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ABSTRACT

The recruitment of magistrates and administrative court staff continues at a good pace, with the aim of closing the persistent shortages. The Government has launched competitions for the permanent recruitment of most court clerks. Sustainability of the workload of professional tax judges and justices of the peace is a challenge. The government tabled in Parliament a draft law on the legal profession, prepared in cooperation with lawyers' associations. Further steps have been taken to complete the digital case management system for criminal courts and prosecutors' offices, following concrete cooperation between executive and judiciary in addressing gaps and initial delays. While a few elements remain pending, the first-instance criminal trial workflow is now fully digitalised. The positive trend in reduction of the disposition time continued, while the length of judicial proceedings remains a serious issue. Backlog reduction continued, particularly for the older cases. In the absence of majority support in a referendum, the envisaged constitutional reform separating careers of judges and prosecutors did not materialise.

A new national anti-corruption strategy was adopted for the years 2026-2028. The criminal law framework to combat corruption has been stabilised, with the Constitutional Court ruling that the law restricting the scope of the offence of trading in influence is not in breach of the Constitution. The pace of convictions in corruption cases was maintained. While a draft law on conflicts of interest remains pending in Parliament, existing rules on post-employment restrictions for local public officials were removed in August 2025. A draft law on lobbying was adopted in the Chamber and is being assessed in the Senate. The draft laws on political party and campaign financing addressing the issue of private party donations being channelled via political foundations remain pending in Parliament. The National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) issued additional whistleblowing guidelines. The launch of the Single Transparency Portal increases transparency of public procurement, which remains a high-risk area.

The media regulator exercises its functions independently and legislative changes were introduced to strengthen its financial autonomy. Parliamentary work is ongoing on a reform of the public service media's governance and funding rules. A system of public funding is in place for the allocation of resources and the financing of policies and initiatives in support of the media sector. New legislative initiatives on the protection of journalists are under development, while physical attacks and other forms of intimidations remain a source of concern. There were no developments on the pending press defamation reform.

The draft constitutional reform to introduce the direct election of the Prime Minister remains on the agenda of Parliament. Stakeholders continued to express concerns about the excessive use of emergency decrees and of motions of confidence, while the Chamber of Deputies took steps to limit their use in the future. Initial steps were taken towards establishing a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The 2025 'security law' is being implemented and a new emergency decree in the field of internal security was converted into law, with some stakeholders raising concern about their possible impact on civic space and the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, based on the recommendations in the 2025 Rule of Law Report, considering other developments that took place in the period of reference, and in addition to recalling the relevant commitments made under the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the country-specific recommendation under the European Semester on the efficiency of the justice system, the Commission concludes the following:

- Significant further progress has been made on completing the digital case management system for criminal courts and prosecutors' offices, as the first-instance criminal trial workflow is now fully digitalised. Since some procedures remain to be digitalised, it is recommended to Italy to *complete the digital case management system in all instances*.
- There has been no further progress on the pending legislative proposal on conflicts of interest while limited progress has been made in adopting comprehensive rules on lobbying to establish an operational lobbying register as a draft law on lobbying was adopted in the Chamber of Deputies and is being assessed by the Senate. Therefore, it is recommended to Italy to *take forward legislative efforts to systematically regulate conflicts of interests and adopt comprehensive rules on lobbying and establish an operational lobbying register*.
- There has been no progress to address the practice of channelling donations through political foundations and associations and introduce a single electronic register for party and campaign finance information, as the draft laws tabled in Parliament have not been discussed yet. Therefore, it is recommended to Italy to *accelerate efforts to address the practice of channelling donations through political foundations and associations and introduce a single electronic register for party and campaign finance information*.
- There has been no progress in the legislative process on the draft reform on defamation, the protection of professional secrecy and journalistic sources. Therefore, it is recommended to Italy to *take forward the reform on defamation while guaranteeing press freedom, taking into account European standards on the protection of journalists*.
- Limited progress has been made to establish a National Human Rights Institution, as initial steps were taken to relaunch the initiative while various draft laws remain pending in Parliament. Therefore, it is recommended to Italy to *establish a National Human Rights Institution taking into account the UN Paris Principles*.

As regards the other 2025 recommendations, the Commission concludes that:

- Some further progress was made to ensure that rules or mechanisms are in place to provide funding for public service media that is appropriate for the realisation of its public service remit and to guarantee its independence, as parliamentary work on a reform bill has advanced. Given that the topics of this recommendation are covered by the provisions of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), while the Rule of Law Report will continue to monitor significant developments and report on their impact, further follow-up will be ensured as part of the Commission's support to Member States and enforcement of the EMFA.

I. JUSTICE SYSTEM¹

Independence

The level of perceived judicial independence in Italy continues to be average among the general public and is now high among companies. Overall, 51% of the general population and 60% of companies perceive the level of independence of courts and judges to be ‘fairly or very good’ in 2026². Among the general public, this figure has increased in comparison with 2025 (46%) and has significantly increased in comparison with 2022 (37%). The perceived judicial independence among companies has significantly increased in comparison with 2025 (48%), as well as in comparison with 2022 (40%).

In the absence of majority support in a referendum, the envisaged constitutional reform separating careers of judges and prosecutors did not materialise. On 30 October 2025, Parliament had given final approval to the constitutional reform aimed at separating careers of judges and prosecutors, establishing two separate High Councils, one for judges and one for prosecutors, and creating a High Court to which the disciplinary powers over ordinary magistrates would be transferred from the High Council for the Judiciary³. In the absence of a two-third majority support in Parliament, the reform was subject to a constitutional referendum, which took place on 22-23 March 2026. A majority of voters voted against the proposed reform.

Some stakeholders continued to raise concerns about public statements by politicians critical of the judiciary. Stakeholders report that statements by Government officials and members of Parliament increased in number and intensity during the electoral campaign ahead of the constitutional referendum⁴, and the High Council of the Judiciary issued protective orders in three cases⁵. Concerns were expressed at the highest institutional level about such statements⁶. According to European standards, while criticising judicial decisions is a normal aspect of democratic discourse, the executive and legislative powers should avoid criticism that undermines the independence of or public confidence in the judiciary⁷.

The government tabled in Parliament a draft law on the legal profession, prepared in cooperation with lawyers’ associations. In September 2025, the Ministry of Justice tabled in Parliament a draft law on the legal profession, prepared in cooperation with lawyers’ associations, to update rules on professional practice, law firms, access to the profession and

¹ An overview of the institutional framework for all four pillars can be found [here](#).

² Figures 48 and 50, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard and Figures 51 and 53, 2024 EU Justice Scoreboard. The level of perceived judicial independence is categorised as follows: very low (below 30% of respondents perceive judicial independence as fairly good and very good); low (between 30-39%), average (between 40-59%), high (between 60-75%), very high (above 75%).

³ Draft law A.S. 1353. See 2024 Rule of Law Report, Italy, pp. 5-7, for a description of the draft reform.

⁴ National Association of Magistrates (2026).

⁵ Country visit Italy, High Council of the Judiciary, High Court of Cassation, National Association of Magistrates. See also MEDEL (2026), written input, p. 11. Since July 2025, there have been three protective proceedings (*pratica a tutela*) by the High Council of the Judiciary. They all concerned judges and prosecutors of the Court of Cassation targeted by political attacks, for their investigations in the Almasri case, their study on the ‘security decree’ (both in July 2025), and their decision on the text of the question for the referendum on the reform of the judiciary (in February 2026).

⁶ Such statements also related to ongoing investigations and judicial decisions. President of the Republic (2026). Court of Cassation, General Prosecutor (2026). Court of Cassation, First President (2026).

⁷ Council of Europe (2010), para. 18.

training, as well as to strengthen transparency, client protection, and disciplinary mechanisms. The reform is under discussion in parliamentary committees⁸.

Quality

The recruitment of magistrates and administrative court staff continues at a good pace, with the aim of closing the persistent shortages. The Minister of Justice aims to achieve the full staffing of the judiciary (11 171 magistrates⁹) through five ongoing competitions for over 2 000 posts¹⁰. The extensive recruitment plan aims to close the significant shortages of ordinary magistrates, which remain at around 15-17%¹¹. At least 626 magistrates will reach pension age by 2029¹². Among the administrative staff of ordinary courts, around one third of posts remain vacant. Competitions launched in 2024 are ongoing¹³. The staffing situation in different courts varies. With the exception of the Constitutional Court, which is fully staffed, other courts reported significant shortages of judicial and administrative staff¹⁴. The situation is of particular concern at the Court of Cassation, with 38% of vacant administrative posts¹⁵, as well as for justices of the peace and honorary judges who face a 17% shortage against an expected increase in workload given new competences¹⁶. The sustainability of the results achieved in addressing the backlog of tax cases needs to be monitored. The first competition for professional tax judges was concluded in May 2026, and 173 tax judges have begun their training programme and will shortly take up their judicial functions, while two more competitions are planned. At the same time, the final number of professional tax judges (some 576) will be just over a fourth of the current 1 966 honorary tax judges¹⁷. The honorary status and insufficient salary of the vast majority of tax judges is a source of contention¹⁸. While acknowledging the progress made, stakeholders concur that continued efforts to fill

⁸ Draft law [A.C. 2629](#) to reform Law No. 247 of 2012. National Bar Association (*Consiglio Nazionale Forense*), written input via CCBE, replies to questions 15 and 23.

