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Provisional version

Progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (January – December 2025)

Report¹

Rapporteur: Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Latvia, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

¹ Reference to Committee: [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#).

A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recognises the work carried out by the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) in fulfilling its mandate as defined in [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#) (modified) on the “Setting up of an Assembly committee on the honouring of obligations and commitments by member states of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)”. In particular, it welcomes the committee’s work in accompanying the 10 countries under a full monitoring procedure (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine) in their efforts to comply fully with the obligations and commitments they entered into upon accession to the Council of Europe. It also welcomes the efforts of the countries engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue (Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia), as well as the countries subject to periodic monitoring of their membership obligations (Greece, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden).

2. The Assembly congratulates Bulgaria on the closure of its post-monitoring dialogue with the Assembly in 2025, in recognition of the progress made in addressing the Assembly's remaining recommendations with regard to its membership obligations and accession commitments.

3. The Assembly takes note of the fact-finding visits carried out in 2025 and the findings by the respective co-rapporteurs with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, North-Macedonia, Sweden, Spain, Türkiye and Ukraine.

4. The Assembly welcomes the positive developments and progress made during the reporting period in the countries under a full monitoring procedure or engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue; it expresses its concern about some negative developments and remaining shortcomings and urges all these countries to step up their efforts to fully honour their membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe. The Assembly stands ready and is committed to co-operate and assist member States in this endeavour.

5. Regarding the countries under a full monitoring procedure, with respect to:

5.1. Armenia: the Assembly regrets the excessive polarisation and stigmatisation of political opponents by all sides in Armenia. The Assembly is deeply concerned by the conflict between the Prime Minister and the head of the Armenian Church, and by the reports of plots to usurp power by several clergymen belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church. While reiterating that three consecutive elections have been free of irregularities since 2018, the Assembly recalls the need to implement regulations on the misuse of public resources and the financing of political parties. Ahead of the June 2026 general elections, the Assembly calls for an improvement in relations between the political majority and the opposition, in order to ensure that the election campaign is issue- and policy-driven, and free from personal attacks between election contestants. In this context, the Assembly recalls the ECRI recommendation that “elected bodies and political parties should adopt appropriate codes of conduct that prohibit the use of hate speech and call on their members and followers to abstain from engaging in, endorsing or disseminating it”. The Assembly takes note of the current Prime Minister's intention to organise a constitutional referendum after the 2026 general elections;

5.2. Azerbaijan: with reference to its [Resolution 2527 \(2024\)](#) “Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Azerbaijan”, the Assembly remains seriously concerned about the further deterioration of the human rights situation in the country and the increase in the number of persons detained allegedly on politically motivated grounds, including civil society activists, journalists and media workers, academics, opposition politicians and other government critics. The Assembly exhorts the authorities to end retaliatory prosecutions and to release immediately all those detained on politically motivated charges, including 23 Armenian detainees, the human rights defender Mr Anar Mammadli, as well as the journalists and media workers involved in the Abzas Media case. The Assembly again calls upon the authorities to amend the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Media, and relevant NGO legislation in line with the Venice Commission's recommendations, and to implement the European Court of Human Rights' judgments. The Assembly reiterates its condemnation of the decision by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs to declare numerous members of the Assembly personae non gratae as a result of, inter alia, their vote in favour of [Resolution 2527 \(2024\)](#) and urges the authorities to immediately revoke this decision. The Assembly takes note of the

² Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the Committee on 9 December 2025.

resumption of cooperation between the Azerbaijani authorities and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and calls on the authorities to engage in constructive dialogue with all Council of Europe bodies, including the Assembly itself;

5.3. Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Assembly welcomes the resolution of the recent political crisis through adherence to the rule of law and democratic elections. It also welcomes the Republika Srpska National Assembly's decision to annul entity-level laws adopted between 2023 and 2025 that had been declared unconstitutional. The Assembly notes the organisation of early elections for the President of Republika Srpska, which will replace Mr Dodik whose s mandate was revoked by a definitive and legally binding judicial decision. However, it regrets the very low voter turnout and allegations of electoral fraud during these elections, despite the 2024 amendments to the electoral code designed to enhance transparency and integrity in the electoral process. With regard to the decision-making process at state level, the Assembly is concerned about the ongoing use of vetoes and blocking procedures for political reasons, which hinder the implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly urges the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to complete the selection procedure for the post of judge at the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina without further delay, in conformity with the requirements of fairness and transparency. The Assembly notes the ongoing discussions about the amendments to the Law on the Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, and calls upon the relevant authorities to adopt these legislative instruments expeditiously, in accordance with the Venice Commission's recommendations;

5.4. Georgia: the Assembly reiterates its position as set out in [Resolutions 2585 \(2025\)](#), [2600 \(2025\)](#) and [2624 \(2025\)](#), and it expresses deep concern about the increasingly rapid breakdown of democracy in Georgia. The Assembly deeply regrets that developments in 2025 have cast doubt on the existence of democracy in Georgia and the authorities' willingness to fulfil Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe. The Assembly condemns the ruling majority's appeal to the Constitutional Court to ban three key opposition movements: the United National Movement, Ahali/Coalition for Change, and Strong Georgia/Lelo. The Assembly also expresses concern about the politically motivated and trumped-up charges against key opposition leaders and NGO activists. The Assembly calls upon the authorities to cease these unacceptable actions against the democratic opposition, as pursuing them would effectively establish a dictatorship in Georgia. The Assembly urges the Georgian authorities to reverse this democratic backsliding immediately, engage in dialogue with the Assembly, and ensure that the country honours its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe;

5.5. Hungary: the Assembly refers to [Resolution 2617 \(2025\)](#) and reiterates its concerns about the weakening of democratic checks and balances in Hungary, as well as the instrumentalisation of constitutional norms, the Fundamental Law and cardinal laws to cement the political preferences of the ruling party. Regarding elections, the Assembly notes with concern that successive reforms have amplified the distortion between the number of votes received and the number of seats obtained. The Assembly therefore calls for a complete overhaul of electoral legislation after the 2026 elections, based on inclusive consultations with the main political parties, civil society organisations, and scholars. The Assembly also expresses concern about the lack of political will to tackle high-level corruption, as well as about measures aimed at silencing civil society organisations and the independent media. The Assembly calls on Hungary to abolish the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty and to reject the Bill on the Transparency of Public Life;

5.6. Republic of Moldova: the Assembly welcomes the Moldovan authorities' continued commitment to reforming their democratic institutions in line with European standards and norms. It urges the authorities to ensure these reforms are as transparent and inclusive as possible to guarantee their effectiveness and irreversibility. The Assembly condemns the Russian Federation's unprecedented interference in the recent parliamentary elections, as well as its efforts to destabilise the country. In order to strengthen the resilience of Moldovan institutions against such efforts, the Assembly recommends that the Moldovan authorities continue to reform electoral legislation in line with the Venice Commission's recommendations, including with respect to postal voting. Furthermore, it recommends that the authorities continue to strengthen the legal framework for freedom of expression by reviewing legislation that allows for the banning of media outlets, and by adopting the new Mass Media Law without delay;

5.7. Poland: the Assembly takes note of the outcome of the "competitive and well managed" Presidential elections in Poland that took place in May and June 2025. It expresses concern about the deep polarisation of the country and urges the government and president to work together to resolve their institutional disputes and to unblock the much-needed reforms of the judiciary that are necessary

to implement the judgments of the ECtHR with regard to the independence of the judiciary in Poland. The Assembly therefore calls upon the authorities to fully address the recommendations of the Venice Commission in its upcoming opinion on the draft laws regarding the status of judges in Poland;

5.8. Serbia: the Assembly is concerned about the escalation of the ongoing mass protests since November 2024, which followed the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station canopy. It notes that these protests have spread across the country, involving a wide range of social groups who are demanding new elections, accountability, transparency, and justice. The Assembly calls on the Serbian authorities to address the protesters' legitimate demands and engage in constructive dialogue. The Assembly urges the authorities to refrain from using disproportionate violence against protesters and to ensure that all incidents of violence are investigated swiftly, independently and effectively. Anyone found responsible for violent acts, whether they are enforcement officers or private individuals, should be held accountable. The Assembly also calls on the authorities to stop harassing, smearing and intimidating civil society organisations and activists. Regarding media freedom, the Assembly expresses concern about revelations of the surveillance of Serbian journalists and activists and urges the authorities to end this practice and conduct effective investigations into abuses. Those responsible must be held accountable. The preparation of the next report on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Serbia is a matter of priority;

5.9. Türkiye: the Assembly reiterates its [Resolutions 2599 \(2025\)](#), [Resolution 2528 \(2024\)](#), [2518 \(2023\)](#) and [2459 \(2022\)](#). It calls again upon the authorities to fully and swiftly implement judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and exhorts them to release Messrs Kavala and Demirtaş and Ms Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu without delay. It furthermore urges the authorities to take legislative measures in order to introduce the 'right to hope' (see *Öcalan v. Türkiye* (No. 2)). The Assembly urges the authorities to carry out the necessary reforms to restore an effective system of checks and balances and to ensure full independence of the judiciary. In addition, it calls on the authorities to put an end to all forms of reprisals against politicians, lawyers, journalists, and civil society activists and to take all necessary measures to eliminate physical ill-treatment in places of detention and to ensure accountability for its use. The Assembly furthermore calls on authorities to respect the will of the people expressed in democratic elections, in particular by not replacing democratically elected mayors by governors appointed by the Minister of Interior and by stopping attacks on opposition parties, including the main opposition party – the Republican People's Party (CHP). Recalling its [Resolution 2597 \(2025\)](#), it calls again on the authorities to release Mr Ekrem İmamoğlu and to drop all unfounded charges against him. Finally, the Assembly welcomes the 'terror-free Türkiye' process started following the call on 27 February 2025 by the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, for the PKK to lay down its arms and disband. It calls on the authorities and all concerned stakeholders to continue taking concrete steps within this process in order to achieve sustainable peace and political stability;

5.10. Ukraine: the Assembly welcomes the numerous reforms introduced by the Ukrainian authorities to guarantee the functioning of the country's democratic and rule of law institutions in accordance with European standards, despite the ongoing large-scale aggression of the Russian Federation. It notes the ambitious reform programme initiated as part of their accession negotiations with the European Union, many of which address areas that also covered in the monitoring procedure in respect of Ukraine. However, the Assembly urges the Ukrainian authorities to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the executive and to ensure that legislative processes are transparent and inclusive. In the assessed period overall Ukraine continued to make progress with regard to fighting the endemic corruption in the country. Nevertheless, noting the continued widespread corruption in Ukraine, the Assembly is concerned by reports of actions that could restrict the autonomy and effectiveness of the country's anti-corruption agencies. The Assembly welcomes efforts to align minority rights with European standards and therefore calls on the authorities to address the Venice Commission's recommendations on the 'Law on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine' and related legislation, such as the Education Law and the State Language Law. The Assembly commends the resilience of the Ukrainian population in the face of the Russian Federation's blatant aggression against Ukraine and its civilian population, for which the Russian Federation should be held fully accountable.

6. The Assembly welcomes the initialing of the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which paves the way for a final settlement of the long-standing conflict between these two Council of Europe member States, which will bring stability and peace to the region. It calls on both Armenia and Azerbaijan to now sign and ratify and fully implement the peace agreement.

7. Regarding the countries engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue with the Assembly during 2025, with respect to:

7.1. Albania: the Assembly welcomes the Albanian authorities' stated commitment to addressing the Assembly's recommendations contained in [Resolution 2544 \(2024\)](#), which concluded the monitoring procedure for the country and initiated the post-monitoring dialogue. The Assembly urges all political forces to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue to address the remaining recommendations expressed in that resolution. The Assembly also welcomes the competitive nature of the recent parliamentary elections, as well as the implementation of out-of-country voting, in line with its recommendation. However, it regrets the shortcomings noted in the electoral process, particularly reports of abuse of administrative resources and vote buying. The Assembly therefore calls upon parliament to address the shortcomings and ambiguities in the electoral framework that hinder its implementation. The Assembly is concerned that the media environment has not improved. Media concentration remains a cause for concern, and the Assembly's recommendations regarding the decriminalisation of defamation and the use of SLAPPs must be prioritised;

7.2. Bulgaria: the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#), in which it decided to close the post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria and monitor developments in the country with regard to the rule of law, pluralist democracy, and human rights as part of its periodic reviews. The Assembly calls on the Bulgarian authorities to address the shortcomings pointed out in [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#) as soon as possible, in close cooperation with the relevant Council of Europe bodies. In particular, the Assembly invites the Bulgarian authorities to resume reforming the organisation of the State through the adoption of ordinary legislation and/or new constitutional amendments by the Grand National Assembly, and to take the necessary measures to fully and rapidly implement judgments of the European Court of Human Rights that have been pending for at least ten years. Finally, the Assembly calls on the authorities to adopt electoral reforms that could lead to more stable governments;

7.3. Montenegro: the Assembly commends the authorities for their endeavours to adopt legislative reforms recommended by the Assembly in accordance with the norms of the Council of Europe, and in particular their exemplary cooperation with the Venice Commission;

7.4. North Macedonia: the Assembly invites all political forces to reach a consensus on the revision of the Constitution that would allow the country to pave its way to the European Union. It encourages the authorities to step up the reforms launched to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the country. In particular, the Assembly calls on the authorities to implement the outstanding recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR concerning the reform of the electoral legislation as well as GRECO's recommendations from its Fourth and Fifth Evaluation Rounds concerning prevention of corruption respectively of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors and of persons with senior executive functions and police. The Assembly is concerned about numerous cases of ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty by the police and the situation in prisons, especially in Idrizovo; it calls on the authorities to implement without delay the outstanding recommendations of the CPT. Moreover, the Assembly calls on the authorities to implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights fully and rapidly, and in particular to take the necessary legislative measures to implement the judgments *X. v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* concerning lack of legislation on conditions and procedures for changing the sex of transgender people on birth certificates and *Elmazova and Others v. North Macedonia* concerning discrimination against Roma pupils.

