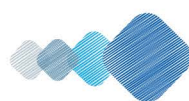


Rule of Law in View of EU Accession

Quarterly brief

July–September 2025



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This brief summarises the key developments related to the rule of law in the context of North Macedonia's EU accession for the period July–September 2025. It includes **monitoring the fundamentals of EU accession, including key developments in the functioning of democratic institutions, public administration reform, and Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights.**

Key developments

- » In July, the three key PAR laws were adopted: the Law on Administrative Servants, the Law on Public Sector Employees, and the Law on Professional Development of Administrative Servants.
- » The Public Financial Management Reform (PFM) Programme for the period 2025–2028, along with its Action Plan for 2025, was adopted.
- » At the beginning of August, the Assembly announced the upcoming local elections—the eighth since the country's independence.
- » At the same time, an announcement for the election of a new president of the SCPC was published; however, the selection was suspended due to the pending local elections in the country.
- » The SEC adopted a new rulebook allowing independent candidates to run in the upcoming local elections if they are endorsed by the signatures of only two citizens.
- » The new Commission for the selection of candidates for judges in the ECtHR was formed, and a new public call for applications was published in September.
- » In July, the Assembly decided to issue a public call for the election of a new Ombudsperson; however, the selection has not been made yet, and thus the office of the Ombudsperson now functions with only two vice-Ombudspersons for the entire country.
- » The draft Law on Probation was published.
- » In September, the Law on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Institutions was adopted.
- » In late September, the constitutive session of the National Coordinating Body for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was held.
- » In August, the National Action Plan on Children's Rights 2025–2029 was adopted.



List of Abbreviations

AA	Agency for Administration
AAVMS	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services
AJM	Association of Journalists of Macedonia
BPPO	Basic Public Prosecutor's Office
BPPOPOCC	Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption
CEF	Center of Excellence in Finance
CPPD	Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CUP	Center for Change Management
DGAFP	Directorate-General for Administration and the Civil Service
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ENER	Unique National Electronic Register of Regulations
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
GRECO	Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption
IA	Intelligence Agency
INSP	National Institute of Public Administration of France
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex communities
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MFA	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
MP	Member of Parliament
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA	National Security Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Agency
PFM	Public Financial Management
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
SAO	State Audit Office
SCPC	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption
SEC	State Election Committee
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SSNM	Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers
SPACE I	Annual Penal Statistics on Prison Populations
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UPO	Trade Union for Employees in the State Administration
VMRO-DPMNE	The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
ZORODU	Law on the Organisation and Work of State Administration Bodies



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Functioning of democratic institutions



Elections

On 9 August, the President of the Assembly announced the upcoming local elections—the eighth since the country's independence. The first round of elections for mayors and councillors in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje will be held on 19 October. In municipalities where the mayoral election is not completed in the first round, a second round is scheduled for 2 November. During these elections, citizens will vote for mayors and municipal councillors across 80 municipalities, including the City of Skopje.¹ The State Election Commission (SEC) adopted the deadlines for holding the local elections on the same day, following their previous announcement by the President of the Assembly. The election campaign for the first round begins on 29 September and will last continuously until 17 October. The campaign for the second election round will last until 31 October.² Just a few days later, the former president of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) and current independent candidate for mayor of the Municipality of Centar announced on her Facebook profile that, only 11 hours after declaring her candidacy, police officers arrived at her home to inform her of criminal proceedings initiated against her.³ The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje stated the criminal charges against the former president of the SCPC and current independent candidate for mayor of the Municipality of Centar, highlighting that it was merely an invitation for questioning and had no connection to her political activities.⁴ The next day, at a special session, the Assembly voted on proposed amendments to the Electoral Code that would require independent lists of councillors and mayoral candidates to gather signatures from 0.95 per cent of registered voters in the respective municipality or the City of Skopje. During the committee debate, the political party Levica proposed an amendment to reduce the threshold from 0.95 per cent to 0.5 per cent—an amendment supported by all parties except the European Front. When the proposal returned to the plenary session, 66 MPs voted in favour and 18 opposed. However, during the vote of the non-majority communities, 11 MPs supported the amendments while 18 voted against, resulting in their rejection due to the lack of a Badinter majority.⁵

The next day, the SEC adopted a new rulebook allowing independent candidates to run in the upcoming local elections with the endorsement of just two citizens. Under this rulebook, independent candidates for both mayoral and councillor positions must collect two signatures to qualify for participation. The decision was approved at a session with six votes in favour and one against. The rulebook was proposed by an SEC member who referred to Article 63 of the Electoral Code, noting that it remains in force and regulates the procedure for collecting signatures for candidate nominations, despite Article 62—which specifically pertains to local elections—being repealed by the Constitutional Court.⁶ Next, a member of the SEC filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court, challenging the SEC's guideline on the number of municipal councillors, following a government decision based on the 2021 census that reduced the number of councillors in 14 municipalities.

1 Decision on calling elections for members of the municipal councils and the City of Skopje council, and for deputy mayors of the municipalities and for the Mayor of the City of Skopje (Решение за распишување на избори за членови на советите на општините и советот на Град Скопје и за градоначалници на општините и за градоначалник на Град Скопје) State Election Commission, 9 August 2025, <https://www.sec.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025/>

2 Ibid

3 Ivanovska: 11 hours after I announced my candidacy for mayor of the Municipality of Centar, police officers knocked on my door (Ивановска: 11 часа откако ја објавив кандидатурата за градоначалничка на Општина Центар, полицајци затропаа на мојата врата), 360 Stepeni, 15 August 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/ivanovska-11-chasa-otkako-ja-objaviv-kandidatura-za-gradonachalnic-ka-na-opshtina-tsentar-politsajtsi-zatro-paa-na-mojata-vrata/>

4 Prosecutor's Office on the criminal charges against Ivanovska: The summons for questioning is in no way related to her political activities (Обвинителството за кривичната пријава за Ивановска: Поканата за испитување во ниту еден случај не е поврзана со нејзините политички активности), 360 Stepeni, 15 August 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelstvo-za-krivichnata-prijava-za-ivanovska-pokanata-za-ispituvane-vo-nitu-eden-sluchaj-ne-e-povrzana-so-nejzinite-politichki-aktivnosti/>

5 The changes to the Electoral Code did not pass – an amendment was adopted, but there was no ballot box (Не поминаа измените на Изборниот законик – се усвои амандман, но немаше бадинтер), Fokus, 16 August 2025, <https://fokus.mk/ne-pominaa-izmenite-na-izborniot-zakonik-se-usvoi-amandman-no-nemashe-badinter/>

6 SEC adopts rulebook – independents to run in local elections with two citizen signatures (ДИК донесе правилник – независните да се кандидираат на локалните избори со два граѓански потписа), 360 Stepeni, 17 August 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/dik-donese-pravilnik-nezavisnite-da-se-kandidiraat-na-lokalnite-izbori-so-dva-graganski-potpisa/>

The decision was passed with five votes in favour and one against, despite the SEC member's request for a consensus vote. The Municipality of Gostivar experienced the largest reduction, from 31 to 23 councillors, reflecting a population drop from 80,000 in 2002 to 60,000 in 2021. Opposition party DUI also appealed to the Constitutional Court, claiming the decision was unconstitutional and had marginalised Albanians. At the same time, VLEN criticised DUI for allowing the distinction between residents and non-residents in the census.⁷ In September, the Assembly adopted a Declaration on holding fair, free, and democratic elections for municipal and City of Skopje councils, with 73 votes in favour and none against. Submitted by the Assembly President and parliamentary group coordinators, the Declaration emphasises non-partisan unity, respect for citizens' voting rights, and condemnation of family and group voting as a means to manipulate election outcomes.⁸ Next, the Constitutional Court decided not to initiate proceedings concerning the SEC Rulebook, which allows independent candidates for mayor and councillors to run in the 19 October local elections with just two citizen signatures. The Court concluded that the SEC's action was necessary to ensure independent citizens could participate in the electoral process and to uphold the Constitution and the Electoral Code.⁹

Additionally, a few days later, the Constitutional Court decided not to initiate proceedings regarding the Government's decision to reduce the number of councillors in certain municipalities. Following the 20th session, the Court's President and Judge Rapporteur held a press conference to address questions about the decision on determining the number of municipal councillors in Macedonia. The case reached the Court after three initiatives were filed by MPs of the European Front challenging the Government's decision.¹⁰ At the end of the month, the SEC finalised the voter list, confirming that 1,832,415 citizens were eligible to vote. This included 112,000 voters temporarily abroad, 2,162 voters in detention or serving prison sentences, and 450 voters residing in nursing homes.¹¹ Finally, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) unanimously adopted guidelines for broadcasters for the 2025 local elections, effectively preventing the party Levica from accessing paid political advertising. In response, Levica filed a complaint with the AAVMS, arguing that the guidelines discriminate against smaller parliamentary parties and demanding urgent revisions.¹²

7 Ditmire Shehu filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the SEC for reducing the number of councilors (Дитмире Шеху поднесе тужба до Управен суд против ДИК за намалувањето на бројот на советници) Telma TV, 25 August 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/08/25/ditmire-shehu-podnese-tuzhba-do-upraven-sud-protiv-dik-za-namaluvaneto-na-brojt-na-sovetniczi/>

8 The Assembly passed a Declaration on Fair, Free and Democratic Elections (Собранието изгласа Декларација за фер, слободни и демократски избори), Nova Makedonija, 12 September 2025, <https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/sobranieto-izglosa-deklaracija-za-fer-slobodni-i-demokratski-izbori/>

9 Constitutional Court did not initiate proceedings regarding the SEC Rulebook: Independents can participate in elections with two signatures (Уставен не поведе постапка за Правилникот на ДИК: Независните може да учествуваат на избори со два потписи), 360 Stepeni, 17 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/ustaven-ne-povede-postapka-za-pravilnikot-na-dik-nezavisnite-mozhe-da-uchestvuvaat-na-izbori-so-dva-potpisi/>

10 Constitutional Court did not initiate proceedings regarding the government's decision to reduce the number of councilors in some municipalities (Уставен не поведе постапка за владината одлука за намален број советници во дел од општините), Fokus, 24 September 2025, <https://fokus.mk/ustaven-ne-povede-postapka-za-vladinata-odluka-za-namalen-broj-sovetnitsi-vo-del-od-opshтините/>

11 SEC has finalized the voter list – 1,832,415 voters have the right to vote (ДИК го заклучи избирачкиот список – право на глас имаат 1 832 415 избирачи), 360 Stepeni, 26 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/dik-go-zakluchi-izbirachkiot-spisok-pravo-na-glas-imaat-1-832-415-izbirachi/>

12 Controversial guideline adopted – Levica will not be able to advertise (Усвоено спорното упатство – Левица нема да може да се рекламира), Televizija 24, 26 September 2025, <https://24.mk/details/usvoeno-spornoto-upatstvo-levica-nema-da-moze-da-se-reklamira>

Governance

The parents of the victims of the tragic fire in Kochani continued their protests. During the reporting period, they, along with relatives, friends, and supporters, marched through the city every Saturday in the “March of the Angels,” demanding justice and accountability for the victims.¹³ Regarding the court proceedings related to the fire in Kochani, the case—initiated after an indictment was filed by the Kochani Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office at the Basic Court of Kochani—has been transferred to the Basic Criminal Court of Skopje. This followed a decision by the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, which accepted the proposal and designated the Skopje Basic Criminal Court as having competent and territorial jurisdiction to handle the indictment. The Supreme Court reached this decision after determining that the Basic Courts in Shtip and Strumica lack a sufficient number of criminal judges.¹⁴