⁹ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 6. Ministry of Justice (2026), p. 379.

¹⁰ In December 2025, 578 magistrates (laureates of the competition launched in December 2021) completed their one-year traineeship and entered into service. In June 2026, 355 more magistrates (laureate of the competition launched in October 2022) are set to assume full service. In October 2025, 339 more (laureates of the competition for 400 posts launched in October 2023) started their 18-month traineeship and are set to enter service in April 2027. Following the completion of a competition launched in April 2024, the appointment of 412 new judges is imminent. Competitions for 800 additional magistrates were launched in December 2024 and October 2025 and are ongoing; their laureates are set to begin training by June 2027. Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 7-8. Ministry of Justice (2026), pp. 302-303.

¹¹ 1 600 - 1 800 vacancies out of 10 600 posts. Data extrapolated from: Ministry of Justice (2026), pp. 301-305. The shortages amounted to 17% in 2024. See 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 6.

¹² Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 8.

¹³ Court of Cassation, First President (2026).

¹⁴ Shortages amounted to 21% of judicial posts at the Court of Auditors, 17% among justices of the peace, 16% at the Court of Cassation, 13% among administrative judges, and 55% for tax judges. Among administrative personnel, shortages amounted to 38% of posts at the Court of Cassation, 19% at administrative courts, 20% for tax courts and 14.5% at the Court of Auditors. Sources: Court of Cassation (2026a), pp. 288-290. High Council of the Judiciary (2025a), p. 119. Ministry of Finance (2025), pp. 43 and 45. Court of Auditors (2026), p. 348. Country visit Italy, Council of State, Constitutional Court, Board of the Tax Courts.

¹⁵ This is up from 33% and set to increase due to retirements. Court of Cassation (2026a), pp. 288-290.

¹⁶ Data on 28 November 2025. High Council of the Judiciary (2025a), p. 119. New competences had been postponed from October 2025 to end June 2026 due to severe shortages of justices of the peace (65%).

¹⁷ Country visit Italy, Board of the Tax Courts (*Consiglio di Presidenza della Giustizia Tributaria*).

¹⁸ Country visit Italy, Board of the Tax Courts. Honorary tax judges are paid some €900 per month, plus €100 per ruling (with no increase since 2006), and are not covered by pension, insurance, or maternity schemes.

judicial and administrative vacancies in the courts are necessary to improve the efficiency of justice¹⁹.

The Government has launched competitions for the permanent recruitment of most court clerks funded as part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). Recognising their contribution to improving the productivity of ordinary and administrative courts (clerks help magistrates manage cases, prepare hearings, draft judgements and digitalise proceedings), the Government committed to recruit, upon competitive evaluation, 9 368 court clerks, i.e. over 80% of the some 11 200 *addetti all'ufficio per il processo* (AUPP) and administrative personnel still in service by the end of the RRP funding in June 2026²⁰. Authorities and most stakeholders agree that the clerks play a key role in increasing the efficiency and quality of the justice system, effectively contributing to the reduction of backlog and of the length of proceedings. Some stakeholders have called for court clerks to maintain judicial and legal advice functions, as during the four years of RRP funding, and not merely administrative tasks, in their new permanent posts within the court administration²¹. The decree-law of 4 June 2026 expanded the functions of AUPP staff and extended their deployment to the Juvenile Courts, the Surveillance Courts and the Surveillance Offices. The decree-law also provides that AUPP staff shall, as a general rule, be assigned to activities supporting judicial functions, save in cases of duly substantiated and urgent necessity.

There has been significant further progress on the recommendation to complete the digital case management system for criminal courts and prosecutors' offices²². Italy's civil, administrative, tax, and accounting justice are already fully digitalised, which is helping to reduce disposition time, while digital solutions are being deployed to conduct and follow court proceedings in criminal cases²³. The APP case management system²⁴, mandatory since 2025 in all criminal courts and prosecutors' offices, faced system-related shortcomings which delayed the digital transition²⁵. After enacting a corrective strategy, the Government announced that by the end of 2025 the first-instance criminal trial workflow was fully digitalised²⁶. This entailed the interoperability between APP and the other digital court systems²⁷, the promotion of digital templates for legal acts, the reorganisation of the digital trial file, the digital management of the hearing, and the strengthening of the IT infrastructure including security and performance²⁸. While some procedures remain to be digitalised²⁹,

¹⁹ Court of Cassation, Council of State, National Bar Association (2026), written inputs, pp. 10-11, pp. 1-2 and p. 11 respectively.

²⁰ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 11. The first notices of competition were issued on 17 December 2025 for 1 660 officials and 63 assistants to be recruited from among former RRP-funded staff. Over €349 million were allocated for the recruitments as part of the 2026-2028 Integrated Activity and Organization Plan (PIAO). Notices of competition for 6 919 officials, 712 administrative staff and 1 488 data entry operators were issued on 16 March, with entry into office foreseen on 1 July 2026.

²¹ Country visit Italy, National Association of Magistrates.

²² The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended to Italy to '[c]omplete the digital case management system for criminal courts and prosecutors' offices'. Some progress was previously assessed in 2025 and 2024, and significant progress in 2023.

²³ Figures 41-47, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. The decree-law of 4 June 2026 allocated additional funding to the digitalisation of the justice system, to ensure connectivity and enhance digital infrastructure security.

²⁴ *Applicativo del Processo Penale*, see Decree of the Ministry of Justice No. 206 of 2024.

²⁵ For more details on the technical challenges, see the 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 7.

²⁶ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 16.

²⁷ *Portale Notizie di Reato* (PNR) and *Portale Deposito Atti Penali* (PDP).

²⁸ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 16.

²⁹ Procedures that remain possible both on paper and online include the lodging of appeals (*impugnazioni*), pre-trial supervision measures (*misure cautelari*), and enforcement proceedings (*procedimenti esecutivi*). Appeal courts and justices of peace are set to introduce digital proceedings in 2026, while the Court of

digital applications are now interoperable and open for lawyers and for police forces³⁰. According to the Government, as from end of 2025, the digital platform is the prime operating system for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in first-instance criminal proceedings³¹. Significant further progress has been made on the recommendation in the 2025 Rule of Law Report.

Parliament adopted a Law on Artificial Intelligence, including about its use in the justice system. The Law, adopted in September 2025, reserves to magistrates all decisions on the interpretation and application of the law, while it promotes the use of AI to simplify support activities³². Implementing decrees adopted on 10 June 2026 provide for training programmes on AI for judicial and administrative staff, covering both technical aspects and legal issues, including implications of the use of AI systems for the organisation of the judiciary and protection of individual rights³³.

Lawyers raised concerns about the mechanism for offsetting outstanding debts against legal aid payments. With a view to strengthening tax collection and preventing public funds from being paid out to professionals with outstanding tax debts, Italy's 2026 budget law extended the scope of the existing offset mechanism to professional payments of up to EUR 5 000. The Bar Association expressed concerns that these rules would affect legal aid lawyers who already receive delayed payments from the State. The Bar Association considers that the new rules might deter lawyers from providing legal aid and risk paralysing the legal aid system.³⁴

Efficiency

The positive trend in reduction of the disposition time continued, while the length of judicial proceedings remains a serious issue³⁵. Previous judicial reforms that aimed to increase efficiency of the justice system are now in effect, with implementing legislation and by-laws in place³⁶. The judiciary, Government and Parliament cooperated closely to design and introduce targeted measures aimed at achieving the RRP targets of reduction of backlog and of disposition time³⁷. The disposition time of civil and commercial cases decreased in all

Cassation uses separate applications that are not interoperable. Country visit, High Council of the Judiciary, National Association of Magistrates, Union of Italian Criminal Chambers. EJN (2025).

³⁰ Lawyers can interact with APP through the PDP platform, and police forces can upload crime reports in APP through PNR. Italian Government (2026a), additional written input.

³¹ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 16.

³² [Law No. 132 of 23 September 2025](#), Article 15. The law states that it is to be interpreted and applied in conformity with the [EU Regulation 2024/1689](#), cf. Art.1(2). National Bar Association, written input via CCBE, replies to question 19.

³³ Italian Government (2026a), additional written input.