8. Regarding the countries that were subject to the procedure for the periodic review of membership obligations to the Council of Europe in 2025, with respect to:

8.1. The Netherlands: the Assembly notes that the preparation of the report was interrupted due to the early parliamentary elections in the country, followed by coalition negotiations which led to an extension of the reference for the report for this country until March 2027;

8.2. Spain: the Assembly expects that the authorities will address the concerns and recommendations expressed in the Venice Commission's "Opinion on the Manner of Election of the Judicial Members of the General Council of the Judiciary" ([CDL-AD\(2025\)038](#)). It also calls on the authorities to implement without delay the outstanding GRECO's recommendations from its Fourth and Fifth Evaluation Rounds concerning prevention of corruption respectively of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors and of persons with top executive functions and law enforcement authorities;

8.3. Sweden: the Assembly notes with interest the debates about Constitutional amendments in Sweden that aim to counter potential democratic backsliding. The Assembly notes that the scheduled

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general elections in September 2026 and the subsequent coalition negotiations will most likely result in delays for the periodic monitoring procedure in respect of Sweden;

8.4. Greece: the Assembly notes that the preparation of the report has not yet fully started.

9. The Assembly welcomes the continued close cooperation with the Venice Commission within the framework of parliamentary monitoring procedures. This is evident from the large number of opinions requested and produced, as well as the number of follow-up hearings organised with the participation of Venice Commission rapporteurs. The Committee's ability to request Venice Commission opinions with regard to any Member State has been an important instrument in enabling the Committee to fulfil its mandate to monitor compliance with membership obligations in all Council of Europe Member States.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. The basis for the Parliamentary Assembly's monitoring procedure is [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#) on the setting up of an Assembly Committee on the honouring of obligations and commitments by member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) (as modified by [Resolution 1431\(2005\)](#), [Resolution 1515 \(2006\)](#), [Resolution 1698 \(2009\)](#), [Resolution 1710 \(2010\)](#), [Resolution 1936 \(2013\)](#), [Resolution 2018 \(2014\)](#), [Resolution 2261 \(2019\)](#), [Resolution 2325 \(2020\)](#), [Resolution 2357 \(2021\)](#), [Resolution 2428 \(2022\)](#) and [Resolution 2551 \(2024\)](#). [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#) defines the mandate of the Monitoring Committee and stipulates that "it shall be responsible for verifying the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by the member States under the terms of the Council of Europe statute (ETS No. 1), the European Convention of Human Rights (ETS No. 5) and all other Council of Europe conventions to which they are parties, as well as the honouring of the commitments entered into by the authorities of member States upon their accession to the Council of Europe."

2. In accordance with Paragraph 14 of [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#) as amended, the Monitoring Committee is obliged to report to the Assembly, on a yearly basis, on the general progress of the monitoring procedures. In line with established practice, the Committee has entrusted me, as its Chairperson, with the task of being the rapporteur on the committee's activities for the period from January to December 2025.

3. In line with its mandate, the Monitoring Committee follows all Council of Europe member States with regard to the honouring of their membership obligations, and if relevant, specific accession commitments. Currently, ten countries are subject to a full monitoring procedure: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

4. Three countries are currently engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue (Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia). The post-monitoring dialogue concerns the States that have progressed to this stage following the termination of a full monitoring procedure. It is a less intensive procedure focusing on a limited number of remaining issues that are expected to be resolvable within a limited timeframe. Therefore, the Rules of Procedure specify that only two post-monitoring dialogue reports will be issued. The second post-monitoring report has to determine whether the post-monitoring dialogue can be ended for that country. If not, the country will return automatically to a full monitoring procedure. In a welcome development, on 1 October 2025, the Assembly resolved to close the post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria with the adoption of [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#).

5. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Monitoring Committee is tasked to ensure and assess the fulfilment of obligations assumed by all member States under the Council of Europe Statute, the European Convention on Human Rights and all other conventions concluded within the Organisation to which they are party. Therefore, as set out in [Resolution 2261 \(2019\)](#), the Monitoring Committee prepares periodic review reports on the honouring of obligations to the Council of Europe for all member States that are not subject to any of the two specific monitoring procedures mentioned above. As specified in this resolution, the Monitoring Committee selects the countries for periodic review according to its internal working methods, on substantive grounds, while maintaining the objective of producing, over time, periodic monitoring reports on all member States. The Committee is currently preparing periodic review reports on Greece, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

6. Finally, the Committee can prepare a report on the functioning of democratic institutions in any member State when particular developments warrant. Following a motion for a Resolution, tabled by Ms Rian Vogels (Netherlands, ALDE) and others, the Committee was, on 29 September 2025, seized for a report on the functioning of Democratic Institutions in the Slovak Republic.

7. The country-specific comments and paragraphs have been prepared on the basis of the inputs of the respective country rapporteurs and reflect their reports, notes and statements as well as findings of other Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms. They should therefore not be considered as a political statement by the Chair of the Monitoring Committee.

2. Overview of the Committee's activities

2.1. General comments

8. 2025 proved to be another very busy year for the Committee and its mandate to monitor the honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by all our Member States.
9. During the January 2025 part-session, the Committee was seized for a report on the challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia, and I was appointed rapporteur in line agreed Committee.
10. Over the reporting period, the rapporteurs carried out the following visits to the countries under their respective responsibility: Georgia (twice), , Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye and Ukraine.
11. On 30 September 2025, the Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe in the context of the report on “The honouring of obligations and commitments by Azerbaijan” and on 9 December 2025, the Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly.
12. Furthermore, at the initiative of the relevant rapporteurs, several hearings were held during Committee meetings. A hearing was organised on the situation regarding the Media in Albania. A hearing in March and four exchanges of views were organised in respect of Georgia: in April, May, September and in October 2025. An exchange of views and a hearing were organised on Hungary: in March on recent developments in the country, and in May on “Challenges to civil society and independent media in Hungary”. A hearing was organised on “Revelations concerning surveillance of journalists and activists and the situation of civil society” in Serbia. In September, an exchange of views was organised on “The state of Spain’s implementation of the recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) concerning preventing corruption in parliament, judiciary, central governments and law enforcement agencies”. In January, a joint hearing with the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights was organised on the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights concerning Türkiye in the framework of the preparation of the report on “Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – 12th report”. In September, a joint hearing with the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination was organized on the situation of national minorities in Ukraine.
13. In May, the Latvian parliament invited the Committee to hold a meeting, and an exchange of views was organised with Latvian authorities with Ms Irēna Kucina, President of the Constitutional Court of Latvia, and Ms Lauma Paegļkalna, Vice-Minister of Justice of Latvia. A public Seminar on “Resilience and preparedness of civil society in the face of crises” was organised with Ms Claire Bazy Malaurie, President of the European Committee for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), Ms Inese Vaivare, Director of the National Platform for Development Cooperation, Latvia, Ms Olena Suslova, Founder and Senior Analyst of the Women’s Information Consultative Center, Ukraine, and Mr Iulian Groza, Executive Director of the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), Republic of Moldova.
14. The Monitoring Committee submitted four ordinary country reports to the Assembly during the reporting period: “The honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by Hungary”, and “Post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria” which the Assembly resolved to close. Two other reports which will be debated to the Assembly during the January 2026 part session: “Post-monitoring dialogue with North Macedonia” and “The functioning of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.
15. Several reports were prepared under urgent procedure, two with regard to Georgia (in addition to the report on the challenge of its unratified credentials): “The situation in Georgia and follow-up to Resolution 2585 (2025) “Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia”” during the April part-session and “Uphold democracy and the rule of law in Georgia” during the October part-session; and one on Türkiye: “The arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul and the state of democracy and human rights in Türkiye” during the April part-session.
16. During the year, the Committee considered and declassified an information note on the “honouring of obligations and commitments by the Republic of Moldova” and one on the “honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia”.
17. As in previous years, the outstanding co-operation with the Venice Commission continued over the reporting period and the Committee remained one of its most prolific clients. The Committee requested the

opinions on the Georgian Law on the registration of Foreign Agents, the amendments to the Law on Grants and other Laws related to “foreign influence”. In respect of Hungary it requested opinions on the draft bill on “The transparency of Public Life” and other legislation relating to “foreign influence, the fourteenth amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary and Act LXVII of 2024 on the amendment of Act CLI of 2011 on the Constitutional Court and on the legal status of the Prosecutor General, prosecutors and other prosecutorial employees and on the career of a prosecutor, as well as on the December 2024 electoral reform. In respect of Poland, it requested an opinion on draft laws on the status of judges as prepared by the Codification Commission of the Ministry of Justice of Poland and with regard to the Slovak Republic it requested (urgent) opinions on the draft amendments to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and on Law No. 109/2025 amending the Law “on non-profit organisations providing services of general interest”.

2.2. Countries under a full monitoring procedure

2.2. 1. Armenia

18. The latest monitoring resolution on Armenia was [Resolution 2560 \(2024\)](#), adopted in June 2024. The Parliamentary Assembly commended Armenia for its ongoing commitment to democratic development in the face of significant security challenges, particularly following the recent humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Assembly acknowledged Armenia's efforts in pursuing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan and supported the ongoing electoral reforms that have led to more transparent elections. While acknowledging progress in areas such as judicial independence and anti-corruption measures, it emphasised the necessity for ongoing dialogue between the ruling majority and opposition, as well as the importance of safeguarding democratic institutions from political influence.

19. In 2025, the conclusion of the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty talks, announced in March, dominated proceedings. On 8 August 2025, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan met in Washington to sign the text of the draft peace treaty and a joint declaration. This meeting was a significant turning point in the history of the bilateral relationship. Following this, the OSCE decided to close the Minsk process and its related structures at the request of Armenia and Azerbaijan. On 18 November 2025, Armenian and Azerbaijani parliamentarians met for a bilateral meeting in Istanbul. The delegations discussed the role of the parliaments in implementing confidence-building measures between the two countries. Both sides emphasised the significance of constructive dialogue among parliamentarians within international organisations.

20. In March 2025, Armenia's National Assembly passed a law approving accession to the European Union, signifying a major foreign policy shift towards stronger European integration.

21. In June, a significant dispute between State and the Armenian Apostolic Church arose. Important protests were initiated by religious leaders, fueled by ongoing tensions between the government and the Armenian Apostolic Church. The protests were notably led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, who initiated a civil disobedience campaign known as the "Holy Struggle," calling for marches and rallies including a demonstration in Yerevan. Although couched in moral and spiritual terms, the movement had clear political demands, including calls for Prime Minister Pashinyan to step down. This blended religious considerations with opposition politics. By June 2025, the conflict had escalated, resulting in the arrest of Archbishop Galstanyan and other clergy members. They were accused of plotting to usurp power and overthrow the constitutional order.

22. In January 2025, following the conclusion of the former co-rapporteur Kimmo Kiljunen's mandate, Mr Piero Fassino (Italy, SOC) was selected to serve alongside Ms Boriana Åberg (Sweden, EPP/CD) as co-rapporteurs. A monitoring visit had been scheduled for October 2025 but had to be postponed. The next parliamentary elections in Armenia are scheduled for 7 June 2026. These elections will determine the composition of the National Assembly and the prime minister's position.

2.2.2. Azerbaijan

23. In 2025, the Azerbaijani delegation remained absent in the Assembly for a second year, as it had not presented its credentials during the January part-session (27-31 January 2025).³ Therefore, the examination

³ In 2024, the Azerbaijani delegation did not take part in the Assembly's work following the latter's [Resolution 2527 \(2024\)](#) on “Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Azerbaijan” of 24 January 2024, in which it resolved not to ratify the credentials of that delegation.

by the Assembly of the Monitoring Committee's report of 5 December 2023⁴ on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Azerbaijan was further delayed.

24. The co-rapporteurs for Azerbaijan – Ms Lise Christoffersen (Norway, SOC) and Sir Christopher Chope (United Kingdom, ECPA)⁵ – continued to monitor the situation in the country. On 30 September 2025, the Monitoring Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe about ways of cooperation with the country.