In July, the Assembly, with 71 votes in favour and none against or abstaining, approved the interpellation on the work of the State Public Prosecutor, submitted by the Levica party. It concluded that the allegations against the prosecutor were well-founded and forwarded this conclusion to the Government and the State Public Prosecutor.¹⁵ The following day, the State Public Prosecutor announced that he would not resign and would instead focus even more on his work.¹⁶

In the meantime, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFA) and the British Foreign Secretary signed a Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between North Macedonia and the United Kingdom at the Foreign Office in London. According to the Minister, the agreement strengthens the strategic relationship between the two countries, enhancing cooperation in foreign policy, security, and defence, particularly within NATO.¹⁷

At the same time, a total of 828 projects worth EUR 225 million were signed between the Government and the municipalities that applied and were selected in the second call for financing through the Hungarian loan. The largest share went to transport, with EUR 132 million for 589 projects, followed by 143 projects in the environment sector and 48 projects in education.¹⁸

Finally, the MFA invited the Bulgarian ambassador to deliver a formal *démarche* in response to statements by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister. During a television appearance, the minister claimed that by removing references to the “Macedonian language and identity” from the European Parliament (EP) report on North Macedonia, they prevented the EP from being used for domestic political propaganda by the Prime Minister or “North Macedonia”. The MFA conveyed the *démarche* to the Bulgarian ambassador, noting the inappropriateness and diplomatic impropriety of such public remarks by a high-ranking government official.¹⁹

13 The 24th “March for the Angels” will be held in Kocani today (Во Кочани денеска ќе се одржи 24. „Марш за ангелите“), MIA, 27 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/48ManBN>

14 The indictment for the fire at “Puls” from Kochani has reached the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje. (Обвинителниот акт за пожарот во „Пулс“ од кочанскиот стигна во Основниот кривичен суд Скопје), 360 Stepeni, 2 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelniot-akt-za-pozharot-vo-puls-od-kochanskiot-stigna-vo-osnovniot-krivichen-sud-skopje/>

15 The Assembly voted on the interpellation for Ljupčo Kocevski (Собранието ја изгласа интерпелацијата за Љупчо Коцевски), DW News, 29 July 2025, <https://www.dw.com/mk/sobranieto-ja-izglasa-interpelacijata-za-republickiot-javen-obvinitel-lupco-kocevski/a-73454933>

16 Kocevski: I will not resign, I will devote myself to my work even more zealously (Коцевски: Нема да поднесам оставка, уште поревносно ќе се посветам на работата), 360 stepeni, 30 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/kotsevski-nema-da-podnesam-ostavka-ushte-porevnosno-ke-se-posvetam-na-rabotata/>

17 Mucunski and Lamy signed the Declaration of Strategic Partnership (Муцунски и Лами ја потпишаа Декларација за стратешко партнерство), Kanal 5 TV, 17 July 2025, <https://kanal5.com.mk/mucunski-i-lami-ja-potpishaa-deklaracija-za-strateshko-partnerstvo/a708648>

18 The agreements from the second call for financing infrastructure projects from the Hungarian loan were signed in the Government (Во Владата се потпишаа договорите од вториот повик за финансирање на инфраструктурни проекти од унгарскиот кредит), 360 Stepeni, 17 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/vo-vladata-se-potpishaa-dogovorite-od-vtioriot-povik-za-finansirane-od-ungarskiot-kredit/>

19 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Bulgarian ambassador to the country for talks over Georgiev’s statements. (МНР го повика бугарскиот амбасадор во земјава на разговор поради изјавите на Георгиев), 360 Stepeni, 10 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/mnr-go-povika-bugarskiot-ambasador-vo-zemjava-na-razgovor-poradi-izjavite-na-georgiev/>

Civil Society

On 25 September, the fourth session of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society was held. The session covered the following items: the Rules of Procedure and the 2025–2026 Work Programme of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society; proposed amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations; the 2024 report on financing association and foundation activities from state and local budgets; the report on Council representatives' participation in the Commission for Allocation of Financial Resources; and the nomination of a civil society representative for the working group preparing the 2027–2029 Transparency Strategy.²⁰

Civilian Oversight of the Security/Intelligence Sector

In August, it was reported that the National Security Agency (NSA) submitted three reports to the Public Prosecutor's Office regarding a former director and several NSA employees, alleging illegal, unprofessional, and unethical conduct. According to the NSA, the reports stem from an internal investigation conducted after the 2024 change of government and cover actions between 2019 and 2024.²¹

Following this, a session of the Commission for Supervision of the Work of the NSA and the Intelligence Agency (IA) was scheduled for 5 September to examine allegations of illegal wiretapping between 2019 and 2024, but it was postponed. MPs from both the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and the opposition SDSM had called for the session following claims by the current NSA director and the Prime Minister that illegal wiretapping took place during that period.²²

On 10 September, the Parliamentary Commission for Oversight of the NSA and the IA voted overwhelmingly to conduct an oversight visit to the NSA, amid allegations of wiretapping and misconduct between 2019 and 2024. During the visit, MPs reviewed documents and examined the scope of alleged illegal, unethical, and unprofessional actions by the former director and staff. They stressed that the oversight serves the public interest and expressed hope for at least partial declassification of documents to provide a detailed report. Key questions focused on the roles of senior personnel and the measures taken against political actors while they were in opposition.²³ After members of the Parliamentary Committee for Oversight of the Work of the NSA and the IA paid an oversight visit to the NSA on 10 September and to the IA on 11 September, an MP from VMRO-DPMNE used inflammatory language to call on the prosecution to take strong action, criticising what he described as clear legal violations and abuses that should already have led to charges, and demanding accountability.²⁴

20 4th session of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (4-та седница на Советот за соработка меѓу Владата и граѓанското општество), Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, 25 September 2025, <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=node/1052>

21 The National Security Agency has reported to the Prosecutor's Office illegal and unprofessional conduct by a former director and a group of employees. (АНБ пријавила кај Обвинителството незаконско и непрофесионално постапување на ексдиректор и група вработени), 360 Stepeni, 29 August 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/anb-prijavila-kaj-obvinitelstvoto-nezakonsko-i-neprofesionalno-postapuvane-na-eksdirektor-i-grupa-vraboteni/>

22 The session of the Parliamentary Committee for Oversight of the Work of the National Security Agency and the Intelligence Agency has been postponed. (Одложена седницата на собраниската Комисија за надзор над работата на АНБ и Агенцијата за разузнавање), 360 Stepeni, 5 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/odlozhena-sednitsata-na-sobraniskata-komisija-za-nadzor-nad-rabotata-na-anb-i-agentsijata-za-razuznavane/>

23 Petrovska entered the NBA with about thirty questions, Prendzov expects to see who was wiretapped (Петровска во АНБ влезе со триесетина прашања, Пренцов очекува да види кој сè бил прислушван), 360 Stepeni, 10 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/petrovska-vo-anb-vleze-so-triesetina-prashana-prendhov-ochekuva-da-vidi-koj-se-bil-prislushvan/>

24 MP Kovački called on the Prosecutor's Office to "kick itself" if it does not react to the NSA (Пратеникот Ковачки повика Обвинителството да се „издига на клоци“ ако не реагира за АНБ), 360 Stepeni, 11 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/pratenikot-kovacki-povika-obvinitelstvoto-da-se-izdiga-na-klot-si-ako-ne-reagira-za-anb/>

Public Administration Reform

In July 2025, an organised corruption scheme was uncovered in the Agency for Administration (AA): three employees (the head of IT, an associate for exam administration, and the Secretary General) arranged exams for administrative officials in exchange for bribes, enabling unqualified candidates to receive the highest scores and secure employment. The case was revealed after a lengthy investigation involving special measures, and documents confirmed that the practice had existed over a long period and under different governments. The three entered into plea agreements with the prosecution, admitted their guilt, received suspended sentences, and one of them was banned from holding public office for five years. Their employment was terminated in August 2024.²⁵

In July, the Trade Union for Employees in the State Administration (UPOZ) and the union organisation within the AA demanded a 30% salary increase for employees in the Candidate Selection Sector, warning of a work stoppage if their demand is not met. They emphasised that staff work under significant pressure and tight deadlines, which negatively affects their health and private lives. Nearly 80% of employees earn below the national average salary, staff turnover is steadily increasing, and unlike other institutions, the AA does not approve funds for promotions or new hires, leaving employees undervalued, overburdened, and exhausted.²⁶

A year after promising a 10% cut to North Macedonia's public sector, the government is instead expanding hiring across ministries and agencies ahead of October's local elections. Officials describe this as part of a staffing plan, but the opposition and unions accuse VMRO-DPMNE of filling jobs with loyalists to boost electoral support. The exact number of public employees is unclear, as the government has delayed releasing this year's employment report.²⁷

On 10 July, the Assembly adopted three key PAR laws: the Law on Administrative Servants, the Law on Public Sector Employees, and the Law on Professional Development of Administrative Servants. The laws aim to ensure merit- and competency-based employment and promotion in public administration through a transparent digital system, enhanced working conditions for IT professionals, incentives for young talent, mandatory training via the Academy, structured mentorship, and clear criteria for advancement and accountability, all under centralised control and institutional oversight.²⁸

On 2 September, the Government adopted the following documents: the Public Financial Management Reform (PFM) Programme for the period 2025–2028²⁹, along with its Action Plan for 2025,³⁰ and the Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the PFM Reform Programme for the period January–December 2024.³¹

25 "Copywriter factory at the Agency for Administration (Фабрика за препишувачи во Агенцијата за администрација)," Sloboden Pечат, 31 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/fabrika-za-prepishuvachi-vo-agencijata-za-administracija/>.

26 "UPOZ demands an increase in the salaries of employees who select candidates at the Agency for Administration (УПОЗ бара зголемување на платите на вработените што селектираат кандидати во Агенцијата за администрација)," 360 Stepeni, 10 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/upoz-bara-zgolemu-vane-na-platite-na-vrabotenite-shto-selektiraat-kandidati-vo-agentsijata-za-administratsija/>.

27 Sinisa Jakov Marusic, "Claim and counter-claim in North Macedonia over pre-election public hiring," BalkanInsight, 29 July 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/07/29/claim-and-counter-claim-in-north-macedonia-over-pre-election-public-hiring/>.

28 "Minchev: We have made a historic step forward in the public administration reform with the adoption of three key laws (Минчев: Направивме историски исчекор во реформата на јавната администрација со усвојување на три клучни закони)," Official website of the Ministry for Public Administration, 11 July 2025, <https://mja.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/mincev-napravivme-istoriski-iscekori-vo-reformata-na-javnata-administracija-so-usvojuvanje-na-tri-klucni-zakoni>.

29 "Public Financial Management Reform Programme for the period 2025–2028 (Програма за реформа на управувањето со јавни финансии за периодот 2025 – 2028 година)," Official website of the Ministry for Finance, July 2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/upravuvanje-so-javnite-finansii-file-VNVH.pdf>.

30 "Action Plan for Implementing the Public Financial Management Reform Programme for 2025 (Акциски план за спроведување на Програмата за реформа на управувањето со јавни финансии за 2025 година)," Official website of the Ministry for Finance, 2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/upravuvanje-so-javnite-finansii-file-3giW.pdf>.