³⁴ Law No. 199 of 30 December 2025, Art. 1, comma 725. The new rules extend the existing compensation mechanism between professionals and the Treasury for payments up to EUR 5 000. Italian Government (2026a), additional written input. The legal aid scheme provided protection to over 200 000 persons in 2024, including minors and women victims of abuse with no income. National Bar Association (*Consiglio Nazionale Forense*), written input via CCBE, reply to question 16. National Bar Association (2025). The value of legal aid doubled in the past 10 years, to reach EUR 450 million.

³⁵ In the context of the European Semester, the Commission has proposed that the Council recommend Italy to “further reduce the backlog and disposition time of the justice system”. European Commission (2026) 212 final, CSR 4.

³⁶ ‘Cartabia’ reforms, Legislative Decrees No. 149 of 2022 and No. 150 of 2022, as well as No. 44 of 2024. Country visit Italy, Ministry of Justice, High Council of the Judiciary.

³⁷ Decree-Law No. 117 of 8 August 2025. Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 19-20. National Bar Association (*Consiglio Nazionale Forense*), written input via CCBE, replies to question 22.

instances, reaching 1 789 days by end 2025 (-28.8% compared to 2 512 days in 2019; the RRP target is -40% by 30 June 2026). It remains among the longest in the EU, with an average of over 4.5 years to solve civil and commercial cases³⁸. The disposition time for criminal cases in first instance and appeal continued to decrease³⁹. By end 2025 it had been reduced to 958 days in all three instances (-31.2%), exceeding the RRP target (-25%)⁴⁰. Administrative⁴¹ and tax courts⁴² also recorded slight improvements. Italy remains under enhanced supervision of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers as regards the length of civil and criminal proceedings⁴³. The Government continued to pay compensation for the excessive duration of judicial proceedings⁴⁴.

Backlog reduction continued, particularly in the oldest cases. In 2024, the clearance rate was 95% for first-instance civil and commercial cases (down from 110% in 2023)⁴⁵, and the total number of pending cases slightly increased⁴⁶. The oldest cases continued being reduced at first, second and third instance (-9%, -9.1% and -9.4%)⁴⁷. In relation to the 2019 baseline, the Government reported a 94.9% reduction of the backlog in pending civil cases, and a 99.6% reduction in pending appeals by June 2025, in line with previous RRP targets⁴⁸. Work is ongoing to achieve the broader June 2026 targets, which aim for a 90% reduction in pending civil cases from 2017-2022 and pending appeals from 2018-2022⁴⁹. For first-instance criminal cases, the clearance rate was 99.5% (111% in 2023)⁵⁰ and the number of pending cases decreased by 1.1%⁵¹. For first-instance administrative cases, the clearance rate was equal to 125%⁵² and the number of pending cases decreased by some 12.5%⁵³. Tax courts reported a clearance rate in 2024 of 90.5% in first instance and of 126.5% in appeal⁵⁴. As

³⁸ In 2025, the disposition time of civil and commercial cases decreased by 53 days in first instance (435 days), by 84 days in appeal (to 492 days) and by 76 days in cassation (to 863 days). ISTAT (2026). The disposition time in litigious civil and commercial cases in first-instance courts had increased to 584 days in 2024 from 511 in 2023. Figures 6, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

³⁹ In 2025, the disposition time in criminal cases decreased by 4 days in first instance (312 days) and by 83 days in appeal (to 524 days) while it increased by 41 days in cassation (to 122 days). ISTAT (2026).

⁴⁰ ISTAT (2026). The RRP target is of 1 044 days compared to the 1 392 days to solve criminal cases in 2019.

⁴¹ The time needed to resolve administrative cases in all instances fell by 46 days (803 days in 2025 against 849 in 2024; 976 in 2023). Country visit Italy, Council of State. In first instance, administrative cases took 483 days in 2024 (595 in 2023), still among the longest in the EU. Figure 7, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

⁴² The time needed to resolve tax cases fell by 66 days in first instance (373 days in 2024 against 439 in 2023) and by 20 days in appeal (947 days against 967 in 2023). Country visit Italy, Board of the Tax Courts.

⁴³ Council of Europe, Table of cases under enhanced supervision of the Committee of Ministers.

⁴⁴ In 2025, Italy paid EUR 111 709 231 in compensation to some 100 000 persons for the excessive duration of judicial proceedings. Via the *PagaPinto* digital platform, Italy aims to compensate some 80 000 persons within two years for some EUR 400 million in total. Ministry of Justice (2026), p. 250.

⁴⁵ Figure 10, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. CEPEJ (2026), Table 3.10.5 (EC).

⁴⁶ 2 912 061 cases (+0.8%). The increase concerned in particular the Justices of the Peace (+5.4%) and the ordinary courts (+1.8%), while decreases were noted in appeal (-7.5%) and cassation (-5.5%).

⁴⁷ Ministry of Justice (2026), p. 564.

⁴⁸ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Milestone MIC1-47 and target TIC1-48 in the RRP monitoring framework.

⁵⁰ CEPEJ (2026), Table 3.13.3.

⁵¹ It decreased by 3.4% at the judicial decision stage, while it increased by 1.9% at the prosecution stage. Data by 30 September 2025. Ministry of Justice (2026), p. 572.

⁵² Figure 11, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. It was 78% in 2023 and 95% in 2022.

⁵³ Figure 11, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. CEPEJ (2026), Table 3.3.3.

⁵⁴ Country visit Italy, Board of the Tax Courts.

regards audit courts, the clearance rate in 2024 was 98%⁵⁵. With RRP support, extraordinary measures were adopted to address the backlog in civil cases in specific geographical areas⁵⁶.

The reform of mediation continues being implemented, with the aim of reducing the number of legal proceedings through increased uptake of alternative dispute resolution tools. While preliminary data points to a slight increase in take-up and success rates, the reform's impact remains to be assessed⁵⁷. Business stakeholders highlight the potential of mediation to contribute effectively to reducing litigation, and call for further measures to promote its uptake, including by promoting training and information measures aimed at judges, as well as at economic operators and citizens⁵⁸.

II. ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

The perception among experts, citizens and business executives is that the level of corruption in the public sector remains relatively high. In the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Italy scores 53/100 and ranks 19th in the European Union and 52nd globally⁵⁹. This perception is relatively stable over the past five years.⁶⁰ The 2026 Special Eurobarometer on Corruption shows that 82% of respondents consider corruption widespread in their country (EU average 71%) and 42% of respondents feel personally affected by corruption in their daily lives (EU average 30%). As regards businesses, 77% of companies consider that corruption is widespread (EU average 65%) and 41% consider that corruption is a problem when doing business (EU average 37%). Furthermore, 43% of respondents find that there are enough successful prosecutions to deter people from corrupt practices (EU average 38%), while 47% of companies believe that people and businesses caught for bribing a senior official are appropriately punished (EU average 31%)⁶¹.

A new anti-corruption strategy was adopted for the years 2026-2028. In January 2026, the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) adopted a national anti-corruption plan which includes, for the first time, a multiannual strategy for the prevention of corruption and the promotion of transparency and integrity for the years 2026-2028⁶². The national anti-corruption plan focuses on public contracts, ineligibility and incompatibilities for public officials, and transparency in the public administration. The multiannual strategy comprises a list of actions linked to milestones, targets and indicators.

⁵⁵ 2025 Rule of Law Report Italy, p. 8.

⁵⁶ These included magistrates volunteering to work remotely for other courts, financial incentives, staff increases in targeted appeal courts. Additional measures concerned staff increases in targeted appeal courts, honorary magistrates deployed to fill vacancies, workload reorganisation, and shortened traineeships for new magistrates. Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 11, 19.

⁵⁷ New cases have increased by 1% (+87 416), and by 14% compared to 2022. A third of cases are closed by agreement at the first mediation meeting. Success rate at following meetings increased from 45% in June 2019 to 52.7% in June 2025. Country visit Italy, Ministry of Justice.

⁵⁸ Confindustria (2026), written input, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁹ The level of perceived corruption is categorised as follows: low (above 79); relatively low (between 79-60), relatively high (between 59-50), high (below 50).

⁶⁰ In 2021, the score was 56, while, in 2025, the score is 53. The score significantly increases/decreases when it changes more than five points; improves/deteriorates (changes between 4-5 points) and is relatively stable (changes from 1-3 points) in the last five years.

⁶¹ Data from Special Eurobarometer 573 (2026) and Flash Eurobarometer 582 (2026).

⁶² ANAC (2026b).

The criminal law framework to combat corruption has been stabilised, with the Constitutional Court ruling that the law restricting the scope of the offence of trading in influence is not in breach of the Constitution. In December 2025, the Constitutional Court ruled that the law restricting the scope of the offence of trading in influence is not in breach of the Constitution. At the same time, the Court noted that introducing a comprehensive framework on interest representation could help to distinguish legitimate forms of interest representation from criminal conducts (trading in influence)⁶³. Alongside the repeal of the offence of abuse of office, which in May 2025 was also held by the Constitutional Court not to be in breach of the Constitution, and the restriction in scope of the offence of trading in influence⁶⁴, a new offence of embezzlement had been introduced in 2024 to sanction unlawful conduct in the management of public money⁶⁵. In light of the revised criminal law framework⁶⁶, civil society⁶⁷, judicial actors⁶⁸ and ANAC⁶⁹ have called for the introduction of additional administrative or disciplinary measures to strengthen the overall framework to combat corruption in Italy.