25. The co-rapporteurs monitored, in particular, the dire situation of human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society representatives. On 16 January 2025, Ms Christoffersen (Norway, SOC), issued a statement, along with the then General Rapporteur for political prisoners, Ms Thórhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC) (Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), condemning the sentencing of Mr Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, a well-known Azerbaijani civil activist.⁶

26. According to independent civil society groups, there are 392 political prisoners in the country, including human rights defenders, activists, journalists and media figures, politicians and political activists, academics and intellectuals.⁷ Human rights activist Mr Anar Mammadli, Head of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre and winner of the Assembly's 2014 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, has remained in detention on remand since 30 April 2024, awaiting trial on charges of foreign currency smuggling, tax evasion, illegal entrepreneurship and forgery.⁸

27. On 20 May 2025, Mr Iqbal Abilov, a Talysh historian and ethnographer, was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment and found guilty of treason and incitement of hatred, in relation to his professional exchanges with Armenian scholars.⁹

28. On 20 June 2025, the Baku Court of Serious Crimes sentenced seven journalists and media workers affiliated with Abzas Media (Mr Ulvi Hasanli, Mr Sevinc Vagifgizi, Mr Hafiz Babali, Mr Mahammad Kekalov, Mr Nargiz Absalamova, Ms Elnara Gasimova and Mr Farid Mehralizade) to prison sentences of 7,5 to 9 years, mainly of 'foreign currency smuggling'. On 9 September 2025, the Baku Court of Appeal upheld this judgment. The journalists and their legal representatives have denied all accusations and denounced the trial as politically motivated.¹⁰ These convictions raised criticism within the Council of Europe.¹¹ Abzas Media director Mr Ulvi Hasanli had participated in Assembly's Committees' hearings in the past and had cooperated with its rapporteurs. In 2025, he was one of the three short-listed nominees for the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.

29. In 2025, the Azerbaijani authorities resumed cooperation with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT). The CPT carried out a periodic visit to Azerbaijan from 22 September to 3 October 2025; it was its sixth periodic visit to the country. The CPT examined the treatment and conditions of detention of persons in the custody of law enforcement agencies, in prison establishments and in psychiatric institutions.¹²

30. On 8 August 2025, a significant milestone was reached with the initialling of the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace agreement in Washington DC, United States. This agreement stipulates that both States will relinquish all territorial claims against each other, refrain from the use of force, and commit to upholding international law. It thus paves the way for a final settlement of the longstanding conflict between the two countries, both of which have been Council of Europe member States since 2001.¹³

⁴ Doc. 15927, 12 February 2024.

⁵ Appointed by the Monitoring Committee at its meeting in Paris on 4 March.

⁶ [PACE rapporteurs express deep concern at the sentencing of Bakhtiyar Hajiyev in Azerbaijan](#), 16 January 2025.

⁷ As of 3 November 2025, see at: [Anar Mammadli Campaign to end repression in Azerbaijan](#)

⁸ [Azerbaijan: authorities should release imprisoned human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists - Commissioner for Human Rights](#), 29 April 2025.

⁹ [Azerbaijan: PACE General Rapporteur deplors sentencing of a Talysh academic to 18 years in prison](#), 22 May 2025.

¹⁰ [Verdict against Abzas Media Journalists Upheld – IRFS](#), 10 September 2025.

¹¹ [Azerbaijan: the Commissioner reiterates his call for the release of imprisoned human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists - Commissioner for Human Rights](#), 25 June 2025, and [Convictions of Abzas Media journalists 'part of a continuing pattern of pressure against independent media in Azerbaijan' says PACE rapporteur](#), 12 September 2025.

¹² [Council of Europe anti-torture Committee \(CPT\) carries out a visit to Azerbaijan - CPT](#), 6 October 2025.

¹³ Statement by the Council of Europe's Secretary General: [Armenia and Azerbaijan: A milestone on the road to lasting peace - Portal](#), 8 August 2025.

31. On 25 January 2025, local elections were held for the country's 685 municipalities, with a turnout of over 31,45% of the overall electorate.¹⁴ The Congress for Local and Regional Authorities did not observe them.

2.2.3. Bosnia and Herzegovina

32. The latest resolution adopted by the Assembly was [Resolution 2574 \(2024\)](#), in which the Assembly reaffirmed its support for Bosnia and Herzegovina and urged member States to respect its sovereignty. The Assembly has commended recent reforms in the country, including anti-corruption measures and the establishment of a human rights ombudsman, which have led to the opening of EU accession negotiations. However, it has expressed concern over the electoral framework's compliance with human rights standards, the functioning of the Constitutional Court, and the need for further constitutional reforms. The Assembly has made a number of calls for improvements, including to electoral legislation, judicial efficiency, anti-corruption efforts, and the protection of human rights.

33. On 3 December 2024, the Committee decided to appoint Mr Pablo Hispán (Spain, EPP/CD) as co-rapporteur. On 20 September 2025, the mandate of Mr Zsolt Németh (Hungary, ECPA) was extended until 31 January 2026. The Committee conducted a discussion on the latest developments in March and in May, and subsequently held a hearing with Mr Elmedin Konaković, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in September. In November 2025, both co-rapporteurs conducted a country visit in Sarajevo. The delegation met with the Chair of the Council of Ministers, Ms Borjana Kristo, the Ministry of Justice, Mr Davor Bunoza, the Ministry of Human Rights, Mr Sevlid Hurtic, and representatives of the most prominent political parties in parliament. They also met with the acting president of Republika Srpska, Ms Ana Trisić Babić.

34. The co-rapporteurs have prepared a report on the functioning of democratic institutions that was adopted by the Committee on 9 December 2025. In their report, the co-rapporteurs covered the political developments that took place since the latest Assembly resolution, in 2024. They addressed the issue of the institutional reforms needed to fully honour Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitments undertaken on its accession to the Council of Europe. The report also explores the issue of State property, a key element in the political situation.

2.2.4. Georgia

35. The rapid dramatic democratic backsliding in Georgia has been an important point of attention of the work of the Committee. The rapporteurs for Georgia made two fact-finding visits to the country, in January and November 2025. In addition to the report on the challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia, the Assembly debated two reports prepared under urgent procedure by the two co-rapporteurs for Georgia, in April and October 2025.

36. In addition, a hearing and three exchanges of views were organised on Georgia. In March, the Committee organised a hearing on "The human rights concerns in relation to the ongoing crisis in Georgia", with Mr Marc Cools, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Ms Nino Lomjaria, Executive Director of Georgia's European Orbit and former Public Defender (Ombudsperson) of Georgia, Mr Ucha Nanuashvili, Founder of the Human Rights Center of Georgia, Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and former Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia, Ms Tina Bokuchava, representative of the three political forces (Coalition for Change, Unity – National Movement, and Strong Georgia), and Ms Natia Mezvrishvili, Deputy Chair of the political party For Georgia. In April, an exchange of views on the situation in Georgia and follow-up to [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#) was organised with Ms Salome Samadashvili, Strong Georgia, and Ms Tina Bokuchava, United National Movement – Unity. During its May meeting, the Committee organised an exchange of views on "The human rights situation and challenges to civil society and media in Georgia", with Ms Claire Bazy Malaurie, President of the European Committee for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), and Mr Michael O'Flaherty, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Lastly, in September, the Committee held an exchange of views on "the impact of the transparency legislation on civil society", with Ms Eka Gigauri, Executive Director, Transparency International Georgia, and Mr Dave Elseroad, Head of Advocacy and Geneva Office, Human Rights House Foundation.

37. Over the last year, the authorities' policies have become increasingly isolationist and antagonistic towards the European organisations and their member States, as evidenced by the baseless attacks and damaging accusations against members of the international community in Georgia. Regrettably, despite their credentials being ratified, all members of the Georgian delegation resigned following the adoption of [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#) on the 'Challenge on substantive grounds of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary

¹⁴ [Central Election Commission announces preliminary results of municipal elections](#), 30 January 2025.

delegation of Georgia'. The Georgian authorities' rejection of any form of dialogue and their refusal to cooperate with, inter alia, the Venice Commission in preparing its opinions on Georgian legislation is deeply concerning.

38. Regrettably, despite the many calls to the contrary, no inclusive process to establish an electoral environment conducive to new, genuinely democratic elections was implemented. Consequently, the majority of opposition parties decided not to participate in the local elections that took place on 4 October 2025. Only Lelo-Strong Georgia and For Georgia of the main democratic opposition parties participated, while the others called for a boycott of the local elections. In this contested electoral environment, Georgian Dream won 81.7% of the vote with a turnout of 40.9%, Strong Georgia won 6.7%, and For Georgia won 3.7%. The main democratic opposition parties, including those that had participated in the elections, decried the elections as rigged and manipulated in favour of the ruling majority. Regrettably, these elections were not observed by civil society organisations with a well-respected track record in election observation due to the crackdown on such organisations. The Georgian authorities invited the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) to observe these elections purposefully so late as to render their observation impossible and outright declined to invite the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

39. Nevertheless, following the elections, both Strong Georgia and For Georgia announced that they would take up the mandates won in the different local councils. In addition, in a move that was decried by the other opposition forces, For Georgia announced on 20 October that it would end its boycott of the parliament, and its members took up their mandates on 28 October 2025.

40. The past year was characterised by an increasingly harsh and relentless crackdown of the Georgian authorities on political dissent. This included the adoption of repressive legislation and the abuse of politically motivated legal proceedings against civil society, independent media, opposition forces and individual protesters. The politically motivated prosecution of opposition members and independent journalists, including Ms Mzia Amaglobeli, was strongly condemned by the international community including the Parliamentary Assembly. This relentless crackdown exacerbates the country's social and political crisis, violates its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe and accelerates its democratic backsliding.

41. In stark contrast with the lengthy prison sentences handed down to protesters on questionable and allegedly fabricated charges, no effective investigations have been conducted into police brutality and other human rights abuses during the demonstrations, nor into the many substantiated reports of torture and ill-treatment of demonstrators during their arrest and detention.

42. A large-scale popular protest against the increasing authoritarianism of the ruling majority was organised on 4 October 2025, the day of the local elections. While reportedly largely peaceful, regrettably violence broke out when a number of protesters tried to storm the Presidential Palace, which was prevented by the police. While criticised by most of the opposition and civil society as a regrettable and misguided, but spontaneous, action by a number of protesters at the instigation of some individual organisers, the authorities considered the unrest on 4 October as an attempt of violent overthrow of the government with the backing of western governments and other actors. A total of 44 individuals were placed under pre-trial detention for their involvement in the unrest. Amendments were adopted to the Law on Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code, that substantially increased the administrative and criminal penalties for actions such as covering faces, blocking roads and participating in assemblies that officials had ordered to be terminated. In a clear signal that the authorities wish to crackdown on the daily demonstrations that are taking place, many protesters are reportedly being detained on nearly daily basis, some of them facing long prison times for being charged with blocking a road for a second time.¹⁵

43. Several former members of the Georgian Dream leadership, and high-level government officials – including former Prime Minister Mr Irakli Garibashvili and former Prosecutor General Mr Otar Partskhaladze – have been arrested and charged with corruption and abuse of office. While widely considered part of an internal power struggle and retribution, it highlights the continuing existence of widespread high-level corruption within Georgian governmental circles.¹⁶

44. Civil society in Georgia has historically played a pivotal role in the country's democratic development. The different actions by the Georgian authorities to impede the proper functioning of civil society organisations, including through the controversial Transparency of Foreign Influence Law and Georgian Foreign Agent Registration Act (GEOFARA) which was adopted on 1 April 2025. In addition, on 16 April and 11 June 2025, the Georgian authorities adopted a series of amendments in 2025 which require international donors, including

¹⁵ Protester Faces Up to One Year in Jail After Police Arrests Him for 'Repeat Road-Blocking' – Civil Georgia.

¹⁶ TI-Georgia: Elite Corruption 'Remains Widespread' Despite GD's Crackdown on Ex-Officials – Civil Georgia.

the Council of Europe and its member States, to obtain the Georgian Government's approval before providing funds or assistance to Georgian civil society organisations. Receiving an unauthorised grant will result in criminal prosecution. The cumulative effect of these laws has been devastating for civil society in Georgia, whose survival is currently at risk.

45. In its opinion on the Law on the Registration of Foreign Agents, the amendments to the law on grants and other laws relating to “foreign influence” that was requested by the Monitoring Committee, the Venice Commission concluded that *“the legal regime established by GEOFARA risks undermining the rule of law, civic space, and democratic freedoms”*¹⁷ and recommended this law to be repealed. With regard to the law on Grants, the Venice Commission considered that the amendments *“provide no clear and objective criteria for refusal and contain insufficient safeguards, thereby leaving wide scope for arbitrary or discriminatory application. The extensive investigatory and enforcement powers of the Bureau, including the power to order immediate seizure, combined with constrained procedural timelines and disproportionate sanctions, further undermine fairness and due process”*¹⁸. It therefore recommended that the amendments be repealed.