31 "Annual Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Public Financial Management Reform Programme for the Period January–December 2024 (Годишен извештај за следење на спроведувањето на Програмата за реформа на управувањето со јавни финансии за периодот јануари – декември 2024 година)," Official website of the Ministry for Finance, July 2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/upravuvanje-so-javnite-finansii-file-jTkV.pdf>.

On 18 September 2025, the Minister of Public Administration and representatives of the Support for Improvement in Governance and Management/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (SIGMA/OECD) held a working meeting to prepare the Law on the Organisation and Work of State Administration Bodies (ZORODU). The preparation of the Law on Senior Executive Service and the Law on the Salary System is also underway.³²

The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) has launched a professional development programme for civil servants in accordance with the latest Law on Professional Development. In its first phase, 1,000 employees will be included, with more than 500 already starting standardised training in Skopje. The programme is supported by international partners, including the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF), the French Agency for Vocational Training, the Vita Institute, and the Faculty of Economy. It will continue in the coming months with regional training sessions across the country.³³

The MPA and the Embassy of France have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation for a project aimed at modernising institutions and building a professional and trustworthy public administration. The project “Strengthening Capacities and Professionalization of the Administration,” carried out in partnership with the National Institute of Public Administration of France (INSP), the Directorate-General for Administration and the Civil Service (DGAFP), as well as the Center for Change Management (CUP), aims to establish an Academy for the training and professional development of administrative officials and to enhance professionalisation through experience-sharing and innovative pilot training programmes.³⁴

32 “The Ministry for Public Administration has launched the first cycle of generic trainings for administrative servants (Министерството за јавна администрација го започна првиот циклус на генерички обуки за административни службеници),” Official Website of the Ministry for Public Administration, 18 September 2025, <https://mja.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/ministerstvoto-za-javna-administracija-go-zapocna-prviot-ciklus-na-genericki-obuki-za-administrativni-sluzbenici>.

33 Ibid.

34 “The Ministry for Public Administration and the Embassy of France in the Republic of Macedonia with a joint project to strengthen the capacities and professionalize the public administration (Министерството за јавна администрација и Амбасадата на Франција во Република Македонија со заеднички проект за јакнење на капацитетите и професионализација на јавната администрација),” Official Website of the Ministry for Public Administration, 19 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4nNplvN>.

Chapter 23



Functioning of the judiciary

Management bodies

At its 28th session on 30 September 2025, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a decision to terminate the position of President of the Council due to the expiration of the mandate on 1 October 2025. The Council also decided to postpone the election of a new President until the ongoing local elections are concluded. Until a new President is elected, the Council will be chaired by the Deputy President, whose mandate remains in effect.³⁵

Independence and impartiality

At its 253rd session on 28 July 2025, the Judicial Budget Council once again reviewed the issue of the Ministry of Finance's failure to grant consent for fixed-term employment. Considering the adverse impact on court operations due to staff shortages, the Council members agreed to send a second letter requesting that the Ministry of Finance approve fixed-term employment in the courts.³⁶ Next, at its 534th session, the Judicial Budget Council reviewed a notification from the Ministry of Finance stating that financial resources had not been allocated for the requested fixed-term employment in the judiciary.³⁷

Accountability

At its 526th session, the Judicial Council deliberated on the reports concerning the factual and established situations following the submission of requests to determine the liability of judges. It decided to terminate the procedure in five cases regarding the liability of judges, while no decision was reached in one case. Additionally, the Council established Commissions of Rapporteurs to review the submitted requests to determine the liability of judges and court presidents.³⁸

Professionalism and competence

At its 525th session, the Judicial Council appointed Acting Court Presidents for Gostivar, Debar, Sveti Nikole, and Skopje to serve until new Court Presidents are elected.³⁹ At its 526th session, the Judicial Council appointed a new president of the Basic Court Ohrid.⁴⁰

At its 26th session on 4 July 2025, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted decisions to appoint a public prosecutor as the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Kichevo, and another public prosecutor as the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Struga.⁴¹

35 Announcement from the 28th session (Соопштение од одржана 28-ма седница), Council of Public Prosecutors, 30 September 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-28-ma-sednica/>

36 Announcement from the 253d session (Соопштение од одржана 253-та седница), Judicial Budget Council, 28 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4nIBTVa>

37 Announcement from the 254th session (Соопштение од одржана 254-та седница), Judicial Budget Council, 27 August 2025,

38 Announcement from the 526th session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia (Соопштение од 526-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ), Judicial Council, 23 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oidCoM>

39 Announcement from the 525th session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia (Соопштение од 525-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ), Judicial Council, 3 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/43eMRJR>

40 Announcement from the 526th session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia (Соопштение од 526-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ), Judicial Council, 23 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/474JeHr>

41 Announcement from the 26th session (Соопштение од одржана 26-та седница), Council of Public Prosecutors, 4 July 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-26-ta-sednica/>

Next, at its 27th session on 16 July 2025, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a decision to appoint two public prosecutors to the High Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje, and also approved the appointment of two public prosecutors to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption (BPPPOCC).⁴²

Quality of justice

In July, the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reform expressed concern over the decision of the Board of Directors of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, adopted at its 235th session on 24 June 2025, which appointed the Special Advisor to the Minister of Justice as a member of the Programme Council of the Academy. According to the group, publicly available information indicates that the appointed Programme Council member serves as a Special Advisor to the Minister of Justice. This position does not qualify as a managerial civil servant under the Law on Administrative Servants, but instead constitutes a fixed-term engagement under the Law on Public Sector Employees.⁴³

Following this, at its 236th session, the Board of Directors of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors reviewed the decision, adopted on 24 June 2025, regarding the appointment of a new member to the Programme Council of the Academy. Following the review, the Board instructed the Academy to formally address and consult the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia to determine whether the appointment complies with the law. At the same session, a judge of the Basic Civil Court Skopje was appointed as a deputy member of the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, following a nomination submitted by the Association of Judges of the Republic of North Macedonia. Subsequently, the Academy sent a letter to the Ministry of Justice regarding the Western Balkans Growth Plan 2024–2027, in which the Academy is included under reform 5.2.1, specifically the step stating that vacant positions for judges and prosecutors are to be filled regularly based on the projections of the Supreme Court and the State Public Prosecutor's Office after the implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategies in the Courts and Prosecutor's Offices (scheduled for December 2024 and again in December 2026). Additionally, the Academy referred to a regulation on the implementation and control of the Western Balkans Reform and Growth Instrument, adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on 20 May 2025, and submitted a table regarding the Growth Plan to the Ministry of Justice. The Academy also submitted a request for an amendment to the Law on the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors to the Ministry of Justice.⁴⁴

At its 237th session, the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors approved, at the contested member's request, the termination of his mandate on the Programme Council. Following this, the Academy was required to submit a request to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia for the appointment of a new Programme Council member within 30 days from the date of the mandate termination decision.⁴⁵

At its 239th session, the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors was informed by the Academy's Director about the progress in implementing the steps of the Reform Agenda 2024–2028,

⁴² Announcement from the 27th session (Соопштение од одржана 27-ма седница), Council of Public Prosecutors, 16 July 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-27-ma-sednica/>

⁴³ Announcement (Соопштение) Blueprint Group for Judicial Reform, 4 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/3IMbNBD>

⁴⁴ Report from the 236th session of the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors (Известување од одржана 236-та седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители), Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, 17 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/477HgWS>

⁴⁵ Report from the 237th session of the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors (Известување од одржана 237-ма седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители), Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, 9 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ogENjl>

specifically regarding the filling of vacant judicial and public prosecutor positions. Following this update, the Management Board instructed the Academy to address the Ministry of Finance, through the Judicial Budget Council, to request confirmation of whether funds have been allocated for the admission of 130 students from the Academy's ninth generation in 2026.⁴⁶

Efficiency

The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Bitola established an investigation centre aimed at strengthening its investigative capacities. Initially, two investigators have been employed to begin operations. Such investigative centres are already operating in the prosecutor's offices in Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo and in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Report from the 239th session of the Management Board of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors (Известување од одржана 239-та седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители), Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, 18 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ohfX3p>

⁴⁷ The Bitola Prosecutor's Office has received an investigative center. (Битолското обвинителство доби истражен центар), 360 Stepeni, 31 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/bitolskoto-obvinitelstvo-dobi-istrazhen-tsentar/>

Fight Against Corruption

The Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) published a new report under the Fifth Evaluation Round for North Macedonia, taking into account the progress achieved by the country in implementing its recommendations to prevent corruption within the top executive functions of the central government and the police. The report concludes that North Macedonia has satisfactorily implemented 17 of the 23 recommendations, while the rest remain partly implemented. Steps taken to improve transparency and promote integrity with regard to persons entrusted with top executive functions, such as the government's new rules of procedure and the creation of an electronic database to register and verify the asset declarations of elected and appointed public officials, were welcomed in the report.⁴⁸

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

The investigation of the President of the SCPC for allegedly disclosing official secrets in the "Aditiv" case,⁴⁹ concluded with an indictment against her for that criminal act.⁵⁰ Additionally, the investigation revealed that she had an auditor from the State Audit Office (SAO) pass an exam on her behalf, allowing her to obtain a security clearance certificate for access to information classified as a state secret.⁵¹ This prompted another indictment against her for computer forgery, while the SAO removed the auditor from performing audits and revoked his own security clearance certificate.⁵² Shortly after, the President of the SCPC resigned from her position, and the Assembly confirmed her resignation.⁵³ She submitted a request to the SAO to return to her previous position of assistant to the Chief State Auditor,⁵⁴ while at the end of September, the court trial against her for the aforementioned crimes began.⁵⁵

At the beginning of August, the Assembly published a decision to issue a public announcement for the election of a new president of the SCPC, following which a committee was formed to select candidates for that position.⁵⁶ Thirteen candidates applied,⁵⁷ however, the Assembly suspended the selection due to the pend-

48 'North Macedonia: GRECO welcomes progress in anti-corruption reforms in central government and the police and ends compliance procedure', Official website of the Council of Europe, 9 July 2025, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/north-macedonia-greco-welcomes-progress-in-anti-corruption-reforms-in-central-government-and-the-police-and-ends-compliance-procedure>.

49 Anti-corruption commission, signed by Dimitrovska, dismisses two reports related to the "Aditiv" case (Антикорупциска, со потпис на Димитровска, отфрлила две пријави поврзани со случајот „Адитив“), Telma TV, 25 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/25/antikorupciska-so-potpis-na-dimitrovska-otfrila-dve-prijavi-povrzani-so-sluchajot-aditiv/>.

50 'Indictment against Dimitrovska from the SCPC – she disclosed official secrets via Viber, and her security clearance certificate was obtained by another person (Обвинение за Димитровска од ДКСК – оддавала службени тајни преку Вибер, а сертификатот за тајност ѝ го поларал друг)', 360 Stepeni, 18 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/obvinenie-za-dimitrovska-od-dksk-oddavala-sluzhbeni-tajni-preku-viber-a-sertifikatot-za-tajnost-i-go-polagal-drug/>.

51 'An auditor passed the test for the President of the SCPC so that she could read state secrets – indictment and new charges against Tatjana Dimitrovska (Ревизор ѝ го положил тестот на претседателката на ДКСК за таа да може да чита државни тајни – обвинение и нови дела за Татјана Димитровска)', Sloboden Pecat, 18 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/revizor-i-go-polozhil-testot-na-vcpresedelkata-na-dksk-za-taa-da-mozhe-da-chita-drzhavni-tajni-obvinenie-i-novi-dela-za-tatjana-dimitrovska/>.

