

LIBERTIES

RULE OF LAW

REPORT

2026



LIGA LIDSKÝCH PRÁV



#roi-report2026

CZECH REPUBLIC



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FOREWORD

The Liberties Rule of Law Report 2026 is the seventh annual report on the state of rule of law in the European Union (EU) published by the Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties). Liberties is a non-governmental civil society organisation promoting the civil liberties of everyone in the EU, and it is built on a network of national civil liberties groups from across the EU. Currently, we have member organisations in Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, as well as a contributing partner organisation in Greece.

Liberties, together with its members and partner organisations, carries out advocacy, campaigning and public education activities to explain what the rule of law is, what the EU and national governments are doing to protect or harm it, and gathers public support to press leaders at EU and national level to fully respect, promote and protect our basic rights and values.

Drafted by Liberties and its member and partner organisations, the 2026 report covers the situation during 2025 with the purpose of providing the European Commission with reliable information and analysis from the ground to feed its own rule of law reports, and to provide an independent analysis of the state of the rule of law in the EU in its own right. Liberties' report represents the most in-depth reporting exercise carried out to date by a civil society network to map developments in a wide range of areas connected to the rule of law in the EU.

The 2026 report includes EU-wide trend analysis in the justice system, anti-corruption framework, media freedom, checks and balances, based on 22 country reports that follow a common structure, mirroring and expanding on the priority areas and indicators identified by the European Commission for its annual rule of law monitoring cycle. Nearly 40 organisations contributed to the compilation of these country reports. The 2026 report places particular emphasis on the recommendations made by the European Commission and how, in the assessment of Liberties' members, they have been implemented. Specific gaps were identified alongside new issues that arose in 2025.

[Download the full Liberties Rule of Law Report 2026 here.](#)

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CZECH REPUBLIC

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS

The League of Human Rights (LLP)



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The League of Human Rights is a Czech non-governmental organisation established in 2002, continuously striving for systemic changes to promote consistent respect for human rights. The LLP's mission is to protect human rights by providing legal counselling, engaging in advocacy activities, educating and raising awareness, and pursuing strategic litigation. Moreover, LLP advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups and upholds principles of the rule of law.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: STAGNATOR

Resignation of Justice Minister Pavel Blažek: In May 2025, Czech Justice Minister Pavel Blažek resigned following revelations that the Ministry of Justice had accepted and monetised a large cryptocurrency donation originating from a person previously convicted of serious criminal offences.¹

Czech parliamentary elections and appointment of a new government: Held over 3-4 October 2025, the most recent elections of the Chamber of Deputies Parliament drew one of the highest voter turnouts in recent Czech history (nearly 69%). The pre-election campaign was marked by narratives of threats such as rigged elections, withdrawal from the EU and NATO, an end to support for Ukraine, and restrictions on civil society.² Turning to the results, the populist ANO party (lit. 'Yes'), under the leadership of former Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, has emerged as the most prominent political force, garnering approximately 34.5% of the vote and securing 80 out of 200 seats in the Chamber.³ As ANO did not attain an outright majority, subsequent coalition building culminated in a government combining ANO with the far-right parties for **Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)** and the **Motorists for Themselves**. All three parties are marked by a shared Euroscepticism, though to different degrees.⁴ In this regard, the government's program statement includes provisions regarding the sovereignty of the Czech Republic, a zero-tolerance policy toward illegal migration, and a rejection of the EU migration pact, as well as a review of the Green Deal.⁵ President Petr Pavel, however, refused to appoint Filip Turek (Motorists party) as a minister of environment due to Turek's

1 Ketrin Johecová, *Drug dealer bitcoin scandal risks upending Czech election*, Politico Europe, 2 June 2025, <https://www.politico.eu/article/czech-minister-pavel-blazek-quits-drug-dealer-scandal-election-gift-babis>.

2 League of Human Rights, *Not just words. What was said in the pre-election campaign ("Nejsou to jenom slova. Co všechno zaznělo v předvolební kampani?")*, 1 October 2025, <https://llp.cz/blog/nejsou-to-jenom-slova-co-vsechno-zaznelo-v-predvolebni-kampani/>.

3 BBC News, *Czech Republic: Billionaire populist Andrej Babiš party wins parliamentary election*, BBC News, 5 October 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62qezmr92lo>.

4 Jan Lopatka and Jason Hovet, *Czech vote winner Babiš signs coalition deal with eurosceptic partners*, Reuters, 3 November 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/czech-election-winner-babis-signs-coalition-deal-with-partners-2025-11-03/>; Politico Europe: *Czechian eurosceptic Andrej Babiš agrees coalition deal with far-right*, Politico Europe, 3 November 2025, <https://www.politico.eu/article/czechia-andrej-babis-clinches-coalition-deal-far-right/>.

5 Jan Lopatka and Jason Hovet, *Czech president appoints Prime Minister Babiš government*, Reuters, 15 December 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/czech-president-appoints-prime-minister-babis-government-2025-12-15/>; Aneta Zachová: *Populist billionaire Babiš returns as Czech prime minister*, Euractiv, 9 December 2025, <https://www.euractiv.com/news/populist-billionaire-babis-returns-as-czech-prime-minister/>.

extremist, racist, homophobic and hateful statements,⁶ considering him not suitable for any cabinet function. This situation remained unchanged as of 7 January.⁷

In terms of meeting the recommendations from *2025 Rule of Law Report*, It is important to note that the 2025 recommendations were put on the back burner by the parliamentary elections and the long process of choosing the new government.

Assessment of the trajectory

The Czech Republic made minimal progress in anti-corruption measures or the enhancement of the independence of public media. While lobbying legislation (Act No. 168/2025 Coll. Act on the Regulation of Lobbying - which is rather problematic), there was no progress on revolving door rules for parliamentarians or other senior officials. Similarly, no measures were adopted regarding the length of judicial trials of corruption cases. The issue of the current minister's conflict of interest remains unresolved, as there are still insufficient guarantees that Andrej Babiš has truly distanced himself from his trust fund.⁸

Moreover, several early signs of rule-of-law backsliding may be currently indicated, predominantly:

- **Targeting civil society:** The new coalition government program explicitly targets advocacy-oriented civil society through measures that echo the 'foreign agents' approach. The program mentions increased oversight and control of nonprofits over their financing and activities, establishment of registry of state subsidies, label or restrict certain foreign funding, target so-called political, green and ideological NGOs, reducing the role of nonprofits in education, etc. Official statements

6 See e.g.: Romea.cz, *Czech journalist who archived Turek's social media posts comes forward, says Turek has always been fascinated with fascism and always made racist remarks*, 22 October 2025, <https://romea.cz/en/czech-republic/czech-journalist-who-archived-tureks-social-media-posts-comes-forward-says-turek-has-always-been-fascinated-with-fascism-and-always-made-racist-remarks/>.

7 ČTK, *Babiš lunches at the Castle with Pavel — also discusses Turek's ministerial nomination* ("Babiš obědvá na Hradě s Pavlem. Řeší i Turkovu ministerskou nominaci"), Seznam Zprávy, 7 January 2026, <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-politika-babis-obedva-na-hrade-s-pavlem-resi-i-turkovu-ministerskou-nominaci-295665>.

8 iROZHLAS.cz, *Babiš's Transfer of Agrofert? "It Seems More Thorough, but Doubts About Conflict of Interest Persist," Says Lawyer* ("Babišův převod Agrofertu? Zdá se to důkladnější, pochybnosti o střetu zájmů ale trvají," říká právnička), 21 February 2026, https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/babisuv-prevod-agrofertu-zda-se-dukladnejsi-pochybnosti-o-stretu-zajmu-ale_2602211604_mst

suggest the motivation isn't mainly budgetary but reduce perceived political influence.⁹ In this context, more than 140 non-governmental organizations issued a joint statement on 14 January 2026, warning that the government's declaration threatens the functioning of public services.¹⁰

- **Control over state media through state budget:** In January 2026, the coalition's confirmed plan to abolish license fees for Czech Television (ČT) and Czech Radio (ČRo) and replace them with direct state budget allocations.¹¹ The current prime minister's public statements during the autumn 2025 election campaign, in which he specifically targeted certain media outlets, already indicated his desire to gain control over public media.¹²
- Abolishment of selected key working and advisory bodies of the government such as National Economic Council of the Government (NERV) which advised particularly in the areas of public finance consolidation, pro-growth measures, support for regional development, and healthcare.¹³

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- 9 Civic Space Watch, *Czech Republic: Civic Space Under Pressure from Funding Cuts and Policy Shifts by the New Right-Wing Government*, 10 February 2026, <https://civicspacewatch.eu/alert/czech-republic-civic-space-under-pressure-from-funding-cuts-and-policy-shifts-by-the-new-right-wing-government/>; iROZHLAS.cz, *It's Not About Financial Savings. The New Government Wants to Scrutinize Non-Profits: Oversee Their Funding and Limit Their Influence* ("O finanční úsporu nejde. Nová vláda si chce posvítit na neziskovky: dohlédnout jim na financování i omezit jejich vliv"), 18 November 2025, https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/o-financni-usporu-nejde-nova-vlada-si-chce-posvicit-na-neziskovky-kvuli-jejich_2511180500_jgr
- 10 Glopolis, *Government Statement Threatens the Functioning of Public Services, Warns Over 140 Non-Governmental Organisations* ("Vládní prohlášení ohrožuje fungování veřejně prospěšných služeb, upozorňuje přes 140 nevládních organizací"), 12 January 2026, <https://glopolis.org/pro-civic/vladni-prohlaseni-ohrozuje-fungovani-verejne-prospesnych-sluzeb-upozorňuje-pres-140-nevladnich-organizaci/> Amnesty International Česká republika, *Government Statement Threatens the Functioning of Public Services, Warns Over 140 Non-Governmental Organisations* ("Česko: Vládní prohlášení ohrožuje fungování veřejně prospěšných služeb, upozorňuje přes 140 nevládních organizací"), 13 January 2026, <https://amnesty.cz/cesko-vladni-prohlaseni-ohrozuje-fungovani-verejne-prospesnych-sluzeb-upozorňuje-pres-140-nevladnich-organizaci/>
- 11 Česká televize 24, *Coalition Announced Agreement on Abolishing Fees for Public Media* ("Koalice oznámila shodu na zrušení poplatků za veřejnoprávní média"), 19 January 2026, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/koalice-oznamila-shodu-na-zruseni-poplatku-za-verejnopravni-media-369420>
- 12 Respekt, *Babiš Turns Against the Media* ("Babiš vyrazil proti médiím"), 15 February 2026, <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2026/8/babis-vyrazil-proti-mediim>
- 13 Deník.cz, *Babiš Government Abolishes NERV: Why It Decided and What the Impact Will Be* ("Babišova vláda zrušila NERV: Proč se tak rozhodla, jaký to bude mít dopad"), 9 February 2026, <https://www.denik.cz/ekonomika/babisova-vlada-zrusila-nerv.html>

