



European
Policy
Institute
Skopje

SHADOW REPORT ON **CHAPTER 23**

FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN
OCTOBER 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2025

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Publisher:
European Policy Institute - Skopje

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Skopje, December 2025



This Report was prepared under the Project "Building Bridges for a Common Future: Rule of Law in View of EU accession", funded by the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content of this report lies with the authors and may in no way be considered to represent the views and opinions of the European Union.

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List of Abbreviations

AAVMS	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services
ACCMIS	Automated Court Case Management Information System
AJPP	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
BPPO	Basic Public Prosecutor's Office
BPPO-POCC	Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption
CC	Criminal Code
CPPD	Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ENER	Single National Electronic Register of Regulations
EPI	European Policy Institute
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
HCHR	Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
HPPO	Higher Public Prosecutor's Office
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Community
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
Mol	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MPD	Network for Protection against Discrimination
MRT	Macedonian Radio-Television
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Agency
PPO	Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia
MKD	Republic of North Macedonia
SCM	Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia
SCPC	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

Introduction

This Shadow Report consolidates into a single coherent document all findings, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the monitoring of the areas contained within Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. This is the jubilee tenth such report published by the European Policy Institute (EPI) – Skopje, taking into account the comments and opinions of state institutions and non-governmental organizations. The previous nine reports covered the following periods: October 2014 – July 2015,¹ July 2015 – April 2016,² May 2016 – January 2018,³ June 2018 – March 2019,⁴ April 2019 – March 2020,⁵ April 2020 – September 2021,⁶ October 2021 – September 2022,⁷ October 2022 – September 2023,⁸ and October 2023 – September 2024.⁹

The report covers the period from the beginning of October 2024, ending with the conclusion of September 2025. The report presents data relevant even prior to October 2024, provided they were necessary for contextualization or for clarifying developments from the current reporting period that are relevant to it. The coverage period of the report corresponds to the reporting period of the European Commission (EC) for the Republic of North Macedonia (MKD). This draft report follows the structure of Chapter 23, in accordance with the EC report. At the end of each area, recommendations are highlighted in a box.

The reporting period was marked by the implementation of the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia for the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans,¹⁰ which represents a comprehensive package of measures to achieve the envisioned goals in the priority areas agreed upon with the EC, including the rule of law.

This Shadow Report was drafted within the framework of the project “Building Bridges for a Common Future: Rule of Law in View of EU accession”. The project is financed by the European Union and aims to help create sustainable reforms for the rule of law on the path to the EU accession.

1 Neda Chalovska et al., „Правосудството и темелните права во Република Македонија“ (The Judiciary and Fundamental Rights in the Republic of Macedonia), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2015, https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza_Mreza.pdf.

2 Neda Chalovska, Voislav Stojanovski, and Aleksandar Jovanovski, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот од јули 2015 до април 2016 година“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period from July 2015 to April 2016), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2016, https://epi.org.mk/docs/Izvestaj_mk.pdf.

3 Velimir Delovski et al., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот од мај 2016 до јануари 2018 година“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period from May 2016 to January 2018), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018, https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23_izvestaj%20vo%20senka_2018.pdf.

4 Iva Conevska et al., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот јуни 2018 – март 2019 година“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2018 – March 2019), 2019.

5 Iva Conevska and Ismail Kamberi, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот јуни 2019 – март 2020“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2019 – March 2020), European Policy Institute – Skopje, 2020, https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Izvestaj_vo_senka_2020.pdf.

6 Iva Conevska Vangelova and Ismail Kamberi, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот април 2020 – септември 2021“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period April 2020 – September 2021), European Policy Institute – Skopje, 16 December 2021, <https://epi.org.mk/post/2027>.

7 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот октомври 2021 – септември 2022“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2021 – September 2022), 29 December 2022, <https://epi.org.mk/post/23011>.

8 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот октомври 2022 – септември 2023“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2022 – September 2023), 29 December 2023, <https://epi.org.mk/post/25518>.

9 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот октомври 2023 – септември 2024“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2023 – September 2024), 29 December 2024, <https://epi.org.mk/post/30562>.

10 „Реформска агенда на Северна Македонија 2024-2027“ (Reform Agenda of North Macedonia 2024-2027), Ministry of European Affairs, 6 November 2024, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/reformska-agenda-na-severna-makedonija-2024-2027-godina-file-Nhp6.pdf>.

Methodology

In the preparation of this report, the methodology for monitoring the areas that are the focus of the work of “Network 23” – Judiciary, fight against corruption, and fundamental rights¹¹—developed in 2015 and already applied to previous reports—was applied. It included research into official sources of state and judicial institutions, analysis of media reporting on certain developments in these areas during the period in question, as well as a review of numerous analyses and reports prepared by civil society organizations. Additionally, data obtained through requests for access to public information were used, for some of which responses are still pending.