46. In this opinion, the Venice Commission also evaluated the amendments to the law on broadcasting, that introduce a blanket ban on foreign funding for broadcasters, which *“undermines media pluralism and fails the standards of necessity and proportionality.” and recommended that these amendments be repealed.*¹⁹ On the other hand, the Venice Commission felt that amendments to the Law on Political Association of Citizens that fully prohibit political parties from receiving in-kind support, such as free lectures or seminars, from legal entities or associations in Georgia or abroad fall within the permissible national margin of discretion.

47. At the moment of writing, more than 60 civil society organisations have been informed that they will be subjected to inspections by the anti-corruption Bureau, the independence of which from the executive branch of government is questionable, and at least seven well-respected civil society organisations had their bank accounts frozen as part of a criminal investigation into alleged sabotage on behalf of foreign entities.

48. On 2 September 2025, the Parliamentary Investigative Commission into the activities of the “United National Movement (UNM) regime’ and its political representatives between 2003 and 2012 – this investigation was later extended to cover the period from 2012 until the present day – published its report. This report concluded that the UNM and its affiliated parties hindered the establishment of a healthy political system in Georgia and should therefore be banned. On 16 October 2025, the Georgian parliament adopted in final reading a legislative package that will make it possible to deprive any individual “associated” with parties declared unconstitutional of basic political rights such as their passive voting rights, including the right to found or join political parties or hold public office. On 28 October 2025, the ruling party announced that it had filed an appeal to the Constitutional Court to ban three key opposition movements – the United National Movement, Ahali/Coalition for Change, and Strong Georgia/Lelo. It stated that it had not appealed for a ban of the For Georgia party as it had now entered the parliament, or – for the moment – the ban of smaller opposition parties, reportedly as they, “do not have a significant influence due to their size and organizational structure, including the real prospect of overcoming the electoral threshold”. At this stage, the ruling majority is not appealing to deprive individuals associated with these parties of their political rights as envisaged by the legislative package adopted on 16 October 2025. The rapporteurs issued a statement reiterating the Assembly’s position that banning the democratic opposition would effectively establish a one-party dictatorship and urged the ruling majority to reconsider their appeal.

49. On 4 November 2025, the European Commission presented its annual Enlargement Package. In its report on Georgia, the European Commission noted that it had witnessed in Georgia “serious democratic backsliding, with a rapid erosion of the rule of law and fundamental rights being severely restricted” and restrictive laws targeting activists, civil society and independent media, threaten the survival of democratic foundations”. It therefore concluded that. *“The basic foundations of democracy were significantly undermined during the reporting period. The Georgian authorities’ attack on democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms through hostile rhetoric, constant spreading of disinformation, intimidation, repressive actions and legislative measures is a drastic setback for the country’s democracy. Civil liberties, the principle of checks and balances, and democratic decision-making have been eroded” as a result of which “Georgia does not have a viable path to the European Union unless conditions change dramatically. It is now a candidate country in name only”*.²⁰

¹⁷ CDL-AD(2025)034 § 117.

¹⁸ Ibid § 118.

¹⁹ Ibid § 120.

²⁰ Georgia Report 2025 - Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood

50. The crackdown on the opposition further escalated when, on 6 November, the Prosecutor General's office announced that it had started criminal proceedings²¹ against several leading politicians from different opposition parties (Mr Mikheil Saakashvili, Mr Giorgi Vashadze, Mr Nika Gvaramia, Mr Nika Melia, Mr Zurab Japaridze, Ms Elene Khoshtaria, Mr Mamuka Khazaradze and Mr Badri Japaridze) for Crimes against the State, in particular sabotage, assistance in hostile activities to a foreign country, financing activities directed against the constitutional order of Georgia and the foundations of national security, and calling for the violent change of the constitutional order of Georgia or the overthrow of the State government.²² If convicted on these, widely considered trumped-up, charges, these persons could face lengthy prison sentences, in some cases, up to 15 years. In addition, on 12 November, the Prosecutor General filed criminal charges against Mr Giorgi Gakharia, the leader of the "For Georgia" party for "*organizing the intentional infliction of severe bodily harm against two or more persons*" in and "*abuse of official powers*" when he was Minister of the Interior for Georgian Dream.²³ These charges carry potential sentences of up to 13 years.

51. The rapporteurs for Georgia visited Tbilisi from 10 to 12 November 2025. During their visit, the rapporteurs met with the ruling majority and main parliamentary and extra parliamentary opposition parties and visited several of the detained opposition leaders in prison. Regrettably, the representatives of the government and its institutions refused to meet with the rapporteurs. Following the visit, the rapporteurs called again on the authorities to immediately end the politically motivated charges against the opposition parties and their leadership and urged them to repeal the foreign agent legislation and the law on administrative offences which are incompatible with European standards and norms, as noted by the Venice Commission in its opinion on these pieces of legislation.

2.2.5. Hungary

52. The Committee has discussed the developments in Hungary on several occasions in 2025. In January, the Committee agreed to request two opinions to the Venice Commission, on the fourteenth amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary and on the December 2024 electoral reform. In March, the Committee held a hearing on recent developments in the country, with the participation of Mr Tamás Bodoky, journalist, editor and publisher at *atlatzo.hu*, and Mr András Léderer, Head of advocacy at the Hungarian Helsinki Committee. In May, the Committee held an exchange of views on "Challenges to civil society and independent media in Hungary", with the participation of Ms Claire Bazy Malaurie, President of the Venice Commission and Mr Michael O'Flaherty, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. On 19 May 2025, the Co-rapporteurs issued a statement: "The Hungarian draft law on "transparency in public life" must not be adopted, say PACE monitors".

53. In June, the Committee considered a preliminary draft report and agreed to send it to the authorities of Hungary for comments and agreed to request the Venice Commission for an opinion on the draft bill of Hungary on "The transparency of Public Life" and other legislation relating to "foreign influence". The Committee considered a draft report and adopted a draft resolution in September 2025, and this resolution was adopted by the Assembly on 30 September 2025.

54. According to the co-rapporteur's explanatory memorandum, Hungary has undergone dramatic political and legal transformations since 2010, marked by the dominance of the Fidesz-KDNP coalition and a series of structural changes to the country's constitutional order, electoral system, and state institutions. As a result, there has been a significant decline in the quality of democracy, rule of law, and the protection of human rights, leading to growing concerns at both domestic and international levels.

55. Following its transition to a parliamentary republic and accession to the Council of Europe in 1990, Hungary initially made strides toward pluralist democracy and respect for human rights. However, the adoption of a new Constitution in 2011 triggered mounting scrutiny, with international bodies repeatedly urging Hungary to honor democratic standards amid fears of "illiberal democracy."

²¹ According to the statement of the PG's office, Mr Mikheil Saakashvili will be charged under Article 317 of the Criminal Code of Georgia - for calling for a violent change of the constitutional order of Georgia or for the overthrow of the State government. Zurab Girchi Japaridze and Giorgi Vashadze will be charged under Article 318, Part 1 and Article 319 of the Criminal Code of Georgia - for sabotage and assistance in activities hostile to a foreign country. Ms Elene Khoshtaria will be charged under Article 318, Part 1, Article 319 and Part 1 of Article 321, of the Criminal Code of Georgia - for sabotage, provision of material resources for the aforementioned crime and assistance in activities hostile to a foreign country. Nika Gvaramia, Nikanor Melia, Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze will be charged under Article 318, Part 1 of the Criminal Code of Georgia - sabotage.

²² [Georgian Authorities to Prosecute Eight Opposition Leaders Over 'Crimes Against State' – Civil Georgia.](#)

²³ [Georgian Authorities to Prosecute Eight Opposition Leaders for 'Crimes Against State' – Civil Georgia](#)

56. Electoral legislation has been systematically modified to favour the ruling coalition, through gerrymandering and the introduction of first-past-the-post voting amplifying majoritarian advantages. Additionally, the financing of political parties and campaigns have displayed profound disparities, with pro-government actors enjoying far greater resources, weak transparency, and little effective oversight of campaign funding practices. Such changes allowed to transform simple majorities out of the ballot boxes into 2/3 “supermajorities” in Parliament, giving the power to single-handedly change the constitution. Numerous constitutional reforms have consolidated executive power and undermined institutional checks and balances.

57. Partisan control has extended to judicial institutions, regulatory bodies, and public oversight offices through supermajority appointments, challenging the independence of the judiciary and weakening mechanisms that ensure government accountability. While recent reforms aimed at accessing frozen EU funds have introduced improvements in judicial functions, broad discretion over appointments and disciplinary controls remain vested in ruling party allies.

58. The fight against corruption, a persistent and serious issue in Hungary, does not seem to make any progress. Anti-corruption authorities are either undermined or subject to political influence. Despite the introduction of institutions such as the Integrity Authority and the Anti-Corruption Task Force at the behest of the EU, these bodies face operational crises and accusations of political persecution, compounded by non-transparent asset transactions and procurement irregularities. Independent media and civil society helping to expose corruption cases are targeted by official authorities and hampered in their functioning.

59. Media freedom and pluralism have greatly suffered, with media regulatory authorities and public service broadcasters dominated by government affiliates. Media ownership is concentrated in pro-government hands, limiting independent journalistic voices to a small minority and subjecting critical outlets to administrative and financial pressure.

60. Civil society and academic independence have likewise been eroded, with public interest foundations taking control of universities and cultural institutions, removing them from public or parliamentary oversight. Funding for independent NGOs has been curtailed in favour of government-aligned organizations, and new laws threaten the operation and existence of critical civil society actors.

61. In its [Resolution 2617 \(2025\)](#), the Assembly called for a complete overhaul of the electoral legislation after the 2026 elections, for the publication of the GRECO reports and the strengthening of independent anti-corruption institutions; for restoration of public oversight over public interest asset management foundations and for measures to strengthen the independent oversight of the media. The Assembly also called for the abolition of the Sovereignty Protection Office. The Assembly expressed its readiness to further the constructive dialogue and close co-operation with the Hungarian authorities within the framework of the monitoring procedure.

2.2.6. Republic of Moldova

62. The rapporteurs visited the Republic of Moldova from 26 to 28 May 2025. On 1 October 2025, Mr Antonio Gutiérrez Limones (Spain, SOC) was appointed co-rapporteur to replace Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez (Switzerland, SOC) who had left the Assembly.

63. The political agenda in the Republic of Moldova during 2025 was dominated by the preparations for the Parliamentary elections that took place on 28 September 2025. Nevertheless, the reform progress continued unabated during this period. Election preparations in the Republic of Moldova were dominated by significant concerns over foreign interference, especially from the Russian Federation through disinformation campaigns and vote-buying schemes during as it had been the case for the 2024 presidential contest and constitutional referendum.

64. The parliamentary elections were observed by an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) of which the Assembly was a part. According to the IEOM, the Republic of Moldova’s parliamentary elections were competitive and offered voters a clear choice between political alternatives, but the process was marred by serious cases of foreign interference, illegal funding, vote buying, cyberattacks and widespread disinformation campaigns especially by the Russian Federation. The electoral legislation provides a sound basis for conducting democratic elections but frequent changes to the legislation, including shortly before the elections, have raised some concerns about legal certainty and stability of electoral legislation.

65. The Republic of Moldova has a very sizable diaspora, with about 1/3 of its citizens living outside the country. As a result, the issue of diaspora voting is an important as well as a sensitive issue in the Republic of Moldova. This is compounded by the fact that the diaspora vote has had a significant impact on the outcome

of recent elections including the parliamentary elections. In this context, the postal vote was an issue of some controversy. Moldovan authorities introduced postal voting on a trial basis for the last Presidential elections and constitutional referendum. During this trial phase, the number of countries where postal voting took place was limited to six: the United States, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. In its opinion on the Law on Postal Voting, the Venice Commission highlighted that “The limited territorial scope of this trial is acceptable due to its application to one vote only” and that for future elections it should be introduced “to all countries where postal voting is safe and reliable, to be identified by decisions of the Central Electoral Commission”. Postal voting for the parliamentary elections was introduced in two additional countries: Japan and Australia. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has stated that it did not have the required administrative resources to conduct postal voting across the board in all countries.

66. These elections were won by the incumbent PAS with 50,2% of the votes, or 55 seats. The Patriotic Electoral Bloc consisting of the PSRM, the PCRM and two other smaller parties, won 24.2% of the vote, or 26 seats while the Alternativa of Chisinau mayor Ion Ceban won 8% of the votes or 8 seats. Two other parties, the PN and PPDA each won 6 seats in the new parliament, while all other parties failed to win any mandates. In the light of the contentious and tense electoral cycles, the ruling party will have to follow an inclusive governance and reform policy in order to ensure the effectiveness as well as irreversibility of the reforms.

67. Media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova are balanced by the urgent need to counteract disinformation and hate speech, especially given foreign attempts to sway public opinion and disrupt democratic processes. Legislative initiatives to strengthen mass media regulation and oversight, as well as to clarify the responsibilities of regulatory bodies, have been introduced and evaluated with recommendations from the Venice Commission. However, critics have expressed concern over the closure of media outlets for national security reasons, emphasising the importance of transparency and safeguards to ensure such measures do not erode trust in the Republic of Moldova’s democratic path.

