczpospolita daily revealed a significant decline in public trust towards judicial institutions. According to the findings, only 36.1% of Poles trust the justice system, representing a year-on-year decrease of 6.2 percentage points. The proportion of respondents expressing strong distrust rose by 10 percentage points to 23.1%, while overall distrust reached 57.4%.

The same study indicated that trust in the prosecution service fell from 40% to 37.4%. Trust in the Constitutional Tribunal remained at a level similar to 2024, with 30.3% of respondents expressing confidence in the institution, while distrust rose by 4.8 percentage points to 54.5%.

This erosion of public confidence may be attributed to the deepening crisis within the justice system regarding the status of individuals appointed with the participation of the so-called "new NCJ" and ongoing doubts concerning their impartiality and independence.

This crisis has directly impacted fundamental state processes, including the adjudication of the validity of the presidential election. The resolution on this matter was issued by the Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs Chamber, a body whose status remains contested both domestically and internationally because it is composed entirely of judges appointed via the new NCJ. Consequently, public debate has emerged questioning the effectiveness and legal certainty of the electoral process itself, leading to significant doubts as to whether a valid election of the President of Poland has actually taken place.

The issue of the Supreme Court's lawful composition returned to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). In a landmark judgement on 4 September 2025 (C-225/22), the CJEU allowed for judicial decisions to be treated as non-existent if the court failed to meet the requirements of independence, impartiality, and being established by law, provided such a consequence is essential to guarantee the primacy of EU law.

Following this ruling, on 24 September 2025, the Supreme Court—sitting in a composition of seven judges, none of whom were appointed via the new NCJ—ruled that judgements of the Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs Chamber concerning extraordinary complaints must be considered non-existent. In response, on 4 December 2025, the combined Labour and Extraordinary Control Chambers (composed primarily of "new" judges) issued a resolution asserting that no court or public authority possesses the power to declare a Supreme Court judgement non-existent.

The legal uncertainty has increasingly affected lower-instance courts. There are growing reports of judgements being overturned due to improper court composition or doubts regarding a judge's independence. A notable example was a ruling by the Court of Appeal in Poznań, which quashed a life sentence for a triple murder due to such procedural irregularities.

Regarding the Constitutional Tribunal, its public standing continues to be marred by doubts over its composition, specifically the presence of three "double judges" appointed to seats already filled. These issues, alongside irregularities in the appointment of the President of the Tribunal, were highlighted by the CJEU in its judgement of 18 December 2025 (C-448/23).

B. Quality of justice

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined in the introduction)

[single market relevance] Accessibility of courts (e.g. court/legal fees, legal aid, language)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, several legislative and administrative changes were implemented to improve access to justice and legal services in Poland, focusing on court fees, legal representation costs, and the accessibility of free legal aid.

Civil Court Fees and Access for Businesses
The Sejm passed an amendment to the Act on Court Costs in Civil Cases, significantly reducing the financial burden for litigants in high-value disputes. Specifically, the maximum proportional fee, which is charged in cases involving property rights exceeding 20,000 PLN, was lowered from 200,000 PLN to 100,000 PLN. This adjustment is intended to enhance access to the courts for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by allowing them to pursue high-value claims with more manageable upfront costs.

Remuneration for Legal Aid Counsel
The Minister of Justice issued new regulations regarding the remuneration rates for advocates and legal advisers providing legal aid ex officio. As a result of these changes, fees for certain categories of cases were increased by 25% to 50%. For instance, the rate for legal defence in proceedings regarding a break in the execution of a sentence rose from 360 PLN to 540 PLN. Despite these adjustments, the remuneration for court-appointed legal aid remains at a level that does not correspond with market rates, which continues to be a point of discussion within the legal profession.

Free Legal Aid Accessibility
A significant reform impacting the accessibility of justice was the amendment to the Act on Free Legal Aid. This legislation permanently integrated solutions originally introduced during the pandemic, allowing for the provision of free legal assistance via telephone or email. Furthermore, the new regulations improved the situation for persons with disabilities, who now have the possibility of receiving free legal aid outside of designated consultation points, ensuring greater flexibility and inclusivity in the legal support system.

Resources of the judiciary (human/financial/material), remuneration/bonuses/rewards for judges and prosecutors, including observed changes (significant and targeted increase or decrease over the past year)

(Material resources refer e.g. to court buildings and other facilities. Financial resources include salaries of staff in courts and prosecution

offices.)

5,000 character(s) maximum

n 2025, the Polish justice system experienced a significant increase in financial resources. Total budgetary expenditure allocated to the functioning of the justice system increased by nearly 12%, reaching PLN 27.4 billion (approximately EUR 6.5 billion). The largest share of these resources was allocated to the functioning of the common courts.
Remuneration of judges and prosecutors
The increased expenditure in 2025 was largely linked to the return to mandatory indexation of judges' and prosecutors' salaries, based on the average wage in the national economy. In previous years, the suspension ("freezing") of this indexation had been challenged before labour courts and the Constitutional Tribunal, which found that preventing the adjustment of judges' remuneration was incompatible with constitutional requirements.
In 2025, a similar development occurred with regard to prosecutors' remuneration. The Supreme Court, in case II PSKP 11/25, issued a judgment concerning the indexation of prosecutors' salaries, further reinforcing the relevance of salary indexation as a legal safeguard linked to the stability and independence of the justice system.
Human resources – judicial assistants
The 2025 budget also introduced measures aimed at strengthening support staff in courts. It increased the number of judicial assistant posts by more than 1,100 full-time equivalents and provided for salary increases for this position, reaching up to PLN 2,000 (approximately EUR 450). These measures were intended to improve the attractiveness of the profession and facilitate recruitment among lawyers, including enabling persons to take up these functions already during law studies. While the objective of improving staffing levels and support for judges was widely noted, the latter element raised questions among stakeholders as to whether it would translate into a measurable improvement in the functioning and quality of justice.
Targeted funding restrictions
At the same time, the 2025 budget did not include funds for the remuneration of judges of the Constitutional Tribunal and for allowances of members of the National Council of the Judiciary.. This approach was linked to the position of the parliamentary majority, which challenged the legality of the composition of both institutions and questioned their independence and impartiality in light of selected judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights.
Overall, 2025 was marked by a substantial increase in budgetary resources for the justice system, driven primarily by salary indexation and staffing-related measures, while also reflecting continued institutional disputes affecting funding decisions for certain constitutional bodies.

[single market relevance] Training of justice professionals (including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff, clerks/trainees)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Digitalisation (e.g. use of digital technology, including electronic communication and AI tools, within the justice system and with court users, procedural rules, access to judgments online)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, digitalisation of the Polish justice system continued as part of a broader, multi-year transformation aimed at improving efficiency, accessibility, and transparency. While many foundational tools had been introduced earlier, 2025 can be seen as a year of consolidation and legislative groundwork for more advanced digital solutions.
Electronic communication and service of documents.
A major development was the expansion of the national electronic delivery system (e-Doręczenia). From 1 January 2025, electronic registered delivery became mandatory for public administration bodies, and from 1 April 2025 for entities entered in the National Court Register. Although courts themselves were not yet universally obliged to use e-Doręczenia in all proceedings, these changes substantially increased digital readiness among court users (lawyers, companies, public institutions) and supported a gradual shift toward electronic service as a default mode of communication with the justice system.
Court portals and procedural rules.
The Portal Informacyjny Sądów Powszechnych remained a central interface between courts and users. In 2025, its role evolved from a largely informational tool toward a platform prepared for two-way electronic communication. Crucially, amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure adopted in 2025 introduced a legal framework for electronic filing of pleadings and submissions via the portal. Although the most extensive effects were scheduled to enter into force in subsequent years (starting from 1st March 2026), 2025 marked a turning point by embedding digital communication directly into procedural law rather than treating it as an auxiliary solution.
Remote and hybrid hearings.
Remote hearings, introduced more broadly during and after the COVID-19 period, became a normal and accepted element of court practice by 2025. Courts routinely use video conferencing for hearings involving parties, witnesses, or experts, subject to judicial discretion and technical feasibility. This contributed to reduced delays and improved access to justice, particularly for parties located far from the court seat.
Digital recording of hearings.
The electronic recording of hearings (e-protokół) continued as a standard practice. Audio and video recordings form part of case files, replacing or supplementing traditional written minutes. Courts provided technical tools for playback, reinforcing the role of digital evidence and documentation in everyday judicial work.
Access to judgments online.
Public access to judgments remained a stable pillar of digital justice. Judgments of common courts were published through the Ministry of Justice's Portal Orzeczeń, while administrative court decisions continued to be available via the CBOSA database. In 2025, these systems functioned as established sources of case law, subject to anonymisation requirements and the rule that online databases are informational rather than official promulgation sources.
Digital court registers.
Beyond adjudication, 2025 saw continued digital development of court-run registers, including the electronic National Court Register (eKRS), land and mortgage registers, and insolvency-related systems such as the National Register of Debtors. Legislative amendments and system upgrades aimed to streamline procedures, improve data quality, and reduce reliance on paper filings.
AI and strategic programmes.

Artificial intelligence featured prominently in policy discourse in 2025. The Ministry of Justice formally launched the multi-year “Cyfrowy Sąd” (Digital Court) programme, framing AI and advanced IT tools as part of a long-term strategy extending to 2028. In practice, 2025 focused on planning, governance, and pilot discussions rather than actual deployment of AI tools in adjudication. Conferences and expert debates addressed potential uses of AI (e.g. document analysis, workflow support) alongside concerns about transparency, accountability, and judicial independence.
Overall assessment.
In sum, 2025 was less about sudden technological breakthroughs and more about embedding digital solutions into law and institutional practice. For court users, this meant greater reliance on electronic communication, routine online access to case information and judgments, and clearer prospects for fully digital proceedings in the near future.

Use of assessment tools and standards (e.g. ICT systems, including AI-based systems, for case management, court statistics and their transparency, monitoring, evaluation, surveys among court users or legal professionals)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Case management and court statistics.
Core assessment functions remained embedded in nationwide ICT systems used by courts, including case management systems for common courts and administrative courts. These systems automatically generate statistical data on caseloads, clearance rates, duration of proceedings, backlog levels, and judge-specific workloads. In 2025, such data continued to be used by court presidents, the Ministry of Justice, and inspection bodies for operational supervision, allocation of resources, and organisational planning. The emphasis was on standardised indicators enabling comparisons across courts and regions.
Transparency of statistical data.
Court statistics increasingly served not only internal management but also public transparency. Aggregated statistical reports were published through official channels, allowing insight into the efficiency of courts and categories of cases. While raw datasets were not fully open, 2025 practice reflected a gradual shift toward clearer presentation of performance indicators, aligned with broader public-sector transparency standards.
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
Monitoring tools in 2025 combined quantitative data (case duration, productivity indicators) with qualitative oversight mechanisms. These included periodic inspections of courts, internal audits, and evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Justice. ICT systems facilitated monitoring by enabling real-time or near-real-time access to performance data, reducing reliance on manual reporting. Importantly, assessment tools were framed as supporting administrative supervision rather than evaluating the substantive content of judicial decisions, in line with constitutional guarantees of judicial independence.
AI-based and advanced analytical tools.
Artificial intelligence featured in assessment primarily at a conceptual and pilot level. Within the broader "Cyfrowy Sąd" programme launched in 2025, AI was discussed as a potential tool for advanced statistical analysis, forecasting caseload trends, identifying bottlenecks, and supporting management decisions. However, 2025 did not see widespread deployment of AI systems for automated evaluation of judicial performance. The dominant narrative emphasised caution, transparency, and the need for clear governance rules before integrating AI into assessment processes.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland's justice system used assessment tools mainly to strengthen administrative efficiency, accountability, and transparency, rather than to control adjudicatory outcomes. ICT-based statistics, monitoring systems, and surveys formed a maturing ecosystem of evaluation, while AI remained largely prospective. The year can be characterised as one of incremental refinement and standardisation, laying the groundwork for more sophisticated data-driven court management in the coming years.