Consultations with civil society organizations, state institutions, and experts were also conducted for the preparation of this shadow report. First, consultations were held regarding the submission of relevant analyses, reports, and research related to Chapter 23. Subsequently, on December 22, 2025, a discussion on the draft version of the report was held, which enabled the receipt of significant, substantive contribution from representatives of relevant state and judicial institutions and civil society organizations in the finalization of this document, whereby their remarks, views, and comments have been incorporated into this shadow report.

Part of the data and developments covered in this report are presented and analyzed in greater detail in the quarterly reports on the rule of law in view of EU accession, which we publish regularly throughout the year on our website, available at the following link: <https://epi.org.mk/cat/mesecni-izvestai>.

¹¹ Наталија Шикова (уред.), „Методологија за мониторинг и евалуација на јавните политики од Поглавјето 23 – правосудство и фундаментални права од законодавството на Европската унија“ (Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies in Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights of European Union Legislation), Center for Change Management, https://epi.org.mk/docs/Metodologija_mk.pdf.

1. Judiciary

In the area of the judiciary, during this reporting period as well, attention was focused on the implementation of judicial reforms and the implementation of the recommendations of the European Union (EU) Peer Review Mission on the work of the Judicial Council. These recommendations represent an important benchmark for improving the functioning of the Council and are partially integrated into the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028)¹² with an Action Plan,¹³ as well as in the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia within the framework of the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.¹⁴

The Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary represents one of the key strategic documents that should serve as a guide for the implementation of reforms aimed at strengthening the independence, efficiency, and accountability of the judiciary. In this context, the report analyzes the contribution of judicial institutions in the past period toward strengthening judicial independence and respecting the principle of the rule of law, as well as the degree of compliance of the reform processes with European standards and the *acquis communautaire*. Simultaneously, the reporting period was analyzed from the aspect of the implementation of the EU Reform Agenda, i.e., the covered priority measures in the area of the rule of law.

12 “Развојна секторска стратегија за правосудство (2024-2028)” (Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary(2024-2028)), Ministry of Justice, December 2023, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/strategii-file-luvL.pdf>

13 “Акциски план за спроведување на Развојна секторска стратегија за правосудство (2024-2028)” (Action Plan for the Implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary(2024-2028)), Ministry of Justice, 2023, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/strategii-file-utgU.pdf>.

14 „Реформска агенда на Северна Македонија 2024-2027“ (Reform Agenda of North Macedonia 2024-2027).

Strategic documents

The Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) and its Action Plan were officially presented to the public on December 28, 2023, by the Minister of Justice and the President of the working group that prepared the strategy.¹⁵ In mid-2025, the Ministry of Justice publicly released the 2024 annual report on the implementation of the Strategy. Last year, the commencement of a total of 152 activities was planned, of which 24 have been fully implemented, 69 are in the process of implementation, and 57 activities have not been implemented. The greatest progress is noted in the first (Judiciary and public prosecution in accordance with EU standards) and second priority areas (Institutions of the judicial system), where the implementation rate exceeds 60%.¹⁶ The Strategy is based on the experiences and assessments from the implementation of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector (2017–2022),¹⁷ continuing the reform process. Additionally, it addresses key issues identified by the European Commission in the Screening Report for Cluster 1, “Fundamentals,” related to the judiciary.¹⁸ The recommendations from the EU Peer Review Mission on the work of the Judicial Council are also integrated into the strategy, along with recommendations regarding the training of judges and public prosecutors, administrative justice, and enforcement. The Strategy, developed with the involvement of the academic community and relevant civil society organizations, and supported by the EU Rule of Law Project, identifies five interconnected priority areas: 1) judiciary and public prosecution in accordance with EU standards; 2) institutions of the judicial system; 3) independent professions and public services; 4) reform of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia; 5) reforms in specific legal areas – criminal and civil. In the Action Plan of the Strategy, realistic timeframes are set with a logically sequenced order of implementation of activities. The Plan also includes measures for adopting laws in areas outside the judiciary that fall under the competence of the Ministry of Justice, such as: reform of the Electoral Code for alignment with OSCE/ODIHR recommendations; reform of the Law on Financing of Political Parties and its alignment with the reforms in the Electoral Code; and the adoption of a law to regulate fair and adequate representation. However, the Action Plan does not provide specific budgeting for the planned activities, which constitutes a significant shortcoming.¹⁹ In May 2024, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a decision to establish the Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms,²⁰ and a constitutive session was held.²¹ However, after the change of government, a

15 „Стратегијата за развој на правосудниот систем е патоказ за враќање на довербата на граѓаните во судството“ (The Strategy for the Development of the Judicial System is a Roadmap for Restoring Citizens' Trust in the Judiciary), Makfax, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3NE4NZx>.

16 “Годишен извештај за спроведувањето на Развојната секторска стратегија за правосудство 2024 – 2028 во 2024 година” (Annual Report on the Implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary 2024–2028 in 2024), Ministry of Justice, April 2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/izvestaj-regulativa-file-Nj5C.pdf>.