68. Judicial reforms reflect the Republic of Moldova’s determination to meet international standards, especially in its quest for European Union accession. Noteworthy steps include the appointment of judicial officials, the proposed merging of prosecutorial bodies to streamline anti-corruption efforts, and comprehensive changes to the Constitutional Court’s legislation. The Venice Commission has generally supported these reforms but continues to advocate for strengthening judicial independence further and clarifying constitutional controls over international treaties. Judge appointments and term limits have become points of attention, as these will shape the institutional landscape for years to come.

69. On 4 November 2025, the European Commission presented its annual Enlargement Package. In its report on the Republic of Moldova, the European Commission concluded that the Republic of Moldova has continued to show resilience and commitment to reforms progress despite unprecedented challenges as a result of attempts by the Russian Federation and its proxies to destabilise the country. The European Commission emphasised that the authorities should ensure that its electoral legislation fully aligns with European standards and to increase parliamentary transparency, accountability, integrity and overall effectiveness. It welcomed the progress in the reforms of the judiciary and the fight against corruption and called for the strengthening of the capacities of the anti-corruption institutions. It acknowledged the legislative and institutional framework for the protection of fundamental rights, but with regard to freedom of expression, it called for the mechanism allowing the withdrawal of the licences of TV/radio channels under the law on strategic investment to be brought in line with European standards and for the adoption of a new law on Mass Media.

2.2.7. Poland

70. Also in the light of the Presidential election no rapporteurs’ visits took place during 2025. On 9 September 2025, Mr Christophe Bricq (Monaco, EPP/CD) was appointed co-rapporteur to replace Mr Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD) who had left the Assembly.

71. Presidential Elections in Poland took place on 18 May and 1 June 2025, against a backdrop of deep political polarisation and unresolved institutional disputes that have defined the country since 2015. These elections were observed by an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) of which the Assembly was a part. The IEOM concluded that “the presidential election in Poland was competitive and well managed, but deeply affected by long-standing political polarisation, media bias, and continuing controversies regarding the independence of key oversight institutions. Both rounds respected fundamental freedoms, and election day was calm and professionally organised. However, ballot secrecy was not always ensured, campaign finance lacked transparency, and disinformation and foreign interference posed serious risks”.²⁴

²⁴ Doc. 16258, § 7.

72. Mr Karol Nawrocki, who was supported by PiS and its allies, narrowly won the second round of the elections with 50.89% of the vote, beating Mr Rafał Trzaskowski, who was supported by the parties of the governing coalition, who received 49.11% of the vote. This result highlights the deep political division in the country. As a result, the president and government of Poland continue to belong to opposing political camps. In the polarised political climate of the country, this risks a continuation of the constitutional standoff between the government and the president that has plagued the country since the last parliamentary elections. This standoff has impeded the necessary judicial reforms demanded by the ECtHR in its judgments on the judiciary's lack of independence. It is likely that the President will continue former President Duda's practice of blocking practically all of the government's legal initiatives, including the much-needed judicial reforms demanded by the ECtHR. The need for these urgent reforms to the rule of law was underscored by the CJEU's judgment on 4 September 2025, which ruled that any judicial decision rendered by a panel that does not comply with the requirements of EU law — in other words, any decision involving judges appointed after the controversial reform of the National Council of the Judiciary in 2017 — must be declared null and void.

73. On 23 July Prime Minister Tusk announced a government reshuffle in the wake of the Presidential election. The most notable change was the dismissal of the Minister of Justice Mr Adam Bodnar, who was replaced by Mr Waldemar Żurek, a former member and spokesperson of the National Council of the Judiciary and, one of the most vocal critics of PiS-led reforms.

74. To support the reform of the judiciary, the Monitoring Committee requested an opinion from the Venice Commission on the draft laws on the status of judges, prepared by the Codification Commission of the Polish Ministry of Justice, on 4 March 2025. On 10 October 2025, The Minister of Justice, Waldemar Żurek, formally presented the draft law, titled "Act on Restoring the Right to an Independent and Impartial Court Established by Law by Regulating the Effects of Resolutions of the National Council of the Judiciary Adopted in 2018–2025. This will "now enable the Venice Commission to finalise its opinion in the near future".

2.2.8. Serbia

75. The co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee closely followed the situation in Serbia, although a visit to the country could not be organised due to the political developments (see below) and changes in the rapporteurships.²⁵ The Monitoring Committee discussed the situation in Serbia during its meetings in March, April and May 2025. At the April meeting, it held a hearing on "Revelations concerning surveillance of journalists and activists and the situation of civil society".²⁶ The Assembly held two urgent debates – on 8 April ("Protests and rallies in the Western Balkans and Central Europe") and on 1 October ("The political crisis in Serbia") – during which it discussed the situation in the country.

76. The co-rapporteurs, Mr Axel Schäfer and Ms Victoria Tiblom, issued a few statements, in which they expressed concern about the deterioration of the situation in the country due to the escalation of mass protests since November 2024.²⁷ The unrest began after a tragic accident in November 2024 — the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station canopy — that left sixteen people dead. Initially driven by student-led protests, the movement quickly expanded nationwide, encompassing a wide spectrum of Serbian society. Protesters demand new elections, transparency, accountability, and the eradication of corruption that they claim erodes the rule of law and public trust. Huge protests took place in Belgrade and other major cities in March, June and August 2025. The March protest, although largely peaceful, was disrupted when a loud blast, possibly from a Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD), caused panic and injuries. The June and August protests culminated in violent clashes between demonstrators and police. On 1 November 2025, a big march was organised in Novi Sad to commemorate the 1st anniversary of the tragic incident at the railway station.

²⁵ Ms Victoria Tiblom (Sweden, ECPA) was appointed on 28 January 2025 to replace Mr Thibault François (France, ECPA). Following the departure from the Assembly of Mr Axel Schäfer (Germany, SOC) in June 2025, a new co-rapporteur – Mr Yunus Emre (Türkiye, SOC) – was appointed on 9 September 2025.

²⁶ On 8 April 2025, with the participation of Mr Raša Nedeljkov, Programme Director, CRTA (Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability), Belgrade, Serbia, Ms Jelena Sesar, Balkans researcher, Amnesty International, London, United Kingdom, and Mr Milan Trifunović, Head of the Technical Directorate, Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Belgrade, Serbia. On 23 December 2024, the co-rapporteurs reacted to the findings by *Amnesty International* and the *Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)* that Serbian police and intelligence services were using advanced phone spyware alongside mobile phone forensic products to unlawfully target journalists, activists and others; see their statement [PACE monitor expresses deep concern at the surveillance of Serbian journalists and activists](#).

²⁷ [Surge of clashes in Serbia: PACE rapporteur urges all sides to refrain from further violence and to engage in constructive dialogue](#) of 21 August 2025, [PACE monitor deeply concerned about the escalating tensions in Serbia](#) of 1 July 2025, [PACE monitoring co-rapporteurs express concern about the escalation of tensions in Serbia](#) of 20 March 2025 and [PACE monitors urge dialogue to defuse tensions in Serbia](#) of 20 February 2025.

77. The co-rapporteurs urged Serbian authorities to respond with dialogue rather than force. They condemned all forms of violence — whether by the State, pro-government groups, or protesters and expressed concern about incidents of police brutality (including excessive use of tear gas and batons), arbitrary detentions, the use of surveillance against journalists and activists and harassment of civil society groups.

78. The situation has also been followed by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Michael O’Flaherty, who visited Serbia in April 2025 and expressed concern about increased levels of the use of force by the police during protests as well as arbitrary arrests and detention of protesters.²⁸ The state of freedom of expression and media remains an issue of concern. In 2025, the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists issued at least 11 alerts, including in cases of denigration of journalists criticising the government, physical attacks or other harassment against journalists covering protests and Pegasus surveillance²⁹.

79. In February 2025, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (“Framework Convention”) issued its [Fifth Opinion on Serbia](#).³⁰ It has concluded that although Serbia has a strong legal framework for the protection of minority rights, progress is still needed on the practical level. Persons belonging to national minorities face ongoing difficulties in fully enjoying their rights under the Framework Convention. These challenges are influenced by shifting political priorities, social polarisation, and inter-State relations. There are notable regional inequalities, with stronger minority rights protection in Vojvodina compared to southern Serbia, underscoring the need for a more consistent, nationwide approach. Additionally, Roma communities experience significant obstacles in accessing their rights across multiple areas.

2.2.9. Türkiye

80. In 2025, the Monitoring Committee and its co-rapporteurs on Türkiye — Mr Stefan Schennach, (Austria, SOC) and Lord David Blencathra (United Kingdom, ECPA) — continued to closely follow the situation in the country. The Monitoring Committee discussed different issues concerning Türkiye at its meetings in January,³¹ April, May, June and October 2025. The co-rapporteurs on Türkiye made a fact-finding visit to Ankara and Istanbul on 9-13 June 2025.³²

81. Türkiye experienced significant political turbulence in 2025, marked by developments focusing around two issues: attacks and judicial harassment against the main opposition party — the Republican People’s Party (CHP) — and the start of the Kurdish peace process.

82. As regards the first topic, attacks against the CHP culminated with the arrest on 19 March of Mr Ekrem İmamoğlu, the Mayor of Istanbul and President of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, alongside over 100 local officials, politicians, journalists, and businessmen on charges of corruption and aiding terrorism. This arrest sparked a major controversy as Mr İmamoğlu was set to become the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) candidate for the 2028 presidential election, making the timing of his detainment and the revocation of his university degree highly contentious and perceived as politically motivated.

83. The detainment of Mr İmamoğlu and related individuals triggered an extraordinary wave of mass protests across the country, with youth and students taking a leading role in major cities like Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. Despite a strict ban on demonstrations, the opposition mobilised millions, and the State’s response was forceful, involving pepper spray, water cannons, stun grenades, and plastic bullets. Nearly 2,000 people were arrested, with numerous reports of serious human rights violations against those in custody. During these protests, media workers were not spared, facing physical assaults and detention, and access to social media and major internet platforms was temporarily restricted.

84. In its [Resolution 2597 \(2025\)](#) on “The arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul and the state of democracy and human rights in Türkiye” of 9 April 2025, the Assembly expressed deep concern over these developments and,

²⁸ Statements of 4 July 2025, [Serbia: the authorities should refrain from excessive use of force and arbitrary arrests - Commissioner for Human Rights](#), and of 28 April 2025, [Serbia: authorities should ensure safety of demonstrators and improve working environment for civil society and human rights defenders - Commissioner for Human Rights](#).

²⁹ As of 6 November 2025.

³⁰ Adopted on 26 February 2025 and published on 5 May 2025.

³¹ On 29 January 2025, the committee held a joint hearing with the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on the preparation of the report on “Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – 12th report”³¹, with the participation of Mr Yıldırım Tuğrul Türkeş (Türkiye, NR), Chairperson of the Turkish delegation, and Mr Alper Hakkı Yazıcı, Vice-Chairman of Human Rights Department of Ministry of Justice.

³² See their [statement](#) made after the visit, 23 June 2025.

like other European and Council of Europe institutions,³³ urged the Turkish authorities to release Mr İmamoğlu immediately and drop all unfounded charges against him and others involved in the same investigation. The co-rapporteurs on Türkiye met him in the Silivri Prison (Istanbul) on 12 June 2025 during their fact-finding visit. Nevertheless, despite these calls, Mr İmamoğlu and his collaborators remain in detention on remand. In July, he was sentenced to one year and 8 months of imprisonment for insulting election officials in 2022 and was banned from political activities. In October, a new 'political espionage' charge was brought against him.

85. Mr İmamoğlu's arrest was followed by increasing political pressure, judicial harassment and intimidation being directed at the CHP and its members. Hundreds of CHP mayors, party administrators and municipal officials were arrested on terrorism and corruption charges. More than a dozen of CHP mayors, including those of İstanbul, Antalya, and Adana, have been suspended. On 2 September, an Istanbul court annulled the legality of the party's Istanbul provincial congress held in October 2023, removed the elected Istanbul leadership and appointed a new interim administration from the faction that lost the internal election. The future of the CHP and the fate of its current leadership were also under threat pending the outcome of legal proceedings concerning alleged irregularities in the election of delegates at the CHP's general Congress in November 2023.³⁴

86. In a statement of 29 September 2025,³⁵ the co-rapporteurs on Türkiye condemned these developments as an 'attempt to weaken the main opposition party in Türkiye'. They stressed that safeguarding the rights of the CHP was 'essential to protecting the country's democratic future' and called on the authorities to immediately halt all judicial harassment and politically motivated investigations targeting CHP representatives. Moreover, the Assembly discussed the situation in the country during its autumn part-session.³⁶

87. On 24 October 2025, a first-instance civil court in Ankara rejected a lawsuit demanding the annulment of the CHP 2023 Congress, allowing the current party leadership to remain in place.³⁷

88. As regards the second important set of developments, the 'terror-free Türkiye' process started following the call on 27 February by the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, for the PKK to lay down its arms and disband. In response to this call, the PKK announced in May that it would dissolve itself. In July, it held a symbolic disarmament ceremony, marking the end of its 40-year armed campaign. A parliamentary Committee was subsequently formed in August to outline the framework for legal arrangements related to the peace process. It has since heard from a wide range of stakeholders, including human rights groups, academics, and civil society representatives.³⁸ At the end of October, the PKK announced a new step, declaring that it had begun withdrawing its forces from Türkiye. Moreover, a series of talks had been held between President Tayyip Erdoğan and pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) to advance peace process.³⁹ It is believed that, within this process, Mr Öcalan, could benefit from the 'right to hope', after over 26 years of imprisonment and following the ECtHR judgment delivered in his case in 2014.⁴⁰

89. Moreover, on 3 November 2025, the ECtHR Grand Chamber rejected Türkiye's appeal against its judgment of 8 July 2025, which found the pre-trial detention of the Kurdish leader and former co-chair of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtaş's in the Kobani trial to be politically motivated and in violation of several provisions of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights and of its Article 18.⁴¹ With this decision, the judgment is now final. During their June 2025 visit to Türkiye, the co-rapporteurs discussed with the authorities the execution of the previous ECtHR judgment concerning Mr Demirtaş⁴² and of

³³ See the statements of the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and its Commissioner for Enlargement of 19 March 2025, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights of 24 March 2025 and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe of 27 March 2025.