Geographical distribution and number of courts/jurisdictions ("judicial map") and their specialisation, in particular specific courts or chambers within courts to deal with fraud and corruption cases.

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Specialisation (of judges/specific courts/chambers within courts) and training for the judiciary to deal with commercial cases, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and mediation as regards commercial cases.

5,000 character(s) maximum

C. Efficiency of the justice system

(Under this topic, you are not required to give statistical information but should provide input on the type of information outlined in the introduction)

[single market relevance] Developments related to efforts to improve the efficiency of the justice system (e.g. as regards length of proceedings, to address backlogs)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Any other developments related to the justice system - please specify

5,000 character(s) maximum

II. Anti-Corruption Framework

Where previous specific reports, published in the framework of the review under the UN Convention against Corruption, of GRECO, and of the OECD address the issues below, please make a reference to the points you wish to bring to the Commission's attention in these documents, indicating any relevant updates, changes or measures introduced that have occurred since these documents were published.

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding the anti-corruption framework (if applicable):

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland’s anti-corruption framework continued to rely on a stable legislative basis, while limited progress was reported in addressing long-standing recommendations from international monitoring bodies. The criminalisation of corruption offences remains broadly aligned with international standards; however, challenges persist in the areas of prevention, integrity safeguards and effective implementation.
International assessment context.
Poland has been reviewed under the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), by GRECO, and within the framework of the OECD. These reviews have consistently identified shortcomings related to:
the effectiveness of conflict-of-interest rules and asset declaration systems, in particular as regards verification and enforcement;
the preventive integrity framework for high-level officials;
transparency of decision-making processes, including lobbying activities;
the institutional environment in which anti-corruption bodies operate.
These findings remained relevant in 2025.
Follow-up to the 2025 Report.
The 2025 Report noted no significant legislative changes aimed at addressing the core recommendations issued in previous review cycles. Follow-up measures reported by the authorities focused primarily on administrative and organisational actions, such as the continued application of existing codes of conduct, internal guidance, and awareness-raising or training activities.
No substantial reform of the asset declaration system or of mechanisms for identifying and managing conflicts of interest was reported in 2025.
Recommendations by GRECO concerning integrity rules for persons entrusted with top executive functions remained partly or not implemented. Similarly, OECD-related recommendations concerning preventive and detection mechanisms, including in the context of complex economic activities, did not see notable advancement.
Enforcement and monitoring.
Investigations and prosecutions of corruption-related offences continued, and statistical information on enforcement activity remained available. At the same time, the 2025 Report underlined that quantitative data alone does not allow for an assessment of effectiveness, and that concerns persist regarding consistency, institutional safeguards and the broader rule-of-law context in which anti-corruption enforcement takes place.
Transparency and preventive environment.
Developments in digitalisation and access to public information were presented as contributing to transparency. While these measures may have an indirect preventive effect, they did not address the specific structural issues repeatedly identified by international monitoring bodies, including the regulation of lobbying, revolving-door risks and independent oversight of integrity rules.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland made limited progress in strengthening its anti-corruption framework. The focus remained on the use of existing legal instruments and administrative practices, with no substantive reforms addressing key outstanding recommendations. As a result, challenges identified in earlier UNCAC, GRECO and OECD reviews persisted, particularly with regard to prevention, integrity safeguards and effective implementation.

A. The institutional framework capacity to fight against corruption (prevention and investigation / prosecution)

List any **changes** as regards relevant authorities (e.g. national agencies, bodies) in charge of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption and the resources allocated to each of these authorities (the human, financial, legal, and technical/specialised resources as relevant), including the cooperation among domestic and with foreign authorities. Indicate any relevant measures taken to effectively and timely cooperate with OLAF and EPPO

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland's institutional framework to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute corruption continued to rely on a multi-authority model, with responsibilities distributed among specialised bodies and the prosecution service. While the overall structure remained stable, Poland's accession to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) constituted a significant institutional development affecting the handling of offences affecting the EU's financial interests.
Institutional set-up and responsibilities.
The main authorities involved in anti-corruption activities continued to include:
the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (CBA), responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of corruption offences, as well as analytical and control tasks;
the Public Prosecutor's Office, responsible for prosecuting corruption cases, including those investigated by the CBA and other law enforcement bodies;
the Police and other specialised services supporting investigative activities;
public administration bodies responsible for internal preventive measures, ethics frameworks and compliance.
No new national anti-corruption authority was established in 2025, and the distribution of competences among domestic bodies remained unchanged.
Resources and capacity.
In 2025, authorities continued to operate largely within existing human, financial and technical resources. No significant increases in staffing or dedicated budgetary allocations specifically targeting anti-corruption prevention or enforcement were reported. Concerns previously identified regarding capacity constraints, workload and effectiveness were not addressed through targeted reinforcement of resources. Preventive capacity remained fragmented, with no single authority equipped with comprehensive coordination or independent oversight powers.
Investigation and prosecution.
Corruption-related investigations and prosecutions continued, and statistical data on enforcement activity remained available. At the same time, EU and international assessments have consistently underlined that effectiveness depends not only on formal competences, but also on institutional safeguards, prioritisation and consistency of enforcement. No legislative or organisational measures addressing these aspects were reported in 2025.
Cooperation with EU bodies and international partners.
A key development in 2025 was Poland's participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). Following accession to the enhanced cooperation framework, Poland designated European Prosecutors and European Delegated Prosecutors, enabling EPPO to exercise its competences on Polish territory with regard to criminal offences affecting the EU's financial interests. This marked a shift from indirect cooperation to direct participation in EPPO investigations and prosecutions, requiring close coordination between EPPO and national authorities.
Poland continued to cooperate with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in accordance with EU law, including through information exchange, coordination of investigations and follow-up to OLAF reports. In 2025, cooperation with OLAF increasingly operated alongside EPPO's activities, reflecting the complementary roles of administrative investigations by OLAF and criminal investigations and prosecutions led by EPPO.

Domestic cooperation among national authorities continued on the basis of existing legal frameworks and operational arrangements. No new formal coordination mechanisms were reported in 2025 to strengthen strategic cooperation between prevention bodies, investigative services and prosecutors.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland’s institutional anti-corruption framework continued to function on the basis of existing domestic structures, with limited changes in resources or preventive capacity. Poland’s accession to the EPPO represented a significant institutional development for the protection of the EU’s financial interests. At the same time, challenges previously identified regarding coordination, prevention capacity, and institutional safeguards persisted, and no comprehensive reforms addressing these issues were reported during the year.

Safeguards for the functional independence of the authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, safeguards for the functional independence of authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption in Poland remained largely unchanged. The legal framework provides for the formal establishment and competences of the relevant bodies; however, concerns previously identified regarding institutional independence and safeguards against undue influence persisted.
Legal and institutional framework.
Anti-corruption prevention and detection continued to rely primarily on the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (CBA), supported by other law enforcement bodies and internal control mechanisms within public administration. The CBA operates under statutory provisions defining its mandate, powers and internal structure. At the same time, it remains institutionally linked to the executive, including as regards leadership appointments and oversight arrangements.
Despite plans revealed in 2024, no legislative changes were introduced in 2025 to modify the institutional position of the CBA or to strengthen statutory guarantees of its functional independence.
Appointment and dismissal safeguards.
The procedures for the appointment and dismissal of the leadership of anti-corruption authorities remained unchanged in 2025. These procedures continued to involve the executive branch, without the introduction of additional safeguards such as enhanced parliamentary involvement, independent selection panels or objective, transparent criteria defined in law. International monitoring bodies have previously identified this as a factor that may affect the perceived and actual independence of anti-corruption bodies; these observations remained relevant in 2025.
Operational independence and prioritisation.
While authorities responsible for corruption prevention and detection formally exercise their powers independently in individual cases, concerns persisted regarding the broader institutional environment in which operational priorities are set. No measures were reported in 2025 to strengthen safeguards ensuring that investigative priorities are determined exclusively on the basis of objective risk assessments and public-interest considerations.
Budgetary and resource-related safeguards.
Budgetary allocations and staffing levels for anti-corruption authorities continued to be determined through the general budgetary process. No specific mechanisms were introduced in 2025 to provide enhanced financial autonomy or multiannual budgetary stability for bodies responsible for corruption prevention and detection. As a result, resource-related dependencies identified in earlier assessments were not addressed.
Accountability and oversight mechanisms.
Oversight of anti-corruption authorities continued to be exercised through existing mechanisms, including executive oversight, parliamentary scrutiny and judicial review of investigative measures. While accountability mechanisms are an essential component of the institutional framework, international and EU-level assessments have previously underlined the need to ensure that oversight arrangements do not interfere with operational independence. No changes were reported in 2025 to recalibrate this balance.
Coordination with prosecutorial authorities.
Safeguards for independence must also be assessed in the context of cooperation between detection bodies and prosecutorial authorities. In 2025, cooperation continued under existing legal arrangements, without new measures to clarify or reinforce functional separation between investigative bodies and prosecutorial

decision-making in corruption cases.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, no new safeguards were introduced to strengthen the functional independence of authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption in Poland. While the legal framework continued to provide for formal mandates and accountability mechanisms, structural vulnerabilities previously identified—particularly regarding appointments, oversight and resource dependence—remained unaddressed. As a result, concerns regarding the robustness of institutional safeguards for independence persisted.