17 Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор за периодот 2017–2022 година со Акциски план (Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector for the Period 2017–2022 with Action Plan), Ministry of Justice, 2017, http://www.pravda.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/Strategija%20i%20akciski%20plan_MK-web.pdf.

18 ‘Screening Report North Macedonia Cluster 1 – Fundamentals,’ European Commission, July 20, 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/MK%20Cluster_1%20Draft%20screening%20report_external%20version.pdf.

19 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот октомври 2023 – септември 2024“ (Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2023 – September 2024), European Policy Institute, 2024, <https://epi.org.mk/post/30562>.

20 “Конститутивна седница на Советот за следење на реформите во правосудството” (Constitutive Session of the Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms), TV 24, 10 September 2025, <https://24.mk/details/konstitutivna-sednica-na-sovetot-za-sledenje-na-reformite-vo-pravosudstvoto>.

21 Ibid.

new Minister of Justice was elected in June 2024,²² and on September 10, 2025,²³ a new Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms, which has a mandate to monitor the implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) with the Action Plan and the Reform Agenda 2024–2027 in part 5: Fundamentals/Rule of Law, held a constitutive session in a partially changed composition. Members of the Council are high-level representatives of the Government, judicial institutions, the civil sector, and experts.²⁴ With the formation of this Council, which consolidates the monitoring of the two aforementioned documents, it will enable a coordinated approach to the measures and activities undertaken toward the country's progress, ensure alignment and continuity of judicial reforms, and serve as a body that provides transparency, continuity, and accountability in the process of implementing reforms. The Council is tasked with monitoring the implementation of reforms, raising alarms when institutions do not achieve expected results, and providing expert opinions through its members – experts from the judiciary, academia, and the civil sector. The strategic framework is formally aligned with government reform documents and European priorities, but implementation remains limited due to a lack of clear indicators and insufficient coordination among institutions. The Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy has been established, but the results of its work in the coming period remain to be seen.

In this reporting period, significant activities for improving the situation with human resources through the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for the Judicial Network²⁵ and the Human Resources Strategy for the Public Prosecution Network²⁶ have not yet been observed. Precise projections for the missing human resources in courts and public prosecutor's offices across the country are necessary, as is the allocation of appropriate financial resources to fill those gaps.²⁷

The Ministry of Justice should improve and ensure the regular work of the Council for Monitoring the implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) and the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia within the framework of the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans;

It is necessary to conduct regular evaluation of the activities and measures provided for by the Strategy, in order to determine the level of their implementation and the need for revising the Action Plan, as well as to continue public reporting on the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan;

Precise projections for the missing human resources in the courts and public prosecutor's offices across the country are necessary, as well as the allocation of appropriate financial resources to fill those gaps.

22 Собранието го избра новиот владин кабинет (The Assembly elected the new government cabinet), Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 23 June 2024, <https://www.sobranie.mk/ns-newsarticle-sobranieto-go-izbra-noviot-vladin-kabinet.nspx>.

23 „Конститутивна седница на Советот за следење на реформите во правосудството“ (Constitutive Session of the Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms), 24.mk, 10 September 2025, <https://24.mk/details/konstitutivna-sednica-na-sovetot-za-sledenje-na-reformite-vo-pravosudstvoto>.

24 „Конститутивна седница на Советот за следење на реформите во правосудството“ (Constitutive Session of the Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms), Macedonian Radio Television, 10 September 2025, <https://www.mrt.com.mk/node/132783>.

25 „Стратегија на човечки ресурси за судската мрежа“ (Human Resources Strategy for the Judicial Network), September 2020, <https://bit.ly/3trhzNE>.

26 „Стратегија на човечки ресурси за јавнообвинителската мрежа“ (Human Resources Strategy for the Public Prosecution Network), October 2020, <https://bit.ly/3GcekBs>.

27 „Придонес во рамки на дискусијата за Извештајот во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот октомври 2024 – септември 2025 година“ (Contribution to the Discussion on the Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the Period October 2024 – September 2025), European Policy Institute (EPI) – Skopje, 22 December 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17WPZc72Mj/>.

Governing bodies

The Judicial Council remained in the public spotlight due to events that occurred during the reporting period. On December 2, 2024, the President of the Judicial Council submitted an irrevocable resignation from the position, citing a lack of support for improving conditions in the judiciary, as well as continuous pressure and obstructions from the executive branch.²⁸ In this context, public statements by high-ranking government officials were pointed out, as well as negative attitudes toward the Judicial Council, its members, and judges in general.²⁹ Following the resignation, at the 510th session held on January 3, 2025, the Judicial Council unanimously, with 13 votes “in favor,” elected a new President of the Council, who was the sole candidate proposed from among the members elected by the judges.³⁰ Additionally, following the expiration of the mandate of the Deputy President in June 2025, a new Deputy President was elected at the 524th session held on June 4, 2025, chosen through direct elections from among judges belonging to communities constituting more than 20% of the population.³¹