52 'The auditor who passed Tatjana Dimitrovska's "state secrets" test has been suspended from performing audits (Ревизорот што ѝ го положил тестот на Татјана Димитровска за „државна тајна“ е исклучен од ревизиите)', Sloboden Pecat, 23 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/revizor-shto-%D1%9D-go-polozhil-testot-na-tatjana-dimitrovska-za-drzhavna-tajna-e-iskluchen-od-reviziite/>.

53 'The Assembly confirmed the resignation of the President of the SCPC, Tatjana Dimitrovska (Собранието ја констатира оставката на претседателката на ДКСК, Татјана Димитровска)', 360 Stepeni, 29 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-ja-konstatira-ostavkata-na-pretsedelkata-na-dksk-tatjana-dimitrovska/>.

54 'Former Anti-Corruption Commission member Dimitrovska returns to the State Audit Office (Екс-антикорупционерката Димитровска се враќа во Државниот завод за ревизија)', Libertas, 30 July 2025, <https://libertas.mk/eks-antikorupcionerkata-dimitrovska-se-vra-a-vo-drzhavniot-zavod-za-revizi-a/>.

55 'The court trial against the former President of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Tatjana Dimitrovska, has begun (Почна судењето против поранешната претседателка на Антикорупциска, Татјана Димитровска)', 360 Stepeni, 30 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/počna-sudeneto-protiv-poraneshnata-pretsedelka-na-antikorupciska-tatjana-dimitrovska/>.

56 'A committee for selection of candidates for president of the SCPC has been formed (Формирана комисијата за селекција на кандидатите за претседател на ДКСК)', Nova Makedonija, 13 August 2025, <https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/formirana-komisijata-za-selekcija-na-kandidatite-za-pretsedel-na-dksk/>.

57 '13 candidates applied for the post of president of the SCPC, these are the names (За претседател на ДКСК се пријавиле 13 кандидати, еве ги имињата)', 360 Stepeni, 18 August 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/za-pretsedel-na-dksk-se-prijavile-13-kandidati-eve-gi-iminata/>.

ing local elections in the country.⁵⁸ In mid-August, the SCPC elected a new Deputy President from among its members, in accordance with the principle of rotation.⁵⁹

In mid-September, a consultative meeting with civil society organisations (CSOs) was held as part of the preparation of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026–2030. Namely, the SCPC met with representatives of the Platform of Civil Society Organizations Fighting against Corruption to review and discuss the prepared Corruption Risk Assessment for the purpose of preparing the Strategy and the methodology for its preparation.⁶⁰

During the entire reporting period, the SCPC conducted preparatory activities ahead of the pending local elections. Working meetings were held with the SEC⁶¹ and the Public Prosecutor's Office⁶². A memorandum of cooperation was signed with the SEC and the SAO to strengthen their commitment to direct cooperation, coordination, and mutual assistance in implementing the legal provisions on financing election campaigns, the exchange of information and data, and the timely action following potentially identified election irregularities.⁶³ The SCPC also issued a public notice to inform all state institutions, political parties, participants in the electoral process, as well as the general public about the legal possibilities for using budget funds in accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest and the Electoral Code.⁶⁴ It also informed the public that, pursuant to the legal obligation of all public funds, public enterprises, and all other legal entities with state capital, they are required to submit data to the SCPC on all official vehicles at their disposal. However, only 42% of them submitted such data.⁶⁵

The Public Prosecutor's Office

Following an investigation initiated by the BPPPOCC, an indictment was filed against 36 individuals (doctors, lawyers, and other official persons) organised into two criminal groups that mediated and illegally enabled the acquisition of rights to someone else's care and disability pension, in exchange for money over the past two years. The case, titled "Sindrom," revealed reasonable suspicion of several committed criminal offences, namely: criminal association, accepting and giving a bribe, and receiving a reward for unlawful influence. Thus far, 13 defendants have entered into plea agreements with the prosecution, and, based on these, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje has pronounced several verdicts. For the rest, the public prosecution has proposed to the court that the security measures already imposed on them be extended.⁶⁶

58 'The procedure for selection of the president of the SCPC has been suspended (Запрена постапката за избор на претседател на ДКСК)', Official Website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 August 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/ns-newsarticle-zaprena-postapkata-za-izbor-na-pretседател-na-dksk.nspх>.

59 'Cveta Ristovska, the professor of Bojan Hristovski and a dozen students Who graduated from the private faculty in just one year, will lead the Anti-Corruption Commission during the elections (Цвета Ристовска, професорката на Бојан Христовски и на дузина академски граѓани што го протрчаа приватниот факултет за една година, ќе ја води Антикорупциската комисија за изборите)', Sdk.mk, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4gR36SU>.

60 'A working meeting was held between the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and the Platform of Civil Society Organizations Fighting against Corruption to prepare the new National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026-2030 (Одржан работен состанок помеѓу Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата и Платформата на граѓански организации за борба против корупција за подготовка на новата Национална стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026-2030)', Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 18 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3IKIO12>.

61 'Cooperation towards promoting integrity of the electoral process (Соработка во насока на унапредување на интегритетот во изборниот процес)', Official Website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 16 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4h1Qmt2>.

62 'Working meeting of the SCPC and the Public Prosecutor's Office ahead of the 2025 local elections (Работна средба на ДКСК и Јавното обвинителство во преспет на локалните избори 2025)', Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 16 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Vta4xc>.

63 'SEC, SCPC and SAO signed a memorandum of cooperation ahead of the local elections (ДИК, ДКСК и ДЗР потпишаа меморандум за соработка во преспет на локалните избори)', 360 Stepeni, 18 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/dik-dksk-i-dzr-potpishaa-memorandum-za-sorabotka-vo-presret-na-lokalnite-izbori/>.

64 'Notice (Известување)', Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 11 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4mTIDhU>.

65 'Only 42% of institutions submitted data on official vehicles ahead of the 2025 local elections (Само 42% од институциите доставија податоци за службени возила пред локалните избори 2025)', Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 29 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/46SSEFQ>.

66 "'Sindrom' case – 36 defendants and 13 plea agreements (Предмет „Синдром“ – 36 обвинети и 13 спогодби)', Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 22 July 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/predmet-sindrom-36-obvineti-i-13-sporogodbi/>.

The trial of the former directors of the Radiotherapy and Oncology Clinic in Skopje, within the case “Onkologija 2,” began. The defendants are charged with abuse of official position and authority, fraud, and embezzlement in the service, for causing damage to the budget of over MKD 2.2 billion by illegally purchasing medicines without the consent of the Health Insurance Fund. During the hearing on 12 September, both defendants stated they do not feel guilty, and the court proceedings are ongoing.⁶⁷

In the case against the former director of the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje declared her guilty of abuse of official position and authority and sentenced her to two years in prison. It was determined that she worked contrary to the Law on Public Procurement and the Law on the Establishment of the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility when concluding contracts with collaborators, experts, and trainers, as she did not announce a public competition and discriminated against potential candidates, giving preference to several individuals, and acted contrary to the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.⁶⁸

Aside from the aforementioned cases, criminal charges were also filed for the following: abuse of official position and authority against the former acting president of the Council for Promotion and Supervision of Audit of the Republic of North Macedonia⁶⁹ and against the current mayor of the Municipality of Struga,⁷⁰ as well as against a former director of Skopje Prison and two prison police officers;⁷¹ receiving a reward for unlawful influence and accepting a bribe by six police officers and two other persons;⁷² accepting a bribe by the director of a public health institution⁷³ and by a doctor from another hospital,⁷⁴ and criminal association, abuse of official position and authority, and giving and accepting a bribe by fifteen persons, among whom are the director of a branch office of the Public Enterprise “National Forests,” the chief of the Delchevo police, and several police officers.⁷⁵

67 ‘The former directors of Oncology do not feel guilty for negligent work and financial crimes at the clinic (Ексдиректорите на Онкологија не се чувствуваат виновни за несовесно работење и за финансиски криминал на клиниката)’, 360 Stepeni, 12 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/eksdirektorite-na-onkologija-ne-se-chuvstvuvaat-vinovni-za-nesovesno-rabotene-i-za-finansiski-kriminal-na-klunikata/>.

68 ‘Former Erasmus+ director Lidija Dimova sentenced to two years in prison for abuse of official position (Ексдиректорката на „Еразмус+“, Лидија Димова, осудена на две години затвор за злоупотреба на службената положба)’, 360 Stepeni, 18 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/eksdirektorkata-na-erazmus-lidija-dimova-osudena-na-dve-godini-zatvor-za-zloupotreba-na-sluzhbenata-polozhba/>.

69 ‘Indictment for abuse of official position and authority (Обвинителен предлог за злоупотреба на службена положба и овластување)’, Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 23 July 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinitelen-predlog-za-zloupotreba-na-sluzhbena-polozhba-i-ovlastuvane/>.

70 ‘The BPPO Struga filed charges against Ramiz Merko for the contract for lighting the Crn Drim riverbed (ОЈО Струга му поднесе обвинение на Рамиз Мерко за договорот за осветлување на коритото на Црн Дрим)’, 360 Stepeni, 17 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-struga-mu-podnese-obvinenie-na-ramiz-merko-za-dogovorot-za-osvetluvane-na-koritoto-na-crn-drim/>.

71 ‘Indictment against eight persons (Обвинителен предлог против осум лица)’, Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 July 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinitelen-predlog-protiv-osum-lica/>.

72 ‘Indictment against eight persons (Обвинителен акт против осум лица)’, Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 August 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinitelen-akt-protiv-osum-lica/>.

73 ‘Two persons charged with corruption-related crimes (Поднесено обвинение за две лица за кривични дела поврзани со корупција)’, Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 July 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/podneseno-obvinenie-za-dve-lica-za-krivichni-dela-povrzani-so-korupcija/>.

74 ‘Doctor in Bitola caught accepting a bribe, the Ministry of Health condemns the incident (Докторка во Битола фатена како прима поткуп, Министерството за здравство со осуда за настанот)’, 360 Stepeni, 16 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/doktor-vo-bitola-fatena-kako-prima-potkup-ministerstvoto-za-zdravstvo-so-osuda-za-nastanot/>.

75 ‘BPPO-POCC with details about the action against illegal logging - director of “National Forests” and police chief are among the suspects (ОЈО ГОКК со детали за акцијата против нелегална сеча на шуми – директор во „Национални шуми“ и полициски началник се меѓу осомничените)’, 360 Stepeni, 19 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-gokk-so-detali-za-akcijata-protiv-nelegalna-secha-na-shumi-direktor-vo-natsionalni-shumi-i-politsiski-nachalnik-se-megu-osomnichenite/>.

Fundamental Rights

The 2024 Country Report of the U.S State Department on Human Rights Practices for North Macedonia determined that there were no significant changes in the human rights situation in the country during the year. However, significant human rights issues included credible reports of serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence and threats of violence against journalists.⁷⁶

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights

During the reporting period, several developments occurred regarding the election procedure for a new judge from North Macedonia to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). In July, the Government of North Macedonia annulled the previously submitted list of three candidates for the position of judge at the ECtHR in Strasbourg, stating that it found none of the three candidates met the required criteria.⁷⁷ Reactions followed from the previous candidates,⁷⁸ calling on the government to explain why the call was annulled, when the previous commission had deemed the applicants eligible, and also revealing the “friendly suggestions” received to withdraw their candidacy for the position of judge.⁷⁹ Reactions followed from civil society as well,⁸⁰ criticising the decision as non-transparent and legally questionable, arguing that by rejecting the list without explanation and dissolving the previous selection commission, the Government undermined the credibility, independence, and fairness of the selection process.