Information on the implementation of measures foreseen in the strategic anti-corruption framework (if applicable). If available, please provide relevant objectives and indicators

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland did not operate under a single, updated and comprehensive national anti-corruption strategy adopted as a binding policy document with clearly defined objectives, timelines and indicators. Anti-corruption measures continued to be implemented through a fragmented framework consisting of sectoral strategies, internal government documents, operational plans of individual institutions and general public integrity policies.
Strategic framework and scope.
Anti-corruption objectives continued to be reflected in broader public administration and internal security planning documents, as well as in the operational mandates of institutions such as the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau and the prosecution service. These documents typically emphasised:
prevention of corruption in public administration;
detection and investigation of corruption offences;
awareness-raising and training of public officials;
analytical and control activities.
However, these objectives were not consolidated into a single strategic framework with measurable targets applicable across all responsible authorities.
Implementation measures in 2025.
In 2025, reported implementation focused primarily on the continuation of existing measures, including:
internal preventive controls and compliance procedures within public bodies;
ethics training and guidance for public officials;
analytical and control activities carried out by specialised services;
operational enforcement activities conducted by investigative and prosecutorial authorities.
No new strategic action plan or revised anti-corruption strategy was adopted in 2025. Measures reported as implementation were largely ongoing or routine in nature, rather than reflecting newly defined strategic priorities.
Monitoring and evaluation.
Monitoring of anti-corruption measures in 2025 continued to rely on internal reporting by individual institutions and on aggregated statistical data. There was no centralised, publicly available evaluation mechanism assessing the implementation and effectiveness of anti-corruption measures across the system as a whole. As a result, the ability to assess progress against strategic objectives remained limited.
Alignment with international recommendations.
International monitoring bodies have repeatedly recommended the adoption of a coherent anti-corruption strategy accompanied by measurable objectives and indicators. In 2025, these recommendations were not addressed through the adoption of a new or revised strategic framework. Implementation therefore continued to take place without a unified structure linking objectives, measures, indicators and evaluation.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, implementation of anti-corruption measures in Poland took place within a dispersed and operationally driven framework, rather than under a clearly articulated strategic anti-corruption policy. While authorities continued to carry out preventive and enforcement activities, the absence of a comprehensive strategy with defined objectives, indicators and evaluation mechanisms limited transparency and the ability to assess effectiveness. Long-standing recommendations to strengthen the strategic dimension of anti-corruption policy therefore remained outstanding.

B. Prevention

Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector in particular as regards high-level officials (including as regards incompatibility rules, revolving doors, codes of conduct, ethics)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, measures to enhance integrity in the Polish public sector, including as regards high-level officials, continued to rely on a set of existing legal and administrative instruments. While a formal framework addressing incompatibilities, conflicts of interest and ethical conduct is in place, no significant legislative changes were reported in 2025 to strengthen these safeguards, and implementation challenges previously identified remained relevant.
Incompatibility rules and conflicts of interest.
High-level public officials are subject to statutory incompatibility rules and obligations to avoid conflicts of interest. These rules continued to be applied in 2025 without substantial modification. At the same time, international and EU-level assessments have repeatedly noted that the scope and enforceability of conflict-of-interest rules remain limited, in particular as regards verification mechanisms and effective sanctions. No measures were reported in 2025 to strengthen monitoring or enforcement of these rules.
Asset declarations.
High-level officials are required to submit asset declarations, which are intended to support transparency and integrity. In 2025, the asset declaration system continued to operate under existing rules. However, verification of declarations remained largely formal, and no reforms were introduced to enhance systematic checks or independent oversight. Long-standing recommendations to improve the effectiveness of asset declaration mechanisms therefore remained unaddressed.
Revolving doors and post-employment restrictions.
Rules addressing post-employment activities and revolving-door risks remained limited in scope. In 2025, no new cooling-off periods or enhanced restrictions for high-level officials were introduced. Oversight of post-employment obligations continued to rely primarily on self-declaration and general administrative controls, without the establishment of a dedicated monitoring body or clear enforcement practice.
Codes of conduct and ethics frameworks.
Codes of conduct applicable to public officials, including senior officials, continued to be in place in 2025. These codes set out general principles of ethical behaviour and integrity. However, their binding nature, enforcement mechanisms and practical impact remained uneven. No unified or updated code of conduct for high-level officials was adopted in 2025, and ethics guidance continued to be dispersed across institutions.
Ethics advice, training and awareness.
Ethics training and awareness-raising activities continued to be carried out within public administration, often in electronic or ad hoc formats. While such activities may support a culture of integrity, no systematic evaluation of their effectiveness was reported in 2025, and participation by high-level officials was not subject to specific monitoring.
Oversight and enforcement.
Responsibility for overseeing integrity rules remained fragmented among different bodies, including internal administrative units and supervisory authorities. No independent body with comprehensive competence to oversee integrity standards for high-level officials was established in 2025. As a result, enforcement of integrity rules continued to rely on decentralised and largely internal mechanisms.
Overall assessment.

In 2025, Poland made limited progress in strengthening integrity safeguards for high-level public officials. While a basic framework of incompatibility rules, asset declarations and codes of conduct remained in place, no significant measures were introduced to address long-standing concerns regarding effectiveness, enforcement and oversight. As a result, challenges related to conflicts of interest, revolving-door risks and ethical compliance persisted.

Measures to enhance general transparency of public decision-making (including rules on lobbying, asset and interest disclosure rules, gifts policy, transparency of political party, financing)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Poland’s system for ensuring transparency in lobbying and political influence remained largely static through 2025. No new comprehensive national legislation on lobbying was adopted, leaving the existing framework essentially unchanged. The core regulation continues to be the 2005 Law on Lobbying, which formally obliges professional lobbyists to register and wear identification badges when operating within Parliament. However, this law applies only to a very narrow category of actors and does not reflect the realities of contemporary interest representation. In practice, many individuals and entities engaged in influencing public decision-making avoid the “lobbyist” label by operating as associations, foundations, legal advisors, or consultants. As a result, a significant share of lobbying activity remains outside formal disclosure requirements, rendering the existing law largely ineffective.
Poland nonetheless maintains a relatively broad system of asset disclosure for public officials. Ministers, members of parliament, senior civil servants, and local officials such as mayors and councilors are required to submit annual asset declarations published in the Public Information Bulletin (BIP). In 2025, policy discussions focused on improving the quality and usability of these disclosures, particularly through the introduction of a standardized electronic submission system. Currently, many declarations are submitted in handwritten form or as scanned PDFs, which severely limits their usefulness for analysis and public scrutiny. Although the government took limited preparatory steps toward an electronic system for asset declaration and verification, no draft legislation was formally published. Only fragments of an earlier draft bill remain available. When Watchdog Poland requested access to the full draft, authorities refused, claiming that it constituted an internal document not subject to public disclosure.
GRECO’s August 2025 assessment also highlighted new guidelines clarifying which benefits may or may not be accepted by senior executive officials, such as ministers and their deputies. Similar developments occurred within law enforcement bodies, where internal codes of ethics were updated. For instance, the Border Guard adopted an internal anti-corruption policy in 2025 that includes explicit rules on gift-giving and gift acceptance. Despite these initiatives, Poland still lacks a single, binding legal framework regulating gifts across the public sector. Regulation remains fragmented, relying on internal policies and general provisions of the Penal Code. GRECO emphasized that while guidelines are useful, Poland has no centralized system to monitor compliance or to provide confidential advice to officials facing ethical dilemmas.
A particularly serious challenge in 2025 was the growing role of third-party campaigning. During the May–June presidential election, OSCE observers raised concerns about non-transparent political advocacy conducted by formally independent committees and organizations. Several newly created groups ran extensive online advertising and billboard campaigns in support of opposition candidate Rafał Trzaskowski without disclosing their funding sources. Some reportedly spent hundreds of thousands of złoty, in some cases exceeding the expenditures of official campaign committees, while remaining outside statutory spending limits and reporting obligations. Two such campaigns were referred to Poland’s security services amid suspicions of foreign financing. This episode exposed major gaps in Polish electoral law, particularly regarding online third-party campaigning, and highlighted the limited capacity of oversight institutions to react swiftly. As noted in the OSCE’s preliminary report,

insufficient regulation, weak oversight, and ineffective sanctions undermined voters' ability to make informed choices.
Overall, transparency in political financing remained a significant concern in 2025. While awareness of the problem has increased and public debate has intensified, legislative and institutional responses have lagged behind evolving practices. The elections demonstrated how easily existing rules can be circumvented and how political money can flow through foundations, associations, or other intermediaries with minimal transparency. Addressing these vulnerabilities by regulating third-party advocacy, strengthening real-time disclosure requirements, and enhancing oversight mechanisms remains an unresolved challenge as Poland moves beyond 2025. Until meaningful reforms are implemented, the risk of undisclosed influence over public decision-making will continue to undermine transparency and public trust.

Measures to prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector. Please specify the features and scope of their application (e.g. categories of officials concerned, types of checks and corrective measures depending on the category of officials concerned)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, the Senate introduced reforms to its ethical framework, including mandatory declarations of conflicts of interest for senators. These declarations must cover private business ties and professional activities that could be affected by legislative work. Importantly, the new rules require disclosure of even "potentially possible" conflicts, establishing a higher transparency standard than that applied in the Sejm, where ethical regulations remain older and more general. At the executive level, GRECO acknowledged some progress, including the development of ethical guidelines for persons holding top executive functions. These guidelines address conflicts of interest and acceptable conduct in office. However, GRECO stressed that major shortcomings persist, including the absence of a comprehensive integrity strategy, the lack of systematic verification of asset declarations, and unclear or nonexistent rules on post-employment restrictions and revolving-door practices.

--> For the three previous points, **please also provide information and figures on their application/ enforcement if available to you**, such as number of detected breaches/irregularities of the various rules in place and the follow-up given (investigations, sanctions, etc.)

Measures to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption, including their application (i.e. number of reports received, and the follow-up given)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland significantly strengthened its framework for whistleblower protection and the reporting of corruption in the public sector, following the entry into force of the Act on the Protection of Whistleblowers adopted in 2024. This legislation, implemented the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive. The new framework applies across the public sector, covering central government bodies, local authorities, state agencies, and other public institutions. All public entities are required to establish confidential internal reporting channels, designate responsible officers or units, acknowledge reports, and provide feedback within statutory deadlines. Whistleblowers are protected against retaliation such as dismissal, demotion, harassment, or other adverse treatment, and may seek compensation if retaliation occurs. The law also provides for sanctions against individuals or institutions that obstruct reporting, breach confidentiality, or retaliate against whistleblowers.
In addition to internal channels, 2025 saw the operationalization of external reporting mechanisms. Ombudsman became a central external reporting authority, establishing a dedicated whistleblower unit to receive reports, provide legal guidance, verify submissions, and forward substantiated cases to competent bodies such as law enforcement or regulatory authorities. The Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (CBA) continued to function as a key recipient of corruption-related reports, using whistleblower information to initiate analyses and investigations in cooperation with prosecutors.
From the launch of the external reporting system in late December 2024 until the end of September 2025, a total of 561 cases were submitted to the Ombudsman. Of these, 173 reports were classified as formal whistleblower disclosures meeting the statutory criteria. The remaining submissions mainly concerned private matters or were made by individuals outside a work-related context and therefore did not qualify for protection under the Act.
In the first half of 2025 alone, the Ombudsman classified 144 reports as protected whistleblower disclosures and provided 136 instances of legal advice to individuals reporting irregularities. The thematic scope of the reports was broad; however, they most frequently concerned misuse of public finances, irregularities in public procurement, violations of personal data protection rules, environmental harm, and threats to public health and safety. A significant share of the reports related to the protection of the financial interests of the state or EU funds, indicating a substantial number of cases involving potential corruption or misappropriation of public resources.
A smaller number of reports concerned alleged violations of constitutional rights and freedoms. In 15 such cases, the Ombudsman initiated direct explanatory proceedings in 2025, having determined that no other competent authority was available to examine these matters.
As regards outcomes, by the end of the third quarter of 2025 the Ombudsman had forwarded 52 verified and anonymized reports to the relevant law enforcement or supervisory authorities. During the same period, approximately 133 anonymous submissions were received, and those deemed credible were also transmitted for further handling. Each referral resulted in the initiation of preliminary inquiries by the competent authority. The National Prosecutor’s Office confirmed that whistleblower reports have become an important source of information on criminal offences, including corruption, and frequently constitute the basis for launching investigations.
Despite this progress, 2025 also revealed important limitations. For example, a few local governments were slow to post whistleblowing procedures on their

websites or didn’t train staff about the new law. In other cases, reports arose of officials mishandling a whistleblower’s confidentiality. Each such instance undermines the law’s effectiveness. The Ombudsman can intervene (under its regular mandate) when a public body violates a whistleblower’s rights, and in 2025 it handled cases of alleged retaliation or non-compliance with the Act. Nonetheless, these incidents highlight the need for continued oversight to ensure all entities properly implement the law.
The material scope of protected disclosures remains relatively narrow, covering only specific categories of legal violations, which led to the exclusion of many submissions (for example, general labor law or workplace misconduct cases). Awareness of the new protections was still developing, and trust in internal reporting mechanisms varied across institutions. Some public bodies were slow or inconsistent in implementing reporting procedures, and resource constraints affected the capacity of oversight institutions to process reports quickly.