The pace of convictions in corruption cases was maintained. In 2024, the authorities registered 1 673 criminal convictions for individuals (1 709 in 2023) and 39 for legal persons (31 in 2023). The rate of suspended convictions (60% in 2024) remained as high as in previous years⁷⁰. The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) investigated 24 corruption cases in 2025⁷¹. The ultimate beneficial ownership register was reformed in January 2026⁷², but remains suspended⁷³. The human, financial and technical resources of the investigation and prosecution services dealing with corruption offences remained stable⁷⁴. Stakeholders continue to raise a few concerns regarding the lack of enforcement of foreign bribery offences, while authorities refer to the existence of ongoing investigations⁷⁵.

Constitutional review is ongoing on the law reforming the Court of Auditors, which has extended the list of acts eligible for preventive control by the Court and introduced, under certain conditions, a presumption of good faith of office holders. Public authorities that submit award decisions to the Court of Auditors for *ex ante* review shall not be held liable for the decisions taken if the Court has not pronounced itself on the content of the

⁶³ In its judgment 185/2025, the Constitutional Court found that the revised offence does not violate the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption of the Council of Europe and therefore Italy's international obligations under the Constitution. *Ibid.*, para. 6.

⁶⁴ Law No. 114 of 9 August 2024 restricted the scope of trading in influence to existing relationships with a public official and to the giving or promise of money or other economic benefits.

⁶⁵ Article 314-bis of the Criminal Code (*peculato per distrazione* / embezzlement by diversion). Country visit Italy, Ministry of Justice. See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 9.

⁶⁶ See in particular Chapter I of the Italian Criminal Code, Articles 314 to 335a, on crimes of public officials against the public administration, including corruption offences.

⁶⁷ Dem.e.tr.a and Transparency International Italy (2026), written inputs, p. 16 and 16 respectively.

⁶⁸ Country visit Italy, Court of Cassation and Court of Auditors.

⁶⁹ ANAC (2025c), p. 7.

⁷⁰ Country visit Italy, Ministry of Interior. Due to a backlog in the data collection, the data for 2025 are not yet up to date.

⁷¹ EPPO (2026), written input, pp. 33. This number accounts for 2.42% of the EPPO's total cases in Italy.

⁷² Legislative Decree No. 210 of 2025.

⁷³ The suspension was decided pending a decision from the Court of Justice of the EU to a question filed by the Council of State. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 10. Once again in place, the register would help authorities in the fight against fraud and corruption. Country visit Italy, Court of Auditors.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Justice (2026), written input.

⁷⁵ 23 OECD recommendations related to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention remained not implemented and 7 other recommendations were partially implemented. OECD (2024), p. 5. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 10. Country visit Italy, Ministry of Justice. ReCommon (2026), written input, p. 3.

decision within 30 days (extendable up to 90 days). With the reform, this rule of silent assent has been expanded to public contracts related to the RRP (mandatory submission) and to decisions by regions and local authorities (optional submission). Furthermore, the reform establishes that holders of political offices are presumed to act with good faith – until proven otherwise – when adopting acts that were proposed, endorsed or signed by the heads of the administration. This provision applies exclusively in cases where no wilful misconduct is involved and where all technical and administrative opinions issued by the administration are wholly favourable⁷⁶. According to the government, the reform of the Court of Auditors, in force since January 2026, aims to increase the efficiency of the institution by rebalancing its workload and by strengthening the Court’s audit and oversight functions, including its concurrent control powers, and to facilitate the approval of public contracts⁷⁷. Concerns have been voiced, including by the association of magistrates of the Court of Auditors, that the Court might not have the required resources to timely and thoroughly analyse such decisions and that this might reduce the effective supervision of public spending and, in turn, protect public officials from possible (criminal) investigations in the future⁷⁸. In April 2026, the Court of Auditors challenged the law before the Constitutional Court⁷⁹.

No further discussions took place in Parliament on the draft law on conflicts of interest⁸⁰. Although some fragmented rules are in place on conflicts of interest for members of the government, Italy is still lacking comprehensive rules on conflicts of interest for political office holders, including members of Parliament⁸¹. A draft law on conflicts of interest⁸² remains pending and no further discussions have taken place in Parliament. The network of corruption prevention and transparency officers established by the National School of Administration developed a handbook of good practices on how to deal with conflicts of interest⁸³. The national anti-corruption plan for the year 2025 includes a guidance document on the rules on ineligibility and incompatibility in the public sector in order to support administrations in the application of these rules⁸⁴. The *Guardia di Finanza* updated its code of ethics and established the possibility for staff to submit questions and receive

⁷⁶ Italian government (2026a), additional written input.

⁷⁷ Law No. 1 of 2026. For the first time, the law introduces a definition of ‘gross negligence’ for all administrative cases (before, it was left to the interpretation of the judge in each case) which narrows the concept to a few cases such as a manifest breach of the applicable rules. In the event of gross negligence, the compensation of damage in favour of the state is capped at 30% of the affected fund and cannot exceed the double of the annual salary of the person responsible. With these rules in place, the Court of Auditors expects the deterrent effect of the rules to be reduced as well as a decrease of the amounts that the state recovers via judgments by the Court. Country visit Italy, Court of Auditors.

⁷⁸ CILD, Dem.e.tra (2026), written input, p. 24 and p. 37 respectively. Country visit Italy, ANAC and Court of Cassation. Association of Magistrates of the Court of Auditors (2025).

⁷⁹ Constitutional Court, pending appeals, available at <https://www.cortecostituzionale.it/sfoglia-ricorsi>. The implementing decrees provided for under Law No. 1 of 2026 are currently being drafted. Italian government (2026a), additional written input.

⁸⁰ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Italy to ‘adopt the pending legislative proposal on conflicts of interest’. Some progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025, 2024 and 2023.

⁸¹ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 11. Some rules are in place (see in particular Law no. 215/2004 on conflicts of interest for members of the government), which include some disclosure obligations for holders of government office, in particular for assets. See also GRECO (2024), p. 21-22.

⁸² After approval by the Chamber of Deputies on 28 May 2024, the draft law on conflicts of interest remains pending at the Senate.

⁸³ National School of Administration (2026).

⁸⁴ ANAC (2026b). ANAC issued this guidance document to mitigate the severe fragmentation of norms across legal acts. ANAC (2026a), p.9. The national anti-corruption plan includes the objective of adopting standardised declaration templates and strengthening random checks on appointments within the public administration to effectively enhance oversight.

practical guidance on ethical issues⁸⁵. Existing rules on post-employment restrictions for local public officials were removed in August 2025⁸⁶, allowing members of local and regional councils and executives to be appointed as directors of publicly controlled companies without a cooling-off period. ANAC and civil society have called upon the government to reintroduce the previous ineligibility rules⁸⁷. Therefore, there has been no progress on the implementation of the recommendation.

A draft law on lobbying was adopted in the Chamber of Deputies and is being assessed in the Senate⁸⁸. The lack of a comprehensive regulation of lobbying activities continues to be perceived as one of the main shortcomings of the national integrity system⁸⁹. The Constitutional Court called upon the Parliament to introduce a regulation on lobbying activities⁹⁰. In January 2026, the Chamber of Deputies adopted a draft law on lobbying which remains pending in the Senate⁹¹. The draft law includes disclosure obligations for interest representatives, while exempting trade unions and employers' associations. It also does not include a legislative footprint and professional lobbying firms would not have to indicate on whose behalf they perform an interest representation activity. At the same time, the Ministry of Defence has introduced a voluntary transparency register where the meetings with stakeholders from the defence industry will be published⁹². Therefore, limited progress has been made to implement the recommendation.

With several draft laws pending in Parliament, there has been no progress in relation to the financing of political parties and campaigns by donations through political foundations and associations⁹³. The persistent practice of private party donations could impede public accountability and result in disproportionate influence of private donors on the political agenda⁹⁴. The draft laws tabled in Parliament to address this long-standing issue have not been discussed yet⁹⁵, neither has the draft law to increase the autonomy of the Committee for Transparency and Control of Political Parties and Political Movements. The human and financial resources of the Committee were increased in 2025⁹⁶. Since the draft laws are still pending, there has been no progress yet regarding the implementation of the recommendations.

⁸⁵ Guardia di Finanza (2025).

⁸⁶ Law no. 122 of 8 August 2025, Article 2 repealing Article 7 of legislative decree no. 39 of 8 April 2013.