Regarding other changes in composition, on December 11, 2024, elections were held for two members of the Judicial Council from the Štip appellate area and for a member from among the judges belonging to communities over 20%. Two judges were elected—one from the Skopje Court of Appeal and one from the Štip Court of Appeal—with a six-year mandate. Within the framework of the electoral process, the Judicial Council applied the recommendation of the Peer Review Mission, publicly publishing the biographies of all candidates, with five candidates recorded for the Štip appellate area and one candidate from among the judges belonging to communities over 20%.³²

Additionally, in July 2025, the mandate of one member of the Judicial Council proposed by the President of the State expired.³³ The President postponed the proposal of a new member, explaining that they would wait for the adoption of the new Law on the Judicial Council,³⁴ which is why the Council functioned during the reporting period with a reduced composition of 12 members.

The interpellation submitted by a group of Members of Parliament for the five members of the Judicial Council who are not judges—three elected by the Assembly and two proposed by the President of the State—was also a current issue. The interpellation was submitted in February 2025 due to alleged negligence, damage to the reputation of judges, and jeopardizing

28 „Соопштение за јавност“ (Press Release), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, <https://bit.ly/4aizVXS>.

29 Ibid.

30 “Записник од 510 седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ” (Minutes of the 510th Session of the Judicial Council of the MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 03 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qeUrNO>.

31 “Записник од 524 седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ” (Minutes of the 524th Session of the Judicial Council of the MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 04 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/44tc04j>.

32 “Записник од 524 седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ” (Minutes of the 524th Session of the Judicial Council of the MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 04 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/49c5ph8>.

33 “Сиљановска-Давкова ќе го чека новиот закон за Судски совет, па потоа ќе предложи нов член” (Siljanovska-Davkova will wait for the new Law on the Judicial Council before proposing a new member), Radio Free Europe, 08 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33467246.html>.

34 Ibid.

public trust in the judiciary. On March 11, 2025, at the 40th plenary session, the Assembly voted in favor of the interpellations for all five members, concluding that they do not have confidence to perform their functions. Despite this, none of the affected members submitted a resignation.³⁵

On the other hand, in November 2024, the Ministry of Justice formed a working group for amendments and supplements to the Law on the Judicial Council, composed of judges, university professors, members of the Judicial Council, and representatives of the civil sector and the Ministry of Justice.³⁶ The mandate of the working group was to incorporate the recommendations of the EU Peer Review Mission into a new legislative text, as well as to fulfill the reform steps provided for in the Reform Agenda with a deadline of June 2025. Following the drafting of the draft law, public hearings were organized in all four appellate areas, after which the proposal-law was published on ENER (Electronic National Register of Regulations)³⁷ and submitted to the Venice Commission for an opinion.³⁸ The proposal-law provides for strengthened criteria for the election of members of the Judicial Council, especially for those elected by the Assembly and upon the proposal of the President of the State. The criteria for “distinguished jurist” have been specified, aimed at strengthening the transparency, integrity, and professional credibility of the candidates. Additionally, the law introduces a clear procedure for the dismissal of the President of the Judicial Council and regulates the accountability of the Council members in more detail, as a reaction to the 2023 case when the dismissal decision was annulled by the Administrative Court. In accordance with the recommendations of the Peer Review Mission, the threshold for initiating disciplinary proceedings is reduced from 20 to at least 10 judges, and the possibility of initiating an administrative dispute before the Administrative Court is introduced for judges who have been issued a disciplinary measure or dismissal. Although the Reform Agenda envisaged the adoption of the new Law on the Judicial Council by June 2025, it has not yet been adopted as of the time of reporting.

Regarding the remaining recommendations of the 2023 EU Peer Review Mission, which do not require constitutional or legal changes and directly depend on the work of the Judicial Council, it is noted that their implementation continues to face challenges. Although these recommendations represent a significant portion of the total recommendations, their realization is largely partial and mainly limited to amendments of bylaws. Some of the recommendations remained unimplemented also due to the absence of consent for new employment by the Ministry of Finance, which, among other things, delayed the implementation of the recommendation for hiring a public relations spokesperson in the Judicial Council.

35 “40 седница на Собранието” (40th session of the Assembly), Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 March 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/detalii-na-sednica.nspx?sittingId=a12327be-4550-4161-9bd9-fa6b3b48ee07>.

36 “Формирани работни групи за измени на законот за Судскиот совет и Кривичниот законик” (Working groups formed for amendments to the Law on the Judicial Council and the Criminal Code), TV 24, 23 January 2025, <https://24.mk/details/formirani-rabotni-grupi-za-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-sudskiot-sovet-i-krivichniot-zakonik>.

37 “Предлог на Закон за Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија” (Draft law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia), Single National Electronic Register of Regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia (ENER), https://ener.gov.mk/default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=84282.

38 “North Macedonia - Opinion on the draft law on the Judicial Council,” Official website of Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/venice-commission/-/cdl-ad-2025-026-e>.