Moreover, the Memory Agenda Council, the Competitiveness and Economic Growth Council and the Strategic Investment Committee were also abolished.¹⁴

- Threat to the independence of civil servants: In January 2026 the ruling coalition announced its intentions to repeal the Civil Service Act.¹⁵ The current framework¹⁶ limits arbitrary hiring and dismissal through formal procedures designed to shield officials from direct political pressure, whereas the new proposal¹⁷ would align their employment more closely with general labour law and increase managerial flexibility. The new law intends to abolish the special legal status of ‘service positions’, meaning many officials would no longer be appointed through structured civil-service procedures but hired under standard labour-law contracts. Second, selection procedures and career rules would be simplified or reduced, lowering barriers that currently limit politically motivated appointments. Third, dismissal rules would become more flexible, allowing managers (and indirectly political leadership) to reorganize offices and remove officials more easily. Fourth, the reform would weaken institutional safeguards such as independent oversight mechanisms and formal evaluation frameworks. Moreover, the draft law was submitted as an MP proposal, thus circumventing the standard legislative procedure at the ministerial level.¹⁸

Several early warning signs can be identified, primarily in the public statements of the new government, its media appearances, and its forthcoming programme declaration. These signals suggest a possible shift in the approach to civil society and independent media, although it remains unclear

14 Seznam Zprávy, *Government Abolishes Its Councils for Competitiveness and the Memory Agenda* (“Kabinet zrušil své rady pro konkurenceschopnost či paměťovou agendu”), 15 March 2026, <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-politika-kabinet-zrusil-sve-rady-pro-konkurenceschopnost-ci-pametovou-agendu-299548>

15 Act No. 234/2014 Coll. on Civil Service.

16 Act No. 234/2014 Coll. on Civil Service. Available online:

17 ODok Portál / VeKLEP, *Proposal by MPs Radek Vondráček, Renata Vesecká, Libor Vondráček and Zuzana Ožanová for the Adoption of a Law on the Legal Status of State Employees in Ministries and Other Administrative Authorities (Law on State Employees)* (“Návrh poslanců Radka Vondráčka, Renaty Vesecké, Libora Vondráčka a Zuzany Ožanové na vydání zákona o právních poměrech státních zaměstnanců v ministerstvech a jiných správních úřadech (zákon o státních zaměstnancích)”), 5 January 2026, <https://www.odok.gov.cz/portal/veklep/material/ALBSDPVEF33B/>

18 Česká justice, *The End of the Civil Service Act: Government Aims to Streamline the State Administration* (“Konec služebního zákona. Vláda: zestihlení státní správy”), 15 January 2026, <https://www.ceska-justice.cz/2026/01/konec-sluzebniho-zakona-vlada-zestihleni-statni-spravy/>; Transparency International ČR, *Government of Andrej Babiš Proposes a New Law on State Employees That Will Threaten the Independent Performance of the Civil Service* (“Vláda Andreje Babiše navrhuje nový zákon o státních zaměstnancích, který ohrozí nezávislý výkon státní správy”), 23 January 2026, <https://www.transparency.cz/vlada-andreje-babise-navrhuje-novy-zakon-o-statnich-zamestnancich-ktery-ohrozi-nezavisly-vykon-statni-spravy/>

what measures will ultimately be adopted. Among the options mentioned are the introduction of a ‘foreign agents’ law, the termination of public funding for certain non-profit organisations, and changes to the financing model of Czech Television and Czech Radio.

State of play (versus 2025)

-  *Justice system*
-  *Anti-corruption framework*
-  *Media Environment and Media Freedom*
-  *Checks and balances*

Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Regression</i> | <i>No progress</i> | <i>Progress</i> |
|  |  |  |

JUSTICE SYSTEM -

General assessment

In March 2025, Act No. 57/2025 Coll.¹⁹ was amended to include a judicial pay freeze, resulting in a de facto retroactive reduction of judicial salaries by approximately 5% since January 2025. This was contrary to the extensive case law of the Czech Constitutional Court²⁰ and was also criticised by the European Association of Judges.²¹ Subsequently, judges began filing civil lawsuits over their salary assessments, seeking compensation at the level due to them under the Czech Republic's original standard calculation mechanism. In October 2025, the Czech Constitutional Court declared the amendment unconstitutional.²² The court found that no exceptional circumstances had been presented to justify the reduction, nor could the state credibly demonstrate how the declared savings would contribute to the recovery of public finances. Furthermore, the intended measures were not adequately discussed with representatives of the judiciary. Following the ruling, the state is required to provide retroactive compensation to judges, estimated at over €33 million (800 million Kč), plus interest and

19 Act No. 57/2025 Coll., amending Act No. 236/1995 Coll., on salaries and other benefits associated with the performance of the functions of representatives of state power and certain state authorities and judges and members of the European Parliament, as amended, and certain other acts.

20 For summary see: Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic, *Judges' salaries in 2021, 2022 and 2024 back before the Constitutional Court: three times the same, but each time slightly different* ("Soudcovské platy 2021, 2022 a 2024 po čase opět na stole Ústavního soudu: třikrát stejně, ale pokaždě trochu jinak"), 28 May 2024, <https://www.usoud.cz/aktualne/soudcovske-platy-2021-2022-a-2024-po-case-opet-na-stole-ustavniho-soudu-trikrat-stejne-ale-pokazde-trochu-jinak>.

21 European Association of Judges: *Statement on the restriction of judicial remuneration in Czechia* (published via Soudci.cz), 9 May 2025, https://www.soudci.cz/WebContent/Czechia_EAJ%20Statement_Yerevan%202025.pdf.

22 *Ruling of the Constitutional Court, Case. No. Pl. ÚS 19/25 of 7 October 2025. Available in Czech language online: https://nalus.usoud.cz:443/Search/GetText.aspx?sz=Pl-19-25_1. See also: Daniela Lazarová, *Constitutional Court overturns pay freeze for judges*, Radio Prague International, 2 October 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/constitutional-court-overturns-pay-freeze-judges-8865045> and Nikola Šedová, *Constitutional Court: the reduction of judges' salaries in 2025 is unconstitutional. The state must pay them back*, Dostupný advokát, 12 October 2025, <https://dostupnyadvokat.cz/en/blog/constitutional-court-the-reduction-of-judges-salaries-in-2025-is-unconstitutional-the-state-must-pay-them-back/>.*

legal costs. As of 1 January 2026, it is anticipated that the salaries of judges and prosecutors will rise by over 13% in the following year.²³

Progress in the digitisation of the justice system remained very slow in 2025. The absence of a fully functioning electronic court file (known as eSpis) and electronic insolvency register (eISIR) remains a fundamental deficiency. The deployment of the comprehensive eISIR/eSpis system has been postponed once again to the fourth quarter of 2026.²⁴ Improvements were made to the accessibility of district and regional court decisions on the Ministry of Justice website²⁵ during the year, though decisions of general courts, as well as the Constitutional Court, are still usually published with hindsight after they are announced. On a positive note, in the past year, the Justice Ministry as well as the apex courts themselves, have made significant efforts to enhance the utilisation of artificial intelligence, particularly in administrative processes such as transcriptions, translations, text summaries, and anonymisation. The Ministry has also undertaken a substantial initiative to incorporate the secure Microsoft Copilot environment. However, courts still lack a uniform methodology for using AI, a robust data infrastructure, and connectivity to key justice systems.²⁶

Implementation of 2025 Commission recommendations

Recommendation: There were no specific recommendations concerning the judicial system in the 2025 Report.

23 Sections 3 and 4 of Act No. 236/1995 Sb., as amended by Law 57/2025 Sb.; See also: Eva Paseková, *Salaries of judges and prosecutors will jump significantly. See by how much (Soudcům a žalobcům skokově vzrostou platy. Podívejte se o kolik)*, Česká justice, 15 September 2025, <https://www.ceska-justice.cz/2025/09/soudcum-a-zalobcum-skokove-vzrostou-platy/>.

24 Request for information submitted by LLP to the Ministry of Justice on 8 October 2025; response to the request received from the Ministry of Justice on 23 October 2025.

25 See the website of the Ministry of Justice: <https://rozhodnuti.justice.cz/>; the online access to case of law of the apex courts remains separate.

26 See full report on state of digitalisation of Czech judiciary in 2025: League of Human Rights, *Digitalisation Delayed, Justice Denied? Delayed digitalisation and its impact on access to justice*, League of Human Rights (Liga lidských práv), 30.11.2025, https://llp.cz/wp-content/uploads/ENG_Report.pdf.

Gaps in the Commission's Report

Limited progress on judicial pay and reform

The European Commission declares that the Czech Republic made some progress on taking measures to address the remuneration of judges as of 2026. However, this could be misleading if understood as the adoption of new rules that would increase judges' salaries. In fact, no reform or new remuneration mechanism has been introduced in 2024 - only a partial correction to the unconstitutional legislative intervention carried out by Act No. 349/2023 Coll.²⁷ has been made. The 2023 Act amended the calculation of judges' base salaries, as set out in Section 3(3) of Act No. 236/1995 Coll.²⁸ The Constitutional Court declared this intervention unconstitutional in its ruling No. Pl. ÚS 5/24 of May 15, 2024,²⁹ as it violated the principle of judicial independence and the legitimate expectations of judges resulting from the long-established 'salary automatism'. Although the 2024 salary adjustment was presented as an increase, it was merely a restoration of a mechanism that would have applied automatically if the unconstitutional intervention had not occurred. According to legal analyses and the judiciary's opinion, Act No. 417/2024 Coll.,³⁰ which regulates the salary base for 2025, does not fully respect the binding requirements arising from the Constitutional Court's aforementioned ruling. This is particularly true with regard to the prohibition of arbitrary and repeated interventions in the remuneration of judges. Therefore, it is again the subject of court proceedings. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to speak of a systemic improvement, but rather of a continuing structural weakness.

