

To Ms Marilena Raouna, Deputy Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus
To Mr Costas Fytiris, Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus

26 March 2026

Dear Minister Raouna, dear Minister Fytiris,

We, the undersigning organisations, welcome your commitment, as part of Cyprus' priorities of the Presidency of the Council of the EU, to strengthen the core foundational values of the European Union.

These values entail and depend on a strong and resilient rule of law. However, over the last decade we have witnessed a regression of many Member States, amply documented by European civil society organisations and independent institutions, notably in the areas of judicial independence, anti-corruption, media freedom, civic space, and effective checks and balances. In turn, the European institutions have ramped up their efforts to monitor the rule of law, foster dialogue with Member States and ensure that every one of them fully adheres to the European rule of law standards. Additionally, they sanctioned recurring or unresolved issues through infringement procedures, the activation of the conditionality regulation or Article 7 TEU.

At the forefront of these efforts to defend and preserve the rule of law stands the judiciary, with courts often acting as a last line of defence. In particular, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) deliver essential judgments to stop infringements against the rule of law in the EU. The binding nature of these judgments notwithstanding, Member States often do not feel compelled to implement these rulings stringently or in a timely manner, in particular when these rulings are competing with governments' agendas.

A study, annually conducted by the European Implementation Network (EIN) and Democracy Reporting International (DRI), highlights the gravity of non-implementation of rule of law-related court judgments.

On the **ECtHR** side, the picture is one of growing backlog and slowing progress. As of 1 January 2025, there were **650** leading ECtHR judgments awaiting full implementation across EU Member States, up from 624 in January 2024, and 616 in the year prior. Further, **45.7 per cent** of leading judgments delivered in respect of EU states over the past ten years were still pending implementation, compared to 44 per cent at the end of 2023, and 40 per cent at the end of 2022.

Overall, since the first edition of the report in 2021, the number of pending leading judgments has increased by **8 per cent** (from 602 to 650), the share of the open cases from the past 10 years by **24 per cent** (from 37 per cent to 45.7 per cent), and the average implementation time by **23 per cent** (up by a full year, from 4 years and 4 months).



The **CJEU** picture is mixed but reveals similar underlying dynamics. The 2025 review assessed **382** rule of law related rulings issued between 2019 and 2025 across 25 EU Member States. Of these, **223** (58.4 per cent) were **fully complied** with, **98** (25.6 per cent) only **partially complied** with, and 35 (9.2 per cent) not complied with at all, while 26 (6.8 per cent) could not be conclusively assessed.

In total, over **one-third** of CJEU rulings have not been fully complied with. Of the **133** rulings in this category, **84** (63.15 per cent) have been pending for more than **two years**, amounting to **over a fifth of all rulings** covered (21.98 per cent).

We, the undersigning organisations, **encourage the Presidency to put this issue on the agenda of relevant meetings of the General Affairs and Justice and Home Affairs Council**, and to treat serious non-implementation as a priority topic in political dialogue with governments and parliaments, supporting pro-reform implementation hubs.

We furthermore invite the Presidency to take all necessary action to ensure that all Member States treat this topic with the urgency it demands. In this vein, we kindly recall our recommendations that Member States:

- Adopt coherent **national implementation strategies** with clear timelines, responsibilities and parliamentary oversight, instead of ad hoc, fragmented measures.
- Robustly undertake politically sensitive **structural reforms** flagged as required by ECtHR/CJEU judgments (e.g. in areas such as judicial independence, detention conditions, surveillance, discrimination) instead of settling for technical or cosmetic fixes.
- Safeguard judicial independence and **ensure that national courts are not hindered** in consistently applying ECtHR and CJEU case law, including disappling conflicting national norms where required.
- Create and strengthen **effective domestic remedies** (preventive and compensatory) to address recurrent violations and reduce the flow of repetitive cases to Strasbourg and Luxembourg.

Cyprus can be a driving force behind the EU-wide implementation of European Court's judgments and thereby the rule of law overall. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ACCEPT Romania

Amnesty International

Antigone

APADOR-CH

Association of European Journalists in Belgium

Balkan Free Media Initiative



Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

Civil Liberties Union for Europe

Coalizione Italiana per le Libertà e i Diritti Civili (CILD)

Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'Homme

Committee to Protect Journalists

Conseil central de surveillance pénitentiaire / Centrale toezichtsraad voor het gevangeniswezen

D.i.Re - Donne in Rete contro la violenza

Defend Democracy

Democracy Reporting International (DRI)

Environmental Justice Network Ireland

Equal Legal Aid

European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)

European Civic Forum

European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)

European Implementation Network (EIN)

European Partnership for Democracy

European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network

FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)

Forum for Human Rights

Generations for Rights Over the World

Gentium

Greek Helsinki Monitor

HIAS Greece

Human Development Research Initiative (HDRI)



Human Rights House Zagreb

Human Rights Monitoring Institute

Humanists International

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

Hungarian Helsinki Committee

I Have Rights

ILGA-Europe

Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis"

Institute for Regional Media and Information (IRMI), Ukraine

Institute Novact of Nonviolence

Inter Alia

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

JEF Europe

KISA-Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism

La Cimade

LDH (Ligue des droits de l'Homme - France)

Lellos P Demetriades Law Office LLC

LGBTI organization Deystvie

Ligue des droits humains (Belgium)

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT)

Romanian Judges Forum Association



Rosa Parks Foundation

Rule of Law Empowerment (ROLE)

Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza (Love Does Not Exclude Association)

StraLi

Transcena Association

Transparency International EU

TRUTH NOW CYPRUS

Validity Foundation - Mental Disability Advocacy Centre