Additionally, although it was recommended to publicly release the candidates' biographies and ranking lists during the selection of judges to a higher court, during the reporting period, the Judicial Council did not publish this information, despite the conducted selection procedures. Likewise, although amendments were made to the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Council providing for the participation of representatives from the Judges' Association and civil society organizations during the review of the Annual Report on the work of the Judicial Council,³⁹ this provision was not consistently applied. Namely, at the 521st session held on April 30, 2025, where the Annual Report on the work of the Judicial Council for 2024 was reviewed, representatives of the Judges' Association and civil society organizations were not invited.⁴⁰

During the reporting period, following the expiration of the mandate of the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, on March 10, 2025, at the 517th session, the Judicial Council, with 13 votes "IN FAVOR," appointed a judge from the Supreme Court as acting President of the Supreme Court.⁴¹ Following the completed selection procedure, at the 523rd session held on May 26, 2025, the Judicial Council elected the new President of the Supreme Court with 8 votes "IN FAVOR."⁴² Although the decision was made in May and no objections were filed by the other candidate, the solemn declaration and official assumption of office took place later, on July 3, 2025.⁴³

Regarding the Council of Public Prosecutors, during the reporting period, two new members were elected by the Assembly from among university law professors, lawyers, and other distinguished jurists. The first member was elected at a plenary session on December 10, 2024, and the second on June 24, 2025.⁴⁴ Additionally, the mandate of the President of the Council of Public Prosecutors expires on October 1, 2025, whereby, pursuant to the Law on Public Prosecution, the mandate lasts two years without the right to re-election.⁴⁵ In this context, the Council scheduled a session for September 30, 2025, with the election of a new president as an agenda item. Upon the proposal of a Council member, the election was postponed due to the local elections, in order to avoid the perception of political influence, after which the Council unanimously decided that the Deputy President should continue to lead the Council until the election of a new president.⁴⁶

39 „Деловник за изменување и дополнување на Деловникот за работа на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија“ (Rules of Procedure for Amending and Supplementing the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 117/2024.

40 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Totic, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавните обвинители во 2025 година“ (Report from the Monitoring of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025), Coalition "All for Fair Trials" (unpublished).

41 "Записник од 517 седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ" (Minutes of the 517th Session of the Judicial Council of the MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/44sLIPz>.

42 "Записник од 523 седница на Судски совет" (Minutes of the 523rd Session of the Judicial Council), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 26 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/3L4gyuH>.

43 „Свечен изјава на претседателот на Врховен суд на Република Северна Македонија и претседателот на Основен суд Крушево“ (Solemn declaration of the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia and the President of the Basic Court Kruševo), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/3X1FK7>.

44 „Материјали од Собрание“ (Assembly Materials), Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, <https://www.sobranie.mk/datali-na-materijal.nspx?param=efd6f74b-8ee8-45b7-aa4d-61ea8cd78ba1>.

45 „Закон за Советот на јавните обвинители“ (Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors), Official Gazette of the RNM No. 150/2007 (12.12.2007), 100/2011, 42/2020.

46 "Соопштение од 28 седница на Советот на јавните обвинители" (Announcement from the 28th session of the Council of Public Prosecutors), 30 September 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-28-ma-sednica/>.

Furthermore, the procedure initiated by the Government for the dismissal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia was noted by the public. Namely, at a session held on February 11, 2025, the Government tasked the Ministry of Justice with initiating activities to launch a dismissal procedure.⁴⁷ According to the Law on Public Prosecution, the Council of Public Prosecutors is competent to provide a positive or negative opinion on such a proposal. Thus, at the session held on April 2, 2025, the Council, citing Article 10-a, paragraph 2 of the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors, passed a decision to exclude the public from the discussion on the proposal. At the same session, with 6 votes “IN FAVOR” and 3 votes “AGAINST,” the Council issued a negative opinion regarding the proposal for dismissal. Following the tragic event in Kočani, the Government decided to suspend the procedure due to the sensitivity of the situation and to continue it after the conclusion of the local elections in November 2025.⁴⁸

Consistent implementation of the recommendations of the Peer Review Mission by the Judicial Council is required, as is the implementation of the Action Plan for the Development Sectoral Strategy for Judicial Reform;

It is necessary to establish a standardized format for detailed explanations of the decisions of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors;

The adoption and implementation of amendments to the Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors in accordance with the recommendations of the EU Peer Review Mission and the Venice Commission are required;

It is necessary to conclude the initiated procedure for the dismissal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia and to commence the procedure for the election of a new Public Prosecutor.

⁴⁷ “Владата почна постапка за разрешување на државниот обвинител Љупчо Коцевски” (The Government initiated a procedure for the dismissal of State Prosecutor Ljupcho Kocevski), TV Telma, 11 February 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/02/11/vladata-pochna-postapka-za-razreshuvane-na-drzhavniot-obvinitel-lupcho-koczevski/>.