[single market relevance] Specific measures to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in sectors with high risks of corruption, with a view to monitor and prevent corruption and conflict of interests, and where applicable measures to prevent and address corruption committed by organised crime groups.

- *Such high-risk sectors could include: public procurement, including construction, transport/infrastructure, defence, cohesion, agriculture, environment, healthcare, investor residence schemes, large-scale investments of national interest and the spending of EU funds, urban planning.*
- *In particular, measures to mitigate high risks of corruption in the area of public procurement, such as enhancing transparency and oversight (for example through digital technologies) and promoting fair competition and accountability in public procurement (e.g. targeted actions to address the high share of single bids) and measures to guarantee the effective and independent functioning of the public procurement review bodies.*

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland continued to address corruption risks in high-risk sectors primarily through general regulatory frameworks and operational tools already in place, rather than through new targeted anti-corruption measures. While sector-specific regulations exist in areas traditionally exposed to higher corruption risks, limited progress was reported in strengthening transparency, oversight and accountability mechanisms.
High-risk sectors and general approach.
Sectors identified as presenting elevated corruption risks include public procurement (notably construction, transport and infrastructure), defence, healthcare, environment, agriculture, urban planning, large-scale public investments and the spending of EU funds. In 2025, no dedicated cross-sectoral anti-corruption strategy or action plan targeting these areas was adopted. Risk mitigation continued to rely on general integrity rules, criminal law enforcement and sector-specific regulatory controls.
Public procurement framework.
Public procurement remained the sector most frequently identified as vulnerable to corruption risks. The legal framework governing procurement procedures continued to be based on existing legislation aligned with EU law. In 2025, no major legislative amendments were introduced specifically to strengthen anti-corruption safeguards in procurement.
Transparency and digital tools.
Electronic procurement platforms continued to be used for publication of notices, tender documentation and contract awards, contributing to baseline transparency. However, no significant new digital tools were introduced in 2025 to enhance risk analysis, red-flag detection or systematic monitoring of procurement procedures. While procurement data are available electronically, advanced analytical use of data to identify corruption risks remained limited.
Competition and single-bid procedures.
The high share of single-bid procedures in certain sectors continued to raise concerns regarding competition and integrity. In 2025, no targeted measures were reported to address this issue, such as enhanced scrutiny of single-bid tenders, sector-specific risk assessments or corrective action plans. As a result, concerns previously identified regarding limited competition in public procurement persisted. One significant change concerns the introduction of the law on the Central Contract Register, which will cover all contracts below PPL thresholds and will start operating for central administration entities in July 2026.
Oversight and control mechanisms.
Oversight of public procurement continued to be exercised through existing control bodies and audit mechanisms. While these bodies retained their formal competences, no measures were reported in 2025 to strengthen their independence, resources or analytical capacity. The effectiveness of ex ante and ex post controls therefore remained dependent on existing institutional arrangements.
Public procurement review bodies.
The public procurement review system continued to operate through established review bodies responsible for examining complaints and appeals. In 2025, no reforms were introduced to enhance their independence, efficiency or accessibility. Long-standing concerns regarding the effectiveness and timeliness of review mechanisms were not addressed through legislative or organisational changes.
EU funds and organised crime risks.

Measures to protect EU funds relied on existing management and control systems, audits and cooperation with relevant national and EU bodies. In 2025, no specific new measures were reported to address corruption risks linked to organised crime groups beyond general criminal law enforcement and financial controls. Preventive, risk-based approaches targeting organised crime infiltration in high-risk sectors were not further developed.
Other high-risk sectors.
In sectors such as healthcare, environment, urban planning and large-scale investments, integrity safeguards continued to rely on general administrative law, internal controls and criminal sanctions. No sector-specific transparency or integrity initiatives were introduced in 2025 to address corruption and conflict-of-interest risks in a targeted manner.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland made limited progress in strengthening transparency, integrity and accountability in high-risk sectors. While basic legal and institutional frameworks remained in place, no targeted anti-corruption measures were introduced to address persistent risks, particularly in public procurement. Challenges related to limited competition, high levels of single-bid procedures, constrained oversight capacity and the effectiveness of review bodies remained unresolved, in line with concerns previously identified at EU level.

[single market relevance] Measures for the prevention of corruption in relation to the issuing of official permits (e.g. related to environment, energy, service provision and various types of construction)

5,000 character(s) maximum

C. Repression

The legal framework on the criminalisation and sanctions for corruption and related offences, including foreign bribery

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, Poland’s legal framework on the criminalisation of corruption and related offences remained largely unchanged. Criminal law provisions continue to cover core corruption offences in line with international standards; however, long-standing concerns regarding effectiveness, enforcement and sanctioning practices persisted, including in relation to foreign bribery.
Criminalisation of corruption offences.
Polish criminal law criminalises active and passive bribery in the public sector, abuse of office and related corruption offences. These provisions apply to domestic public officials and, under certain conditions, to private-sector actors. The scope of criminalisation broadly corresponds to standards set out in the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and relevant Council of Europe instruments.
In 2025, no legislative amendments were introduced to expand or clarify the definitions of corruption offences. As a result, the substantive criminal law framework remained stable.
Sanctions and penalties.
The Criminal Code provides for custodial sentences, fines and ancillary penalties for corruption offences. While the sanctions available in law are potentially dissuasive, international monitoring bodies have previously noted that sanctioning practices do not always reflect the seriousness of offences, in particular where penalties are suspended or reduced. No changes were introduced in 2025 to adjust sanction levels or to address concerns related to consistency and proportionality in sentencing.
Liability of legal persons.
Poland provides for the liability of legal persons for offences committed in their interest. However, the framework has been repeatedly assessed as limited in scope and practical effectiveness, particularly with regard to the conditions triggering liability and the level of sanctions. In 2025, no reforms were reported to strengthen corporate liability for corruption-related offences.
Foreign bribery.
Foreign bribery is criminalised under Polish law, and jurisdiction may be established in cases involving Polish nationals or entities. Poland is subject to monitoring under the OECD framework on combating bribery of foreign public officials. Previous OECD evaluations have highlighted insufficient enforcement and a low number of foreign bribery cases, raising concerns about effectiveness rather than formal compliance.
In 2025, no legislative or policy measures were reported to strengthen the detection, investigation or prosecution of foreign bribery. The low level of enforcement activity in this area therefore remained a concern.
Statute of limitations and procedural aspects.
General criminal law rules on limitation periods and procedural safeguards continued to apply to corruption offences. No specific amendments were introduced in 2025 to extend limitation periods or to address procedural obstacles identified in earlier assessments, such as the complexity and length of proceedings in corruption cases.
Alignment with international recommendations.
International monitoring bodies have repeatedly recommended strengthening the effectiveness of the criminal law framework, including through improved enforcement, more effective sanctions and enhanced corporate liability. In 2025, these recommendations were not followed by legislative reforms, and the focus remained on applying existing provisions.

Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland maintained a formally comprehensive legal framework criminalising corruption and related offences, including foreign bribery. However, no progress was reported in addressing long-standing concerns related to enforcement, sanctioning practices and corporate liability. As a result, challenges identified in earlier UNCAC and OECD evaluations persisted, with effectiveness remaining the key issue rather than the absence of criminalisation.

Official data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, final judgments and the application of sanctions for corruption offences (differentiated by offence if possible). Please indicate whether the cases: involve legal persons; are related to the implementation of EU or national funds; involve high level corruption. Please indicate which data is publicly available and how policy-making is informed by the data

5,000 character(s) maximum

It is still too early to assess court conviction statistics for corruption-related offences in 2025, as comprehensive and validated judicial data will only become available in March 2026; however, it is already possible to provide a more detailed assessment of law enforcement activity, in particular the actions undertaken by the Police during the year.
In 2025, combating economic crime, including corruption-related offences, remained a priority for the Polish Police, in particular through specialised economic crime units.
Overall activity and detection.
In 2025, Police units conducted 57,770 preparatory proceedings related to economic crime, identifying a total of 167,353 criminal offences. The overall detection rate for economic crime reached 91.32%, indicating a high operational effectiveness. Due to changes in statistical classification, data are not fully comparable with 2024.
Corruption-related offences continued to represent a core component of economic crime enforcement. The Police were responsible for 98% of detected corruption offences nationwide in 2025, an increase compared to 91.68% in 2024, confirming the central role of the Police in uncovering corruption cases.
Suspects and enforcement measures.
In the course of economic and corruption-related investigations, Police detained 19,232 suspects. Enforcement activity included the use of financial investigations and asset-tracing tools, reflecting a focus on disrupting illicit financial gains associated with corruption and related offences.
Asset recovery and financial safeguards.
A key element of anti-corruption enforcement in 2025 was the use of preventive asset seizure. The Police secured property and financial assets with a total value of approximately PLN 2.18 billion, intended to cover future fines, confiscation orders and compensation to victims. This amount exceeded 150% of the planned target for 2025, highlighting the increasing emphasis on financial recovery as part of corruption-related enforcement.
Secured assets included cash, vehicles, company shares, securities and real estate, demonstrating the application of extended confiscation techniques in complex economic and corruption-related cases.
Relevant offence categories linked to corruption risks.
While corruption statistics are aggregated within broader economic crime categories, several offence groups closely linked to corruption risks were actively investigated in 2025, including:
Economic fraud: 27,836 preparatory proceedings, 75,236 offences identified, with charges brought against 8,329 persons;
Tax crimes (including VAT fraud): 2,303 proceedings, 7,819 offences identified, charges brought against 1,611 persons;
Illegal trade in medicinal products: 718 proceedings, over 330 offences identified.
These offence categories frequently overlap with corruption schemes involving public procurement, tax administration, healthcare and regulated markets.
International cooperation and asset tracing.
In 2025, the Police further strengthened international cooperation in corruption-relevant financial investigations. Poland participated in pilot use of Interpol asset-tracing instruments (Silver Notices and Diffusions). During the year, nine Interpol notices were issued, leading to the identification of assets abroad, including real estate, luxury vessels and cryptocurrencies.