⁸⁷ ANAC (2025c), pp. 7-8. Country visit Italy, CILD and Dem.e.tra. Similarly to previous interventions in 2024 and 2025, ANAC called for a comprehensive overhaul of the rules governing the ineligibility for public office. ANAC (2025b).

⁸⁸ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Italy to 'adopt comprehensive rules on lobbying to establish an operational lobbying register, including a legislative footprint'. Limited progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025, no progress in 2024 and limited progress in 2023.

⁸⁹ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 12. Country visit Italy, The Good Lobby.

⁹⁰ Constitutional Court, judgement No. 185 of 16 December 2025.

⁹¹ Draft law A.C. 2336 (*Disciplina dell'attività di relazioni istituzionali per la rappresentanza di interessi*).

⁹² Ministry of Defence, Ministerial Decree of 29 October 2025, available [here](#).

⁹³ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Italy to "effectively and swiftly address the practice of channelling donations through political foundations and associations and introduce single electronic register for party and campaign finance information". No progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025 and 2024 and some progress in 2023.

⁹⁴ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 12. Italy prohibits direct public funding to political parties, including for political campaigns. Since 2014, political parties are required to finance themselves almost exclusively through private donations from individual donors or legal entities. European Parliament (2021), p. 28. Civil Liberties Union for Europe (2026a), pp. 445-446.

⁹⁵ Country visit Italy, Ministry of Justice. 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 13.

⁹⁶ See 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 14.

The National Authority Against Corruption (ANAC) issued additional whistleblowing guidelines. In November 2025, ANAC issued guidelines on whistleblowing through internal reporting channels which complement the guidelines on external reporting adopted in 2023⁹⁷. In 2025, the number of whistleblower reports submitted to ANAC continued to rise (around 40% increase compared to 2024) while the number of reports that ANAC deemed inadmissible or rejected is also significant (55% of all reports received, up from 35% in 2024)⁹⁸. In 2025, ANAC saw a slight decrease in its monitoring activities and a decrease (about 60%) in its sanctioning activities⁹⁹.

The launch of the Single Transparency Portal increases transparency of public procurement which remains a high-risk area. Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU show that 34% of companies in Italy (EU average 30%) think that corruption has prevented them from winning a public tender in practice in the last three years¹⁰⁰. 71% of businesses perceive the level of independence of the public procurement review body (Regional Administrative Tribunals and the Council of State) as very or fairly good when it is reviewing public procurement cases¹⁰¹. The Single Market and Competitiveness Scoreboard on access to public procurement in Italy reports 39% of single bids for 2025 (27% EU average). Stakeholders report concerns about contracts being artificially split to keep their value just below the threshold (EUR 140 000) requiring a competitive tender procedure¹⁰². The updated code of public procurement continues to be implemented, but its impact on the effectiveness and transparency of public procurement has not yet been assessed conclusively¹⁰³. The national anti-corruption strategy includes an action point aiming to strengthen the skills of administrators working in the field of public procurement¹⁰⁴. The Single Transparency Portal, managed by ANAC, went online in September 2025. It collects data on whether public and private entities fulfil their legal transparency requirements¹⁰⁵ and allows to consult all publicly available data on public procurement online¹⁰⁶. Regarding other high-risk areas for corruption, in addition to public procurement, ANAC identified healthcare, as well as waste and land management¹⁰⁷.

⁹⁷ ANAC (2025a). Stakeholders welcomed the publication of these guidelines. Confindustria (2026), written input, p. 16.

⁹⁸ 1 931 reports were filed in 2025; 1 517 from the public sector and 414 from the private sector. 460 reports were considered inadmissible, 607 were rejected, 397 were forwarded to the competent authorities and 467 were examined by ANAC. ANAC (2026), written input, pp. 6-7. Industry representatives also mention the need for better awareness on how to use whistleblowing channels. Country visit Italy, Confindustria.

⁹⁹ In 2025, ANAC examined 4 459 incoming communications (5 029 in 2024) and opened 333 cases, of which 208 were supervisory and 26 sanctioning proceedings (450 and 61 in 2024). Country visit Italy, ANAC.

¹⁰⁰ Flash Eurobarometer 582 on Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU (2026). This is four percentage points above the EU average.

¹⁰¹ Figure 59, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

¹⁰² ANAC (2026a), p. 23. Confindustria (2026), written input, p. 4.

¹⁰³ While some stakeholders, including ANAC, have voiced concerns that the new rules reduce obligations of public authorities to ensure their impartiality in procurement procedures, industry representatives describe the updated code as a results-oriented approach facilitating procurement procedures. Country visit Italy, ANAC, Confindustria. Court of Cassation (2026), written input, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁴ ANAC (2026b), p. 36

¹⁰⁵ ANAC (2026b), p. 68. ANAC (2026), written input, p. 4. Legislative Decree No. 33 of 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Country visit Italy, ANAC.

¹⁰⁷ ANAC (2026), written input, p. 10.

III. MEDIA PLURALISM AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The media regulator continues to exercise its functions independently, and its financial autonomy has been reinforced. The media regulator, the Communication Regulatory Authority (AGCOM), relies on a well-established legal framework safeguarding its functional autonomy and the independent exercise of its regulatory powers¹⁰⁸. The self-financing system of AGCOM, based on contributions that the regulator collects from entities operating under its regulatory remit, has been adjusted to reinforce its financial independence and stability¹⁰⁹. Following a recently concluded recruitment cycle, staffing levels of AGCOM are expected to increase, which should contribute to the authority's capacity to address its expanding regulatory functions, particularly in the digital domain¹¹⁰.

The reform of public service media's governance and funding rules continued, with a legislative draft under consideration by the Parliament¹¹¹. As part of its public service mission, the media service broadcaster RAI - Radiotelevisione Italiana strives to ensure effective news and current affairs coverage, and to improve the safety and working conditions of its journalists¹¹². With a view to aligning with EMFA, a draft proposal¹¹³ to reform RAI's governance and funding rules is under consideration in the Senate¹¹⁴. The Government indicated that the draft is aimed at strengthening the independence of RAI and better safeguarding its financial stability¹¹⁵. Although stakeholders deemed that some aspects of the reform seem to go in the right direction, they are also of the view that the proposed changes to RAI's governance and funding can be improved¹¹⁶. At the same time, concerns remain regarding risks to its independent functioning and financial viability. Although RAI indicated that the delay in appointing the President of its management board did not affect its

¹⁰⁸ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 14, The Media Pluralisms Monitor (MPM) 2026 assesses the independence and effectiveness of AGCOM at low risk, 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 8, 13 and 20-21. As part of its monitoring tasks of the news media system, AGCOM is preparing a study on news media journalism in Italy and the main challenges and transformations affecting the profession, in collaboration with relevant media stakeholders. Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 31-32; AGCOM (2026), written input, p. 6; Country visit Italy, AGCOM.

¹⁰⁹ 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, p. 21. The 2026 Budget Law clarified that the self-financing system is solely based on contributions from AGCOM's regulated entities and cannot rely on state funding or public contributions, thus reinforcing financial autonomy of the regulator. The budget law also clarified that these contributions are a tax and not a levy, with the aim to provide more stability and certainty regarding available resources for the regulator. Country visit Italy, AGCOM.

¹¹⁰ This is particularly the case in relation to the new competences acquired by AGCOM as digital services coordinator under the Digital Services Act. Country visit Italy, AGCOM. 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 20-21.

¹¹¹ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Italy to "advance with the ongoing legislative work to ensure that rules or mechanisms are in place to provide funding for public service media that is appropriate for the realisation of its public service remit and to guarantee its independence". Some progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025.

¹¹² RAI (2026), written input, p.11; Country visit Italy, RAI.

¹¹³ The draft proposal was formulated by consolidating the different proposals presented in the Senate in 2024. Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 3; 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 14.

¹¹⁴ Changes include the extension of the term of office of the members of RAI's management board, the elimination of direct appointment powers of members of RAI's management board by the Government, the introduction of a cap to yearly potential reductions to the amount of licence fee for RAI, Italian Government, RAI, FNSI, CILD, Ordine dei Giornalisti, and OBCT (2026), written inputs, pp. 3-4, pp. 1, 5 and 6, p. 16, p. 26 and 28, pp. 14 and 17, and pp. 14 and 16-17, respectively.

¹¹⁵ Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 3-4; Country visit Italy, Italian Government.