The new Commission for the selection of candidates was formed on 25 July,⁸¹ with its first meeting held on 25 August.⁸² At the first meeting, the Commission agreed that the call would last 30 days, twice as long as before, and that they would spend another month evaluating, interviewing, and selecting the three candidates. On 2 September, the Commission had its second meeting to finalise the call for candidates, after not being in full composition at prior sessions and therefore deferring the decision. The public call for applications was published on 4 September and again on 11 September.⁸³ The interviews of the applicants are scheduled to be held in October, after the 30-day deadline.

In August, the ECtHR accepted a complaint filed by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, which accuses municipal and national institutions of failing to fulfil their legal obligations to protect the right to a

76 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Macedonia (United States Department of State, 2025), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-macedonia/>.

77 ‘The Government annulled the proposed list of candidates for judge in Strasbourg, determining that Ristoska, Gajdova and Apostolski do not meet the requirements (Владата ја поништи предлог-листата со кандидатите за судија во Стразбур, утврдила дека Ристоска, Гајдова и Апостолски не ги исполнуваат условите)’, Sloboden Pecat, 29 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/vladata-ja-ponishtccci-predlog-listata-so-kandidatite-za-sudija-vo-strazbur-utvrdila-deka-ristoska-gajdova-i-apostolski-ne-gi-ispolnuvaat-uslovite/>.

78 ‘Ristoska: The Government should say which candidates do not meet the requirements for the Strasbourg Court (Ристоска: Владата да каже кои кандидати не ги исполнуваат условите за судот во Стразбур)’, Sloboden Pecat, 29 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/ristoska-vladata-dacc-kazhe-koi-kandidati-ne-gi-ispolnuvaat-uslovite-za-sudot-vo-strazbur/>.

79 ‘Prosecutor Lence Ristoska says she was instructed to withdraw from candidacy for Strasbourg after the Government rejected the entire list without reasoning (Обвинителката Ленче Ристоска вели дека ѝ укажувале да се повлече од кандидатурата за Стразбур, откако Владата без образложение ја отфрли целата листа)’, Sakam Da Kazam, 31 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinitelkata-lenche-ristoska-veli-deka-ukazhuvale-da-se-povleche-od-kandidatura-za-strazbur-otkako-vladata-bez-obrazlozhenie-ja-otfrli-tselata-lista/>.

80 ‘The Government’s decision to annul the list of candidates for judge at the ECHR is non-transparent and legally disputable (Владината одлука за поништување на листата на кандидати за судија во ЕЧП е нетранспарентна и правно спорна)’, Blueprint Group for Reforms in the Judiciary (Блупринт група за реформи во правосудството), 31 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oKNwf2>.

81 ‘A new beginning in the court battle for Strasbourg (Нов почеток во судската битка за Стразбур)’, Radio Free Europe, 6 August 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/sud-strazbur-kandidati-/33495184.html>.

82 ‘The call for Strasbourg judge to be published next week (Огласот за судија во Стразбур ќе биде објавен наредната недела)’, Telma TV, 25 August 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/08/25/oglasot-za-sudija-vo-strazbur-ke-bide-objaven-narednata-nedela/>.

83 ‘Public call for the selection of candidates for judge of the Republic of North Macedonia at the European Court of Human Rights (Јавен оглас за избор на кандидати за судија на Република Северна Македонија во Европскиот суд за човекови права)’, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 September 2025, <https://www.pravda.gov.mk/vest/6871>.

healthy environment and public health.⁸⁴ The complaint concerns the case of the toxic municipal landfill in the town of Struga after domestic courts, including the Basic Court in Struga and the Appellate Court in Bitola, declared themselves incompetent to hear the case of the municipal landfill.⁸⁵

The Ombudsperson

On 10 July, the Assembly of North Macedonia voted on a decision to issue a public call for the election of a new Ombudsperson⁸⁶, as the mandate of the former Ombudsperson had ended on 12 July and was officially declared on 17 July by the President of the Assembly.⁸⁷ Reactions followed from the Ombudsperson himself, stating that he repeatedly informed both the Assembly and the government about the need to launch the new appointment process on time, and he argued that their failure to do so constitutes a breach of the law governing the Ombudsman's office.⁸⁸

Additionally, the Network for Protection Against Discrimination called on the Assembly to base the selection process on merit, independence, and transparency, and to refrain from partisan deals, ensuring that the process is inclusive, open, and aligned with EU and national standards for the rule of law.⁸⁹ Seventeen candidates applied to the call.⁹⁰

The Elections and Appointments Committee in the Assembly held a session on 31 July, where the candidate from the coalition VLEN was proposed as the new Ombudsperson.⁹¹ The Network for Protection against Discrimination criticised the selection as politically driven and non-transparent, warning that nominating a party-affiliated candidate undermines the institution's independence and credibility. It urged the Assembly to ensure an open, merit-based process that safeguards the Ombudsman's impartial role in protecting citizens' rights from political influence.⁹²

However, the proposed candidate failed to secure election to the Assembly, as it was unable to secure the required "Badinter majority,"⁹³ thus further undermining the institution's capacity and independence. The office of the Ombudsperson now operates with only two vice-Ombudspersons for the entire country.⁹⁴

84 'The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg will decide on the Struga landfill case (Европскиот суд за човекови права во Стразбур ќе расправа за струшката депонија)', MIA - Media Information Agency, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/43uZnVU>.

85 'Case of Struga illegal landfill in North Macedonia goes to Strasbourg Court', Balkan Green Energy News, 11 April 2025, <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/case-of-struga-illegal-landfill-in-north-macedonia-goes-to-strasbourg-court/>.

86 '59 session of the Assembly of North Macedonia - Decision on Announcing an Advertisement for the Election of the Ombudsperson (59 седница на Собрание на Република Северна Македонија - Одлука за распишување оглас за избор на Народен правобранител)', Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 July 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nspx?param=6ba3bfae-e0bc-4142-958b-6b94753ca57d>.

87 'The Parliament confirms the termination of the office of Ombudsperson Naser Ziberi (Собранието констатира престанок на функцијата на Народниот правобранител Насер Зибери)', 360 Stepeni, 17 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-konstatira-prestanok-na-funktsijata-na-narodniot-pravobranitel-naser-ziberi/>.

88 'The Parliament has not yet determined a successor – Ombudsperson Naser Ziberi is retiring (Собранието сè уште не одредило наследник – Народниот правобранител Насер Зибери во пензија)', TV 21, 15 July 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/sobranieto-se-ushte-ne-odredilo-naslednik-narodniot-pravobranitel-naser-ziberi-vo-penzija/>.

89 'The Network for Protection against Discrimination is seeking an independent person for Ombudsperson (Мрежата за заштита од дискриминација бара независно лице за Народен правобранител)', Radio Free Europe, 25 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33483842.html>.

90 'New record - 17 candidates for new Ombudsperson (Нов рекорд- 17 кандидати за нов Народен правобранител)', Telma TV, 30 July 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/07/30/nov-rekord-17-kandidati-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/>.

91 'Faton Sellami proposed as new Ombudsperson (Фатон Сељами предложен за нов Народен правобранител)', Kanal 5, 31 July 2025, <https://kanal5.com.mk/faton-seljami-predlozhen-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/a710693>.

92 'Network for Protection against Discrimination: The Ombudsperson function must remain outside party agreements (Мрежа за заштита од дискриминација: Функцијата Народен правобранител мора да остане надвор од партиските договори)', Radio MOF, 4 August 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/mrezha-za-zash-tita-od-diskriminacija-funkcijata-naroden-pravobranitel-mora-da-ostane-nadvor-od-partiskite-dogovori/>.

93 'Citizens' advocate decimated before elections (Адвокатот на граѓаните десеткуван пред избори)', Sloboden Pечат, 20 August 2025, <https://www.slobodenpe-cat.mk/advokatot-na-gragjanite-desetkuvan-pred-izbori/>.

94 'Gashi's cabinet: The decision for the call for a new Ombudsperson has been signed (Кабинетот на Гаши: Потпишана е одлуката за оглас за нов Народен правобранител)', 360 Stepeni, 15 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/kabinetot-na-gashi-potpishana-e-odlukata-za-oglas-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/>.

Prison and detention facilities

The Ministry of Justice published the new draft Law on Probation, which brings substantial changes aimed at improving justice, protecting victims, and making the probation service more efficient.⁹⁵

During the reporting period, a series of critical controversies continued to underscore the chronic problems in North Macedonia's penitentiary system. An indictment was submitted against the former director and seven other employees of Shutka Prison for knowingly and intentionally escorting convicts in 2024 from the prison to their homes or other locations for private purposes, contrary to procedural rules.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the same prison is currently facing another issue: the Basic Criminal Court Skopje sent an open letter to the management of the prison regarding the failure to escort convicts to scheduled hearings, leading to the postponement of cases. The prison's current director responded that the institution faces shortages of staff and vehicles, which hamper escort processes.⁹⁷

Other prisons did not lack incidents either. In the male department of Idrizovo Prison, a convict assaulted a prison police officer,⁹⁸ while in the female section of the prison, a 14-year-old convict was kept locked in a cell for up to 22 hours a day because there is no separate juvenile girls' facility.⁹⁹ The Ombudsperson opened a case regarding the child and managed to get her transferred to the Tetovo Correctional Facility in Volkovija, where she now has an entire building to herself.¹⁰⁰

At the beginning of the school year, the Ombudsperson stated that classes at the Tetovo Correctional Institution did not start on 1 September. He subsequently raised the issue with the Ministry of Education and Science, but they had not responded to his concerns.¹⁰¹

According to the Council of Europe's 2024 Annual Penal Statistics on Prison Populations (SPACE I), prison overcrowding remains a critical challenge in one-third of European prison administrations, where overall, the number of inmates per 100 places available increased from 93.5 to 94.9 from 31 January 2023 to 31 January 2024, while North Macedonia reported moderate overcrowding.¹⁰²

The Administration for Execution of Sanctions signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, to establish cooperation between the institutions for the provision of state-owned agricultural land for the performance of agricultural activities by convicted persons

95 'New Draft Law on Probation published on ENER (Нов предлог Закон за пробација објавен на ЕНЕП)', Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 5 September 2025, <https://pravda.gov.mk/vest/6874>.

96 'Indictment against the former director and seven employees of the Shutka prison for illegal transfer of convicts (Обвинение против ексдиректорот и седум вработени во затворот во Шутка за незаконско изнесување осуденици)', Sdk.mk, 8 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinenie-protiv-direktorot-i-sedum-vraboteni-vo-zatvorot-vo-shutka-za-nezakonsko-iznesuvane-osudenitsi/>.

97 'Criminal Court with an open letter to the director of the Shutka prison due to failure to escort defendants (Кривичен суд со отворено писмо до директорот на затворот Шутка поради неспроведување на обвинети)', 24.mk, 19 August 2025, <https://24.mk/details/krivichen-sud-so-otvoreno-pismo-do-direktorot-na-zatvorot-shutka-poradi-nesproveduvanje-na-obvineti>.

98 'Convict attacks prison police officer in Idrizovo (Осуденик нападна затворски полицаец во Идризово)', Telma TV, 25 August 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/08/25/osudenik-napadna-zatvorski-policiaecz-vo-idrizovo/>.