Analytical assessment.
The 2025 Police statistics indicate intensified operational activity and high detection capacity in economic and corruption-related crime. High detection rates and substantial asset seizures demonstrate a strong enforcement focus. At the same time, the aggregation of corruption within broader economic crime categories limits the granularity of publicly available data, making it difficult to assess trends in high-level or complex corruption cases specifically.

Potential obstacles identified in law or in practice to the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases (e.g. political immunity regulation, procedural rules, statute of limitations, cross-border cooperation, pardoning)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, the legal and institutional framework governing the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases in Poland remained formally in place, while practical and structural obstacles previously identified by EU and international monitoring bodies continued to affect effectiveness.
Immunities and authorisation requirements.
 Certain categories of public officials benefit from constitutional or statutory immunities, requiring prior authorisation for criminal proceedings to be initiated. While such immunities are not uncommon in EU Member States, assessments have noted that procedural requirements for lifting immunity may lead to delays and can complicate investigations involving high-level officials. No changes were reported in 2025 to streamline or clarify immunity-lifting procedures in corruption-related cases. The issue is even more concerning also, since the Hungarian Government is accepting asylum requests from high-level Polish politicians (former Minister of Justice and his deputy) who are facing corruption charges for their operation before elections in 2023.
Institutional and procedural framework.
 Complex corruption cases often require extensive investigative measures and long procedural timelines. In 2025, procedural rules governing criminal proceedings remained unchanged. Concerns persisted regarding lengthy proceedings, procedural formalism and the cumulative effect of appeals, which may reduce the deterrent effect of enforcement and contribute to cases becoming time-barred.
Statute of limitations.
 Limitation periods applicable to corruption offences continued to apply without modification in 2025. International assessments have previously underlined that, in complex cases, statutes of limitations may pose a practical obstacle, particularly where proceedings are prolonged. No measures were introduced in 2025 to extend limitation periods or to provide specific safeguards for complex or high-level corruption cases.
Cross-border cooperation.
 High-level corruption cases increasingly involve cross-border elements, including financial flows and legal entities in multiple jurisdictions. Poland continued to rely on existing mutual legal assistance mechanisms and EU judicial cooperation tools. While cooperation frameworks are in place, delays and complexity in cross-border cooperation have been identified as practical challenges. Poland’s participation in the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) improved the framework for handling cases affecting the EU’s financial interests; however, EPPO competence is limited to such offences and does not cover all forms of high-level corruption.
Institutional safeguards and prioritisation.
 Effective prosecution of high-level corruption depends on institutional safeguards ensuring independence, adequate prioritisation and protection from undue influence. In 2025, no specific measures were reported to strengthen these safeguards in relation to complex corruption cases. Concerns previously raised regarding consistency in case selection and prioritisation therefore remained relevant.
Pardoning and extraordinary remedies.
 The legal framework provides for the possibility of pardons and other extraordinary remedies. While such measures are exceptional, their potential use in corruption cases has been identified as a factor that may affect public

perception of accountability. In 2025, no legislative changes were introduced to clarify or restrict the use of such measures in corruption-related cases.
Access to specialised expertise.
Complex corruption cases often require specialised financial, forensic and analytical expertise. In 2025, no targeted measures were reported to strengthen access to specialised resources or dedicated units for handling high-level corruption cases. Capacity constraints therefore remained a practical consideration.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, no specific reforms were introduced to address obstacles affecting the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases in Poland. While the legal framework continued to allow for such proceedings, procedural complexity, immunity-related requirements, limitation periods, cross-border challenges and capacity constraints continued to pose practical obstacles. As a result, concerns previously identified at EU and international level persisted, affecting the effectiveness and timeliness of enforcement in complex corruption cases.

Information on effectiveness of criminal and non-criminal measures and of sanctions (e.g. recovery measures and administrative sanctions) on both public and private offenders

5,000 character(s) maximum

Any other developments related to the anti-corruption framework - please specify

5,000 character(s) maximum

III. Media pluralism and media freedom

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding media pluralism and media freedom (if applicable)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Compared to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, there have been substantial developments with regard to the planned media law reform aimed at addressing concerns related to the impartiality and independence of the media regulator, as well as the independence and pluralism of public service media more broadly. The proposed changes—intended to implement the European Media Freedom Act—generally move in a positive direction. The draft law has been presented and subjected to public consultation and is likely to be further discussed in the framework of a public hearing.

Despite an apparent decrease in the number of SLAPP cases, particularly those initiated by public entities, the draft law implementing the Anti-SLAPP Directive - originally expected to be adopted in the third quarter of 2025 - has still not been taken up for legislative work in the Sejm. Concerns raised by civil society organisations regarding the reliance of the early dismissal mechanism on the existing Polish concept of a "manifestly unfounded claim," which may limit its practical use, have not been taken into account.

There has been limited development with regard to access to documents, which has generally remained stable; however, there have been instances of unjustified refusals and even the penalisation of requests for access to information.

A. Media authorities and bodies

(Cf. Article 30 of Directive 2018/1808)

Measures taken to ensure the independence, enforcement powers and adequacy of resources (financial, human and technical) of media regulatory authorities and bodies

5,000 character(s) maximum

A draft law aimed at reforming national legislation - most notably the Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting - to ensure compliance with the European Media Freedom Act has been proposed. Commonly referred to as the media law (ustawa medialna), it introduces a number of reforms concerning the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT).

The main strand of the proposed changes relates to the procedure for appointing members of the Council. Public hearings of candidates are to be open, and the participation of civil society organisations is to be ensured. Each candidate will be required to submit proof of support from organisations active in the media sector (e.g. creators' associations). Moreover, the eligibility requirements for candidates are to be significantly strengthened. These include a ban on membership in a political party for five years prior to nomination, a prohibition on standing in elections on a party list within the previous ten years, and precisely defined requirements concerning professional experience in the field of media.

Despite the draft law introducing changes that generally move in a positive direction with regard to the appointment of members of the Council, it does not alter the existing model, under which members are proposed and appointed by political actors, namely members of the Sejm and the Senate, as well as the President. This means that even if the draft law is adopted in its current form, there remains a risk that the composition of the Council will be shaped by a single political option rather than reflecting political diversity in Poland. Civil society organisations have called for further reforms to the appointment procedure - such as qualified-majority voting, opposition involvement, and broader nomination rights - but it remains uncertain whether these proposals will be adopted, as they are not reflected in the current version of the draft.

Under the draft law the number of members of the Council has been increased from six to nine, and staggered six-year terms have been introduced, with one third of the membership renewed every two years. The grounds for loss of membership in the Council have also been expanded. New grounds include joining a political party or other organisations, as a consequence of the revised eligibility requirements for Council membership, as well as acquiring shares or other interests in media service providers and engaging in gainful employment other than academic teaching or creative work.

With regard to additional safeguards, the draft provides for the repeal of the provision under which the rejection of the Council's annual report by the Sejm and the Senate automatically results in the termination of the terms of office of all members of the Council. While this change should be assessed positively, it should also be considered in light of the possibility that the personal composition of the Council may remain influenced by a single prevailing political orientation.

Another change introduced by the draft law is the requirement that any administrative decision issued by the Chair of the Council be preceded by a resolution of the Council. This measure appears to be aimed at limiting the Chair's discretion and should be viewed in the context of the exercise of this competence in recent years.

This is a new version of the draft media law, following an earlier version that had already been presented, and it has undergone a number of significant changes. Some of the demands put forward by civil society organisations have been taken into account, in particular with regard to the procedure for appointing members of the Council. Moreover, the draft was subject to public consultations lasting approximately seven weeks, which may be regarded as a positive development and as an indication of political willingness to include the views of civil society organisations and other non-political actors.

As regards the financing of the Council, the draft Budget Act envisages a slight increase in the Council's budget. At the same time, in its 2025 report, Najwyższa Izba Kontroli noted that the funds allocated to the activities of the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT) are insufficient. This should be considered in the context that, if the draft law is adopted, the Council will have an increased number of members and, as a consequence of the transposition of the European Media Freedom Act into Polish law, will also be entrusted with additional tasks.

Conditions and procedures for the appointment and dismissal of the head / members of the collegiate body of media regulatory authorities and bodies

5,000 character(s) maximum

The draft law doesn't modify the procedure for the appointment of the Chair of the Council, meaning that the existing appointment mechanism is to be retained. The Chair is elected from among their members and may be dismissed by the members of the National Broadcasting Council. Neither the Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting nor the Council's rules of procedure regulate the manner in which the Chair is elected. The election therefore takes place in accordance with the Council's ordinary mode of operation, that is, by way of a resolution adopted by at least two thirds of the members of the Council.

The loss of membership in the Council would, as a consequence, also result in dismissal from the position of Chair. As noted above, the draft law introduces new grounds for such loss of membership.

Existence and functions of media councils or other self-regulatory bodies

5,000 character(s) maximum

The main change introduced by the draft law with regard to the functions of the Council concerns the restoration of constitutional order in the area of shaping the personal composition of single-shareholder joint-stock companies of the State Treasury, within which public radio and television broadcasters operate, including their management boards and supervisory boards. According to the case law of the Constitutional Tribunal, the complete exclusion of the Council from this procedurę - which took place in 2015 - is unconstitutional (judgments of 3 December 2016, case no. K 13/16).

B. Safeguards against government or political interference and transparency and concentration of media ownership

[single market relevance] Measures taken to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of state advertising

5,000 character(s) maximum

Safeguards against state / political interference, in particular:

- safeguards to ensure editorial independence of media (private and public)
- specific safeguards for the independence of heads of management and members of the governing boards of public service media (e.g. related to appointment, dismissal), safeguards for their financial and operational independence (e.g. related to reporting obligations and the allocation of resources) and safeguards for plurality of information and opinions
- ***[single market relevance]*** information on specific legal provisions and procedures applying to media service providers, including as regards granting/renewal/termination of licenses, company operation, capital entry requirements, concentration and corporate governance

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners

5,000 character(s) maximum

C. Framework for journalists' protection, transparency and access to documents

Rules and practices guaranteeing journalists' independence and safety, including as regards protection of journalistic sources and communications, referring also, if applicable, to follow-up given to alerts lodged with the Council of Europe’s Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

5,000 character(s) maximum

There are currently no active alerts concerning Poland on the Council of Europe’s Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists.

There have been informal discussions about appointing the Ombudsman as the national focal point within the Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists; however, these efforts are likely to remain unsuccessful due to the lack of funding for additional activities within the Ombudsman’s office.

Law enforcement capacity, including during protests and demonstrations, to ensure journalists' safety and to investigate attacks on journalists

5,000 character(s) maximum

Access to information and public documents by public at large and journalists (incl. transparency authorities where they exist, procedures, costs/fees, timeframes, administrative/judicial review of decisions, execution of decisions by public authorities, possible obstacles related to the classification of information)

5,000 character(s) maximum

There has been a limited development with regard to access to documents over the past year. Access to public documents in Poland is regulated by the Act on Access to Public Information, under a procedure that is free of charge and largely informal.