³⁴ The case was filed by a faction that lost in the party's internal vote, alleging procedural irregularities, including vote buying. At the 2023 congress, Özgür Özel, backed by Mr İmamoğlu, defeated Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who had led the CHP for 14 years.

³⁵ [PACE monitors express serious concern about 'the future of democracy in Türkiye'](#), 29 September 2025.

³⁶ See current affairs debate 'Democracy, the rule of law and inclusive dialogue in Türkiye' of 30 September 2025.

³⁷ BIANET, [Court rejects case seeking annulment of CHP leadership](#), 24 October 2024.

³⁸ [Kurdish peace process - Bianet](#)

³⁹ [Erdoğan hails DEM Party meeting as 'promising' - Türkiye News](#), 2 November 2025.

⁴⁰ ECtHR, *Öcalan v. Turkey (No. 2)*, application No. 24069/03, judgment of 18 March 2014. The Committee of Ministers has recently called on the authorities to take the necessary legislative measures; see its Interim Resolution [CM/ResDH\(2025\)264](#), *Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights - Gurban group of cases against Turkey (Application No. 4947/04)*, 17 September 2025.

⁴¹ ECtHR, *Selahattin Demirtaş (No. 4) v. Türkiye*, application No. 13609/20, judgment of 8 July 2025.

⁴² ECtHR, *Selahattin Demirtaş (No. 2) v. Turkey*, application No. 14305/17, judgment of 22 December 2020 (Grand Chamber).

the judgment concerning Ms Figen Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu⁴³, the other former co-chair of the HDP party, whom they met in the Kandira/Kocaeli Prison on 13 June 2025.

90. The co-rapporteurs also followed the situation of the imprisoned civil society activist and philanthropist Mr Osman Kavala. During their visit to the country, they met him again in the Silivri prison (Istanbul) and called on the authorities to release him and fully implement the ECtHR judgments concerning him.⁴⁴ Moreover, in its [Resolution 2599 \(2025\)](#) on “The implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights”⁴⁵, the Assembly considered “(...) it absolutely unacceptable that the judgment in the case of *Kavala v. Turkey*, which was the subject of infringement proceedings under Article 46, paragraph 4, of the Convention, has not yet been implemented and that Mr Kavala is still imprisoned”. It reiterated its call on Türkiye to immediately release Mr Kavala, in line with its obligations under the Convention and the Statute of the Council of Europe.⁴⁶ The Assembly also noted that Türkiye was amongst the nine States which had over 40 leading cases pending implementation, including leading cases which had been pending implementation for more than five years.⁴⁷ Following their June 2025 visit to the country, the co-rapporteurs for Türkiye were left with ‘the overwhelming impression’ that Türkiye had reached ‘a tipping point’. They reiterated their concerns about the repression of opposition politicians, civil society activists, and individuals deemed a threat to the government; the abuse of pre-trial detention, the politicisation of the judiciary, and the continued practice of replacing democratically elected mayors with trustees appointed by the Ministry of the Interior in opposition-run municipalities.⁴⁸

91. On 5 August 2025, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (“the Congress”) youth delegate in respect of Türkiye, Mr Enes Hocaoğulları, was arrested, questioned, and placed in detention pending trial. The charges against him — for ‘publicly disseminating misleading information’ — related specifically to a speech he made during a plenary debate held by the Congress in Strasbourg on 27 March 2025, on dismissals of mayors in his country; his arrest and detention were firmly condemned by the Congress.⁴⁹ Following a visit of its delegation to Ankara and to Sincan prison, where Mr Hocaoğulları had been detained, the youth delegate was released under judicial control until the end of the trial.⁵⁰

2.2.10. Ukraine

92. On 29 January 2025, Mr Damien Cottier (Switzerland, ALDE) was appointed co-rapporteur to replace Mr Alfred Heer (Switzerland, ALDE) whose term had ended. On 4 March 2025, Ms Saara-Sofia Sirén (Finland, EPP/CD) was appointed co-rapporteur to replace Mr Birgir Thórarinnsson (Iceland, EPP/CD) who had left the Assembly.

93. Following the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Monitoring Committee agreed to suspend preparations for the next monitoring report while continuing to monitor developments in Ukraine. At the same time, the Ukrainian authorities have made enormous and commendable efforts to ensure the effective functioning of their democratic and legal institutions, despite the limitations imposed by martial law. They have also initiated an ambitious reform programme as part of their accession negotiations with the European Union. Many of these reforms address areas covered by the monitoring procedure in respect of Ukraine. It was therefore agreed by the Committee that preparations for a new monitoring report should be started on the basis of one or more fact-finding visits to the country. In that context, a fact-finding visit to Kyiv took place from 8 to 10 October 2025.

94. Following their visit, the rapporteurs issued a statement in which they welcomed the reforms implemented by the Ukrainian authorities to ensure the functioning of the country's democratic and rule of law institutions in line with European standards but noted that important challenges remain. They called upon the authorities to strengthen parliamentary oversight and regretted in that context reports of unnecessary obstacles preventing members of the Verkhovna Rada and local self-government bodies from playing their proper role.

⁴³ ECtHR, *Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu and Others v. Turkey*, Application No. 14332/17, judgment of 8 November 2022.

⁴⁴ ECtHR, *Kavala v. Turkey*, application No. 28749/18, judgments of 10 December 2019 and of 11 July 2022 (Grand Chamber judgment on Article 46§4 of the European Convention on Human Rights).

⁴⁵ Adopted on 9 April 2025, on the basis of a report by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Constantinos Efstathiou (Cyprus, SOC), [Doc. 16134](#).

⁴⁶ See paragraph 9 of the resolution.

⁴⁷ See paragraph 6 of the resolution.

⁴⁸ See their statement, *supra* note 34.

⁴⁹ [“Silencing youth is silencing democracy” – Council of Europe Congress statement following fact-finding visit to Ankara - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#), 5 September 2025.

⁵⁰ [Council of Europe Congress President welcomes release of Congress youth delegate from detention in Türkiye - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#), 8 September 2025.

95. Ukraine continued to make marked progress with regard to fighting the endemic corruption in the country. In June, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a law that tripped Ukraine's anti-corruption bodies of their independence and brought them under the effective political control of the presidential administration. Following a domestic and international outcry, this law was repealed on 31 July 2025, which was welcomed by the rapporteurs. However, reports of subsequent actions that could affect the independence and effectiveness of the anti-corruption bodies remain a point of concern. It is important that the authorities take all necessary steps to ensure the independent functioning of these institutions both in law and practice.

96. Minority rights and freedom of conscience remain sensitive, especially in the light of the instrumentalization by the Russian Federation as an excuse for its full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. It is therefore important that the legislation on these two sensitive issues fully align with European standards. The authorities have continued to make efforts to address the Venice Commission's recommendations regarding the "Law on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine" and have indicated that the remaining recommendations regarding this law, as well as other laws affecting minority rights — such as the Education Law and the State Language Law — will soon be fully addressed.

97. On 4 November 2025, the European Commission presented its annual Enlargement Package. In its report on Ukraine, the European Commission concluded that "Ukraine has continued to show remarkable resilience and strong commitment to its European path despite the escalation of the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression". While commending the authorities' efforts uphold the democratic framework it noted the need for strengthening parliamentary oversight and inclusiveness of the legislative process. Continued efforts are necessary so strengthen the fights against corruption as well as the efficiency and independent of the justice system.

98. On 10 November 2025, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) of Ukraine announced charges against several officials, reportedly including close associates of President Zelensky, for allegedly receiving up to €100 million in kickbacks for contracts involving Ukraine's State-owned nuclear energy company. These revelations sparked a nationwide outcry, particularly given the escalating attacks by the Russian Federation on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. These developments highlight the prevalence of high-level corruption in Ukraine and the need to safeguard and strengthen the independence and efficacy of the country's anti-corruption bodies, including against interference from the executive.

2.3. Post-monitoring dialogue

2.3. 1. Albania

99. In the absence of a consensus among the political groups in the Assembly, the second co-rapporteur for the Post-monitoring dialogue with Albania, was not appointed until June 2025. On 24 June, Ms Mónika Bartos (Hungary, ECPA) was appointed co-rapporteur. Consequently, no fact-finding visits were conducted to the country in 2025. A visit is planned for the beginning of 2026.

100. Parliamentary elections took place in Albania on 11 May 2025. The Assembly observed these elections as part of an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). According to the IEOM, the elections were competitive and well conducted, but they took place in a highly polarised environment, and contestants did not enjoy a level playing field. Although candidates could campaign freely, the campaign was marred by reports of the abuse of administrative resources, allegations of pressure being placed on certain groups of voters (especially civil servants), and vote buying. As with previous elections, the observers noted that the legal framework for elections provides an adequate basis for democratic elections if it is implemented in good faith by all stakeholders. The observers therefore called upon the authorities, and in particular the incoming parliament, to address the shortcomings and ambiguities in the electoral framework that hinder its implementation. In a welcome development, voting abroad for the sizeable Albanian diaspora was introduced for the first time during these elections, in line with the judgments of the Constitutional Court of Albania, addressing an important recommendation in [Resolution 2544 \(2024\)](#) of the Assembly.

101. The Socialist Party, led by Prime Minister Edi Rama, won the elections for a fourth consecutive time, obtaining 53.3% of the votes and 83 seats in the 140-seat Albanian parliament. The Democratic Party of Mr Sali Berisha obtained 46.5% of the vote, securing 53 seats in the new parliament. Meanwhile, the Albania Becomes Movement received 4% of the vote, earning them one seat in the new parliament. The Democratic Party strongly contested the veracity of the results of these elections.

102. The new parliament began work on 12 September 2025. On 27 October 2025, the SP and DP reached an agreement on establishing parliamentary ad hoc committees on electoral and territorial reforms, which were set up by parliament with 113 and 15 votes in favour, respectively.

103. The media situation in Albania was identified as a cause for concern by the Assembly in [Resolution 2544 \(2024\)](#), which concluded the full monitoring process and initiated the post-monitoring dialogue. Unfortunately, this remains a cause for concern, as noted by the IEOM during the recent parliamentary elections. The IEOM deplored the lack of transparent financing and ownership concentration in the media, as well as editorial interference, all of which undermines the integrity and diversity of reporting. Contrary to the Assembly's recommendations, defamation remains criminalised and would be further strengthened if controversial amendments to the Criminal Code are adopted. Additionally, the issue of SLAPPs has yet to be addressed by legislation. On 9 December 2025, the Monitoring Committee organised a hearing on the situation of the media as part of the preparations for the report on the post-monitoring dialogue.

104. On 4 November 2025, the European Commission presented its annual Enlargement Package. In its report on Albania, the European Commission welcomed the firm political commitment of the Albanian authorities to EU integration but noted that the reform process would need to be stepped up to maintain the current momentum in the accession process. With regard to the recent parliamentary elections, it noted that they were held competitively but regretted the shortcomings noted by observers, in particular regarding abuse of administrative resources and lack of level playing field for all electoral contestants. It urged the authorities to fully address the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR recommendations in this respect. It regretted that the political polarisation and lack of genuine political dialogue and consultation was hindering the work of the parliament. With regard to the judiciary, the Commission, highlighted the success of the ongoing vetting process of judges and prosecutors, which should conclude in 2026. However, it stressed that sustained "reform efforts are needed to continue to strengthen the judicial system and maintain high standards of integrity after the completion of the vetting process". It furthermore expressed concern about the continuing prevalence of widespread corruption in connection to the still limited impact of the institutional anti-corruption structures. With regard to freedom of expression, the European Commission expressed its concern about the situation of the media which continues to suffer from the high concentration of media ownership, as well as "intimidation and precarious working conditions for journalists".