99 'A 14-year-old girl sits alone in a cell in "Idrizovo" for 22 hours a day, near Tetovo there is a juvenile home without conditions for girls (14-годишно девојче седи само во ќелија во „Идризово“ по 22 часа на ден, кај Тетово има дом за малолетници без услови за девојчиња)', Sloboden Pечат, 9 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/14-godishno-devojche-sedi-samo-vo-kjelija-vo-idrizovo-po-22-chasa-na-den-kaj-tetovo-ima-dom-za-maloletnici-bez-uslovi-za-devojchinja/>.

100 'The 14-year-old girl who was locked up for 22 hours a day in "Idrizovo" has been transferred to the "Tetovo" Correctional Facility (14-годишното девојче кое беше заклучено по 22 часа на ден во „Идризово“, е префрлено во Воспитно-поправниот дом „Тетово“)', Sloboden Pечат, 9 October 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/14-godishno-devojche-koe-beshe-zaklucheno-po-22-chasa-na-den-vo-idrizovo-prefrleno-e-vo-vospitno-popravniot-dom-tetovo/>.

101 'There are no classes in the Tetovo Correctional Facility — the Ministry of Education is silent about the problem (Нема настава во Воспитно-поправниот дом „Тетово“ — Министерството за образование молчи за проблемот)', Sloboden Pечат, 24 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/nema-nastava-vo-vospitno-popravniot-dom-tetovo-ministerstvoto-za-obrazovanie-molchi-za-problemot/>.

102 'Increasing overcrowding in European prisons', Official website of the Council of Europe, 18 July 2025, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/increasing-overcrowding-in-european-prisons>.

as a significant step in the process of resocialisation and professional training, enabling them to acquire practical skills in agriculture.¹⁰³

Personal data protection

In September, the Personal Data Protection Agency (PDPA) signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Transformation, confirming the mutual commitment and interest in promoting cooperation between the two institutions, especially with the PDPA providing relevant training and assistance in complying with the regulations in the area for which the Ministry is responsible, with the regulations on the protection of personal data.¹⁰⁴ In addition, a training session was organised on the topic of security in personal data processing, which presented the recent updates of the Personal Data Security Regulation and reviewed the obligations of controllers and processors in detail.¹⁰⁵

Freedom of expression

The Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM) called for an urgent increase in the minimum wage, in order to preserve the dignity of journalists and media workers, in a society where more than 50% of media employees have incomes below the national average, and a large part of them earn only a minimum wage.¹⁰⁶

Preparations began for the upcoming local elections, scheduled to be held in the second half of October. After they were announced, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) began monitoring broadcasters in the same manner as before the start of the election campaign. Until the start of the election campaign, AAVMS will conduct daily monitoring of nine television programme services at the state level, with the largest average daily audience reach, while all other programme services will be monitored based on complaints.¹⁰⁷

The Coordinating Body, responsible for handling complaints regarding violations of the Code of Conduct in the Online Space during Election Processes and Referenda, was reactivated and held its first meeting,¹⁰⁸ as a mechanism for protecting and respecting the right to freedom of expression and information.¹⁰⁹

The SEC received a total of 352 applications for registration in the register of broadcasters, print media, electronic media, and internet portals for the 2025 Local Elections, out of which 33 are television stations, 42 are radio stations, eight are print media, and 246 are internet portals. Approximately EUR 6.5 million will be spent on paid political advertising in the media, or 66% of the SEC's total budget for the local elections.¹¹⁰

103 'Convicts will learn agriculture, prison wards will be allocated land for cultivation (Осудениците ќе учат земјоделие, на затворските одделенија ќе им се додели земјиште за обработка)', Sloboden Pecat, 9 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/osudenicite-kje-uchat-zemjodelie-na-zatvorskite-oddelenija-kje-im-se-dodeli-zemjishte-za-obrabotka/>.

104 Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the Personal Data Protection Agency and the Ministry of Digital Transformation (Потпишан Меморандум за соработка помеѓу Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци и Министерството за дигитална трансформација), 5 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/47GejmE>.

105 'Training on 'Security of personal data processing' (Обука за „Безбедност на обработката на личните податоци“), Personal Data Protection Agency of North Macedonia, 30 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/47RzOPX>.

106 'SSNM demands an increase in the minimum wage to preserve media freedom and the dignity of journalists (ССНМ бара зголемување на минималната плата за да се зачува слободата на медиумите и достоинството на новинарите)', Radio MOF, 7 August 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/ssnm-bara-zgolemuvanje-na-minimalnata-plata-za-da-se-zachuva-slobodata-na-mediumite-i-dostoinstvoto-na-novinarite/>.

107 'AAVMS will monitor media reporting in the pre-election period (АВМУ ќе врши мониторинг на медиумското известување во предизборниот период)', Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 9 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LuncqC>.

108 'Meeting of the Coordinating Body for reporting and handling complaints during elections or referendums held (Одржан состанок на Координативното тело за пријавување и постапување по претставки за време на избори или референдум)', Official website of the Code of Conduct in the Online Sphere during Electoral Processes and Referenda, 21 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/47IOXEZ>.

109 'The mechanism for complaints related to election activities in the online space has been reactivated (Реактивиран механизмот за жалби поврзани со изборните активности во онлајн просторот)', Vistinomer, 14 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4nHJkuZ>.

110 '246 portals, 33 television stations and 42 radio stations registered with the SEC will spend 6.5 million euros from the budget for advertising for the local elections (За рекламирање за локалните избори во ДИК регистрирани 246 портали, 33 телевизии и 42 радиостаници, ќе се потрошат 6,5 милиони евра од буџетот)', Sdk.mk, 23 August 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/za-reklamirane-za-lokalnite-izbori-vo-dik-registrirani-246-portali-33-televizii-i-42-radistanitsi-ke-se-potroshat-6-5-milioni-evra-od-budhetot/>.

The Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) warned that the current Electoral Code does not provide clear criteria for which online media outlets are allowed to receive funds for paid political advertising, which creates room for potential party-media corruption, as some of the “portals” are websites with an unknown owner or without an imprint, often newly created before elections with the sole purpose of pouring state money into party campaigns.¹¹¹ On the other hand, political parties participating in the elections accused the AAVMS of preventing them from accessing advertising in traditional media at the national level ahead of the elections.¹¹²

In September, allegations emerged regarding illegal surveillance by the NSA, which filed a criminal report with the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office, alleging that a previous NSA director had monitored media outlets and contacts related to the opposition.¹¹³ The SSNM and AJM responded with concern, emphasising that any covert surveillance of journalists or media workers represents a serious threat to freedom of expression, the citizens’ right to information, and democracy.¹¹⁴ The Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption stated that it is investigating the case.¹¹⁵

During this quarterly period, there have been several incidents in which journalists and media crews were attacked. A media crew was reporting on a landfill that caught fire at the beginning of July,¹¹⁶ when they were physically attacked and their equipment was ruined.¹¹⁷ The AJM¹¹⁸ and the SSNM¹¹⁹ condemned this event, and the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office Skopje filed an indictment,¹²⁰ pursuant to which the Criminal Court Skopje pronounced a suspended prison sentence on the defendants.¹²¹ Other instances of pressure on media include online harassment of a female journalist¹²² and police officers approaching and demanding identification of journalists while they were reporting on an event of high public interest, even when it was obvious that they were media workers with professional equipment.¹²³

111 ‘AJM warns: Lack of rules for paid political advertising in online media creates corruption risks (ЗНМ алармира: Недостигот на правила за платена политичка реклама во онлајн медиумите создава корупциски ризици)’, Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4o-q5T8E>.

112 ‘Apasiev: The Government wants to damage Levica by 400,000 euros and ban it from access to national media (Апасиев: Владата сака да ја оштети Левица за 400.000 евра и да ѝ забрани пристап до националните медиуми)’, Sloboden Pecat, 24 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/apasiev-vladata-saka-da-ja-oshteti-levica-za-400-000-evra-i-da-%d1%9d-zabrani-pristap-do-nacionalnite-mediumi/>.

113 ‘The NSA reported a former director to the Public Prosecutor’s Office, investigating that he had been monitoring some media outlets and their opposition contacts (АНБ пријавила пред Обвинителството поранешен директор, истражила дека следел некои медиуми и нивни контакти од опозицијата)’, Sdk.mk, 29 August 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/anb-prijavila-pred-obvinitelstvoto-poraneshen-direktor-istrashila-deka-sledel-nekoi-mediumi-i-nivni-kontakti-od-opozitsijata/>.

114 ‘AJM and SSNM: Suspicions of wiretapping of journalists need to be fully clarified (ЗНМ и ССНМ: Потребно е целосно расветлување на сомнежите за прислушување на новинари)’, Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 2 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/47zzir2>.

115 ‘Spasovski demands urgent investigation into surveillance, Rexhepi refuses to convene a committee session (Спасовски бара итна истрага за следењето, Рехеџи одбива да свика комисијска седница)’, Telma TV, 3 September 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/09/03/spasovski-bara-itna-istraga-za-sledeneto-redhepi-odbiva-da-svika-komisiska-sednicza/>.

116 ‘Smoke from Vizbegovo “suffocated” Skopje (Чадот од Визбегово го „задуши“ Скопје)’, Deutsche Welle, 9 July 2025, <https://www.dw.com/mk/cadot-od-vizbegovo-go-zadusi-skopje-gorat-stari-vozila-i-se-slusaat-detonacii/a-73213399>.

117 ‘Journalist team attacked in Vizbegovo, prevented from reporting on the fire (Нападната новинарска екипа во Визбегово, ги спречиле да известуваат за пожарот)’, TV 21, 9 July 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/napadnata-novinarska-ekipa-vo-vizbegovo-gi-sprechile-da-izvestuvaat-za-pozharot/>.

118 ‘AJM: Strong condemnation of the attack on the ALSAT M journalist team in Vizbegovo (ЗНМ: Остра осуда за нападот врз новинарска екипа на АЛСАТ М во Визбегово)’, Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 9 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4408mhT>.

119 ‘SSNM: Strong condemnation of the attack on the Alsat M team (СНМ: Остра осуда за нападот врз екипата на Алсат М)’, Official website of the Independent Union of Journalists and Media, 10 July 2025, <https://ssnm.org.mk/soopstenija/ssnm-ostra-osuda-za-napadot-vrz-ekipata-na-alsat-m>.

120 ‘Attack on journalists in Vizbegovo – The Public Prosecutor’s Office filed an indictment against two persons (Нападот врз новинарите во Визбегово – Обвинителството поднесе обвинение против две лица)’, TV 21, 15 July 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/napadot-vrz-novinarite-vo-vizbegovo-obvinitelstvoto-podnese-obvinenie-protiv-dve-litsa/>.

121 ‘The owners of the landfill in Vizbegovo received suspended sentences for attacking a media crew (Условна казна за напад на новинарска екипа добија сопствениците на депонијата во Визбегово)’, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 25 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33483567.html>.

122 ‘SSNM condemns and demands that the online harassment of journalist Miroslava Simonovska stop immediately (СНМ го осудува и бара онлајн малтретирањето на новинарката Мирослава Симоновска веднаш да престане)’, Radio MOF, 15 August 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/ssnm-go-osuduva-i-bara-onlajn-maltretiranjeto-na-novinarkata-miroslava-simonovska-vednash-da-prestane/>.