⁴⁸ “Владата ќе ја прекине постапката за разрешување на Коцевски независно од мислењето од Советот на јавни обвинители” (The Government will terminate the procedure for the dismissal of Kocevski regardless of the opinion of the Council of Public Prosecutors), 360 Stepeni, 26 March 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/vladata-ke-ja-prekine-postapkata-za-razreshuvane-na-kotsevski-nezavisno-od-misleneto-od-sovetot-na-javni-obviniteli/>.

Independence and impartiality

Despite certain positive developments, transparency in the operations of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors still does not reach a satisfactory level.

During the reporting period, moderate progress was observed within the Judicial Council, particularly regarding the regular publication of notices for sessions and adopted decisions, as well as through the continuous live streaming of sessions over the internet, which allows for public insight into the Council's work.⁴⁹ Additionally, the installation of a screen in the session hall, which publicly displays the voting record of members (IN FAVOR or AGAINST), represents a significant step toward advancing transparency and accountability.⁵⁰ However, the Judicial Council still does not have an employee for public relations due to a lack of financial resources for that position.⁵¹ Although press releases and information on current operations are regularly published, the absence of a professional spokesperson significantly limits communication with the media and civil society organizations, especially in sensitive situations that spark significant public interest. In this regard, the recommendation of the Peer Review Mission for establishing a functional communication structure remains unfulfilled. Furthermore, although a Communication Strategy of the Judicial Council and the courts of the Republic of North Macedonia (2024–2028)⁵² was adopted in June 2024, it is not being applied in practice.⁵³

Regarding the reasoning of the Judicial Council's decisions, it remains evident that the recommendation of the Peer Review Mission for detailed, reasoned, and individualized explanations is not fully implemented. The explanations are most often brief, generic, and repetitive, especially during the selection of judges to a higher court. Instead of an analysis based on specific professional results, measurable indicators, and relevant data, discussions are reduced to formal statements and subjective assessments, which limits the transparency and verifiability of the adopted decisions.⁵⁴

Regarding transparency in the work of the Council of Public Prosecutors, during the reporting period, brief announcements containing information on adopted decisions and other Council activities have been regularly published on the website. However, the issue of consistent compliance with the legal obligation to timely inform the public by publishing an announcement no later than three days before sessions remain relevant. In this regard, a partial improvement was noted compared to the previous year—when this deadline was not met for approximately three quarters of the monitored sessions, despite them not being urgent

49 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Tutić, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавните обвинители во 2025 година“ (Monitoring Report of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025), Coalition “All for Fair Trials,” 2025.

50 Ibid.

51 „Придонес во рамки на дискусијата за Извештајот во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот октомври 2024 – септември 2025 година“ (Contribution to the Discussion on the Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the Period October 2024 – September 2025)

52 “Комуникациска стратегија на Судскиот совет и судовите на Република Северна Македонија (2024-2028)” (Communication Strategy of the Judicial Council and the Courts of the Republic of North Macedonia (2024-2028)), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 June 2024, <https://bit.ly/3NEgpf1>.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

cases. In the current reporting period, announcements were published timely for 12 sessions, while for 13 sessions, the legal deadline was again not respected.⁵⁵

During this reporting period, the appointment of a member of the Programming Council of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev” (AJPP) by the Academy’s Board of Directors was noted. Pursuant to Article 19 of the Law on the AJPP, a member of the Programming Council may be a high-level (managing) civil servant from the Ministry of Justice with at least eight years of work experience in the field of justice and a passed bar exam.⁵⁶ However, the appointed person was engaged as a special advisor to the Minister of Justice—a position that does not qualify as a managing civil service post under the Law on Administrative Servants, but rather represents a fixed-term engagement under the Law on Public Sector Employees.⁵⁷ Additionally, previous political involvement and a recent candidacy for Member of Parliament raised serious questions regarding the perception of independence and impartiality of the AJPP, given its crucial role in the selection and training of future judges and public prosecutors.⁵⁸ Following reactions from the civil sector, the appointed member resigned from the position of member of the Programming Council.⁵⁹

The independence of the judiciary is inextricably linked to its financial independence, which continues to pose a serious challenge. As in previous years, during this reporting period, financial resources for the judicial branch were not provided in accordance with legal provisions.⁶⁰ According to data from the Judicial Council, the judicial budget for 2025 amounts to 0.29% of GDP, which directly impacts the capacities of the judiciary and the sustainability of reforms.⁶¹ Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance did not grant consent for the extension of fixed-term employment in 2025,⁶² which directly affects the staffing situation and the operational capability of the courts. Simultaneously, the AJPP has still not received consent from the same ministry to commence the IX generation of candidates for judges and public prosecutors.⁶³ Should this approach continue, there is a realistic risk of serious disruption to the functioning of the courts and public prosecutor’s offices, especially considering alarming data showing that the number of judges has decreased by approximately one quarter over the last five years.⁶⁴

55 Contribution to the Report by the Coalition “All for Fair Trials”.

56 „Закон за Академија за судии и јавни обвинители“ (Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 129/2023 and 53/2024.