The practice of bypassing standard **legislative procedure** was very common in 2025. While the 'state of legislative necessity' (in Czech: *stav legislativní nouze*), frequently used during the pandemic, saw a decline, it was replaced by other 'shortcuts,' specifically substantive 'riders' (unrelated amendments added to bills), proposals submitted by members of parliament and accelerated procedures under the guise of security or international obligations. Despite the fact that these shortcomings are frequently cited in proposals to repeal the law prior to the Constitutional Court, the Constitutional Court persists in asserting that a formal defect in the legislative process consisting of a violation of the rules of

27 Act No. 349/2023 Coll. Amending Certain Acts in Connection with the Consolidation of Public Budgets. Available online in Czech language: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2023/349/2026-01-01>.

28 Act No. 236/1995 Coll., on Salaries and Other Benefits Related to the Performance of Functions by Representatives of State Power and Certain State Authorities, Judges, and Members of the European Parliament. Available online in Czech language: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/1995/236/2025-10-24>.

29 Ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic Case No. Pl. ÚS 5/24 of May 15, 2024. Available online in Czech language: https://nalus.usoud.cz:443/Search/GetText.aspx?sz=PI-5-24_1.

30 Act No. 417/2024 Coll., amending Act No. 155/1995 Coll., on Pension Insurance, as amended, and other related acts. Available online in Czech language: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2024/417/2026-01-01>.

procedure does not inherently constitute grounds for derogating from a legal provision that resulted from such a defective legislative process.³¹

Moreover, the Commission attributed some progress to the digitalisation of the judiciary. However, progress is very slow, and key domains such as the electronic court file (eSpis) and the electronic insolvency register (eISIR) are still not operational, despite being essential for greater advancement. Recommendations should certainly be made to achieve comprehensive progress in these projects, as well as to consult on a collaborative strategy between the justice sector and the supreme courts.

New Issues that Emerged in 2025

Amendment to the Criminal Code: In July 2025, an extensive amendment to the Criminal Code³² was approved, representing the most significant penal law reform in recent Czech history. The most widely discussed changes include adjustments to penalties for minor drug offences, the introduction of new criminal offences such as identity abuse for pornography production (§ 191a) and activity for a foreign power (§ 318a), and the expansion of the protection of vulnerable groups in relation to hate crimes. Other changes include reduced criminal penalties for repeat theft, courts' power to impose sentences below statutory minimums when multiple offenses accumulate, partial decriminalisation of child maintenance non-payment, and reforms to conditional release and parole.

A widely debated change was also the establishment of the so-called 'Child Certificate' registry, which will list individuals convicted of violent or sexual crimes. Critics argue it effectively bans such individuals from relevant professions for up to 100 years, imposing a de facto additional sanction. Furthermore, the new legislation provides for the automatic and retroactive registration of individuals who have been lawfully convicted since 2005. This also applies to perpetrators whose convictions have been expunged, meaning they are treated as if they had not been convicted. Concerns have also been raised about the extremism provisions, which introduce a ban on promoting Communism and punish support for movements that suppress human rights and freedoms. Critics have pointed out that the amendment does not distinguish clearly enough between totalitarian regimes and modern political ideas such as Marxism and democratic socialism.³³ Among the changes appraised is the strengthening

31 See e.g. the latest Ruling of the Constitutional Court Case No. Pl. ÚS 5/25, February 4, 2026, para 41-74, https://nalus.usoud.cz:443/Search/GetText.aspx?sz=PI-5-25_1.

32 Act No. 270/2025 Coll., amending Act No. 40/2009 Coll., the Criminal Code, as amended, Act No. 141/1961 Coll., on Criminal Procedure (Criminal Procedure Code), as amended, and other related acts. Available online: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/270?zalozka=text>.

33 Expats.cz, *New Czech extremism law sparks protest and could end Soviet souvenirs in Prague*, Expats.cz, 5 January 2026, <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/new-czech-extremism-law-sparks-protest-and-could-end-soviet-souvenirs-in-prague>.

of restorative justice (§ 309), which makes conditional release easier, introduces additional alternatives to imprisonment, as well as simplifying the settlement process. For approval, it will now be sufficient for the perpetrator to pay at least 30% of the damages and reach an agreement with the victim regarding installment payments on the remainder.³⁴ This measure responds to structural pressures in the prison system, with several facilities facing severe overcrowding in 2025.³⁵

Family law reform: An amendment to the Civil Code³⁶ fundamentally alters family law by simplifying divorce proceedings, merging divorce and custody proceedings, and strengthening the protection of children and victims of domestic violence. It simplifies the process of uncontested divorces and combines divorce with the adjustment of custody of a child support into a single proceeding. Custody categorisation is removed, with the court determining the scope of each parent's custody on a case-by-case basis, prioritising parental agreements that protect the child's interests. The amendment expressly prohibits corporal punishment and imposes an obligation to raise children free from physical or psychological violence. Furthermore, it extends the rights of registered partners, particularly with

34 Mojmír Ježek, *Criminal Code Amendment 2025: Key Changes from Cannabis to Child Certificate*, EcovisLegal (ECOVIS ježek, advokátní kancelář), 5 June 2025, <https://www.ecovislegal.cz/en/czech-legal-news/czech-criminal-law/criminal-code-amendment-2025-key-changes-from-cannabis-to-child-certificate/>; AOOV: *Amendment of the Criminal Code — Summary of the Main Changes, Association of Organizations in the Prison System* (Asociace organizací v oblasti vězeňství), 2025, <https://aovv.cz/amendment-of-the-criminal-code-summary-of-the-main-changes/>; JUDr. Ondřej Preuss, Ph.D., *What the state doesn't want to punish anymore – and more: changes to criminalisation from 2026*, Dostupný advokát, 5 January 2026, <https://dostupnyadvokat.cz/en/blog/what-the-state-doesnt-want-to-punish-anymore-and-more-changes-to-criminalisation-from-2026>; BPV Braun Partners, *Changes in criminal law in 2026*, BPV Braun Partners, 7 January 2026, <https://www.bpv-bp.com/en/clanek/changes-in-criminal-law-in-2026/>.

35 Martin Ťopek, *How to address overcrowded prison cells and prisoner recidivism? The solution should be greater motivation to work and strengthening of psychiatrists behind bars (Jak na přeplněné cely a recidivu trestanců? Řešením má být větší motivace do práce i posílení psychiatrů za mřížemi)*, Hospodářské noviny, 28 July 2025, <https://archiv.hn.cz/c1-67766060-jak-na-preplnene-cely-a-recidivu-trestancu-resenim-ma-byt-vetsi-motivace-do-prace-i-posileni-psychiatru-za-mrizemi>.

36 Act No. 268/2025 Coll., amending Act No. 89/2012 Coll., the Civil Code, as amended, and other related acts. Available online in Czech language: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/268/2026-01-01>.

regard to the adoption of a partner's child and changes of surname, to provide better protection for children in these families.³⁷

Execution enforcement: Courts in the Czech Republic reported in 2025 that they are overloaded with enforcement proceedings relating to small debts or long-running cases that have produced no results. The significant increase in requests to halt such proceedings last year has placed an additional administrative burden on courts. A large proportion of time is spent on administrative work relating to requests to suspend these cases, for which bailiffs are entitled to remuneration.³⁸

Implementation of Judgments

The College of Experts for the Enforcement of ECtHR Judgments is a consultative body to the Government Representative for the Czech Republic before the ECtHR, tasked with enforcing ECtHR judgments and implementing the ECHR.³⁹ The Czech Republic is currently in the process of implementing 17 judgments of the ECtHR.⁴⁰

The enforcement of the judgment in the *D. H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, Application No. 57325/00, 13 November 2007 has been a long-standing problem. The Expert Forum on the Implementation of the Judgment in D.H. and Others, a special working group of the College of Experts established in 2019, continues to work on the implementation.⁴¹ Czech Republic remains under

37 Mojmír Ježek, *Changes in family law 2025: partnership, divorce and child protection*, EcovisLegal (ECOVIS ježek, advokátní kancelář), 14 November 2025, <https://www.ecovislegal.cz/en/czech-legal-news/family-law-and-divorce/changes-in-family-law-2025-partnership-divorce-and-child-protection/>; Lucie Martin Nešporová (in partnership with Expats.cz), *How Czechia's divorce reform will make the process simpler for international couples*, Expats.cz, 5 January 2026, <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/how-czechia-s-divorce-reform-will-make-the-process-simpler-for-international-couples>.

38 Česká televize 24, *Courts Record Thousands of Applications to Stop Enforcement Cases*, 10 February 2025, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/soudy-eviduji-tisice-zadosti-o-zastaveni-exekucnich-kauz-357929>

39 See more information on the College and Government Representative on the Ministry of Justice website: *Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and decisions of other international human rights bodies* ("Vykon rozsudků ESLP a rozhodnutí dalších mezinárodních lidskoprávních orgánů"), Mezi soudy, 2025, <https://mezisoudy.cz/vykon-rozsudku-eslp-a-rozhodnuti-dalsich-mezinarodnich-lidskopravnych-organu>.

40 See the list of judgments currently in the process of implementation under the "Aktuální témata", <https://mezisoudy.cz/vykon-rozsudku-eslp-a-rozhodnuti-dalsich-mezinarodnich-lidskopravnych-organu>.