2.3.2. Bulgaria

105. Although the Monitoring Committee's proposed to close the post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria already in its report of 6 March 2024⁵¹, the Assembly took such a decision only on 1 October 2025 by [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#), on the basis of an updated Committee report of 9 September 2025.⁵²

106. The Committee's report focused on six outstanding areas of concerns: reform of the judiciary, high-level corruption, transparency of media ownership, human rights of minorities, hate speech and violence against women.

107. The Committee noted that significant constitutional and legislative reforms were undertaken to address long-standing concerns regarding the governance of the judiciary and prosecution service. Regrettably, the majority of constitutional amendments adopted in December 2023 were declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court on 26 July 2024,⁵³ citing procedural requirements, which stalled further reform efforts. Nonetheless, reforms to the Criminal Procedure Code and laws limiting the powers of the Prosecutors Office were upheld, aligning with recommendations from the Venice Commission and reinforcing mechanisms for accountability and criminal liability within the legal system.

108. Bulgaria aimed to strengthen its fight against high-level corruption through the Anti-Corruption Act of October 2023, modernising investigatory powers and promoting transparency in public procurement. Regrettably, despite these legislative advancements and compliance with multiple GRECO recommendations, the country continues to face persistent challenges in securing final convictions in high-profile corruption cases, and an improved legal framework is expected to translate into more effective anti-corruption outcomes.

⁵¹ [Doc. 15947](#), prepared by Ms Þórhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC) and Ms Deborah Bergamini (Italy, EPP/CD). The previous report had been withdrawn from the agenda of the Assembly's April 2024 part-session because of the early parliamentary elections of 9 June 2024. Since no stable coalition could be formed after the latter elections, new early parliamentary elections were called for 27 October 2024.

⁵² [Doc. 16246](#), prepared by Ms Deborah Bergamini (Italy, EPP/CD) and Mr Yves Cruchten (Luxembourg, SOC). Mr Cruchten was appointed on 4 March 2025 to replace Ms Ævarsdóttir, who left the Assembly. The updated report was adopted by the Committee on 9 September 2025, after the co-rapporteurs had carried out a fact-finding visit to Sofia on 2-3 July 2025.

⁵³ By its ruling No. 13.

109. Human rights and freedom of expression have seen notable improvements, such as enhanced protection for journalists and clearer legal definitions of hate speech. However, issues remain — including media ownership concentration, strategic lawsuits against journalists, and the slow integration of the Roma minority, which represents about 5% of Bulgaria's population. Recent legislative measures and national awareness campaigns have bolstered protections against hate speech and domestic violence, but further investments in victim support and Roma inclusion are needed to close persistent social gaps.

110. Over 90 leading judgments of the European Court of Human Rights concerning Bulgaria are pending implementation, with around one third of them pending for at least 10 years. The Committee of Ministers, which supervises execution of ECtHR judgments, still expects tangible progress in the execution of some of them.⁵⁴

111. The Committee concluded that Bulgaria had made significant progress in the honouring of its accession commitments and obligations stemming from membership in the Council of Europe since it joined the Organisation in 1992. Despite the notable instability of its political landscape between 2021 and 2024, with seven consecutive early parliamentary elections, Bulgaria established a coalition government in January 2025, demonstrating renewed political will to honor its international commitments. Moreover, following the decisions of the relevant European Union institutions of June and July 2025, it has been decided that Bulgaria will join the Eurozone as of 1 January 2026.

112. Therefore, in its [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#), the Assembly decided to close the post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria and follow the developments in the country with regard to the rule of law, pluralist democracy and human rights in the framework of its periodic reviews.⁵⁵ It also called on the Bulgarian authorities to resume the reform of the organisation of the State (which was stopped following the ruling of the Constitutional Court of 26 July 2024), through the adoption of ordinary legislation and/or new constitutional amendments by the Grand National Assembly. It also invited the authorities to address other outstanding issues in close cooperation with relevant Council of Europe bodies.⁵⁶

2.3.3. Montenegro

113. In April 2024, the Committee appointed as co-rapporteur Ms Liliana Tanguy (France, ALDE), alongside Mr Nicos Tornaritis, to prepare the second and final post-monitoring dialogue on Montenegro. The first post-monitoring dialogue resolution, adopted in 2021, identified areas of improvement regarding the independence of the judiciary, trust in the electoral process, fight against corruption and the situation of the media. Following the last country visit in 2022, the co-rapporteurs had hailed advances in the fight against corruption and encouraged political leaders to adopt a set of critical measures.

114. Montenegro has been the subject of several 2025 developments across Council of Europe bodies, mainly on constitutional/judicial reform, anti-discrimination, trafficking, and execution of ECtHR decisions.

115. On 7 October 2025, the Committee of Ministers adopted a resolution on execution of the ECtHR decision in *Brahim Kovačević and Others v. Montenegro*, illustrating Montenegro's ongoing process of implementing and complying with earlier judgments and rulings from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Montenegro is still working on addressing previous findings regarding the excessive length of judicial proceedings and ensuring guarantees of fair trials. This involves putting in place remedies for violations found by the Court, such as reducing case backlogs, improving judicial efficiency, ensuring transparency, and safeguarding fair trial rights throughout the court system.

116. In June 2025 the Venice Commission adopted an opinion for Montenegro “On some questions relating to the procedure of early termination of the mandate of constitutional court judges due to age limits”, in accordance with the political agreement signed on 15 March 2025 between the government and opposition representatives to end a controversy as regards the termination of the mandate of a judge of the Constitutional Court on the grounds that she reached the retirement age. A legislative reform is required to ensure that a similar situation should not arise again, and the Venice Commission's opinion includes proposals to include in the future reform. On 28 October 2025, the minister of Justice of Montenegro, Mr Bojan Božović, submitted the draft of this reform for a follow-up opinion to the Venice Commission and the opinion is scheduled for discussion and adoption in December 2025.

⁵⁴ See, in particular, paragraph 14 of [Resolution 2620 \(2025\)](#).

⁵⁵ Paragraph 23 of the resolution.

⁵⁶ Paragraph 20 of the resolution.

Doc. ...

117. In June 2025, the Venice Commission adopted a follow-up opinion on the on the draft Law on the Government. The Commission welcomed the fact that the revised draft law addressed most of its 2023 key recommendations but drew the attention of the authorities to some key recommendations, including the requirement of a constitutional revision.

118. In October 2025 the sixth-cycle ECRI report on Montenegro was published. ECRI requests priority implementation from the authorities of Montenegro on two specific recommendations: to ensure the full independence of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, and to complete the registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians from Kosovo⁵⁷ present in Montenegro, including their children.

119. Montenegro remains under GRECO's 5th evaluation round on "preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments and law enforcement agencies". A Compliance Report, adopted and authorised for publication in 2024, noted partial progress and set a deadline of 31 December 2025 for Montenegro to report further implementation, after which a Second Compliance Report will be prepared. Reforms of the executive and police integrity framework are expected.

120. In 2025 GRETA adopted its new evaluation report on Montenegro for the 3rd round (2021–June 2025), following a December 2024 country visit and consideration of government comments in June 2025. While the report welcomes positive developments in a number of areas, GRETA once again urged the Montenegrin authorities to take action regarding the compensation of victims of human trafficking, on the access to a recovery and reflection period, and on strengthening the criminal justice response to traffic of human beings.

121. A country visit from the co-rapporteurs is scheduled in 2026, with a view to adopt the second and final report on post-monitoring dialogue before the end of the year.

2.3.4. North Macedonia

122. In 2025, the co-rapporteurs Ms Sibel Arslan (Switzerland, SOC) and Mr Joseph O'Reilly (Ireland, EPP/CD) followed closely the developments in North Macedonia and reported to the Committee at its June and October meetings.

123. A fact-finding visit to Skopje took place on 23-25 April 2025, for the first time since 2019.⁵⁸ During their visit, the co-rapporteurs examined in particular the situation in the judiciary, the measures taken to fight against corruption, the electoral framework, the human rights issues and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. They recognised some progress as regards ensuring transparency of work of the Judicial Council and the functioning of the judiciary in general. However, they were concerned about numerous allegations of politicisation of the judiciary and widespread corruption throughout the public sector, as well as the lack of effective measures to combat these phenomena. They also noted that there was an urgent need to reform the electoral framework, in line with long-standing recommendations from the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission. They also concluded that political freedoms – including the rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression, and media pluralism – were generally respected and that North Macedonia, as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-confessional country, could serve as a model for other countries in promoting a 'living together' culture and mentality. They were nevertheless concerned about the poor conditions in some places of detention (especially in the Idrizovo prison) and urged the authorities to implement without delay the outstanding recommendations of the Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee (CPT).

124. During their visit, the co-rapporteurs called on all political parties to find a compromise to implement the 'French proposal' by including a reference to the Bulgarian ethnic minority in the Constitution, which is a condition for moving ahead in the negotiation process on accession to the European Union.

125. Following the visit, the co-rapporteurs prepared a report on post-monitoring dialogue with North Macedonia, which was examined for the first time by the Monitoring Committee on 1 October 2025. On 9 December 2025, the Committee adopted the report, in which it proposed to close the post-monitoring dialogue and follow the developments in the country with regard to the rule of law, pluralist democracy and human rights in the framework of its periodic reviews [TBC].

⁵⁷ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

⁵⁸ See co-rapporteurs' statement made after the visit, [Ending a fact-finding visit, PACE monitors welcome North Macedonia's progress in meeting Council of Europe commitments](#), 30 April 2025.

126. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O’Flaherty, visited North Macedonia at the same time as the co-rapporteurs (22-25 April 2025). In his memorandum published in July 2025, the Commissioner commended North Macedonia’s long-standing commitment to address human rights issues faced by Roma and commended, in particular, the adoption of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2022–2030) and the efforts made by government bodies, the Ombudsperson, and the Commission on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination.⁵⁹ However, he was concerned about environmental risks disproportionately affecting Roma, including air and waste pollution, lack of sanitation, and by exclusion from public services.⁶⁰

127. Moreover, 2025 was another electoral year in North Macedonia. On 19 October 2025, the first round of local elections was held. The main ruling centre-right VMRO DPMNE party crushed its main rival, the Social Democrats (SDSM), so extending its domination of politics to local level. VMRO DPMNE came first in 53 of the country’s 81 municipalities. The turnout was just under 48 per cent, a slight decline from the 50 per cent who voted in the previous local elections in 2021. In those municipalities where a mayor was not elected in the first round by winning more than half of the votes, a second round was held on 2 November.⁶¹ Consequently, the ruling VMRO DPMNE party won in 21 out of the 33 municipalities where second rounds were held (also in Skopje), confirming its overall dominance at the local elections. In total, after the two election rounds, the party is set to govern 54 of the country’s 81 municipalities. This is 12 more than in the previous 2021 local polls, when it won in 42.⁶²

128. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities observed the elections, along with the OSCE/ODIHR and the European Parliament. In its [statement of 20 October](#), it welcomed the fact that election day was well-organised, which was “a positive backdrop for resolving outstanding issues affecting local democracy in North Macedonia”, such as “the overly-politicised environment and perception about corruption that erode public confidence in institutions”. It also regretted the low number of women mayoral candidates and the lack of accessibility for voters with disabilities and older people as well as the absence of local media, particularly outside the capital.

2.4. Periodic monitoring reports

2.4.1. Greece

129. The Monitoring Committee has appointed as co-rapporteurs Ms Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (Finland, SOC) in January 2025, alongside Ms Laura Castel (Spain, UEL) who had been appointed in March 2024.

130. The preparatory work started with an exchange of views with members of the Greek delegation. The members of the delegation welcomed the periodic review as an important opportunity to highlight the significant transformations that had occurred in Greece over the last years. The latest periodic review, from 2017, concluded that Greece was generally fulfilling its membership obligations and that its democratic institutions functioned in line with the Council of Europe’s standards. The report nonetheless identified various concerns and made recommendations across all three pillars of the Council’s mission.

131. By 2025, Greece has achieved significant improvements. It enjoys robust economic conditions, The asylum system has been reformed, and the democratic landscape has also strengthened. Greece is now the only major EU democracy without a strong far-right party threatening democratic norms. The three deficits that the country had to face – indebtedness, trade deficit and lack of trust – have been resolved. Nevertheless, significant challenges persisted within the scope of the periodic review. Corruption by governing officials, verbal attacks against civil society organisations, very serious instances of SLAPPs and the use of Pegasus spyware against politicians and journalists have been mentioned. The work of the Monitoring Committee should allow to clearly identify the real problems and distinguish them from fake news.

132. The co-rapporteurs will carry on the preparatory work and organise a country visit in 2026, in order to present a report before the end of the year.

⁵⁹ Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum on the human rights of Roma and on issues related to the right to a clean and healthy environment in North Macedonia, [CommHR\(2025\)42](#), 29 July 2025, paragraphs 10 and 11.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, paragraphs 39-41.

⁶¹ [North Macedonia Ruling Party Celebrates Triumph in Local Elections | Balkan Insight](#), 20 October 2025.