123 ‘AJM and SSNM express concern about the treatment of journalists by police officers in Demir Hisar (ЗНМ и ССНМ изразуваат загриженост за постапувањето на полициските службеници кон новинарите во Демир Хисар)’, Radio MOF, 12 August 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/znm-i-ssnm-izrazuvaat-zagrizhenost-za-postapuvanjeto-na-poliscskite-sluzhbenici-kon-novinarite-vo-demir-hisar/>.

Vulnerable groups and the principle of non-discrimination

Between July and September, the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD) issued several decisions and opinions. In July, the CPPD issued a general recommendation to the municipalities, calling on them to undertake systemic and non-discriminatory measures and activities to ensure adequate housing, urban planning, legalisation of homes, connections to public infrastructure, as well as administrative support and services for members of the population living in informal and substandard settlements, especially Roma.¹²⁴ It issued several decisions establishing both direct and indirect discrimination on various grounds, including the following cases: dismissal of a textile worker after requesting sick leave to care for her two-year-old child;¹²⁵ firing a worker after she announced her pregnancy;¹²⁶ discrimination based on gender and age;¹²⁷ discrimination in the area of access to healthcare based on disability in several psychiatric hospitals;¹²⁸ firing a physical education teacher based on his presumed political affiliation;¹²⁹ discrimination in the area of access to adequate housing for marginalised groups, predominantly Roma citizens, in various municipalities.¹³⁰

Several developments, including legislative developments, unfolded in the reporting period regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. In July, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) announced that, for the first time, educational assistants will be employed not only in primary schools but also in secondary schools, effective from September 2025, following recent legal changes aimed at improving inclusiveness in the education system.¹³¹ However, the Minister further declared that the permanent employment of the educational assistant is not possible,¹³² despite reactions from parents and educational assistants.¹³³ The public call for educational assistants in secondary education was published on 5 August.¹³⁴ In light of the local elections scheduled for 19 October, implementation of the court ruling by the Appellate Court in Skopje has failed, with many persistent gaps for the exercise of the right to vote, including many polling stations still lacking physical accessibility features, while institutions and parties face no apparent enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance.¹³⁵

124 "General recommendation on housing (Општа препорака за домување)," Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 9 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4p5oKG3>.

125 'Garment worker fired for taking sick leave to care for two-year-old with chickenpox (Конфекциска работничка избркана од работа зашто побарала боледување за да се грижи за двегодишното дете со сипаници)', Sakam Da Kazam, 19 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/konfeksiska-rabotnichka-izbrkana-od-rabota-zashto-pobarala-boleduvane-za-da-se-grizhi-za-dvegodishnoto-dete-so-sipanitsi/>.

126 "Opinion no.08-352/6 (Мислење бр.08-352/6)," Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 23 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/43oc6JV>.

127 'A woman won a discrimination case after reporting a Skopje company that banned men from applying for a financial manager position (Жена доби случај за дискриминација откако пријави скопска фирма која забранува на оглас за финансиски менаџер да се пријавуваат мажи)', Sakam Da Kazam, 28 September 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/zhen-dobi-sluchaj-za-diskriminatsija-otkako-prijavi-skopska-firma-koja-zabranuva-na-oglas-za-finansiski-menadher-da-se-prijavuvaa-mazhi/>.

128 "Opinion no.08-29/15 (Мислење бр.08-29/15)," Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 1 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/43Xyie0>.

129 "Opinion no.08-556/6 (Мислење бр.08-556/6)," Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 19 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qX8itc>.

130 "Opinion no.08-46/2 (Мислење бр.08-46/2)," Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 7 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/47DCC19>.

131 "From September, for the first time, there will be educational assistants in both primary and secondary schools, the most ever, the Ministry of Education and Science announced (Од септември за прв пат образовни асистенти ќе има и во основните и во средните училишта, најмногу досега, соопшти МОН)," Makfax News Agency, 15 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4i04sLR>.

132 'Janevska: There is no permanent employment for educational assistants (Јаневска: Нема трајно вработување за образовните асистенти)', Radio Slobodna Evropa, 20 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33477668.html>.

133 'Parents and special educators overwhelmed by new wave of educational assistant hiring (Родители и специјални едукатори извисени со новиот бран вработувања на образовни асистенти)', Radio MOF, 19 July 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/roditeli-i-specijalni-edukatori-izviseni-so-noviot-bran-vrabotuvanja-na-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

134 'Public call for the employment of 83 educational assistants (Јавен оглас за вработување на 83 образовни асистенти)', DSU for Rehabilitation and Education 'St. Naum Ohridski', 6 August 2025, <https://www.dsu-svnaumohridski.edu.mk/aktivnost/85874/javen-oglas-za-vrabotuvanje-na-83-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

135 "A court ruling is not enough, no one is going to tell parties to develop election material for people with disabilities and municipalities to install wheelchair ramps at polling stations (Џабе судска пресуда, нема кој да им каже на партиите да изработат изборен материјал за лица со попреченост и на општините да стават рампи за инвалидски колички на избирачките места)," Sakam Da Kazam, 12 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4nTByua>.

In addition, there were public demands for simplified documentation procedures when applying for financial assistance, underscoring the bureaucratic barriers faced by many citizens with disabilities.¹³⁶ Furthermore, parents and caregivers are calling for formal recognition of the 'parent-caregiver' profession, ensuring their social protection and labour rights.¹³⁷

In July, the Government of North Macedonia proposed amendments to the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons, which will allow people with autism spectrum disorders and people with other pervasive developmental disorders to be employed.¹³⁸ In addition, in September, the Assembly of North Macedonia adopted the Law on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Institutions,¹³⁹ however the legislation still excludes the private sector and leaves out coverage for digital assistive devices, which remain largely unaffordable or unsupported by the state.¹⁴⁰

Gender

The Minister of Justice announced that with the latest proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, domestic violence perpetrators will be prosecuted ex officio, even without the victim filing a complaint, thus making a systemic change that relieves victims of pressure and fear of retaliation.¹⁴¹

The Prime Minister announced that the Government is considering introducing additional taxes for single people and unmarried people due to demographic challenges faced by the country, as measured by fewer marriages being concluded and fewer children being born.¹⁴² The Network for Protection from Discrimination reacted by stating that it is a threat to basic human rights and the principles of equality and freedom, and that such a tax would burden young people, single parents, LGBTI+ persons, and those who are socially and economically vulnerable.¹⁴³

On a separate occasion, the Gender Equality Platform responded to the draft amendments to the Law on Police, which were submitted to the Assembly, proposing the repeal of the provision that obliges respect for the principle of equality in employment within the police. The response stated that repealing this article sends a dangerous message that gender equality and inclusiveness are irrelevant in the construction of security institutions, and such a proposal represents a serious concern due to numerous cases of inappropriate treatment and ineffective protection by the police, especially in cases of gender-based and domestic violence.¹⁴⁴

136 'People with disabilities requested less documentation to receive assistance (Помалку документација за добивање помош побараа лицата со попреченост)', Независен, 10 July 2025, <https://nezavisen.mk/pomalku-dokumentacija-za-dobivanje-pomosh-pobaraa-licata-so-poprechenost/>.

137 'Parents of children with disabilities demand recognition of the profession of parent-caregiver (Да се признае професија родител-негувател, бараат родителите на деца со попреченост)', Telma TV, 12 July 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/07/12/da-se-priznae-profesija-roditel-neguvatel-baraat-roditelite-na-deca-so-poprechenost/>.

138 'Draft Law amending the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons (Предлог на Закон за изменување на законот за вработување на инвалидни лица)', Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 July 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nsp?param=c0ef645f-0d64-4103-8e5a-b3e8d2690957>.

139 Decree on proclamation of the Law on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Institutions (Указ за прогласување на Законот за пристапност на вебстраниците и мобилните апликации на институциите од јавниот сектор), Official gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no.193/2025 (Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија бр. 193/2025) (2025), <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/zakoni-mdt-file-YJSL.pdf>.

140 'First click towards accessibility institutions will adapt websites for people with disabilities, but inequality remains (Прв клик кон пристапноста - институциите ќе ги прилагодат сајтовите за лицата со попреченост, но нееднаквоста останува)', Prizma.mk, 19 August 2025, <https://prizma.mk/prv-klik-kon-pristapnosta/>.

141 'Domestic violence will be prosecuted ex officio with the new amendments to the Criminal Code (Семејното насилство ќе се гони по службена должност со новите измени во Кривичниот закон)', Sitel TV, 15 July 2025, <https://sitel.com.mk/semejnoto-nasilstvo-kje-se-goni-po-sluzhbena-dolzност-so-novite-izmeni-vo-krivichniot-zakon>.

142 'We are considering additional taxes for singles and unmarried people, said Mickoski (Размислуваме за дополнителни даноци за немажени и неженети, рече Мицкоски)', Sdk.mk, 4 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/razmisluvame-za-dopolnitelni-danotsi-za-nemazheni-i-nezheneti-reche-mitskoski/>.

143 'The Government does not know how much the tax for singles will be and from what age it will be paid, they say that the measure is still in the consideration phase (Владата не знае колкав ќе биде данокот за немажени и неженети и од која возраст ќе се плаќа, велат дека мерката уште е во фаза на размислување)', Sdk.mk, 5 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/vladata-ne-znae-kolkav-ke-bide-danokot-za-nemazheni-i-nezheneti-i-od-koja-vozrast-ke-se-plaka-velat-deka-merkata-ushte-e-vo-faza-na-razmisluvane/>.

144 'Reaction: The repeal of Article 96 of the Law on Police is a dangerous step backwards: equality, representation and trust in the police must not be put into question (Реакција: Укинувањето на член 96 од Законот за полиција е опасен чекор назад: еднаквоста, застапеноста и довербата во полицијата не смеат да бидат доведени во прашање)', Official website of the Gender Equality Platform, 17 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LYT88M>.

The CPPD filed a lawsuit against the Government and the Ministry of Health before the Basic Civil Court Skopje because they failed to include female farmers in the provision of the Law on Health Insurance that lists beneficiaries of maternity leave compensation. While there is an annual programme allocating funds for maternity leave compensation for female farmers, a systematic resolution of this issue has not yet been achieved.¹⁴⁵

At the beginning of September, the National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, together with the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, organised a workshop at which the multisectoral body for monitoring cases of femicide and attempted femicide was officially established. This step was taken to ensure a systematic and coordinated approach to the prevention and monitoring of femicide, as well as the creation of policies for better protection and prevention of gender-based violence.¹⁴⁶

In late September, the constitutive session of the National Coordinating Body for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was held, during which all documents and activities adopted and implemented to date were presented.¹⁴⁷

The Commission for Financial Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes received a total of 54 requests for compensation from victims of violence; however, it approved only one payment of EUR 500, while the rest were rejected as unfounded (32) or are ongoing (21).¹⁴⁸

On 11 July, while inspecting an illegal construction site, the Mayor of the City of Skopje was physically assaulted and threatened.¹⁴⁹ According to her account, assailants verbally threatened her with rape and the murder of her family, and kicked her in front of police officers who did not intervene.¹⁵⁰ The National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence strongly condemned the assault, stating that it attacked the dignity of women in general and also demonstrated that threats, belittlement, and violence increasingly target female politicians.¹⁵¹ Police detained two suspects, while the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje filed a case against one individual for violence.¹⁵² The Basic Criminal Court Skopje found the defendant guilty and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment.¹⁵³

145 'Lawsuit filed against the state because female farmers do not have maternity leave (Поднесена тужба против државата зашто земјоделките немаат породилно отсуство)', Sdk.mk, 18 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/podnesena-tuzhba-protiv-drzhavata-zashto-zemjodelkite-nemaat-porodilno-otsustvo/>.