41 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: *D. H. and Others v. the Czech Republic – Discrimination of Romani children in access to education* ("D. H. a ostatní proti České republice – diskriminace romských dětí v přístupu ke vzdělání"), 2025, <https://msmt.gov.cz/vzdelavani/d-h-a-ostatni-proti-ceske-republice-diskriminace-romskych>.

enhanced supervision of the Committee of Ministers, with implementation still assessed as only partially satisfactory, especially regarding persistent segregation of Roma children in education and insufficient impact of adopted measures at local level. In 2025, the Czech government shifted from a general Roma inclusion framework to more operational implementation tools, including an interim execution report (January 2025) and a new, more targeted action plan to support the participation of Roma and socially disadvantaged children in preschool education, which was submitted to the Committee of Ministers in October 2025. Its implementation is scheduled in the period 2026-2027.⁴² This new action plan focuses on increasing Roma children's enrolment in preschool, identifying municipalities and school founders in areas suspected of segregation, and using targeted support measures to reduce concentration of Roma pupils in separate or 'practical' schools, though concrete indicators and enforcement mechanisms are still being scrutinised by the Committee of Ministers and stakeholders. Despite these formal steps, the overrepresentation of Roma children in certain schools or special educational programs continues (according to statistics, Roma pupils make up approximately 3% of all pupils in the Czech Republic, nevertheless in 135 elementary schools more than a third of pupils are

42 Ministry of Justice, Office of the Agent of the Czech Government before the European Court of Human Rights. Execution of Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights no. 57325/00 – D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic Interim Report on the Execution of the Judgment submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 17 January 2025, https://mezisoudy.cz/storage/files/tinyMCE/D.%20H.%20and%20Others_Interim%20report%20on%20the%20Execution%20of%20the%20Judgment_En_fin_2025-01-17.pdf; Committee of Ministers, *Communication from the Czech Republic concerning the supervision of execution of an ECHR judgment (DH-DD(2025)1215E)*, Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe), 17 October 2025, [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng?i=DH-DD\(2025\)1215E](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng?i=DH-DD(2025)1215E); Committee of Ministers, *Execution of the European Court of Human Rights judgment in D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic (Application No. 004-31) — Supervision of execution documents*, Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe), accessed 2025, <https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=004-31>.

of Roma origin, in 79 elementary schools more than half of the pupils are Roma and in 16 elementary schools Roma pupils make up more than 90% of the school's student population).⁴³

Conversely, several less extensive cases were closed in 2025, including *Josef Nadrchal v. Czech Republic*,⁴⁴ *Veselý v. Czech Republic*⁴⁵ and *Zadeh v. Czech Republic*.⁴⁶

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- 43 National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, *New methodological approach to desegregation ("Nový metodický přístup k desegregaci")*, 8 September 2025, <https://www.npi.cz/aktuality/92877-novy-metodicky-pristup-k-desegregaci?highlight=WyjzZWdyZWdhY2UiXQ==>; Markéta Lankašová and Josef Dyntr, *Segregation of Romani pupils in schools continues. Czechia faces hundred-million-level fines from the EU ("Segregace Romů ve školách trvá. Česku hrozí stamilionové pokuty z EU")*, iDNES.cz, 14 November 2025, https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/romsky-zak-zakladni-skola-pokuta-evropska-komise-segregace.A251114_878924_domaci_hock. Romea.cz, *Report for the Ministry of Education: segregation of Romani children persists; affects 79 schools ("Zpráva pro MŠMT: segregace romských dětí přetrvává; týká se 79 škol")*, 15 December 2025, <https://romea.cz/cz/domaci/zprava-pro-msmt-segregace-romskych-deti-pretrvava-tyka-se-79-skol>; Zapojme Všechny (Collective of NGOs for Inclusive Education), *Situational Report on Segregation of Romani Pupils in Primary Education in the Czech Republic ("Situční zpráva – Segregace romských žáků v základním vzdělávání v ČR")*, September 2025, https://zapojevsechny.cz/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/Situa%C4%8Dn%C3%AD%20zpr%C3%A1va_Segregace%20romsk%C3%BDch%20C5%BE%C3%A1k%C5%AF%20v%20z%C3%A1kladn%C3%ADm%20vzd%C4%9B%C3%A1v%C3%A1n%C3%AD%20v%20C4%8CR.pdf.
- 44 Committee of Ministers, *Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)1 on the execution of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in Josef Nadrchal v. the Czech Republic*, Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, 15 January 2025, <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680b332e2>.
- 45 Committee of Ministers, *Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)184 on the execution of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in Veselý against Czech Republic*, European Court of Human Rights, 2025, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-244982>.
- 46 Committee of Ministers, *Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)65 on the execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights Zadeh against the Czech Republic*, European Court of Human Rights, 30 April 2025, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-243461>.

ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

General assessment

The Czech Republic showed some progress in tackling high-level corruption, illustrated by several high-profile cases and legal reforms. The *Motor Hospital* case saw the coordinated arrest and charging of individuals for large-scale procurement fraud and bribery involving EU funds, with significant asset seizures upheld by court. The Bitcoin Affair demonstrated enforcement against financial crimes connected to criminal proceeds, including seizures and prosecutions. Legislative reforms strengthened public procurement rules, introducing penalties for fraud and restricting participation in contracts and subsidies. The Supreme Administrative Court's ruling on Andrej Babiš confirmed the enforceable interpretation of conflict-of-interest laws, suspending subsidies and public contracts for Agrofert and requiring independent trust oversight. Progress was also seen in the *Čapí Hnízdo* case, where appellate courts overturned acquittals, binding trial courts to recognize fraud in EU subsidy misuse. While lobbying legislation was adopted, implementation gaps and loopholes remain, highlighting the need for continued vigilance. Overall, these developments may be perceived as some indicate a measurable advancement in the Czech authorities' capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption. On the other hand, the Czech Republic fails to introduce complex measures that would have preventive effect in terms of high-profile corruption (i.e. the revolving door measures).

Implementation of 2025 Commission recommendations

Recommendation: Take further measures to reduce the length of proceedings and ensure independence of investigation and prosecution in high-level corruption cases (first made in 2022)

The recommendation is quite broad in terms of its implementation. Speeding up court proceedings, not only in corruption cases but in general, is a complex issue requiring a strategic and comprehensive approach. It would be more helpful to suggest specific areas on which The Czech Republic should currently focus, such as completing the digitisation of the judiciary, reforming procedural codes and increasing the judiciary's personnel capacity, etc. Measuring (quantifying) it is similarly challenging due to the varying complexity levels of corruption cases.

Since the 2025 rule of law report, there have been no comprehensive changes in this area, given that parliamentary elections were held in the autumn of 2025. However, political parties did address the length of court proceedings to some extent in their political programmes, specifically:

The SPOLU party proposed amendments to procedural rules, court fee reform, the simplification of the system for delivering court documents, development of alternative forms of punishment, and the limitation of the reasoning behind court decisions.⁴⁷

The ANO party has declared that it will ensure better salaries for non-judicial staff, digitise files, and introduce uniform IT systems. It also plans to reform the prison system, particularly by introducing alternative punishments, supporting the professional rehabilitation of prisoners, and reducing reoffending.⁴⁸

The STAČILO party advocated a publicly accessible system of court statistics, including information on case duration and numbers, combined with significantly strengthened judicial oversight (e.g., term of office, mandatory training). Moreover, it advocated for the expansion of class action lawsuits on behalf of consumers and the strengthening of the lay element in the judiciary being increased.⁴⁹

Several parties (e.g. the Pirates Party) addressed the length of court proceedings typically in a negative context concerning slow courts, and just generally promised to speed them up. Similarly, vague were the former's proclamations regarding reducing corruption.⁵⁰

The pace of investigations and trials into high-profile corruption cases was evident in several instances. For example, the Court of Appeal delivered a landmark ruling in the Čapí hnízdo case, and measures were taken to further the investigation into the Bitcoin case, including cooperation with the EPPO and Montenegro.

47 SPOLU (Civic Democratic Party, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09), *SPOLU Programme 2025: A Plan for a Stronger Czech Republic* ("Program SPOLU 2025: Plán pro silnější Českou republiku"), SPOLU, 2025, p. 27, <https://spolu25.cz/pdf/SPOLU-program-2025.pdf>.

48 ANO 2011: *Election Programme 2025 (Volební program 2025)*, ANO 2011, 2025, p. 27, <https://www.anobudelip.cz/file/edee/ke-stazeni/volebni-program-2025.pdf>.

49 Enough is enough! Election program for the House of Representatives elections, ('Stačilo!, *Volební program Sněmovní volby*), October 3-4. 2025, <https://programydovoleb.cz/volby/snemovni-volby/166/strana/234/volebni-program/2683#stat-na-strane-o>

50 Czech Pirate Party: *Programme of the Czech Pirate Party (Program České pirátské strany)*, Czech Pirate Party, 2025, <https://www.pirati.cz/program/>; sPaseková: *Politicians shouting "courts are slowing down Czechia" (Politici křičí „soudy brzdí Česko“)*, Česká justice, 18 September 2025, <https://www.ceska-justice.cz/2025/09/politici-krici-soudy-brzdi-cesko/>.

However, a recent public opinion poll indicates that the public supports stricter penalties for corruption.⁵¹ Thus, no substantial structural reforms have been implemented that would demonstrably reduce the duration of proceedings in high-level cases or establish new, specific safeguards for the independence of investigations and prosecutions. The 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index and the Bitcoin case affair have, on the contrary, reinforced the perception that the system continues to fail in matters with significant political implications.⁵²

Focus on advancements aimed at increasing personnel, material capacities, and financial resources in relation to courts and law enforcement agencies as such.

Commission's 2025 assessment: Some further progress

The League of Human Rights' current assessment: No progress

Recommendation: Take further measures to strengthen the integrity framework for all members of Parliament, in particular by complementing the existing rules as regards revolving doors (first made in 2022 – to some extent. The Commission formerly recommended strengthening the integrity framework for Members of Parliament, particularly by ensuring that Codes of Ethics are in place in both Houses of Parliament.)

The recommendation is assessed as relatively clear in its overall objective but lacking precise guidance on the concrete steps to be taken. It is evident that the Commission seeks to strengthen rules applicable to members of parliament and explicitly addresses movements from public office to the private sector. At the same time, however, it does not specify what minimum standards these rules should contain, for example, whether there should be a mandatory code of ethics in both chambers, a required cooling-off period before entering the private sector, stricter regulations on gifts, or alternative measures.

Initial steps have been made in 2025.

51 Novinky.cz: *Survey: Majority of Czechs want harsher penalties for corruption (Průzkum: Většina Čechů chce přísnější tresty za korupci)*, Novinky.cz, 15 October 2025, <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-pruzkum-vetsina-cechu-chce-prisnejsi-tresty-za-korupci-40555671>.