⁶² [North Macedonia Municipal Runoffs Seal Ruling Party's Triumph | Balkan Insight](#), 3 November 2025.

2.4.2. The Netherlands

133. The report on the Netherlands has been under preparation for a considerable amount of time. In 2023, a preliminary draft report was transmitted to the Dutch authorities for comments. However, when we were preparing our final draft, the government fell, and new elections were called for 22 November 2023. The elections dramatically changed the political landscape with the hard right and populist party of Mr Geert Wilders emerging as the largest party. In the increasingly polarised political environment, the negotiations to form a government were drawn out and contentious and concluded only after 223 days.

134. Given that the political makeup of the country had completely changed, the original report needed to be thoroughly rewritten and preparations for a new visit by the co-rapporteurs were underway when, on 3 June, Mr Wilders announced that his party was withdrawing its support for the coalition. The government fell, and new elections were called for 29 October 2025. The margin of votes and seats between the winning and second placed parties, Democrats 66 (D66) and PVV, was the smallest since the size of Parliament was last enlarged in 1956.

135. The report will therefore have to be practically rewritten from scratch, as the co-rapporteurs should wait until a new government is formed to schedule a country visit, the committee agreed to request an extension of the reference until March 2027.

2.4.3. Spain

136. In 2025, the co-rapporteurs Ms Valentina Grippo (Italy, ALDE) and Ms Elvira Kovács (Serbia, EPP/CD) followed closely the developments in the country. At its meeting in Paris on 4 March 2025, the committee held an exchange of views with Mr Antonio Gutiérrez Limones, Chairperson, and members of the delegation of Spain. On 9 September 2025, it held an exchange of views on “The state of Spain’s implementation of the recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) concerning preventing corruption in parliament, judiciary, central governments and law enforcement agencies” with Ms Sophie Meudal Leenders, Senior Legal Adviser, Secretariat of the GRECO, Council of Europe.

A fact-finding visit to Madrid and Barcelona took place on 12-14 November 2025.⁶³ During the visit to Madrid, the co-rapporteurs met the Speaker of the Congress of Deputies, Ms Francina Armengol, members of the Constitutional Committees of the Congress of Deputies and of the Senate, the leader of the main opposition party - the Popular Party (*Partido Popular*), Mr Alberto Núñez Feijóo, the Spanish delegation to the Assembly, the President of the Constitutional Court, Mr Cándido Conde-Pumpido Tourón, the President of General Council of the Judiciary, Ms Isabel Perelló Doménech (who is also President of the Supreme Court), high-level civil servants at the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Parliament. They also had meetings with representatives of the bar, associations of magistrates and prosecutors and civil society. In Barcelona, the co-rapporteurs held meetings with the President of the Parliament of Catalonia, Mr Josep Rull i Andreu, members of the European Union and Foreign Action Committee of the Parliament of Catalonia, the Counsellor of Justice of the Regional Government of Catalonia, Mr Ramon Espadaler i Parcerisas, members of the Republican Left of Catalonia (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*) party and representatives of civil society.

137. Spain is currently trying to reform its justice system and the General Council for the Judiciary (CGPJ), which between 2018 and 2024 remained in an institutional paralysis due to a parliamentary blockage on a renewal of its members.

138. On 5 February 2025, the General Council for the Judiciary adopted a report examining similar European systems of election of judicial councils’ members, together with a Reform Proposal for how to reform the election of the judges-members, presenting alternative models both with and without parliamentary involvement. The CGPJ was unable to reach a consensus on a single proposal and instead submitted two diverging models. The first model, supported by 10 members from the conservative sector, proposes that those members be elected by the judges themselves. This latter system is the one backed by the Popular Party (*Partido Popular*).⁶⁴ The second model, supported by 10 members from the progressive sector and aligned with the Government, maintains the final vote for judicial members by the Parliament. The report was submitted to the Venice Commission.⁶⁵

⁶³ PACE co-rapporteurs to make periodic review visit to Spain, 10 November 2025.

⁶⁴ *The Corner*, 10 October 2025.

⁶⁵ European Commission, *2025 Rule of Law Report. Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Spain*, SWD(2025) 909 final, 8 July 2025 (“2025 Rule of Law report”), p. 3.

139. At its plenary session on 9-10 October 2025, the Venice Commission adopted its “Opinion on the Manner of Election of the Judicial Members of the General Council of the Judiciary”.⁶⁶ It recalled that according to Council of Europe’s standards, not less than half the members of judicial councils should be judges elected by their peers.⁶⁷ It concluded that the first model (‘option 1’) complied with this European standards, although it implied a risk of internal politicisation, especially where judicial associations might exert significant influence over the election process.⁶⁸ As regards the second model (‘option 2’), the Venice Commission was of opinion that “(...) in addition to the internal risks of politicisation discussed under Option 1 (...)”, it made “(...) the procedure vulnerable to external politicisation in Parliament” and did not comply with the European standards.⁶⁹ Moreover, it stressed “the importance of ensuring the composition of the judicial council, with balanced participation of judges from all levels of the judiciary, as well as adequate diversity in terms of specialisation, gender, and region” and added that “the principle of pluralism should likewise apply to lay members, who should represent academia and other legal professions”.⁷⁰

140. As regards preventing and combatting corruption, on 1 August 2025, GRECO published the [Addendum to the Second Compliance Report](#) (adopted in June 2025) concerning Fifth Evaluation Round on “Corruption prevention among persons in top executive functions and law enforcement authorities”, in which it found that Spain had not implemented satisfactorily any of the 19 recommendations. Sixteen recommendations had been partly implemented and three had not been implemented. This marked a slight progress from the previous report, with three further recommendations being assessed as partly implemented. Two of the recommendations where progress had been recorded concerned persons in top executive functions (PTEFs) and one - the Civil Guard.⁷²

141. As regards GRECO’s Fourth Evaluation Round concerning corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors, in April 2025, GRECO published its [Second Addendum to the Second Compliance report on Spain](#), by which it closed the compliance procedure. As of June 2024, Spain had fully implemented seven of the 11 recommendations. Three were partly implemented and one was not implemented.⁷³

2.4.4. Sweden

142. The co-rapporteurs, Ms Yelizaveta Yasko (Ukraine, EPP/CD) and Ms Anne Stambach-Terreoir (France, UEL), made a fact-finding visit to Stockholm from 22 to 24 April 2025. They met civil society organisations government officials and political parties in parliament.

143. In April, GRECO published an addendum to the second compliance report of its fifth evaluation round, on Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies. GRECO concluded that Sweden had implemented satisfactorily or dealt with in a satisfactory manner eleven of the fifteen recommendations contained in the Fifth Round Evaluation Report. Of the remaining recommendations, one has been partly implemented and three have not been implemented. This report terminated the fifth-round compliance procedure with respect to Sweden. The perception among experts, citizens and business executives is that Sweden is one of the least corrupt countries in the world.

144. In April 2025, the government introduced a Bill titled “Enhanced Protection for Democracy and the Independence of the Courts”. This proposal aimed to substantially reform Sweden’s constitutional amendment procedure and strengthen judicial independence to counter democratic backsliding observed in Europe. The constitutional amendment procedure would be made more stringent by requiring a qualified majority for all changes to Sweden’s fundamental laws (the Instrument of Government), rather than just the current simpler majority separated by an election.

145. The Bill also proposes judicial reforms to increase independence from political influence, such as creating a board composed mostly of current and former judges to oversee the court administration agency,

⁶⁶ Venice Commission, Spain. Opinion on the Manner of Election of the Judicial Members of the General Council of the Judiciary, CDL-AD(2025)038.

⁶⁷ Ibid, paragraph 30.

⁶⁸ Ibid, paragraph 66.

⁶⁹ Ibid, paragraph 67.

⁷⁰ Ibid, paragraph 68.

⁷¹ [La falta de acuerdo obliga al CGPJ a aplazar más de 30 nombramientos | España | EL PAÍS].

⁷² GRECO, Fifth Evaluation Round, [Addendum to the Second Compliance Report](#), adopted on 6 June 2025 and published on 1 August 2025, paragraphs 126-134.

⁷³ GRECO, Fourth Evaluation Round, [Second Addendum to the Second Compliance report on Spain](#), adopted on 21 June 2024 and published on 16 April 2025, paragraphs 32 and 37.

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excluding executive and legislative members. Permanent judges would be appointed following recommendations by a judges' majority body and could only be removed upon reaching statutory retirement age. For the Supreme Court, the Bill mandates a set number of justices, with appointments made only after a request by the court itself.

146. Political consensus over the proposal has fragmented: initially, an all-party Committee supported the Bill, but the Sweden Democrats opposed the proposals concerning the constitutional amendment procedure and submitted a motion to reject that part. On 21 October 2025, the Riksdag voted against the Sweden Democrats' motion on whether to hold a referendum on the constitutional matter related to the Bill. The Riksdag then approved the government's proposal to reform the constitutional amendment procedure. Political support mainly came from the government coalition parties (Moderate Party, Christian Democrats, Liberals) and opposition parties who favored stronger democratic safeguards. The reforms are designed to enter into force on April 1, 2027, after confirmation by a second Riksdag vote following the 2026 elections.

147. Other major issues include ongoing concerns about security and crime, with the government emphasizing policy actions against organized crime and public safety. Migration and integration policies continue to be a significant focus as they impact multiple policy areas. Sweden is also navigating its foreign policy challenges, particularly related to security tensions with Russia and its support for Ukraine in the context of the broader geopolitical confrontation.

148. The next general elections in Sweden are scheduled to take place on Sunday, September 13, 2026. These elections will choose the 349 members of the Riksdag (parliament), who will in turn elect the prime minister. Regional and municipal elections will also be held concurrently on the same day. The co-rapporteurs will carry on their preparatory work in order to present a report to the Assembly after next elections took place.

2.5. Functioning of democratic institutions

2.5.1. Slovak Republic

149. The rapporteurs for the report on the functioning of democratic institutions in the Slovak Republic are expected to be appointed at the Committee meeting on 9 December 2025. On 23 June 2025, the Monitoring Committee agreed to request an urgent opinion of the Venice Commission on the (draft) amendments to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic as well as an opinion on Law No. 109/2025 amending the Law "on non-profit organisations providing services of general interest" and other related laws. These opinions were endorsed ([CDL-AD\(2025\)040](#) on the draft amendments to the Constitution) and adopted ([CDL-AD\(2025\)041](#) on the Law "on non-profit organisations providing services of general interest" and other related laws) during the Plenary Session of the Venice Commission on 9 and 10 October 2025.

3. Some thoughts concerning the efficiency and impact of the Committee's work

150. This year has also been very intense for the Committee and its mandate. The events on our continent, as described in the previous sections, have underscored the ongoing importance of the Committee's work.

151. In order to ensure the Assembly's capacity to carry out systematic and effective monitoring, to ensure continuity in the political dialogue with the country concerned, and to produce high-quality, pertinent and timely resolutions, it is important to have rapporteurs that have the required availability to execute their important and often time-consuming tasks.

152. A significant rotation of rapporteurs also took place in 2025 (inter alia concerning Ukraine, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Türkiye and Azerbaijan). In a welcome development, vacant posts were generally swiftly filled by the political groups. Given the number of changes of rapporteurs in the last year, as well as the vacancies that can be anticipated in the coming year, the political groups are invited to nominate members to the Committee who are ready and available to take on the role of co-rapporteur, which carries a heavy workload and demands considerable time commitment.

153. As I mentioned in the previous progress report, the ability of the Committee to request Venice Commission opinions has been an important instrument in the context of both detecting and addressing possible malfunctioning democratic and rule of law institutions in a country. This mechanism is of increasing interest and demand among Committee members, particularly in relation to strengthening the Committee's early warning capabilities. This also includes proposals for requests for opinions on countries that are not subject to a report under one of the Assembly's monitoring procedures, as the terms of reference explicitly mandate the Committee to monitor compliance with membership obligations in all Council of Europe Member States. In this context, the Committee requested a Venice Commission opinion on the draft amendments to

the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, as well as on Law No. 109/2025 amending the Law 'On non-profit organisations providing services of general interest' and other related laws. These opinions were endorsed ([CDL-AD\(2025\)040](#) on the draft constitutional amendments) and adopted ([CDL-AD\(2025\)041](#) on the Law “on non-profit organisations providing services of general interest” and other related laws).

154. In this report, my last progress report as Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee, I wish to raise the issue of how frequently these reports are presented to the Assembly. According to paragraph 15 of [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#), as amended, the Monitoring Committee is required to report to the Assembly once a year on the general progress of the monitoring procedures. These reports are very labour-intensive and time-consuming to produce, especially compared to the level of interest they generate among members during plenary discussions. At the same time, all committees have been asked to reflect on how they can reduce the number of reports discussed in plenary. I would therefore propose that, starting with this report, we present the progress reports biennially. This would enable each outgoing Chairperson to present a progress report at the end of their term and share their reflections on the Committee's work. I believe this would also increase the relevance of these reports, and consequently the attention they receive from our members. To this end, I have prepared a corresponding amendment to [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#), as amended, which is included in the draft resolution accompanying this report.