A journalist was denied access to state events following a negative security check by the State Protection Service (SOP), without being informed of the reasons for the decision or having access to an effective appeal mechanism. As participation in such events is essential to journalistic work, the decision resulted in the loss of the journalist's sources of income. At the same time, despite EU law requiring effective mechanisms to access, verify, and correct personal data processed by law-enforcement authorities, the Polish implementation of Directive 2016/680 provides only limited remedies, focusing narrowly on unlawful processing rather than broader rights of access and verification. In practice, neither the supervisory authority nor the administrative courts offer an effective avenue to exercise these rights, creating a legal loophole that leaves affected journalists without meaningful protection or redress.

In the context of public media, an important development arose in 2023, when the Minister of Culture and National Heritage dismissed the heads and supervisory boards of Polish Public Television, Polish Radio, and the Polish Press Agency on the basis of company law provisions—a move that raised legal doubts. At the time, Prime Minister Donald Tusk stated publicly that the government relied on opinions of leading legal experts confirming the legality and public-interest nature of the measures. Despite requests from civil society organisations, these legal opinions were not disclosed. In January 2026, the Supreme Administrative Court dismissed a complaint against the refusal, holding that where a public authority declares that it does not possess a given document, such a declaration is sufficient to conclude that the document is not held by that authority.

In March of this year, a journalist was convicted of criminal defamation under Article 212 of the Criminal Code for sending questions by email to the press spokesperson of a public institution concerning a judge in retirement. The journalistic material related to these questions was never published. The journalist was fined PLN 5,000, and the proceedings were conducted in camera.

Lawsuits (incl. SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation) and convictions against journalists (incl. defamation cases) and measures taken to safeguard against manifestly unfounded and abusive lawsuits

5,000 character(s) maximum

In January 2025, Poland’s Civil Law Codification Commission unveiled a draft anti-SLAPP law, aiming to implement the new EU Directive 2024/1069 on discouraging unfounded litigation. This draft (amended in April after consultations) was Poland’s first legislative proposal explicitly addressing SLAPPs. Civil society organizations welcomed the initiative as a “promising step” toward shielding journalists, activists and others who speak out on matters of public interest. The bill introduced tools like early dismissal of manifestly unfounded suits and other safeguards. However, experts also warned that, as written, the law might fall short of its promise. Article 19 and a coalition of Polish NGOs cautioned that overly narrow criteria and procedural hurdles could render key safeguards ineffective in practice. For instance, the draft’s definition of a SLAPP was tied to a “manifestly unfounded” standard and an exclusive intent to silence, which might be too strict to catch many abusive cases. It also lacked measures like shifting the burden of proof or allowing judges to award damages to SLAPP targets. In a July 2025 analysis, the Polish anti-SLAPP working group urged lawmakers to strengthen the bill before passage – recommending clearer SLAPP criteria, more “realistic” early-dismissal rules, a true reversal of the burden of proof, and the ability for defendants to seek compensation within the SLAPP proceeding. Crucially, they also advocated barring public authorities (state or local) from suing individuals for defamation, and pairing the civil-law reform with changes to criminal law. These improvements, they argued, are needed to ensure the anti-SLAPP law will be effective in practice. As of the end of 2025, the draft law had not yet been submitted for parliamentary proceedings.
At an international anti-SLAPP conference in Warsaw, April 2024,Minister of Justice, Adam Bodnar, pledged to “abolish criminal defamation,” specifically Article 212 of the Penal Code. Throughout 2024–2025, media freedom groups and Poland’s Anti-SLAPP Working Group kept up advocacy to hold the government to this promise. In 2025, progress was halting: although Bodnar’s ministry convened experts and the Criminal Law Codification Commission produced a draft amendment, that proposal fell short of scrapping Article 212. Instead, it merely “softened” the offense – for example, by removing the possibility of prison time – rather than eliminating it. Rights organizations reacted with disappointment, noting that dropping jail sentences is positive but not enough. Even without incarceration, leaving criminal defamation on the books means journalists and bloggers “would still face the risk of criminal proceedings, with a continued chilling effect”. In April 2025, a coalition of media NGOs issued an open appeal entitled “Fulfil promises – Decriminalise defamation now”, urging the government to fully repeal Article 212 to genuinely protect public watchdogs. They argued that civil and criminal law reforms must be comprehensive and coordinated – only then can Poland make full use of the EU anti-SLAPP directive to build a robust shield for journalists, activists and citizen reporters speaking out in the public interest. In October 2025, activists in Kraków held a “#STOPSLAPP” protest outside the courthouse, symbolically standing with journalists silenced.
By the end of 2025, Poland’s climate for media had shifted with a new government, but the legacy of SLAPPs and punitive defamation laws persisted. While no journalists were imprisoned during the year, multiple convictions and ongoing lawsuits showed the urgent need for reform. There were clear moves in the right direction – a draft anti-SLAPP law, and official acknowledgment that criminal libel must go – yet key reforms remained pending.
There are also prominent examples of pending proceedings initiated by state

entities. One such case concerns a forester who publicly spoke about excessive killings in a national park in an interview with a well-known journal and who had previously submitted numerous requests for access to public information to that entity. While not a journalistic SLAPP in the strict sense, the case was connected to a newspaper interview. As a result, the national park brought civil proceedings against him for the protection of its reputation, which are still pending. In addition, the director filed a private criminal complaint for defamation, which was discontinued due to the statute of limitations, as well as charges of stalking, of which the forester was acquitted. All of these proceedings were financed from public funds.

There was also a striking case in which a court ordered Radio Poznań not to mention a possible link between a prominent businessman and the disappearance of a journalist in the 1990s. Any breach of this injunction is punishable by a fine of PLN 50,000. The injunction was issued in civil proceedings for the protection of reputation initiated by the businessman

Any other developments related to media pluralism and freedom - please specify

5,000 character(s) maximum

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2025 Report regarding the system of checks and balances (if applicable)

5,000 character(s) maximum

A. The process for preparing, enacting and implementing laws

[single market relevance] Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'*/public consultations (including rules and practices on the transparent participation of civil society to policy development and decision-making processes), and transparency and quality of the legislative process in the preparatory, the parliamentary and implementation phase (including guidance on how to implement legislation)

** This includes also the consultation of social partners*

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, formal procedural rules remained in place in Poland requiring impact assessments, stakeholder consultations and transparency in legislative preparation and enactment. At the same time, independent analysis and stakeholder monitoring highlighted ongoing shortcomings in the practical application of these tools, affecting legislative quality and inclusiveness.
Legislative activity and statistical context.
According to the Civic Legislative Forum at the Stefan Batory Foundation (OFL) report summarising the process in 2023–2025, legislative output varied significantly over the period. In the first year of the legislature, 81 laws were adopted, of which 74 entered into force, representing the lowest annual figure in nearly two decades. In the second year, legislative activity increased sharply: 223 laws were passed, with 206 entering into force. A significant portion of this increase reflected 51 deregulatory laws adopted by late 2025, suggesting a rapid legislative pace with potential implications for quality scrutiny. Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego
Impact assessments and evidence-based policymaking.
Formal requirements for Regulatory Impact Assessments (Oceny Skutków Regulacji) remained part of the legislative process. The OFL report notes a notable development: mandatory impact assessments for parliamentary (poselskie) draft laws were introduced on 31 October 2024, and these assessments were prepared with substantive analysis in a significant number of cases in 2025. High public engagement in some consultations (for example, over **20 000 responses to a draft firearm regulation and over 6 000 responses on housing price transparency) illustrates active stakeholder involvement where quality impact analysis was provided.
Despite these improvements, OFL notes that impact assessments were not always prepared at an early stage of drafting or used systematically to shape legislative content prior to first parliamentary readings, limiting their effectiveness as tools for evidence-based policy-making.
Stakeholder/public consultations.
Rules for public and stakeholder consultations remained in force. However, the OFL report identifies a systemic problem with shortened or insufficient consultation periods. In the period observed, 101 of 178 government legislative proposals were not consulted at all, and an additional 59 were consulted for no more than 14 days, yielding an average consultation period of 13 days, below the standard 21-day minimum envisaged in consultation rules.
Although statutory changes introduced mandatory consultations for parliamentary bills, the OFL report emphasises that consultation outcomes rarely influenced draft texts before first readings, with substantive revisions occurring mainly at committee stages, thus reducing the practical impact of stakeholder input.

Transparency of preparatory and parliamentary phases.
While transparency mechanisms formally exist, OFL reports highlight frequent use of special and expedited legislative procedures, including a high share of government bills processed without full consultation, and compressed parliamentary examination. For example, in 2025 several bills — including a renewable energy law and revisions to the labour code — were considered in a single day or within very short multi-reading timeframes, constraining debate and stakeholder engagement.
The OFL report also notes that amendments introduced during committee stages often incorporate substantive changes not subjected to wider consultation,

weakening procedural transparency and predictability.
Implementation phase and guidance.
Guidance accompanying new laws continued to vary by sector and act. Independent monitoring did not identify systematic improvements in the timeliness or quality of implementation guidance, and stakeholders continued to report uncertainty around regulatory requirements, particularly in complex economic or single market-relevant sectors. No clear central mechanism for monitoring implementation or collecting structured feedback was reported.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, formal frameworks for impact assessments, consultations and legislative transparency remained in place, and there were notable positive developments, including mandatory impact assessments for parliamentary bills and high levels of public engagement in certain consultations. Nevertheless, persistent shortcomings were identified in practice: widespread use of shortened consultation periods, limited early-stage evidence use, frequent expedited procedures and consultation outcomes having limited influence before key legislative votes. These patterns continue to affect legislative quality, transparency and inclusiveness, with potential implications for legal certainty and the functioning of the single market.

[single market relevance] Rules and use of fast-track procedures and emergency procedures (for example, the percentage of decisions adopted through emergency/urgent procedure compared to the total number of adopted decisions)

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, the legislative process in Poland was characterised by frequent use of expedited procedures at both the government and parliamentary stages.
Independent monitoring highlighted that a significant share of adopted laws was processed in compressed timeframes, raising concerns about transparency, scrutiny and stakeholder participation.
Fast-track / expedited procedures — statistical overview.
According to the 2025 Raport Obywatelskiego Forum Legislacji (OFL), which analysed legislative activity over the first two years of the X Sejm (2023–2025), a substantial proportion of government bills were adopted using procedures that limited standard consultation and parliamentary deliberation.
At the government stage:
In the first year of the legislature, 25 government bills (43 % of rządowe proposals) were processed under a special (separate) procedure, which reduces or omits elements of standard preparation and consultation.
In the second year, 59 government bills (33 % of rządowe proposals) were similarly subject to separate procedures.
These data indicate that over one-third of government legislative initiatives used procedures with reduced preparatory scrutiny. Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego
At the parliamentary stage:
In the second year of work, 29 bills were adopted after three readings completed in less than four days each. Notable examples included the renewable energy law (25 hours) and the labour code revision (less than 12 hours), demonstrating pronounced compression of parliamentary examination timetables.
Scope and types of procedures.
Fast-track or “urgent” pathways in the Polish legislative system include:
Tryb odmienny (separate procedure) at the government level, which can curtail consultation and limit exposure of draft texts to extended stakeholder input.
Compressed reading schedules in the Sejm, where multiple readings and committee reviews occur within very short overall timeframes, sometimes amounting to only hours rather than days.
Both instruments, while permitted under the Rules of Procedure, were applied widely in 2025, particularly for deregulatory bills (33 of 51 adopted deregulatory acts were processed using special procedures, including 18 without any consultation).
Consultation context.
The intensive use of expedited procedures has direct implications for stakeholder engagement. The OFL report documented that among 178 government proposals processed by the Sejm in the second year, 101 were not consulted at all, and a further 59 received formal consultations lasting no more than 14 days, yielding an average consultation period of 13 days, despite standard guidance suggesting a 21-day minimum.
Implications for legislative quality and participation.
The data for 2025 show that:
High use of fast-track procedures has constrained the time available for expert review, impact assessment refinement and substantive stakeholder participation.
Compressed parliamentary readings have limited opportunities for detailed committee scrutiny and public debate, including for legislation with potential effects on economic activity and single market relevance.
Although some procedural improvements were introduced (such as mandatory impact assessments for parliamentary bills), the results of consultations frequently did not influence the versions of bills presented for first reading, reducing

the substantive impact of public input.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, the application of fast-track and emergency legislative procedures in Poland remained widespread, with a significant share of bills processed under conditions that shortened scrutiny and public consultation periods. Quantitative evidence from the OFL report indicates that special procedures were used in around one-third of government bills, while a notable number of laws passed through three parliamentary readings in under four days. These patterns reflect persistent practices that limit deliberation and transparency in the preparatory and parliamentary phases and may have implications for legislative quality and predictability.