¹¹⁶ OBCT, Ordine dei Giornalisti, FNSI, RAI and CILD (2026), written inputs, and RAI (2026) additional written inputs, pp. 14 and 17, pp.14 and 17, pp.16-17, pp. 5-6, p. 26, and pp. 6-9 respectively; 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 42-43; Country visit Italy, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, Ossigeno per l'informazione, and OBCT.

operations¹¹⁷, some stakeholders considered the political stalemate and inability to find consensus on the appointment to be an illustration of the shortcomings of the current rules in effectively shielding RAI from risks of undue influence¹¹⁸. While the Government indicated that the EUR 10 million reduction in public funding for RAI in 2026 was intended to rationalise RAI's operating costs¹¹⁹, stakeholders expressed concerns regarding its impact on the public service media's financial stability and predictability¹²⁰. RAI deemed the new cost-containment requirements for 2026 and 2027 to be a risk to its financial viability and ability to effectively compete on the market¹²¹. Against this background, there has been some further progress on the recommendation made in the 2025 Rule of Law Report.

A dedicated system to support the media sector is in place while the rules on media market concentrations were updated. A system of public funding, the primary instrument of it being the Single Fund¹²², is in place to support the media sector¹²³. In 2025, the national framework on media market concentrations has been adjusted to clarify that AGCOM's assessment powers regarding positions of significant market power, detrimental to media pluralism, also cover transactions involving online players such as video-sharing platforms and social networks¹²⁴. Stakeholders mentioned overregulation and related competitive disadvantages compared to online players as among the main challenges for the creative and cultural sector's sustainability¹²⁵.

New legislative initiatives on the protection of journalists are under development, while physical attacks and other forms of intimidations remain a source of concern. The legal framework provides specific protection protocols for journalists under threats.¹²⁶ The Specialised Coordination Centre, established within the Ministry of Interior, monitors and reports about cases of intimidation against journalists, promotes exchanges of information and views on potential new policy initiatives¹²⁷, and continues to be considered by media

¹¹⁷ According to applicable rules, in case the office of President remains vacant, its duties are carried out by the most senior member of the management board, ensuring continuity of editorial and administrative activities. RAI (2026), written input, pp. 5-6; Country visit Italy, RAI.

¹¹⁸ FNSI, CILD, OBCT, and Reporters Without Borders (2026), written inputs, p. 16, p.28, p. 16, and pp. 15-16 respectively; The MPM 2026 confirms a high risk indicator for the independence of public service media, as in 2025, 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 9,10, and 42-44; Country visit Italy, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, OBCT, and Ossigeno per l'informazione.

¹¹⁹ Italian Government (2026a), additional written input, p. 1.

¹²⁰ RAI, CILD, FNSI, and OBCT (2026), written inputs, p. 4, pp. 26 and 28, p. 16, and pp. 15 and 17 respectively; Country visit Italy, RAI, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, Ossigeno per l'informazione, and OBCT.

¹²¹ RAI (2026), written input, p. 4; and RAI (2026a), additional written input, pp. 3-5; Country visit Italy, RAI.

¹²² Single Fund for Pluralism and Digital Innovation in Information and Publishing, Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 27-30.

¹²³ Some stakeholders indicated the opportunity to re-adjust the Single Fund's allocation criteria to make the distribution of public resources more efficient, better support innovation and mitigate the challenges of the news desertification affecting local information. Ordine dei Giornalisti (2026), written input p. 2; 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 32, 41-42, and 50.

¹²⁴ AGCOM (2025), Resolution 251/25/CONS; Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 25; AGCOM (2026), written input, pp. 2-4; Country visit Italy, AGCOM.

¹²⁵ Confindustria (2026), written input, pp. 1-3; Country visit Italy, Confindustria Radio Televisioni.

¹²⁶ Italy's Ministry of Interior is responsible for the protection of persons under serious threats, including journalists. The Ministry can adopt protection measures tailored to the level of risk. By June 2026, there were 29 journalists under protective measures in Italy. In addition, the Specialised Coordination Centre ensures a dedicated institutional arrangement gathering representatives from the Ministry of Interior and from media and journalists' associations, Italian Government (2026) written input, pp. 32-33.

¹²⁷ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 33; Country visit Italy, Ministry of Interior.

stakeholders as a good practice to support journalists' safety¹²⁸. Precarious working conditions¹²⁹ and exposure to attacks, threats and other forms of intimidation, including through vexatious legal actions, some of them identified as SLAPPs¹³⁰, remain a source of concern for journalists¹³¹. The Italian Government is yet to adopt secondary legislation to transpose the Anti-SLAPP Directive¹³². Stakeholders indicated a worsening of the situation with an increase of cases of physical attacks and threats in the second half of 2025, which also included serious incidents like a bombing attack against a journalist and host of a RAI programme¹³³, and the storming by protesters of the offices of a daily newspaper¹³⁴. The Prosecutor's Offices of Rome and Naples continue investigating on the Paragon spyware case, including to identify the perpetrators¹³⁵. Also, no new developments were reported on the regulation of access to and disclosure of certain judicial information by journalists, with stakeholders reiterating their concerns about the impact of these rules on freedom of information and press freedom¹³⁶, while the Government considers that they ensure a fair balance between the presumption of innocence and freedom of information. Since the publication of the 2025 Rule of Law Report, the Council of Europe's platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists registered 20 alerts concerning Italy: 13 cases of physical attacks against journalists, 5 cases of harassment and intimidation of

¹²⁸ Ordine dei Giornalisti (2026), written input, p. 18; Country visit Italy, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, OBCT, and Ossigeno per l'informazione.

¹²⁹ Average annual gross earnings for freelancers and journalists with term-contracts amount to EUR 17 000 and EUR 11 000 respectively, which means less than EUR 1 000 net per month, undermining the economic conditions of journalist and making them more vulnerable, Ordine dei Giornalisti (2026), written input; Country visit Italy, FNSI.

¹³⁰ Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, Ossigeno per l'informazione, CILD, OBCT (2026), written inputs, p. 19, p. 19, pp. 7 and 19, p. 30, pp. 19-20 respectively; 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p.18; 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, pp. 13-15. Stakeholders reported that 93 cases of SLAPPs affecting journalists were documented in 2025, Ordine dei Giornalisti and Ossigeno per l'informazione (2026), written inputs, p. 19 and p. 7 respectively.

¹³¹ FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, CILD, RAI, OBCT, Articolo 21, Reporters Without Borders, Ossigeno per l'informazione and Civil Society Europe (2026), written inputs, pp. 17 and 19, p. 15 and 19, p. 30, pp. 9-10, pp. 17-20, p. 17, p. 17, pp. 7 and 18-20, and p. 7 respectively; Country visit Italy, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, OBCT, and Ossigeno per l'informazione.

¹³² Article 6 of the [European Delegation Law No. 36 of 9 April 2026](#) provides the required legal basis for the Government to adopt one or more legislative decrees to transpose into national law the Anti-SLAPP Directive..

¹³³ The Government condemned the event and ongoing investigations indicate the possible involvement of organised crime circles, Italian Government (2026a), additional written input.

¹³⁴ FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, CILD, RAI, OBCT, Reporters Without Borders, Ossigeno per l'informazione, Civil Society Europe (2026), written inputs, p. 17, p. 15, p. 30, p. 8, p. 18, p. 17, p. 7, and p. 7 respectively. The MPM 2026 considers the indicator for journalistic profession, standards and protection to be at medium-high risk in view of this deterioration trend over journalist's safety environment, 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, p. 19.

¹³⁵ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, pp. 17-18. On 5 March 2026, the Rome and Naples Prosecutor's Offices indicated that, following forensic analysis carried out on the personal devices of the concerned journalists, no evidence of operations by the Italian intelligence services targeting journalists through the spyware was found. However, the forensic analysis confirmed that one journalist was hacked by spyware, and investigations to identify the perpetrators should continue. Italian Government (2026a), additional written inputs, pp. 1-4. See also input from various stakeholders, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, CILD, OBCT, Articolo 21, Reporters Without Borders, and Ossigeno per l'informazione (2026), written inputs, p. 17, p. 18, p. 31, pp. 20-21, p. 16, p. 16, and p. 20 respectively; Country visit Italy, FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, OBCT, and Ossigeno per l'informazione.

¹³⁶ FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, and Articolo 21 (2026), written inputs, p. 18, p. 19, p. 6; 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, p. 18; Country Visit Italy, FNSI and Ordine dei Giornalisti.

journalists, and 2 cases of other acts having chilling effect on media freedom¹³⁷. The Mapping Media Freedom platform reported 104 incidents, of which 92 related to different forms of attacks on journalists and 14 related to legal incidents involving journalists¹³⁸. The latest available data of the Coordination Centre also shows a 76% increase in cases of intimidations against journalists in the first six months of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024¹³⁹. In February 2026, the Government tabled in Parliament draft amendments introducing specific aggravating factors for crimes committed against professional journalists¹⁴⁰. Stakeholders welcomed the initiative as a step forward in strengthening the safety of journalists, while stressing the importance for Parliament to consider extending the scope of protection to all media workers¹⁴¹.