146 'The femicide observatory: A new mechanism for protection and prevention (Опсерваторијата за феминиди: Нов механизам за заштита и превенција)', Official website of the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 9 September 2025, <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/opser-vatorijata-za-femitsidi-nov-mehanizam-za-zashtita-i-preventsija/>.

147 'Constitutive session of the National Coordinating Body for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence held (Одржана конститутивна седница на Националното координативно тело за имплементација на Конвенцијата на Совет на Европа за спречување и борба против насилство врз жените и семејното насилство)', Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, 25 September 2025, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/pocetna-ns_article-odrzana-konstitutivna-sednica-na-nacionalното-koordinativno-telo-za-implementacija-na-konvencijata-n.nspх.

148 'Out of 54 requests for compensation for victims of violence and murder of loved ones, the state approved only one payment of 500 euros (Од 54 барања за надомест на жртви на насилство и за убиство на блиски, државата одобрила само една исплата од 500 евра)', Sdk.mk, 29 September 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/od-54-barana-za-nadomest-na-zhrtvi-na-nasilstvo-i-za-ubistvo-na-bliski-drzhavata-odobrila-samo-edna-isplata-od-500-evra/>.

149 'Mayor Danela Arsovska attacked in Chair (Градоначалничката Данела Арсовска нападната во Чаир)', Deutsche Welle, 11 July 2025, <https://www.dw.com/mk/gradonacalnickskata-na-skopje-danela-arsovska-napadnata-vo-cair-mi-se-zakanuvaa-na-mene-i-moeto-semejstvo/a-73244229>.

150 'Mayor Arsovska received 24-hour police security (Градоначалничката Арсовска доби 24-часовно полициско обезбедување)', Radio Slobodna Evropa, 12 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/arsovska-napad-policija/33472367.html>.

151 'The National Network against Violence against Women strongly condemns the brutal attack on Mayor Danela Arsovska (Националната мрежа против насилство врз жени со најостра осуда за бруталниот напад врз градоначалничката Данела Арсовска)', Makfax, 11 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4pltdET>.

152 'Indictment filed against man who insulted and threatened Danela Arsovska (Поднесено обвинение за мажот кој ја навредуваше, па и се закануваше на Данела Арсовска)', A1 On, 18 July 2025, <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/podneseno-obvinenie-za-mazhot-koj-ja-navreduvashe-pa-i-se-zakanuvashе-na-danela-arsovska/>.

153 'Mayor Danela Arsovska's attacker got two years in prison (Напаѓачот на градоначалничката Данела Арсовска доби две години затвор)', Radio MOF, 2 September 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/napagjachot-na-gradonachalnickskata-danela-arsovska-dobi-dve-godini-zatvor/>.

On 15 September in Veles, a woman and her father were murdered by her former partner, who then committed suicide.¹⁵⁴ She had previously lodged multiple reports of threats and violence by her ex-partner, including threats to her family as well as physical attacks against her and property damage.¹⁵⁵ Although the police had been alerted, institutional action appears to have been insufficient to prevent the fatal escalation. The Ministry of Interior initiated disciplinary proceedings against 11 police officers for failure to act upon those complaints,¹⁵⁶ while citizens responded to the tragedy by organising a protest over their inaction.¹⁵⁷

Rights of the child

On 8 August, the Government of North Macedonia adopted the National Action Plan on Children's Rights 2025–2029, taking a significant step toward fulfilling its commitments to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and implementing the European Children's Rights Guarantee. A key component of the plan is the establishment of a national mechanism for coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through amendments to the Law on Child Protection. This will establish a specialised body for monitoring children's rights, which will be tasked with coordinating the implementation of the plan, as well as providing systemic oversight of the implementation of the UNCRC.¹⁵⁸

LGBTI+

The Gender Equality Platform issued a public call ahead of the 2025 local elections, demanding that all political parties adopt dignified local policies for marginalised communities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex communities (LGBTIQ+) and others at the intersection of social injustice.¹⁵⁹ In July, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) published a rulebook on the method of reporting and protecting a student–victim who are victims of violence, abuse and neglect (primary education),¹⁶⁰ to which the Gender Equality Platform issued a reaction, criticising the Ministry for failing to prioritise measures to address violence, discrimination, and exclusion in education, arguing that new rulebook normalises harmful practices rather than prevent them, especially for LGBTI+ students.¹⁶¹

154 'Ministry of Interior on the horror in Veles: The killer went to their home and killed his ex-girlfriend and her father with a knife (МВР за ужасот во Велес: Убиецот им отишол дома и со нож ги убил поранешната девојка и нејзиниот татко)', Sloboden Pecat, 15 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/mvr-za-uzhasot-vo-veles-ubiecot-im-otishol-doma-i-so-ostar-predmet-gi-ubil-poranesnata-sopruga-i-nejziniot-tatko/>.

155 'New details about the Veles tragedy: The victim repeatedly reported violence (Нови детали за велешката трагедија: жртвата повеќепати пријавувала насилство)', 24 Info, 15 September 2025, <https://24info.mk/novi-detali-za-veleshkata-tragedija-zhrtvata-povekepati-prijavuvala-nasilstvo/>.

156 'Disciplinary proceedings against 11 Veles police officers – They did not act upon Rosica's complaints (Дисциплинска постапка за 11 велешки полицајци – Не постапувале по пријавите на Росица)', Sloboden Pecat, 26 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/disciplinska-postapka-za-11-vraboteni-vo-svr-veles-ne-postapuvale-po-prijavite-na-rosica/>.

157 'Protest in front of the Ministry of Interior and in the Women's Fighter Park in Skopje after the murder of 31-year-old Rosica and her father (Протест пред МВР и во паркот на жената борец во Скопје по убиството на 31-годишната Росица и татко ѝ)', Sdk.mk, 18 September 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/protest-pred-mvr-i-vo-parkot-na-zhenata-borets-vo-skopje-po-ubistvoto-na-31-godishnata-rositsa-i-tatko/>.

158 'The National Action Plan for Children's Rights (2025–2029) has been adopted – a systemic step forward for the protection and promotion of children's rights (Усвоен Националниот акциски план за правата на децата (2025–2029) – системски исчекор за заштита и унапредување на детските права)', Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 August 2025, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/pocetna-ns_article-usvoen-nacionalniot-akciski-plan-za-pravata-na-decata-2025-2029-sistemska-iscekora-za-zashtita-i-unap.nsp.x.

159 'Proclamation for the upcoming local elections 2025: Dignified local policies for marginalized communities (Проглас за претстојните локални избори 2025: Достојностени локални политики за маргинализираните заедници)', Gender Equality Platform, 5 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oyDWLT>.

160 'Rulebook on the Method of Reporting and Protecting a Student-Victim of Any Form of Violence, Abuse and Neglect (primary education) (Правилник за начинот за пријавување и заштита на ученик-жртва на која било од формите на насилство, злоупотреба и занемарување (основно образование)', Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia, 7 July 2025, <https://arhiva.mon.gov.mk/content/?id=10254>.

161 'Reaction: Dealing with violence has no place in the policies of the Ministry of Education and Science (Реакција: Справувањето со насилството нема свое место во политиките на МОН)', Gender Equality Platform, 12 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LK3Hud>.

Roma

Following his April visit, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights published a memorandum on North Macedonia addressing the human rights of Roma and the right to a clean and healthy environment.¹⁶² The report acknowledges progress, including the adoption of the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030 and improvements in primary school enrolment, but highlights persistent gaps in implementation, continuing discrimination, school segregation, and weak protection against police abuse. It also stresses that Roma communities are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards due to inadequate housing and waste management. While North Macedonia has a solid legal framework for environmental protection, enforcement and access to justice remain limited. The Commissioner called for stronger institutional coordination, increased local-level funding, accountability in law enforcement, and full implementation of environmental and Roma-inclusion measures. In this regard, the Minister without portfolio responsible for Roma inclusion and implementation of the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030 also stated that combating antigypsyism in North Macedonia requires a systemic and comprehensive response rather than isolated initiatives.¹⁶³

A landmark court ruling was issued in July: the Basic Civil Court Skopje found that the Registry Directorate's failure to integrate individuals from the 'Special Birth Registry' into the regular registry constituted discrimination, disproportionately affecting Roma who were subsequently denied access to rights and services.¹⁶⁴ In late July, the MES issued two public calls for the 2025–26 school year: one to recruit 50 Roma educational mediators to support primary education, and a new call to recruit 35 mediators for the first time in secondary education.¹⁶⁵ In August, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee found that North Macedonia had violated the rights of two Roma citizens at the border crossing at Tabanovce. In two cases, in 2014 and 2015, they were prevented from leaving the country despite having valid passports and documentation.¹⁶⁶

In September, the Director of the Protection and Rescue Directorate at the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia declared in a public appearance that the Roma families living in the informal settlement Vardishte should be relocated "by a short procedure and, if necessary, by force".¹⁶⁷ This declaration followed a massive fire outbreak at the Vardarishte landfill. The Ombudsman emphasised that the state must seek adequate and sustainable housing solutions rather than resorting to forced evictions, criticising public remarks calling for forced relocation of Roma communities as stigmatising, discriminatory, and contrary to the Constitution, the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030, and international human rights law.¹⁶⁸

162 'Memorandum on the human rights of Roma and on issues related to the right to a clean and healthy environment in North Macedonia', Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, 29 July 2025, <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-north-macedonia-by-michael-o-flaherty-council-of-europe-/1680b6bc39>.

163 'Systemic action is needed in the fight against anti-gypsyism (Потребна е системска акција во борбата против антициганизмот)', Nezavisen.mk, 15 July 2025, <https://nezavisen.mk/potrebna-e-sistemska-akcija-vo-borbata-protiv-anticiganizmot/>.

164 'Key court ruling for Roma at risk of statelessness in North Macedonia (Клучна судска пресуда за Ромите во ризик од бездржавјанство во Северна Македонија)', Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, 17 July 2025, <https://myla.org.mk/51418/>.

165 'MES announces two calls for Roma educational mediators, for the first time in secondary education (МОН објави два повика за ромски образовни медијатори, за првпат и во средно образование)', Radio MOF, August 1, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qXSLZY>.

166 'UN Human Rights Committee condemns North Macedonia for anti-Roma discrimination at borders', European Roma Rights Centre, 27 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/49PUmLn>.

167 'Stojanche Angelov "will forcibly and summarily evict the Roma from Vardarishte" - Shukova reacts: This is the height of inhumanity and reveals the true face of this Government (Стојанче Ангелов „по кратка постапка и на сила ќе ги сели Ромите од Вардариште“ – Шукова со реакција: Ова е врв на нечовечноста и го открива вистинското лице на оваа власт)', Civil Media, 16 September 2025, <https://civilmedia.mk/stojanche-angelov-po-kratka-postapka-i-na-sila-ke-gi-seli-romite-od-vardarishte-shukova-so-reakcija-ova-e-vrv-na-nechovechnosta-i-go-otkriva-vistinskoto-litse-na-ovaa-vlast/>.

168 'Solutions for dignified housing are needed, not forced evictions, says the Ombudsperson (Потребни се решенија за достоинствено домување, а не присилно исекување, вели Народниот правобранител)', 360 Stepeni, 17 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/potrebnii-se-reshenija-za-dostoinstveno-domuvane-a-ne-prisilno-iseluvane-veli-narodniot-pravobranitel/>.