[single market relevance] Safeguards to ensure legal certainty, the stability of the legal framework and non-discrimination.

5,000 character(s) maximum

Rules and application of states of emergency (or analogous regimes), including judicial review and parliamentary oversight

5,000 character(s) maximum

In 2025, the constitutional and statutory framework governing states of emergency in Poland remained structured around a combination of constitutional provisions and specialised statutory regimes for emergencies, including state of emergency (stan wyjątkowy), state of natural disaster (stan klęski żywiołowej) and other extraordinary situations. At the same time, actual recourse to formal emergency regimes remained rare, and legal and practical issues concerning their potential invocation continued to be subject to academic and governance debate.
Constitutional and statutory framework.
The 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland establishes the conditions and procedures for declaring various states of emergency, including states of war, martial law, and other extraordinary situations (e.g., external threat), with specific provisions regulating the powers of the President, Council of Ministers and Parliament. Proposed constitutional amendments in 2025 sought to clarify and consolidate certain rules, including provisions on limits to amendment powers and the sequence of triggers for emergency declarations; these proposals remained under discussion and had not yet been adopted into the Constitution.
Under statutory law, the reformed Act on State of Natural Disaster, promulgated in January 2025, regulates the introduction, extension and termination of a state of natural disaster. According to that law:
The Council of Ministers may introduce a state of natural disaster by regulation to prevent or address the effects of natural catastrophes or technical failures, typically for a maximum specified period.
Extension of a state of natural disaster requires the consent of the Sejm.
The regulation is published in the Journal of Laws and announced publicly via voivodes’ notices.
Application in practice.
Historically, formal state of emergency declarations have been used sparingly. A noteworthy instance occurred in 2021 in relation to the migration situation at the Polish-Belarusian border, where a state of emergency was introduced for designated border areas. However, formal states of emergency have not been widely invoked in other contexts; for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic and in previous flood events, authorities chose to use sectoral disaster response powers rather than declare an emergency under the constitutional regime.
In 2025, there was no broad or nationwide state of emergency in force, and instances of invoking emergency powers remained limited and specific to particular situations addressed under the state of natural disaster framework. There were no reported cases of a constitutional state of emergency or martial law being introduced during the year.
Parliamentary oversight.
Under both constitutional and statutory regimes, parliamentary oversight is required for the extension of a declared emergency or natural disaster beyond initial periods. For a state of natural disaster, the Sejm’s consent is necessary to extend the period beyond that originally set by the executive. This mechanism is designed to ensure democratic oversight of prolonged extraordinary measures.
Constitutionally, states of emergency affecting fundamental rights and governance regimes also involve Sejm oversight and voting requirements; constitutional amendment proposals in 2025 aimed to further detail limits on parliamentary dissolution, elections and referenda during such periods, indicating ongoing debates about balancing executive agility with democratic accountability.

Judicial review and legal challenges.
Judicial review of emergency declarations and measures falls within the jurisdiction of ordinary courts and, where constitutional issues are implicated, the Constitutional Tribunal. While academic analysis has underscored ambiguities and limited practical judicial engagement with emergency powers, no major court challenges to emergency declarations were prominent in 2025. Courts retain the capacity to review whether procedural and substantive requirements for declarations have been met, although case law in this domain remains limited due to the infrequent use of such regimes.
Fundamental rights safeguards.
The constitutional framework sets out that certain fundamental rights may be subject to limitations in emergencies consistent with constitutional guarantees. Polish law has generally preferred to respond to crises using specific sectoral powers rather than broad states of emergency, reducing instances where fundamental rights would be broadly limited under an emergency regime.
Overall assessment.
In 2025, Poland’s legal framework for states of emergency and analogous regimes remained well-established in doctrine and statute, with Parliamentary oversight and judicial review mechanisms embedded in law. However, the actual application of constitutional states of emergency continued to be rare, with authorities favoring statutory disaster responses.

Regime for constitutional review of laws

5,000 character(s) maximum

The constitutional review of laws in Poland is formally entrusted to the Constitutional Tribunal, as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. The Tribunal is empowered to review the conformity of statutes, international agreements and certain executive acts with the Constitution, both in abstract proceedings and in response to questions of law referred by courts. Its judgments are final and universally binding.
Functioning and activity in 2025
In 2025, the Constitutional Tribunal continued to operate under significantly constrained conditions. According to publicly available information, the Tribunal issued 41 rulings during the year, including judgments and procedural decisions. At the same time, the number of cases pending before the Tribunal remained high, amounting to several hundred unresolved proceedings at the end of the year (https://trybunal.gov.pl/?type=704&tx_mtsignatures_pi1[sigYear]=25). Individual constitutional complaints continued to be subject to lengthy delays, further affecting access to effective constitutional review.
Composition and vacant positions
In 2025, the Tribunal operated with six vacant judicial positions, following the expiry of nine-year terms of sitting judges. Despite the constitutional competence of the Sejm to elect new judges, Parliament did not proceed with the appointment of successors to these positions during the year. The prolonged existence of unfilled posts affected the Tribunal's internal organisation, its ability to sit in full bench compositions where required, and its overall adjudicatory capacity. This situation added to existing concerns regarding institutional continuity and the effective functioning of constitutional review.
Independence, legitimacy and EU-level assessment
The independence and impartiality of the Constitutional Tribunal continued to be contested, both domestically and at EU level. On 18 December 2025, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that the Polish Constitutional Tribunal, as constituted following contested appointments made between 2015 and 2023, could not be regarded as an independent and impartial tribunal under EU law. The Court found that this situation affects the Tribunal's ability to ensure effective judicial protection in areas governed by EU law. This judgment reinforced long-standing concerns regarding the Tribunal's role where national constitutional interpretation intersects with EU legal obligations and the principle of primacy of EU law.
Publication of judgments
Concerns also persisted in 2025 regarding the non-publication of certain judgments of the Constitutional Tribunal in the Journal of Laws. Under the Constitution, publication is a necessary condition for judgments to produce full legal effects. In practice, the government continued to refrain from publishing selected rulings, citing doubts as to their legality due to the participation of judges whose appointment has been contested. This practice resulted in legal uncertainty, as judgments formally exist but do not enter into force in the legal order, and has been identified by domestic stakeholders and international bodies as undermining the authority and effectiveness of constitutional review.
Institutional context and oversight
Judges of the Constitutional Tribunal are elected by the Sejm for a single nine-year term. While the Constitution and statutory framework provide formal safeguards, the politicisation of appointments in recent years, combined with the persistence of vacant positions and unresolved disputes regarding the legal status of certain judges, continued to affect the Tribunal's perceived

legitimacy and judicial autonomy. No legislative changes were adopted in 2025 to address these structural issues.
Overall assessment
In 2025, the regime for constitutional review of laws in Poland remained formally anchored in the constitutional framework, but its effective functioning continued to face serious challenges. Limited adjudicatory output, a high number of pending cases, six unfilled judicial positions, the non-publication of selected judgments and an adverse assessment by the CJEU collectively contributed to concerns regarding the effectiveness, independence and legal certainty of constitutional review.

B. Independent authorities

Independence, resources, capacity and powers (including effectice access to relevant data) of national human rights institutions (‘NHRIs’), of ombudsman institutions if different from NHRIs, of equality bodies if different from NHRIs and of supreme audit institutions

(Cf. the website of the European Court of Auditors: https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/SupremeAuditInstitutions.aspx#)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Statistics/reports concerning the follow-up to recommendations by National Human Rights Institutions, ombudsman institutions, equality bodies and supreme audit institutions in the past year

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Safeguards to ensure the effective independence of supervisory and regulatory authorities with a direct impact on economic operators such as national economic oversight, enforcement and competition authorities

C. Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

[single market relevance] Transparency of administrative decisions and sanctions (incl. their publication and rules on collection of related data) and respect of the good administration principle (including the obligation of the administration to give reasons for decisions)

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Judicial review of administrative decisions: short description of the general regime (in particular competent court, scope, suspensive effect, interim measures, and any applicable specific rules or derogations from the general regime of judicial review)

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Safeguards (other than judicial review) regarding decisions or inaction of administrative authorities, including remedies (e.g. administrative review)

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Rules and practices related to the application by all courts, including constitutional jurisdictions, of the preliminary ruling procedure (Art. 267 TFEU)

5,000 character(s) maximum

[single market relevance] Implementation of final judgments by the public administration and State institutions and follow-up given to supranational judgments, including decisions from the European Court of Human Rights, as well as available remedies in case of non-implementation

5,000 character(s) maximum

Oversight, including by courts, of the use of intrusive surveillance software by national authorities

5,000 character(s) maximum

D. The enabling framework for civil society

Measures regarding the framework for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. legal framework and its application in practice incl. registration, transparency and dissolution rules)