There has been no further progress on the recommendation related to the defamation rules¹⁴². The draft reform of the defamation regime is still pending in the Senate¹⁴³. Media stakeholders reiterated that it is positive that the proposed reform abolishes imprisonment penalties for press defamation, although this falls short of a full decriminalisation. Stakeholders also reiterated that some of the new and more stringent measures, such as high criminal fines, raise potential issues of chilling effect on press freedom¹⁴⁴. Against this background, there has been no further progress on the related recommendation.

¹³⁷ Italy has responded to 13 of the 20 alerts, Council of Europe, Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, Italy.

¹³⁸ In particular, regarding the 92 incidents related to different forms of attacks on journalists, 18 instances related to cases of physical attacks, 22 instances related to cases of attacks to property, and 52 related to cases of verbal attacks. Concerning other types of incidents, there were 29 reported instances related to cases of interference with journalists' activities. Mapping Media Freedom, Italy country profile.

¹³⁹ Out of the 81 cases registered, 19.4% concerned organised crime and 29% were of 'political-social nature', while 31 out of 81 cases (38.3%) occurred online. Ministry of Interior (2025), p. 5. Monitoring activities carried out by an Italian CSO which, unlike the Specialised Centre, also take into account cases of threats and intimidations for which charges were not filed to competent authorities, report 361 cases of threats or other forms of intimidations against journalists in the first half of 2025, suggesting a tendency where only one out of six journalists press charges. Ossigeno per l'informazione (2026), written input, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ This initiative provides for tighter criminal sanctions for certain crimes, such as those against life or personal safety, when they are committed against journalists. Country visit Italy, Ministry of Interior; Council of Ministers (2026).

¹⁴¹ The draft amendments would only protect professional journalists who are members of the national order. Stakeholders ask to extend protection to all media professionals and news crew members including sound engineers, photographers or cameramen. Ordine dei Giornalisti and FNSI (2026), written inputs, p. 1 and p. 1, respectively. Country visit Italy, Ordine dei Giornalisti, FNSI, Ossigeno per l'informazione, and OBCT.

¹⁴² The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended Italy to "[c]ontinue the ongoing legislative process on the draft reform on defamation, the protection of professional secrecy and journalistic sources while avoiding any risk of negative impacts on press freedom and ensure it takes into account European standards on the protection of journalists". No progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025 and 2024, and some progress in 2023.

¹⁴³ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 4 and p. 27; Ordine dei Giornalisti, Ossigeno per l'informazione, FNSI, Articolo 21, OBCT, and CILD (2026) written inputs, pp.14-15, pp. 19-20, p. 18, p. 6, p. 15, and p. 26 respectively; 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 18; Country visit Italy, Ordine dei Giornalisti, FNSI, Ossigeno per l'informazione, and OBCT.

¹⁴⁴ Ossigeno per l'informazione, FNSI, Articolo 21, OBCT, and CILD (2026), written inputs, pp. 19-20, p.18, p.6, p.15, and p. 26 respectively; 2026 Media Pluralism Monitor, p. 13; Country visit Italy, Ordine dei Giornalisti, FNSI, Ossigeno per l'informazione, and OBCT. In particular it was mentioned the chilling effect related to the risk, envisaged under the proposed draft, for journalists to be fined up to EUR 50 000, taking into account their precarious working conditions and economic vulnerability. FNSI and Ordine dei Giornalisti (2026), written inputs, p. 20 and p. 18 respectively; Country visit Italy, FNSI.

IV. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO CHECKS AND BALANCES

The draft constitutional reform to introduce the direct election of the Prime Minister remains on the agenda of Parliament. After approval by the Senate in June 2024, the draft reform remains under discussion in the Chamber of Deputies¹⁴⁵ and expert hearings in Parliament have not advanced since July 2025. The Government confirmed the reform remains a priority¹⁴⁶. A few stakeholders reiterated concerns that the reform may impact checks and balances by altering the dynamics between the Government and Parliament, and between the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic¹⁴⁷.

Stakeholders continued to express concerns about the excessive use of emergency decrees and of motions of confidence, while the Chamber of Deputies took steps to limit their use in the future. In the current legislature (22 October 2022 to May 2026), Parliament adopted 325 laws. Of these, a third (112 laws) converted government emergency decrees into ordinary laws. A fifth (67 laws) were approved through a motion of confidence in at least one of the branches of Parliament. Three quarters (244 laws) were of government initiative¹⁴⁸. Stakeholders continued to express concerns¹⁴⁹, as they consider that the combined use of law decrees and motions of confidence might affect the separation of powers between the Government and Parliament and jeopardise the legislative function of Parliament¹⁵⁰, particularly in the area of criminal law¹⁵¹. On several occasions, the President of the Republic called on the Government to strictly limit the use of legislation by decree to cases of genuine urgency and necessity. In February 2026, with large support, the Chamber of Deputies amended its rules of procedure with the aim to streamline law-making and, among others, limit the recourse to emergency decrees and motions of confidence. The reform will start applying after the next legislative elections¹⁵².

A law adopted in November 2025 introduced rules on regulatory simplification, public consultation and impact assessment procedures. The law requires the Government to submit to Parliament by end of June each year a regulatory simplification law, gathering proposals from *ex post* impact assessments and from public consultations, and consolidating existing legislation¹⁵³. The law introduces within the framework of the regulatory impact assessment (i) a gender impact assessment and (ii) a generational impact assessment, as an *ex ante* analysis of the environmental and social effects of governmental acts (excluding emergency decrees) on young people and future generations, notably on intergenerational equity. Finally, the law delegates the government to consolidate and reorganise legislation in a wide range of areas¹⁵⁴, as well as to revise the digital administration code. Business stakeholders welcomed the regulatory simplification aims¹⁵⁵.

¹⁴⁵ Draft Law [A.C. 1921](#).

¹⁴⁶ Country visit Italy, Italian Government.

¹⁴⁷ MEDEL (2026), written input, p. 21. Two Italian judicial associations (*Magistratura Democratica*, *Area Democratica per la Giustizia*) are members of MEDEL. Morrone (2025). See also 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 18.

¹⁴⁸ Chamber of Deputies (2026a), Senate of the Republic (2026).

¹⁴⁹ Country visit Italy, ARCI, CILD and Emergency.

¹⁵⁰ Civil Liberties (2026), written input, p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Country visit Italy, Antigone and Unione Forense per la Tutela dei Diritti Umani.

¹⁵² Chamber of Deputies (2026b).

¹⁵³ [Law No. 167 of 10 November 2025](#). Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 35.

¹⁵⁴ Foreign affairs and international cooperation; inland and mixed navigation; active electorate, keeping and revision of electoral rolls; education; disability; legal regimes of interdiction, incapacitation and supported decision-making; civil protection; policies for families, birth rates and equal opportunities; higher education

On 1 January 2026, Italy had 79 leading judgments of the European Court of Human Rights pending implementation, an increase of 5 compared to the previous year¹⁵⁶. At that time, Italy's rate of leading judgments from the past 10 years that had been implemented was at 22% (compared to 27% in 2025; 78% remained pending), and the average time that the judgments had been pending implementation was 5 years and 10 months (compared to 6 years and 4 months in 2025)¹⁵⁷. In 2025, Italy opened 10 new leading cases (of which 4 under enhanced supervision) and closed 5 leading cases (of which 4 under enhanced supervision, all pending for over five years)¹⁵⁸. One of the latter concerned the excessive length of criminal proceedings and had been pending implementation for 25 years¹⁵⁹. The oldest leading judgment, pending implementation for 25 years, concerns excessive length of proceedings before the civil courts¹⁶⁰. As regards the respect of payment deadlines, on 31 December 2025 there were 109 cases awaiting confirmation of payments (compared to 122 in 2024)¹⁶¹. By 17 June 2026, the number of leading judgments pending implementation had increased to 84¹⁶².

More than half of companies surveyed in Italy express confidence in the effectiveness of investment protection. 57% of companies are very or fairly confident that investments are protected by law and courts, a figure which has slightly decreased (58% in 2025)¹⁶³. As regards authorities relevant for economic operators, 72% perceive the level of independence of Italy's Competition and Market Authority as very or fairly good, a figure which has slightly increased (70% in 2025)¹⁶⁴. The supreme administrative court (Italy's Council of State) has jurisdiction in several business-related cases, including in cases related to public procurement, public concessions, public contracts and economic regulation. A number of judicial mechanisms to improve efficiency are available in these cases, including the possibility to apply interim measures, joint examination of similar cases and the consolidation of multiple appeals¹⁶⁵.

There has been limited progress on the recommendation to establish a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)¹⁶⁶. Five draft laws are still pending in Parliament¹⁶⁷. One of

and research; protection of workers' health and safety in the port, maritime, fishing vessel and railway sectors. Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 35.

¹⁵⁵ Country visit, Confindustria.

¹⁵⁶ For an explanation of the supervision process, see the [website](#) of the Council of Europe.