57 “Филков ќе го разгледува именувањето на неговиот посебен советник за член на Програмскиот совет на АСЈО” (Filkov will re-examine the appointment of his special advisor as a member of the AJPP Programming Council), TV Telma, 07 July 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/07/07/filkov-go-pravda-izborot-na-negoviot-poseben-sovetnik-za-chлен-na-programskiot-sovet-na-asjo/>.

58 „Загрозување на независноста и законитоста на Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители“ (Endangering the independence and legality of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors), Official Website of the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 4 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Yw4m5y>.

59 Ibid.

60 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Response to a request for free access to public information”.

61 Ibid.

62 „Соопштение од 254-та седница на Судски буџетски совет - 27.08.2025 година“ (Announcement from the 254th session of the Judicial Budget Council - 27.08.2025), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/3MLNq8x>.

63 „Известување“ (Announcement), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev,” 2025, <https://bit.ly/4r56J0>.

64 Lejla Tutić, „Анализа на состојбата со човечките ресурси во судовите и јавните обвинителства во РСМ“ (Analysis of the Situation with Human Resources in the Courts and Public Prosecutor’s Offices in MKD), Coalition “All for Fair Trials” (unpublished).

An additional aspect that undermines the independence of the judicial branch is the public statements made by representatives of the executive branch regarding the work of judges and public prosecutors, including those concerning ongoing (“live”) court cases. In this context, the President of the Government stated that after the local elections, legal mechanisms would be found to ensure that prosecutors and judges act in accordance with the Constitution and the laws, regardless of the criticisms expressed.⁶⁵ Such statements directly contradict the principle of judicial independence and exert political pressure on the judiciary. In response, the Judicial Council issued a public announcement opposing the use of the judiciary for daily political purposes.⁶⁶

Regarding the attendance of members at sessions, during this reporting period, it was noted that the Judicial Council deliberated in full composition—specifically with the presence of voting members (with the exception of the Minister of Justice and the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia)—at a total of 13 sessions. At an additional 14 sessions, the absence of individual members was recorded, primarily due to health reasons or the use of annual leave.⁶⁷

The Council of Public Prosecutors, on the other hand, acted in full composition at 12 sessions, while the absence of one or more members was recorded at 13 sessions. Analyzed in total, 52% of the monitored sessions were held in the absence of at least one member. Furthermore, at five of these sessions, only the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia, as an *ex officio* member, was absent, while at the remaining eight sessions, other members of the Council were absent.⁶⁸

Digitalization of the judiciary and ACCMIS

The Information and Communication Technology Strategy for the Judicial Authorities (ICT Strategy) expired in 2024,⁶⁹ following which the Ministry of Justice announced the preparation of a new ICT strategy in cooperation with the EU Rule of Law project. Regarding the work of the ICT Council, two sessions were held during 2024. In November 2024, the Minister of Justice adopted a new Rulebook on the composition and manner of work of the Council for the Coordination of Information and Communication Technology in the Judicial Authorities,⁷⁰ and on

65 “По локалните избори ќе најдеме правни механизми, мора да имаме судии и обвинители кои работат според закон, кажа Мицкоски” (After the local elections we will find legal mechanisms, we must have judges and prosecutors who work according to the law, said Mickoski), *Sakam Da Kažam* (SDK), 24 September 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/po-lokalnite-izbori-mora-da-imame-sudii-i-obvinителi-koi-rabotat-spored-zakon-kazha-mitskoski/>.

66 „Соопштение“ (Announcement), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qb0QJB>.

67 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Tutic, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавните обвинители во 2025 година“ (Monitoring Report on the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025)

68 Ibid.

69 „Стратегија за информатичко-комуникациска технологија во правосудството за 2019 – 2024 година“ (Strategy for Information and Communication Technology in the Judiciary for 2019 – 2024), Ministry of Justice, February 2019, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/strategiiii-file-bikP.pdf>.

70 „Правилник за составот и начинот на работа на Советот за координирање на информатичко-комуникациска технологија во правосудните органи“ (Rulebook on the Composition and Manner of Work of the Council for Coordination of Information and Communication Technology in Judicial Bodies), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 242/2024.