5,000 character(s) maximum

The year 2025 did not bring the changes the Polish non-governmental sector was expecting. The proposals put forward by civil society organisations (CSOs) prior to the 2023 elections, which aimed to improve the operating conditions for civil society, were not implemented. The changes introduced were mainly technical and failed to address the sector’s real needs. One example is the decision to allow ministers to commission tasks to the National Institute of Freedom – Centre for the Development of Civil Society to coordinate grant calls, a task that has been carried out by the ministries up till now. This measure does not constitute a systemic reform of CSO financing.
An ambitious and comprehensive change of the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteering, along with amendments of the law reflecting how CSOs actually operate (e.g., simplification of procedures), is still necessary. In 2025, only a few changes of this kind were made (e.g., simplified revenue and cost records for smaller organisations with budgets under 1 million PLN and the repeal of the obligation for public benefit organisations to audit their records when meeting certain financial thresholds). Although the simplification of registration procedures for associations was discussed, it was not adopted (only the first reading of the proposed bill took place).
The proposed “small” amendment to the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteering (UD 240) also fails to address the sector's fundamental challenges in a systemic way. There is clear evidence that the sector needs a comprehensive reform of the legal framework, including public finance procedures (calls, commissioning of public tasks, etc.) at the local level. Both local governments and CSOs agree that the current regulations are no longer fit for purpose. “The Power of Small Communities” fund, launched by the former minister, Adriana Porowska, cannot substitute for a comprehensive reform of the way local governments involve and support CSOs. Although the government responded positively to the appeal of the National Federation of Polish NGOs and the Donors Forum, and announced further changes, it seems that the process of adopting the “small” amendment may hinder the work on the substantial changes that the sector expects. Representatives of CSOs express concern that this process may not be completed during this parliamentary term, which may have far-reaching consequences for the conditions under which CSOs operate.
Meanwhile, the deregulation activities undertaken by the government created a risk of significantly reducing the role of civil society in public participation processes and advocacy. CSOs protested two draft proposals. The 1st one was introducing changes to the law on administrative courts (UDER32), and the 2nd was amending the law, simplifying administrative procedures, including cases settled tacitly (UDER95). The first amendment effectively restricted access to court for CSOs (lodging cassation appeals), and the government withdrew from the implementation of this change. The second, creates a risk that environmental impact assessments will not be carried out, impacting local communities and CSOs, which will not be able to weigh in on investment decisions. The protest on this matter was signed by 107 CSOs.
Public consultation process is problematic. A good illustration is the case of phasing out the measures resulting from the law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict in that country. The whole consultation period fell during the end of December, leaving CSOs with only 4 working days to prepare their position on a complex amendment to a bill, which directly affects the fate of the large Ukrainian community in Poland, including vulnerable groups. This time, a protest letter was signed by 60 CSOs. After the

protest, a consultation meeting was scheduled for January 2026. CSOs point out that even when consultations take place in a timely manner, they often remain superficial and make little impact. According to the Civic Legislation Forum's data, fast-tracking of bills that bypass the public consultation process still remains significant. There was no consultation process for 101 out of 178 government draft bills passed by the Sejm (lower chamber of parliament). The statistics look better in case of parliamentary bills with 139 draft acts referred for a consultation process.

Overall, the year 2025 was a year of wasted opportunity. During the cabinet reshuffle in July, the post of the Minister of Civil Society, held by Adriana Porowska, was eliminated, thus downgrading the importance of policy goals related to civil society. Even if only symbolic, the decision does not bode well for the long-anticipated reforms of the civil society framework. Given that the Minister was authorized to draft and review legislation concerning civil society issues, the current post of A Porowska (Secretary of State) does not provide opportunities for systemic changes

Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This includes measures to protect them from attacks – verbal, physical or on-line –, intimidation, legal threats incl. SLAPPs, negative narratives or smear campaigns, measures capable of affecting the public perception of civil society organisations, etc. It also includes measures to monitor threats or attacks and dedicated support services, as well as available remedies

5,000 character(s) maximum

Attacks on civil society in Poland predominantly take the form of hate speech, smear campaigns, and SLAPPs. These phenomena intensified in the period between 2015 and 2023, when CSOs were subjected to systematic attacks (hate speech, defamation, etc.), aimed at discrediting activism and creating a chilling effect to discourage citizens from organising and protests. As a result of the change in government (2023), the PM, Donald Tusk, set up a consultative body, i.e. the Commission for the Investigation of Mechanisms of Repression Against Civil Society Organisations and Activists (2015-2023) mandated to document past abuses, violations of law, and recommend measures to restore civic space. The first part of the Commission's report published in 2025, describes the use of media (including public media) to dehumanize activists, spread mis- and disinformation, and undermine trust in civil society organisations.

Over the period from 2015 to 2023, malicious campaigns of hate and disinformation intensified their targeting of specific organizations, namely LGBTIQ+ organisations, women's rights organisations and informal networks, advocates and organisations for the rule of law, and groups assisting migrants. While the scale of attacks on CSOs in 2025 cannot be compared to the previous years, it does not mean that they stopped completely. For example, a women's rights organisation operating in Warsaw (focusing on access to abortion) faced repeated acid attacks on their premises. Although the perpetrator was apprehended it signals that threats persist.

In 2025, Attorney General, Adam Bodnar, issued Guidelines of the Prosecutor General on conducting proceedings for crimes motivated by prejudice. Amendments to the Penal Code, introducing four new grounds of discrimination in cases of hate motivated crimes (including: age, gender, sexual orientation, disability) were adopted. These were then referred by the former President, Andrzej Duda, to the Constitutional Tribunal, which blocked their entry into force. As a result, legal protections against hate speech and crimes motivated by prejudice remain very limited.

Another growing concern is the imitation of existing CSOs on fake social media accounts and through the use of counterfeit documents. In 2025, the Ukrainian House documented cases of fake accounts and forged documents in the organisations name, including forged letters in support of the presidential candidate, Rafał Trzaskowski. Polish law lacks clear procedures addressing such abuses in the case of CSOs, despite their potential to undermine public trust.

The most serious ongoing concern are attempts to criminalize humanitarian aid at the Polish Belarusian border. Since 2021, the humanitarian crisis resulted in 103 deaths. Despite repeated attempts to criminalize aid, courts have ruled in favour of activists' rights to provide assistance. In 2025, the "Hajnówka Five" were acquitted (September 2025), yet prosecutors brought new charges against another activist for allegedly facilitating illegal border crossing (December 2025). Organisations providing life-saving support, do so under extremely dangerous conditions. The challenges are exacerbated by the unlawful suspension of the right to apply for international protections and the practically unconstrained rules of the use of firearms in the border area.

Protection mechanisms for CSOs rely mainly on the interventions of the

Commissioner for Human Rights (the Ombudsman) and litigation (if organisations have the resources). There is a new whistleblower support mechanism set up within the Ombudsman's office, which is promising (resulting from the implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2019/1937 of October 23, 2019, on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law). Currently, the protections for whistleblowers remain undermined by weak implementation. The disclosure of a whistleblower's identity by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage revealed a lack of awareness among public officials, threatening the credibility of the mechanisms, and underscoring the need for education. The case of the disclosure was also taken up ex officio by the Office of Data Protection.

The planned legislation implementing the EU anti-SLAPP directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) of April 11, 2024) offers some hope, but NGOs stress shortcomings of the draft bill (see above). These include insufficient consideration of power balance between parties, lack of safeguards against repetitive lawsuits, the problem of interpretation of the criterion of "manifestly unfounded" lawsuit, and the absence of the rules shifting the burden of proof. Furthermore, there seems to be no significant progress on the issue of Article 212 of the Penal Code, which criminalises defamation.

Organisation of financial support for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. framework to ensure access to funding, and for financial viability, taxation/incentive/donation systems, measures to ensure a fair distribution of funding)

5,000 character(s) maximum

On January 20, 2025, United States President Donald Trump issued an executive order entitled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid." The order directed all department and agency heads to suspend all foreign aid for 90 days while their programs were reviewed for program effectiveness and consistency with U.S. foreign policy. As a result, in the following days, Polish civil social organizations implementing programs financed by American foreign aid in the areas of migration and humanitarian aid, education, civil society, democracy, free media, and women's rights, received emails ordering them to immediately suspend their activities or information about the suspension of the procedures for disbursing the funds already allocated. Importantly, activities and financing have been suspended regardless of the signed agreements and financial commitments already made by these organizations, including employment contracts which are protected under the Polish law from immediate termination. Organizations receiving funding from the USAID, which supports numerous projects worldwide, have been particularly impacted. Furthermore, grants awarded by organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Congress, and the US State Department have also been suspended.
After the 90-day deadline, affected organizations received mixed messages. Some received immediate termination of their support programs and contracts. Others were informed that they could receive their payments if they signed a declaration stating they did not adhere to DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) principles. Some organizations received their final installments with suspension of any further support. The exact number of organizations affected is unknown due to the lack of official research and censuses on foreign funding and the fact that those organizations often received aid through various entities, such as large UN agencies like IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF, as well as non-governmental organizations such as the Prague Civil Society Centre and the German Marshall Fund. According to the independent analysis, in 2024, identified American support for the activities of social organizations in Poland amounted to approximately PLN 200 million, 85% of which was allocated for humanitarian aid. Anonymous survey showed that 52 organizations that participated confirmed a loss of approximately PLN 19 million (EUR 4,51 million) due to the Trump’s order. Some organizations directly confirmed the loss of funds. The sudden cessation of funding resulted in, among other things, the suspension of humanitarian aid, forced layoffs, and the risk of the organization closing down completely.
Despite the CSO's dialogue with representatives of the Polish government, it did not decide to introduce any solutions to this crisis situation. Director of the National Freedom Institute - Center for Civil Society Development (NIW-CRSO), the executive agency legally mandated to support civil society development under the Polish law, directed organizations to use available sources of financing, i.e. Power of Small Communities program, targeting mostly smaller, local organizations or emergency support under Priority 5: Emergency Support Program providing small grants (max. PLN20000 ≈ EUR4750) to cover expenses resulting from the organization's urgent needs, originally set up to support organizations affected by the flood in 2024. No government programs to complete blocked projects or cover funds related to signed employee contracts or undertaken commitments have been implemented.
In 2025 the NIW-CRSO itself has undergone significant changes. After the 2024 The Supreme Audit Office’s report, which revealed widespread irregularities, on May 18, 2025, the government adopted the Draft Act amending the Act on the National Institute of Freedom - Center for the Development of Civil Society. The

bill was not subject to public consultation. In addition to routine changes to the budget, the document established the NIW-CRSO as the operator of ministries' grant competitions and assumed increased financial limits and the development of financial programs for NGOs. On the one hand, coordination by the NIW-CRSO of subsidy programs on behalf of the ministries, may result in better standardization of procedures and increased quality of grant competitions. On the other, concerns arise about the centralization and concentration of funding for NGOs within a single agency, which may prioritize its activities selectively, focusing only on specific areas, and which has been accused in the past of several organizational and management irregularities.
Despite these changes and growing needs, no additional system to support philanthropy through donations or tax incentives has been introduced, and the most widely used funding mechanisms for NGOs remains the 1.5% tax donation scheme. According to the Ministry of Finance, in 2025 Poles donated PLN 2.3 billion (approx. EUR 546 million)

E. Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

If there have been developments related to initiatives to foster a rule of law culture, please specify, which (e.g. debates in national parliaments on the rule of law, public information campaigns on rule of law issues, contributions from civil society, education initiatives, etc.)

5,000 character(s) maximum

Any other developments related to the system of checks and balances - please specify

5,000 character(s) maximum

Cross-pillar elements: cross-border rule of law issues related to the Single Market

If there are any significant challenges concerning the Single Market you have been facing in a cross-border context relating to any of the four pillars of the report, including for example issues with market access and the conditions for economic activities, that you would like to highlight, please do so here.

Given the cross-cutting nature of this question, it is included as a separate section in the questionnaire. Information collected under this question will however be integrated under the relevant existing pillar(s) of the Report.

5,000 character(s) maximum

Supporting document upload

If you would like to submit any supporting document(s) to your contribution, please upload your file(s) here

Contact

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