¹⁵⁷ All figures calculated by the European Implementation Network (EIN) and based on the number of cases that are considered pending at the annual cut-off date of 1 January 2026. EIN (2026), written input, p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ Council of Europe (2026), Annual Report 2025, pp. 143, 157, 159, available [here](#).

¹⁵⁹ European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 12 August 1999, *Ledonne v. Italy* (no. 1), case 35742/97. In September 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe noted that a wide range of reforms had brought the average length of criminal proceedings within acceptable and sustainable parameters, and that Italy had introduced an effective compensatory remedy. [CM/ResDH\(2025\)256](#). Council of Europe (2026), Annual Report 2025, p. 88.

¹⁶⁰ European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 12 January 2001, *Trapani v. Italy*, case 45104/98.

¹⁶¹ Council of Europe (2026), Annual Report 2025, pp. 163.

¹⁶² Data according to the online database of the Council of Europe (HUDOC).

¹⁶³ Figures 52 and 53, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. 28% and only 11% of the surveyed investors respectively perceive (i) concerns about quality, efficiency or independence of justice and frequent changes in legislation or (ii) concerns about the quality of the law-making process as a reason for the lack of confidence in investment protection.

¹⁶⁴ Figure 60, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard.

¹⁶⁵ Figures 66 and 67, 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard. The data presented reflects exclusively the mechanisms in place at the level of the highest administrative jurisdictions; the same or other mechanisms may be in place at lower instance administrative courts.

¹⁶⁶ The 2025 Rule of Law Report recommended to Italy to '[s]tep up efforts to establish a National Human Rights Institution taking into account the UN Paris Principles'. No progress was previously assessed on this recommendation in 2025 and 2024 and some progress in 2023.

these, proposed by the parliamentary majority, would task the Data Protection Authority as NHRI¹⁶⁸. This proposal raised concerns among stakeholders, also in relation to the required expertise¹⁶⁹. The Prime Minister's Office set up a working group in October 2025 to relaunch the initiative to establish a NHRI, taking into account the Paris principles and the composite institutional framework, with various bodies responsible for the protection of human rights in Italy¹⁷⁰. Stakeholders, including the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, continued to urge Italy – as one of the very few Member States still without one – to set up an effective, independent and well-resourced NHRI, with a broad mandate¹⁷¹. In parallel, a new equality body (*Organismo per la Parità*) will start operating in 2027, with the aim to align with European standards for national equality bodies¹⁷². Overall, limited progress has been made to implement the recommendation to establish a NHRI.

New legislation in the field of internal security is being implemented, with stakeholders raising concerns about possible impact on civic space and the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms. In December 2025, Civicus downgraded the civic space in Italy from 'narrowed' to 'obstructed'¹⁷³. The Security Law, adopted in June 2025 and seeking to combat terrorism and organised crime and improve internal security, introduced new criminal offenses, also transforming previously administrative offenses into criminal ones, and expanded powers and protection of law enforcement authorities. It notably criminalised the destruction or damage of property at demonstrations, the blocking of roads or railways, and prohibited access to certain urban areas and means of transportation to persons reported or convicted for certain crimes in the same area¹⁷⁴. In 2026, the Government put forward an emergency decree and a draft law¹⁷⁵ defining additional criminal offences and harsher penalties for violating legislation on assemblies¹⁷⁶. The emergency decree, issued in February and converted into law in April 2026, notably expands police powers and surveillance with the aim to protect law enforcement officials and strengthen security during public demonstrations¹⁷⁷. Stakeholders voice concern about developments related to restrictions to the right to protest¹⁷⁸ and about their possible impact on civic space and the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms¹⁷⁹. The Government considers instead that the new provisions achieve a balance between the right to peaceful assembly and the right to free

¹⁶⁷ Italian Government (2026), written input, p. 36.

¹⁶⁸ Draft law [A.S. 505](#).

¹⁶⁹ Country visit Italy, ARCI, CILD, COSPE, Antigone, Emergency, Unione Forense per la Tutela dei Diritti Umani. Civil Liberties (2026), written input, p. 32.

¹⁷⁰ Italian Government (2026), written input, pp. 6, 36-37. Country visit Italy, Italian Government. Existing authorities with competences in the field of human rights protection include: the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights, the National Ombudsman for the Rights of Persons Detained or Deprived of Personal Liberty, the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents, the Data Protection Authority, the Communications Regulatory Authority, and, as of 2025, the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

¹⁷¹ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (2026).

¹⁷² Legislative Decree No. 91 of 2026, aiming to implement EU Directives 2024/1499 and 2024/1500 on minimum standards for national equality bodies.

¹⁷³ Italy's score is 60/100. See https://monitor.civicus.org/press_release/2025/italy/; Ratings by Civicus are on a five-category scale defined as: open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed and closed. Also see FRANET (2026), pp. 184-185.

¹⁷⁴ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 21. See also Associazione Italiana Costituzionalisti (2025).

¹⁷⁵ Council of Ministers (2026), Draft law on public security measures, adopted on 5 February 2026. Council of Ministers (2026).

¹⁷⁶ FRA (2026), written input, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ [Law No. 54 of 26 April 2026](#), converting Decree Law No. 23 of 2026 into law.

¹⁷⁸ Country visit Italy, ARCI, CILD, COSPE, Emergency, Antigone and Unione Forense per la Tutela dei Diritti Umani. Civil Society Europe (2026).

¹⁷⁹ Venturi (2026). Net4Defenders and ARCI (2025).

movement and personal freedom, all of which are protected by the Constitution¹⁸⁰. In May 2026, in a periodic study on legislative developments, the Court of Cassation provided observations on procedure and substance on the 2026 Security Law and its compatibility with constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights and freedoms¹⁸¹. Some stakeholders also reported that certain civil society organisations faced vexatious legal actions, including SLAPP, to discourage civic participation¹⁸².

¹⁸⁰ 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 21.

¹⁸¹ Court of Cassation (2026). Report No. 39 of 2026 noted that the expansion of criminal law and police powers may improve public order enforcement while it raises concerns about proportionality, legal certainty, and compatibility with constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights and freedoms.

¹⁸² 2025 Rule of Law Report, Italy, p. 18. FNSI, Ordine dei Giornalisti, Ossigeno per l'Informazione, CILD, OBCT, ReCommon, written inputs, p. 19, p. 19, pp. 7 and 19, p. 30, pp. 19-20, pp. 1-3 respectively.

Annex I: List of sources in alphabetical order*

* The list of contributions received in the context of the consultation for the 2026 Rule of Law Report can be found at https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-rule-law-report-targeted-stakeholder-consultation_en.

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Annex II: Country visit to Italy

The Commission services held virtual meetings in February 2026 with:

- Anti-corruption Unit of the Financial Police (*Guardia di Finanza*)
- Association Antigone
- *Associazione Articolo 21*
- *Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana* (ARCI)
- Association of Journalists (*Ordine dei Giornalisti*)
- Board of the Tax Courts (*Consiglio di Presidenza della Giustizia Tributaria*)
- Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CILD)
- Communications Regulatory Authority (*Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni, AGCOM*)
- *Confartigianato*
- *Confindustria*
- Constitutional Court (*Corte Costituzionale*)
- *Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti* (COSPE)
- Council of State (*Consiglio di Stato*) and Board of the Administrative Courts (*Consiglio di Presidenza della Giustizia Amministrativa*)
- Court of Auditors (*Corte dei Conti*) and its prosecution service (*Ufficio del Procuratore Generale presso la Corte dei Conti*)
- *Democrazia, etica pubblica, trasparenza* (Dem.e.trà)
- Emergency
- Italian National Press Federation (*Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana, FNSI*)
- Court of Cassation (*Corte Suprema di Cassazione*) and its prosecution service (*Procura Generale presso la Corte Suprema di Cassazione*)
- High Council of the Judiciary (*Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura*)
- Independent Judiciary (*Magistratura Indipendente*)
- *Libera*
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Justice
- National Anti-Corruption Authority (*Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione, ANAC*)
- National Association of Magistrates (*Associazione Nazionale Magistrati*)
- National Bar Association (*Consiglio Nazionale Forense*)
- Open Polis
- *Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa* (OBCT)
- *Ossigeno per l'Informazione*
- Office of the Prime Minister (*Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*)
- *RAI – Radiotelevisione italiana S.p.A.*
- The Good Lobby
- Transparency International – Italy
- Union of Italian Criminal Chambers (*Unione delle Camere Penali Italiane, UCPI*)
- Lawyers' Union for the Protection of Human Rights (*Unione Forense per la Tutela dei Diritti Umani, UFTDU*)

* The Commission also met the following organisations in a number of horizontal meetings:

- Civil Liberties Union for Europe
- Civil Society Europe
- End FGM EU
- European Civic Forum
- European Partnership for Democracy
- Human Rights Watch
- ILGA-Europe
- International Federation for Human Rights
- Philea - Philanthropy Europe Association
- Transparency International EU