52 Act No. 270/2025 Coll., amending Act No. 40/2009 Coll., the Criminal Code, as amended, Act No. 141/1961 Coll., on Criminal Procedure (Criminal Procedure Code), as amended, and other related acts. Available online: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/270?zalozka=text>.

The Czech Republic adopted its first comprehensive lobbying regulation in 2025 through Act No. 168/2025 Coll. on the Regulation of Lobbying and Act No. 169/2025 Coll. (amending related laws), both entering into force on 1 July 2025.

The Czech Republic adopted its first comprehensive lobbying regulation in 2025 through Act No. 168/2025 Coll. on the Regulation of Lobbying and Act No. 169/2025 Coll. (amending related laws), both entering into force on 1 July 2025. However, parliamentary assistants and most advisory body members (except the Government Legislative Council) were excluded from the scope of lobbied persons during parliamentary amendments.

To create a recommendatory framework for preventing revolving doors – possibly in cooperation with GRECO or OECD.

Commission's 2025 assessment: No progress The League of Human Rights' current assessment: In progress

Recommendation: Reinitiate the revision of legislation on conflicts of interest, including as regards beneficial ownership (first made in 2025)

While the recommendation itself provides clear policy direction, its implementation parameters allow for a great deal of discretion, which can lead to ineffectiveness – ‘reinitiate’ does not mean ‘adopt concrete minimum standards’. This can lead to changes being adopted only formally and minimally.

Since the 2025 Rule of Law Report, **no significant legislative advancement has been made** to re-open and complete a comprehensive revision of conflict of interest legislation that would systematically include beneficial ownership rules.

Additionally, the Czech Ministry of Justice restricted public access to the beneficial owners register (ESM) since 17 December 2025 in response to EU and Czech court rulings⁵³ on privacy rights. Public access will be replaced by access for authorities, obliged entities (e.g., banks, notaries), and individuals demonstrating legitimate interest through the courts.

53 Ruling of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic Case No. 27 Cdo 1548/2024 of 26 August 2025, available in Czech language online: https://rozhodnuti.nsoud.cz/Judikatura/judikatura_ns.nsf/WebSearch/65BE95693B8714D5C1258CFA004D3F86?openDocument&Highlight=0;; Judgment of 22 November 2022, Luxembourg Business Registers (C-37/20 and C-601/20, Publié au Recueil numérique) ECLI:EU:C:2022:912.

No steps were adopted by the government, nor were they expected, given the parliamentary elections in autumn 2025.

Clarifying the minimum standards to be achieved could improve the adoption of proper legislation.

Commission's 2025 assessment: No progress The League of Human Rights' current assessment: No Progress

New Issues that Emerged in 2025

Motol Hospital Case

On 24 February 2025, the National Centre Against Organized Crime (NCOZ), operating under the supervision of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), executed a coordinated raid across 46 locations, resulting in the detention of 22 individuals and the formal charging of 16 persons.⁵⁴ The case centered on systematic manipulation of public procurement processes for two major construction projects: a €120 million oncology center and Blue Pavilion energy-efficiency improvements, with the alleged fraudulent scheme involving bribery, subsidy fraud, money laundering, and damage to EU financial interests. The investigation scope encompassed approximately 4 billion Kč in public contract value, with a substantial portion derived from European Union structural funds. The primary suspects include former hospital director Miloslav Ludvík, who led the institution since 2000 and was immediately dismissed, and his deputy Pavel Budinský, who allegedly demanded bribes of over 8 million Kč. In April 2025, the police seized assets totalling over €4,128,147 (100 million Kč) from the accused.⁵⁵ The regional court upheld the seizure in December 2025.

The Bitcoin Affair

In March 2025, Czech Ministry of Justice adopted a decision to accept and auction 468 bitcoins (nearly 1 billion Kč, around €40–45 million) donated by convicted drug trafficker Tomáš Jiříkovský, who had run an illegal dark-web marketplace and was sentenced in 2017 for drug trafficking and

54 Pavel Polityuk and Jack Guy, *Police arrest 22 in suspected €160 million EU fraud at Czech hospital*, Reuters, 24 February 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/police-arrest-22-suspected-160-million-eu-fraud-czech-hospital-2025-02-24/>; Danny Bate, *Czechia's largest hospital embroiled in massive fraud scandal*, Radio Prague International, 26 February 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/czechias-largest-hospital-embroiled-massive-fraud-scandal-8843951>.

55 Vít Pohanka, *Motol hospital scandal: police seize assets worth over CZK 100 million*, Radio Prague International, 7 April 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/motol-hospital-scandal-police-seize-assets-worth-over-czk-100-million-8847729>.

related offenses. In exchange for the ministry's cooperation in accessing a previously confiscated crypto wallet, Jiřikovský offered 30% of its contents. The then-Justice Minister Pavel Blažek agreed, with the subsequent sale of the bitcoins at a state-run auction, and the ministry publicly announcing that the proceeds would be used for digitizing the justice system, improving detention conditions, and housing for prison staff.⁵⁶ Under political pressure, Blažek resigned on 30 May 2025.⁵⁷ The Czech prosecution office opened two separate cases: one targeting Jiřikovský for money laundering and renewed drug-related offences, and another examining possible abuse of power and other crimes connected with the ministry's acceptance and handling of the donation. In August 2025, the National Centre for Combating Organised Crime (NCOZ) arrested Jiřikovský and seized the bitcoins back from the ministry.⁵⁸ The Court subsequently ordered Jiřikovský into custody,⁵⁹ and by late 2025 he faced charges for two counts of legalising proceeds of crime related to 2015 and 2025 transactions. Moreover, at the EPPO request, a Montenegro court froze Budinsky's real estate and shares of companies registered in Montenegro.⁶⁰

The amendment to the Criminal Code (see above) also introduces changes to public procurement, establishing two novel penalties: the prohibition of performing public contracts or participating in public tenders, and the prohibition of accepting subsidies and grants. Penalties may be imposed for specific criminal offences such as fraud in public procurement and public tenders (Section 257), as well as other related offences if they are relevant to the case in question. They may also be imposed on individuals.⁶¹

56 Thomas Smith, *Explained: the Bitcoin scandal shaking Czech politics — and what's at stake*, Expats.cz, 3 June 2025, <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/explained-the-bitcoin-scandal-shaking-czech-politics-and-why-it-matters>; Anne-Laure Duféal, *Czech Justice ministry under investigation for auctioning bitcoin gift from convicted drug dealer*, BrusselsSignal, 2 June 2025, <https://brusselssignal.eu/2025/06/czech-justice-ministry-under-investigation-for-auctioning-bitcoin-gift-from-convicted-drug-dealer/>.

57 Pavel Polityuk and Jack Guy, *Czech government installs new minister after bitcoin scandal*, Reuters, 10 June 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/czech-government-installs-new-minister-after-bitcoin-scandal-2025-06-10/>.

58 Jamie Crawley (with editorial oversight by Stephen Alpher), *Czech Police Arrest Donor in Billion-Dollar Bitcoin Scandal: Report*, CoinDesk, 15 August 2025, <https://www.coindesk.com/policy/2025/08/15/czech-police-arrest-donor-in-billion-dollar-bitcoin-scandal-report/>.

59 Czech News Agency, *Court orders custody for convicted criminal at centre of Bitcoin scandal*, Brno Daily, 19 August 2025, <https://brnodaily.com/2025/08/19/news/politics/court-orders-custody-for-convicted-criminal-at-centre-of-bitcoin-scandal/>.

60 Ruth Fraňková, *Montenegro freezes assets of Czech hospital executive in corruption case*, Radio Prague International, 14 May 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/montenegro-freezes-assets-czech-hospital-executive-corruption-case-8851028>.

61 Jan Vych and David Šnajdr, *Amendment to the Criminal Code: What will happen with public contracts*, AK Vych & Partners, 2 January 2026, <https://www.ak-vych.cz/en/amendment-of-the-Criminal-Code--what-will-happen-with-public-contracts/>.

Andrej Babiš's conflict of interest: On 10 December 2025, the Supreme Administrative Court of the Czech Republic issued a landmark judgment definitively confirming that Babiš's conflict of interest within his first premiership (2017–2021)⁶² rendered Agrofert companies ineligible not only for subsidies but also for public procurement contracts of any value (prior to 2017, Mr Babiš directly owned Agrofert, in order to comply with the new regulation of conflicts of interest, Mr Babiš put his company into two private trusts).⁶³ The Court declared that 'controlling influence' under the Conflict of Interest Law⁶⁴ must be interpreted substantively, not merely formally - a formal transfer to trust funds does not eliminate control if the public official remains the beneficial owner and retains decision-making influence. Moreover, the prohibition extends to all public contracts, including small-scale contracts funded from public sources. As a result, the State Agriculture Intervention Fund (SZIF) suspended processing of all Agrofert subsidy applications on 9 December 2025, pending legal resolution of the conflict. SZIF Director Petr Dlouhý indicated that in the initial phase, Agrofert entities would forfeit approximately 100 million Kč in agricultural support payments.⁶⁵

In December 2025, Babiš announced that all Agrofert shares would be placed under an independent trustee within a trust structure and supervised by an independent protector, chosen by an independent authority. The latter should finally sever all personal ties with the company in question, in line with

62 Judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court, Case No. 8 Afs 215/2024 - 74 of December 11, 2025. Available in Czech language online: <https://vyhledavac.nssoud.cz/DokumentOriginal/Text/747815>.

63 OpenOwnership Case study: *Agrofert Group — early impacts of public beneficial ownership registers (Slovakia)*, OpenOwnership, 15 December 2025, <https://www.openownership.org/en/publications/early-impacts-of-public-beneficial-ownership-registers-slovakia/case-study-agrofert-group/>.

64 § 4c of Act No. 159/2006 Coll. on conflicts of interest. Available in Czech online: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2006/159/2025-07-01>.

65 Czech News Agency, *Subsidies for Agrofert firms halted pending resolution of Babiš's conflict of interest*, Brno Daily, 16 December 2025, <https://brnodaily.com/2025/12/16/news/politics/subsidies-for-agrofert-firms-halted-pending-resolution-of-babiss-conflict-of-interest/>; See also: Transparency International Czech Republic: *Andrej Babiš – corruption cases and conflict of interest (Andrej Babiš – kauzy)*, Transparency International Czech Republic, 2025, <https://www.transparency.cz/kauzy/andrej-babis/>.

Petr Pavel's precondition of resolving his conflict of interest before appointing Babiš as Prime Minister (under the arrangement, the company would pass to his children only after his death).⁶⁶

Development in Čapí Hnízdo criminal case: Quick background: The case concerns alleged subsidy fraud involving a €2,060,000 (50 million Kč) EU grant awarded in 2008 to Farma Čapí Hnízdo, a.s., for construction of a conference and leisure facility near Prague. The indictment alleges that Babiš orchestrated the company's formal separation from the Agrofert conglomerate in 2007–2008, transferring shares to family members and associates, to fraudulently qualify for a subsidy program restricted to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Once the subsidy was secured, the facility was reintegrated into Babiš's business empire.

In June 2025, the appellate court overturned Babiš's acquittal and issued a binding instruction to the trial court, directing it to enter guilty verdicts based on the evidentiary record. The Prague High Court was convinced of the guilt of the accused in both criminal offenses and found that trial court Judge Jan Šott's repeated acquittals constituted misapplication of substantive criminal law.⁶⁷ The latter means that Babiš orchestrated the scheme with intent to unlawfully obtain EU funds, and the Municipal Court is bound to find both accused guilty. However, Babiš regained parliamentary immunity upon election to the Chamber of Deputies on 4 October 2025, thus criminal proceedings against

66 English Radio Prague International, *Babiš to cut all personal ties to Agrofert to resolve conflict-of-interest concerns*, Radio Prague International, 5 December 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/babis-cut-all-personal-ties-agrofert-resolve-conflict-interest-concerns-8870920>; ČTK, Pavel: *If Babiš does not resolve his conflict of interest, ANO should offer another candidate* ("Pavel: Pokud Babiš nevyřeší střet zájmů, ANO by mělo nabídnout jiného kandidáta"), ČT24 (Česká televize), 17 November 2025, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/pavel-pokud-babis-nevyresi-stret-zajmu-ano-by-melo-nabidnout-jineho-kandidata-367266>; Tereza Čemusová, *From the first verdict to an 'irreversible' solution: How Andrej Babiš's conflict of interest escalated over one year* ("Od prvního rozsudku po ‚nevratné‘ řešení. Jak během jednoho roku vygradoval střet zájmů Andreje Babiše"), iROZHLAS.cz, 31 December 2025, https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/stret-zajmu-andrej-babis-agrofert-nevratne-reseni-rozsudky-soudu_2512311200_tec.; Eva Pospíšilová and Jiří Vachtl, *Babiš did more than necessary. If he didn't keep his word, it would destroy him, says lawyer* ("Babiš udělal víc, než bylo třeba. Kdyby nedodržel slovo, zničí ho to, říká právník"), iDNES.cz, 5 December 2025, https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/ustavni-pravnik-jan-kudrna-babis-stret-zajmu-udelal-vic-nez-bylo-treba.A251205_130953_domaci_chtl.

67 Decision of the High Court in Prague, June 23, 2025, Case No. 3 To 34/2024; High Court in Prague, *Information on the decision of the High Court in Prague in case file no. 3 To 34/2024* ("Informace o rozhodnutí Vrchního soudu v Praze ve věci sp. zn. 3 To 34/2024"), Ministerstvo spravedlnosti / Vrchní soud v Praze, 23 June 2025, <https://msp.gov.cz/documents/d/vrchni-soud-v-praze/tiskova-zprava-3-to-34-2024>; Czech News Agency, *Appeals court overturns acquittal of Babiš in Čapí Hnízdo case*, Brno Daily, 23 June 2025, <https://brnodaily.com/2025/06/23/news/politics/appeals-court-overturns-acquittal-of-babis-in-capi-hnizdo-case/>.

him were automatically suspended unless the Chamber voted to waive his immunity. Babiš publicly stated he would not voluntarily request immunity waiver, characterizing the prosecution as “politically motivated”.⁶⁸ Given ANO’s plurality position and coalition with SPD and Motorists, waiver approval is politically uncertain.⁶⁹

Issues related to lobbying legislation: Although the Czech Republic adopted a new lobbying regulation,⁷⁰ the final wording is riddled with several critical design flaws introduced during parliamentary debate. Notably, assistants to MPs and senators, members of advisory bodies,⁷¹ and self-governing units (thus municipalities and regions; including their employees, and organizations representing them) were removed from the list of those considered lobbied (‘targets of lobbying’). This is despite their active role in shaping legislation and influencing public decisions,⁷² creating a potential loophole for circumvention of the adopted Act.⁷³ The effectivity of the act is also threatened by a fact that lobbyists are required to submit reports only on a semi-annual basis rather than contemporaneous disclosure of individual lobbying interactions. Moreover, lobbyists are required to declare their lobbying activities based on their objectives, rather than listing individual contacts, and are not required to disclose the form of contact (in-person, written, telephone), the exact date, or detailed content of the communication. Additionally, the former Minister of Finance Zbyněk Stanjura rejected all resource requests, mandating that the implementation be within the existing personnel capacity of the Ministry of Justice.⁷⁴

68 The Mandate and Immunity Committee did not recommend that the Chamber of Deputies extradite Babiš and Okamuru, (*Mandátový a imunitní výbor nedoporučil sněmovně vydat Babiše a Okamuru*), 17 February 2026, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/snemovni-imunitni-vybor-resi-mozne-vydani-babise-a-okamury-369776>

69 Radim Vaculík, *It will be clearer only in November what will happen to Babiš in the Čapí Hnízdo case* (“O Babišově osudu v kauze Čapí hnízdo bude jasněji nejdřív v listopadu”), Novinky.cz, 1 October 2025, <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-o-babisove-osudu-v-kauze-capi-hnizdo-bude-jasneji-nejdriv-v-listopadu-40541454>.

70 Act No. 168/2025 Coll. on the regulation of lobbying. Available online in Czech language: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/168/2025-07-01>.

71 Except for members of the Government Legislative Council.

72 Particularly parliamentary assistants often play a key role in drafting laws and mediating communication with external actors.

73 Association of Public Affairs, Czech Senate approves lobbying regulation bill. Association of Public Affairs, 5 June 2024, <https://asociace-pa.cz/en/czech-senate-approves-lobbying-regulation-bill/>

74 Ministry of Justice, *Methodology for the Application of the Lobbying Regulation Act* (“Metodika k aplikaci zákona o regulaci lobbování”), Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, 22 June 2025, https://msp.gov.cz/documents/d/msp/metodika-k-aplikaci-zakona-o-regulaci-lobbovani_22-6-2025; Daniela Lazarová, *Lower house approves amendment to Lobbying Act*, Radio Prague International, 8 April 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/lower-house-approves-amendment-lobbying-act-8848708>; *Regulation Act in their hands* (“Boj o výjimky začíná: poslanci mají v rukou podobu zákona o regulaci lobbování”), Rekonstrukce státu, 15 April 2025, <https://www.rekonstrukcestatu.cz/archiv-novinek/boj-o-vyjimky-zacina-poslanci-maji-v-rukou-podobu-zakona-o-regulaci-lobbovani>;

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND MEDIA FREEDOM -

General assessment

The previous coalition government failed to enhance protection for the independence of public media funding. Immediately after taking office, the newly formed government announced the abolition of license fees, which would transfer effective control over public media funding through the state budget.⁷⁵ The issue of journalists' personal safety and protection against strategic lawsuits against public participation in government (SLAPPs) was not even the subject of political debate.

Czechia has ranked 10th (a seven-position jump) in the 2025 **World Press Freedom Index** conducted by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). RSF specifically praised the Czech government's decision to raise license fees for the first time in two decades and index them to inflation. However, according to RSF, press freedom in Czechia is threatened by the high concentration of private media and the online hatred directed against journalists.⁷⁶

The **Global Media and Internet Concentration** (GMIC) published a comprehensive analysis of the Czech media market. In terms of overall concentration, the Czech network media economy in 2019–2022 had a weighted HHI of 2614.9, which means even at the highest level of aggregation, this is a highly concentrated market. The core internet applications were the most concentrated group of markets (3647.7), followed by telecommunications and internet access sectors (2411.7) and online and traditional media (2160.85).⁷⁷

The Ministry of Culture submitted a draft implementation **law on media services** to interdepartmental consultation in March this year in line with the Czech Republic's obligations stemming from the European Media Freedom Act, but the government did not manage to approve it and pass it on to the legislative process during the post-election period.⁷⁸

75 iDNES.tv, *Babiš Promised to Abolish TV Fees. He Says Seventeen EU Countries Don't Have Them* ("Babiš slíbil zrušení televizních poplatků. Nemá je sedmnáct zemí EU, říká"), 10 December 2024, https://tv.idnes.cz/domaci/babis-slibil-zruseni-televiznich-poplatku.V241210_153242_idnestv_cham

76 Reporters Without Borders, *Czechia – World Press Freedom Index country profile*, Reporters Without Borders, 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/country-czechia>.

77 Global Media and Internet Concentration Project (GMICP), *Communications, media and internet concentration in the Czech Republic 2019–2022*, Global Media and Internet Concentration Project, 2023, <https://gmicp.org/communications-media-and-internet-concentration-in-the-czech-republic-2019-2022/>.

78 Draft law on certain conditions for the provision of media services and on amendments to certain related laws (Media Services Act). Available at: <https://www.odok.gov.cz/portal/veklep/material/KORNDDSCZ27K/>.

Prior to October 2025 parliamentary elections, a coalition of 22 civil society organizations (coordinated by European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, Czech chapters of Reporters Without Borders, International Press Institute, Oživení, and others) published *Ten Demands for Maintaining Media Freedom in Czechia*.⁷⁹

In September 2025, the International Press Institute (IPI), Czech National Committee launched *bezpecnazurnalistika.cz* - a first comprehensive journalist safety platform in Czechia. The platform includes Incident Reporting System (online threats, SLAPPs, etc.) and support services (such as legal assistance, psychological support, and professional guidance on confronting coercion).⁸⁰

In the 2025 Media Freedom Poll, the Czech Republic recorded the largest year-on-year increase in media freedom concern among the Visegrad Four countries (+5 percentage points, reaching 51%), with Czech respondents identifying business interests (e.g. media owners and advertisers) as the main threat. On the other hand, public service media maintained the highest trust, indicating that recent financing reforms have bolstered credibility. On the other hand, Czechs are among those who support the introduction of clear rules to regulate content on social networks. The measures they prefer most are removing harmful posts, reducing their reach and adding contextual information.⁸¹

The 2025 Media Rating report states that many Czech online media outlets have increased their transparency towards readers, primarily by publishing and publicising their ethical codes. The report also praises the clearer separation of advertising from editorial content.⁸²

79 Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), *Czech Republic — tag archive on press and media freedom developments* (Czech Republic archives), Media Freedom Rapid Response, 4 September 2025, <https://www.mfrr.eu/tag/czech-republic/>; European Federation of Journalists: *Czechia: 10 demands for maintaining media freedom*, European Federation of Journalists, 3 September 2025, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2025/09/03/czechia-10-demands-for-maintaining-media-freedom/>.

80 International Press Institute, *Czech Republic: IPI National Committee launches new journalist safety platform*, International Press Institute, 26 June 2025, <https://ipi.media/czech-republic-ipi-national-committee-launches-new-journalist-safety-platform/>.

81 MediaFreedomPoll.com, *Media Freedom Poll (global survey on media freedom and safety of journalists)*, MediaFreedomPoll.com, 2025, <https://mediafreedompoll.com/en/>.

82 NFNZ (Nadace Fakta Nenechávejte zaniknout), *Updated media rating: Czech online media strengthen their transparency (“Aktualizovaný media rating: Česká online média posilují svou transparentnost”)*, NFNZ (Nadace Fakta Nenechávejte zaniknout), 8 October 2025, <https://www.nfnz.cz/tz-aktualizovany-media-rating-ceska-online-media-posiluji-svou-transparentnost/>.

In the run-up to the Czech parliamentary elections on 3 and 4 October 2025, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) published ‘10 demands for maintaining media freedom’.⁸³

Implementation of 2025 Commission recommendations

Recommendation: Progress with further reforms relating to transparency of information on media ownership (first made in 2022)

The recommendation does not specify, at least roughly, what type of reforms are expected (e.g. legislative amendments, creation of a public register, harmonisation with company or beneficial ownership registers, or enforcement mechanisms). Similarly as the recommendation from the anticorruption field above - the wording “progress with further reforms” is inherently indeterminate, making it difficult to assess compliance or measure progress objectively.

No substantial legislative or policy progress on media ownership transparency has occurred since the 2025 EC Rule of Law Report - with no clear follow-up action taken at the national level. The government’s policy statement makes no mention of this issue whatsoever.⁸⁴

The Czech Republic should adopt legislative measures requiring the disclosure of the ultimate beneficial owners of all media service providers. These measures should stipulate that up-to-date information on ownership structures is made publicly accessible, establish a designated supervisory authority with enforcement powers and provide effective sanctions for non-compliance.

Commission’s 2025 assessment: No further progress

The League of Human Rights’ current assessment: No progress

Gaps in the Commission’s Report

Protection of journalists

The Czech Republic has taken minimal steps to protect journalists from physical and verbal harassment, as well as from Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

83 European Federation of Journalists, *Czechia: 10 Demands for Maintaining Media Freedom (“Czechia: 10 požadavků na udržení svobody médií”)*, 3 September 2025, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2025/09/03/czechia-10-demands-for-maintaining-media-freedom/>

84 Government of the Czech Republic, *Government Programme Statement (“Programové prohlášení vlády”)*, Government of the Czech Republic, 13 January 2026, <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/vlada/programove-prohlaseni-programove-prohlaseni-vlady-224629/>.

Several reports suggest that attacks on journalists are intensifying in the Czech Republic.⁸⁵ Moreover, during the parliamentary election campaign, statements of several politicians repeatedly appeared that could be interpreted as calls for attacks on journalists.⁸⁶ The survey also shows that most journalists do not report these attacks even though they feel their safety is threatened. However, no comprehensive solution has been adopted by the state, nor is it the subject of discussion in connection with the legislative process.

The situation is similar to SLAPPs. At the government level, the only initiative in 2025 was a questionnaire survey conducted by the Government Council for Human Rights and the subsequent adoption of a resolution.⁸⁷ In its resolution, the Government Council for Human Rights responded to the implementation of the European anti-SLAPP directive (Directive No. 2024/1069) into Czech law. In particular, the resolution recommends including individual measures against vexatious lawsuits in domestic cases as well. However, we are not aware of any activities related to the implementation of this directive.⁸⁸

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- 85 CZ IPI Media, *More Than a Third of Journalists Experience Some Form of Attack at Least Once a Month, CZ IPI and Ipsos Research Shows* (“Více než třetina novinářů a novinářek se setkává minimálně jednou měsíčně s nějakou formou útoku, vyplývá to z výzkumu CZ-IPI ve spolupráci s výzkumnou agenturou Ipsos”), 18 December 2025, <https://czipi.media/tiskova-zprava/tz-vice-nez-tretina-novinaru-a-novinarek-se-setkava-minimalne-jednou-mesicne-s-nejakou-formou-utoku-vyplyva-to-z-vyzkumu-cz-ipi-ve-spolupraci-s-vyzkumnou-agenturou-ipsos/> *Ženy v médiích, Being a Journalist in Czechia (research report)* (“Být novinářem a novinářkou v Česku”), Marína Urbániková, Martin Veselý, Jitka Adamčíková, 2024, Vydal spolek Ženy v médiích, z.s., Praha., 27 February 2026, <https://www.zenyvmediich.cz/clanky/blog-post-title-one-zte2k-mhnbh-nhbzg> MediaGuru.cz, *Czech Journalists Identify Personal Attacks and Pressure as the Biggest Threats* (“Za největší hrozby označují čeští novináři osobní útoky nebo nátlak”), 8 November 2025, <https://www.mediaguru.cz/clanky/2025/11/za-nejvetsi-hrozby-oznacuji-cesti-novinari-osobni-utoky-nebo-natlak/>
- 86 Seznam Zprávy, *Attacks on Journalists Are Increasing: Some Face Aggression Daily, Contributing Factors Include Politicians* (“Útoky na novináře sílí. Někteří čelí agresi denně, přispívají i politici”), 24 April 2025, <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-zivot-v-cesku-utoky-na-novinare-sili-nekteri-celi-agresi-denne-prispivaji-i-politici-274939>; Česká televize 24 (Newsroom ČT24), *Behind the Scenes of Election Newsrooms* (“Zákulisí volebních štábů”), 5 October 2025, <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/11030967025-newsroom-ct24/225411058170031/>
- 87 Resolution of the Government Council for Human Rights of March 18, 2025, on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders from vexatious lawsuits. <https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/rlp/cinnost-rady/zasedani-rady/Usneseni---sikanozni-zaloby.pdf>
- 88 League of Human Rights, *Protection Against SLAPP Lawsuits Is Still Nowhere in Sight* (“Ochrana před šikanózními žalobami je stále v nedohlednu”), 12 February 2026, <https://llp.cz/blog/ochrana-pred-sikanoznimi-zalobami-je-stale-v-nedohlednu/>

Journalists are thus dependent only upon their own professional self-help.⁸⁹

New Issues that Emerged in 2025

- **License fees increase:** Czechia changed both the amounts and the mechanism of public TV and radio license fees through an amendment to the Act on Television and Radio License Fees⁹⁰ that entered into force on 1 May 2025. The monthly TV fee for Czech Television rose from 135 Kč to 150 Kč, and the radio fee for Czech Radio from 45 Kč to 55 Kč, the first increase in roughly 15–20 years. For a standard household this means a total of 205 Kč per month, regardless of how many receivers the household owns. Moreover, the scope of the Act was broadened, with liability now tied to any device capable of receiving broadcasts.⁹¹
- Conversely, the new government’s programme statement announces the abolition of concession fees. The incoming ANO-SPD-Motorists coalition government announced in its policy statement plans to abolish license fees entirely which was subsequently confirmed in the government’s program statement. This would make the financing of public media fully dependent on the share allocated in the state budget.⁹² Furthermore, SPD also advocates merging Czech Television, Czech Radio, and Czech News Agency into a single state-funded institution.⁹³

89 Česká televize 24 (Newsroom ČT24), *Behind the Scenes of Election Newsrooms (“Zákulisí volebních štábů”)*, 5 October 2025, <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/11030967025-newsroom-ct24/225411058170031/Aktuálně.cz>, *Safe Journalism Launches Support for Journalists Facing Threats and Aggression (“Bezpečná žurnalistika spouští pomoc pro novináře čelící hrozbám a agresi”)*, 5 October 2025, <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/bezpecna-zurnalistika-spousti-pomoc-pro-novinare-celici-hroz/r-8abb21228a9511f0beca0cc47ab5f122/>

90 Act No. 119/2025 Coll., amending Act No. 483/1991 Coll., on Czech Television, as amended, Act No. 484/1991 Coll., on Czech Radio, as amended, and other related acts. Available in Czech online: <https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2025/119/2026-01-01>.

91 Daniela Lazarová, *License fees for Czech public radio and television set to increase in May*, Radio Prague International, 21 May 2025, <https://english.radio.cz/license-fees-czech-public-radio-and-television-set-increase-may-8849721>; ASB Group, *Change in Czech TV and radio fees in 2025 — new calculation rules for businesses*, ASB Group, 2025, <https://asbgroup.eu/en/news/change-in-czech-tv-and-radio-fees-in-2025-new-calculation-rules-for-businesses/>.

92 ČTK, *Zavoral and Novák discussed possible changes to public service media funding (“Zavoral a Novák diskutovali o možných změnách financování médií veřejné služby”)*, ČT24 (Česká televize), 7 December 2025, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/zavoral-a-novak-diskutovali-o-moznych-zmenach-financovani-medii-verejne-sluzby-368021>.

93 Lucie Martin Nešporová, *Czech government vows to scrap TV and radio fees — is public media at risk?*, Expats.cz, 7 December 2025, <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czech-government-vows-to-scrap-tv-radio-fees-is-public-media-at-risk>.

- The latter intention has also been confirmed several times since the beginning of 2026 by the current prime minister, Andrej Babiš,⁹⁴ who stated that he intends to abolish the fees by 1 January 2027 at the latest.⁹⁵ The Senate has come out against the planned abolition of fees in a resolution. They similarly warned that scrapping license fees and shifting funding to the state budget would expose public service media to subjective decision-making and political pressure.⁹⁶
- To introduce a mechanism for financing public service media that ensures their financial independence and minimizes or completely eliminates the possible influence of executive bodies on media content and budgets. We also call on politicians to refrain from criminalising the media that receive transparent funding from foreign and cross-border sources.

Implications and Recommendations for 2026

The League of Human Rights recommend that the Czech Republic fully implement Directive 2024/1069 within the specified time limit and, at the same time, extend its protective framework to domestic cases in the legislation currently being prepared. The League of Human Rights also calls on the Czech Republic to take comprehensive measures to increase the personal safety of journalists.

94 Česká televize 24, *Coalition Announced Agreement on Abolishing Fees for Public Media* (“Koalice oznámila shodu na zrušení poplatků za veřejnoprávní média”), 19 January 2026, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/koalice-oznamila-shodu-na-zruseni-poplatku-za-verejnopravni-media-369420>

95 Echo24.cz, *Government Won't Delay Abolishing Fees for Public Media, Babiš Says He Wants to Solve It by the End of the Year* (“Zrušení poplatků za ČT a ČRo se odkládat nebude. Babiš je chce vyřešit do konce roku”), 23 February 2026, <https://www.echo24.cz/a/HssB2/koncesionarske-poplatky-zruseni-vlada-ceska-televize-rozhlas-babis-klempir>

96 Radio Prague International (english.radio.cz), *Senate Opposes Plan to Abolish Public Broadcasting License Fees*, 21 January 2026, <https://english.radio.cz/senate-against-plan-abolish-public-broadcasting-license-fees-8875302>. See also the open letter of the Director General of Czech Radio, René Zavoral, to Prime Minister Andrej Babiš: Czech Radio, *Open Letter from the Director General of Czech Radio to the Chairman of the ANO Movement Andrej Babiš*, 3 February 2025, <https://www.czech.radio/open-letter-director-general-czech-radio-chairman-ano-movement-andrej-babis-9405380>

CHECKS AND BALANCES -

General assessment

The 2025 parliamentary elections resulted in a new coalition government composed of the populist ANO movement and two far-right parties – SPD and Motorists for Themselves. While the elections were held democratically and with high turnout, the resulting majority raised concerns over weakening institutional checks and a possible concentration of power. The new coalition agreement prioritises national sovereignty over EU cooperation and includes controversial goals such as undermining climate policy or rejecting the EU migration pact.⁹⁷

The President refused to appoint one of the proposed ministers (Filip Turek) due to his extremist and discriminatory statements, underlining the limits of executive appointments as a control mechanism. However, no structural remedy has been followed so far, and the coalition continued without modifying the nomination.⁹⁸

Shortly after taking office, the new government started framing non-governmental organisations as politically biased actors and obstacles to democratic sovereignty. Government members have repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of public funding for NGOs, particularly those engaged in human rights, environmental advocacy, or minority rights. While no legislation has yet been passed, this rhetoric contributes to a climate of distrust and delegitimisation of civil society oversight.⁹⁹

Implementation of 2025 Commission recommendations

Recommendation: There were no recommendations made by the European Commission for Czechia in the area of checks and balances in its 2025 Rule of Law Report.

97 Jan Lopatka Jason Hovet, *Czech vote winner Babis signs coalition deal with eurosceptic partners*, Reuters, 3 November 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/czech-election-winner-babis-signs-coalition-deal-with-partners-2025-11-03/>

98 ČTK, *Babiš is having lunch at the Castle with Pavel. They are also discussing Turek's ministerial nomination* ("Babiš obědvá na Hradě s Pavlem. Řeší i Turkovu ministerskou nominaci"), Seznam Zprávy, 7 January 2026, <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-politika-babis-obedva-na-hrade-s-pavlem-resi-i-turkovu-ministerskou-nominaci-295665>

99 League of Human Rights, *Not just words. What was said in the pre-election campaign?*, 1 October 2025, <https://llp.cz/blog/nejsou-to-jenom-slova-co-vsechno-zaznelo-v-predvolebni-kampani/> or Balkan Insight, *New Czech Government to Follow CEE Trend of Targeting NGOs*, 3 December 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/12/03/new-czech-government-to-follow-cee-trend-of-targeting-ngos/>

Gaps in the Commission's Report

The 2025 Rule of Law Report failed to adequately address the persistent and systemic use of legislative riders in the Czech legislative process. While the Commission has previously acknowledged concerns about legislative transparency in general terms, the 2025 report lacks a concrete assessment of how this problem evolved in 2024, which laws were affected, and whether the situation has worsened compared to previous years.

Although the issue has been addressed on several occasions in the Liberties' Rule of Law Reports, the European Commission's 2025 report refers only briefly—and in abstract terms—to the circumvention of legislative procedures in Czechia, particularly via legislative riders. It does not explain how this long-standing problem developed during 2024, nor does it assess whether there was any deterioration.

Importantly, the report omits any mention of the Constitutional Court's landmark ruling Pl. ÚS 41/23 from November 2024, which explicitly declared the misuse of legislative riders unconstitutional. The ruling reaffirmed that attaching unrelated amendments to pending bills violates the principles of legal certainty, democratic deliberation, and the separation of powers. It is one of the most significant judgments on legislative procedure in recent years and was widely discussed by legal experts and civil society.¹⁰⁰

The omission is particularly concerning in light of subsequent events: in September 2025, the Czech Parliament passed a substantial amendment to the Code of Administrative Justice as a legislative rider, without public consultation or meaningful parliamentary debate. This reform—affecting judicial review and participation rights—was introduced in violation of the very standards the Constitutional Court had reaffirmed less than a year earlier.¹⁰¹

New Issues that Emerged in 2025

Two developments that occurred in the second half of 2025 have a significant impact on checks and balances in the Czech Republic:

100 Constitutional Court (Czech Republic), *Judgment of 21 November 2024, No. Pl. ÚS 41/23 (legislative riders case)*, https://nalus.usoud.cz:443/Search/GetText.aspx?sz=Pl-41-23_1

101 HOLEC, ZUSKA & Partners, *Amendment to the Code of Administrative Justice: New rights for third parties and binding opinions*, 2 October 2025, <https://www.holec-advokati.cz/cs/novela-srs-k-postaveni-osoby-zucastnene-a-zavaznym-stanoviskum/>

1. the adoption of a major amendment to the Code of Administrative Justice through a legislative rider, and
2. the increasingly hostile rhetoric of the newly formed government towards civil society organisations.

Both developments affect the quality of democratic governance and the ability of civic actors to participate meaningfully in oversight mechanisms.

In September 2025, the Czech Parliament adopted an amendment to the Code of Administrative Justice, introducing major changes to administrative judicial review. The reform allows for the direct court review of binding opinions (*závazná stanoviska*) and expands the rights of third parties to participate in administrative proceedings. Although these changes could theoretically strengthen access to justice for affected individuals and organisations, the amendment was passed without public consultation, as a legislative rider to unrelated legislation. This raised serious concerns about transparency and the circumvention of legislative procedures.¹⁰²

Following the October 2025 parliamentary elections, a new coalition government was formed by the populist ANO movement and far-right parties (SPD and Motorists for Themselves). Since taking office, government representatives have repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of NGOs, especially those active in the fields of human rights, environmental protection, and minority rights. These organisations have been portrayed as ideological or foreign-funded, and there have been calls to restrict their access to public funding.¹⁰³

Although no repressive measures have yet been adopted, the rhetoric itself creates a chilling effect, deterring civil society actors from engaging in public advocacy. This undermines their role in ensuring democratic accountability.

102 HOLEC, ZUSKA & Partners, *Amendment to the Code of Administrative Justice: New rights for third parties and binding opinions*, 2 October 2025, <https://www.holec-advokati.cz/cs/novela-srs-k-postaveni-osoby-zucastnene-a-zavaznym-stanoviskum/>

103 Balkan Insight, *New Czech Government to Follow CEE Trend of Targeting NGOs*, 3 December 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/12/03/new-czech-government-to-follow-cee-trend-of-targeting-ngos/>; League of Human Rights, *Not just words. What was said in the pre-election campaign?* 1 October 2025, <https://llp.cz/blog/nejsou-to-jenom-slova-co-vsechno-zaznelo-v-predvolebni-kampani/>

The Commission should recommend that the Czech government:

- refrain from using legislative riders for substantial legal reforms;
- ensure that all legislative proposals undergo proper consultation and debate;
- publicly recognise the role of civil society organisations as essential democratic actors;
- ensure that public funding for NGOs is distributed based on fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory criteria;
- protect civil society against political stigmatisation and ensure access to participatory mechanisms in policy-making.

Implications and Recommendations for 2026

By failing to reflect on the Constitutional Court's ruling and the evolving use of legislative riders, the Commission missed an opportunity to:

- recognise the role of national courts in upholding rule of law standards,
- identify a continuing and concrete structural problem in Czech law-making,
- and send a clear signal that legislative abuse must be addressed systematically.

The Commission should recommend that the Czech government:

- refrain from using legislative riders, particularly for substantial legal reforms;
- ensure that every amendment proposed during the legislative process is clearly related to the subject of the bill;
- fully implement and respect the Constitutional Court's judgment Pl. ÚS 41/23;
- establish internal procedural safeguards in Parliament to prevent the introduction and adoption of unrelated legislative riders.

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The League of Human Rights is a Czech non-governmental organisation established in 2002, continuously striving for systemic changes to promote consistent respect for human rights. The LLP's mission is to protect human rights by providing legal counselling, engaging in advocacy activities, educating and raising awareness, and pursuing strategic litigation. Moreover, LLP advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups and upholds principles of the rule of law.

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The Civil Liberties Union for Europe

The Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties) is a non-governmental organisation promoting the civil liberties of everyone in the European Union. We are headquartered in Berlin and have a presence in Brussels. Liberties is built on a network of 24 national civil liberties NGOs from across the EU.

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