December 26, 2024, a Decision for its establishment.⁷¹ The constitutive session of the newly formed ICT Council was held on January 27, 2025, and during this reporting period, the Council held a total of 10 sessions.⁷²

Regarding the distribution of cases in public prosecutor's offices, a system for electronic, automated distribution has still not been established. Pursuant to the Rulebook on the Internal Operations of Public Prosecutor's Offices, cases are distributed in the order of their arrival at the registry office, after which, following their entry into the appropriate register, they are electronically assigned to the competent public prosecutor. According to data from the PPO of the Republic of North Macedonia, activities aimed at upgrading and improving the existing Case Management System are underway, with the goal of increasing the efficiency and functionality of the system.⁷³

The Commission for Oversight of the Operation of ACCMIS in the courts acted in accordance with the previously adopted Oversight Plan for the courts, adopted pursuant to the Law on Court Case Management. During 2025, oversight was conducted in all courts in the Republic of North Macedonia, while in 2024, oversight was carried out in 19 courts.⁷⁴

Strengthening the institutional and human capacities of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors is required, with the aim of providing clear, reasoned, and individualized explanations for adopted decisions;

It is necessary to reduce political influence over the work of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, and over the judiciary in general;

Consistent implementation of the Communication Strategy of the Judicial Council and the courts of the Republic of North Macedonia (2024–2028) is necessary, including the appointment of a public relations spokesperson for the Judicial Council and regular informing of the public by the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors;

Consistent implementation of the legal framework for the financial independence of the judiciary is required, through the full application of the Law on the Judicial Budget and the relevant provisions of the Law on Public Prosecution;

The Ministry of Finance must provide consent for the commencement of a new generation of candidates at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors.

71 Одлука за основање на Совет за координирање на информатичко-комуникациска технологија во правосудните органи (Decision on the Establishment of the Council for Coordination of Information and Communication Technology in Judicial Bodies), Ministry of Justice, 26 December 2024, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/sovet-za-ikt-vo-pravosudnite-organi-file-DOGn.pdf>.

72 Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Response to a request for free access to public information'.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

Accountability

The Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on Courts regulate the procedure for determining the accountability of judges and court presidents. During the reporting period, a total of 159 requests for the determination of judicial accountability were submitted.⁷⁵ Of these, the Judicial Council issued a decision to stay the proceedings in 22 cases, while disciplinary measures were imposed in three cases. Regarding the disciplinary sanction of dismissal from judicial office, the Judicial Council dismissed two judges during this period.⁷⁶

During the reporting period, particular attention was drawn to the Judicial Council's decision from May 2025, which dismissed a judge of the Skopje Court of Appeal due to a serious disciplinary breach that renders them unworthy of exercising the judicial function.⁷⁷ The request for the determination of accountability stated that the United States Department of State had publicly designated the specific judge as an individual involved in significant corruption related to bribery in cases of high public interest, resulting in their placement on the so-called "blacklist."⁷⁸ Additionally, the dismissal of a judge from the Basic Court Kavadarci was noted due to incompetent and negligent performance of the judicial function. According to the findings of the Judicial Council, the judge made a total of 95 telephone calls to a defendant in a case they were presiding over, after which they rendered a verdict, representing a serious violation of professional standards and judicial ethics.⁷⁹ In this context, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office (BPPO) Veles, on June 27, 2025, filed an indictment against the judge for the criminal offense of "Malpractice in office" under Article 353-v, paragraph 4 of the Criminal Code (CC).⁸⁰

Regarding the disciplinary accountability of public prosecutors, during the reporting period, six proceedings for determining disciplinary accountability were initiated, while one public prosecutor was dismissed.⁸¹ Specifically, the Council of Public Prosecutors issued a decision confirming the decision of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia to suspend the Higher Public Prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office (HPP) Skopje from office, effective November 11, 2024, for the duration of the criminal proceedings against him. In this regard, on September 9, 2025, the BPPO Štip filed an indictment against the aforementioned Higher Public Prosecutor for the criminal offenses of "Harassment in the performance of duty" under Article 143 and "Abuse of official position and authority" under Article

75 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Response to a request for free access to public information'.

76 Ibid.

77 „Соопштение за јавност“ (Press release), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4pJ0Voi>.

78 „Одлука за разрешување на судија Е.Б.“ (Decision on the dismissal of judge E.B.), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oWeFuE>.

79 „Одлука за разрешување на судија Л.Н.“ (Decision on the dismissal of judge L.N.), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4s0DW9C>.

80 „На 23 септември почнува содењето на разрешениот судија Лазар Нанев во Велешкиот Суд, обвинет е за несовесно работење во службата“ (The trial of dismissed judge Lazar Nanev begins on September 23 in the Veles Court; He is accused of malpractice in office), Sakam Da Kažam (SDK), 3 July 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrežha/na-23-septemvri-pochnuva-sudene-to-na-razresheniot-sudija-lazar-nanev-vo-veleshkiot-sud-obvinet-e-za-nesovesno-rabotene-vo-sluzhbata/>.

81 Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia), 'Response to a request for free access to public information'.

353, paragraph 1 of the CC.⁸² According to the indictment, in the period from September 2023 to October 24, 2024, during working hours, the defendant made threats and exerted continuous psychological violence against five employees at the HPPO Skopje. Additionally, together with another public prosecutor, in the period from January 2023 to August 2024, as co-perpetrators, they abused their official position and authority while handling certain cases by taking actions that exceeded the limits of their competence.⁸³

Acting in this manner, the defendants failed to perform their official duties in accordance with Article 7 of the Law on Public Prosecution; specifically, they performed the function of public prosecutor unlawfully, partially, and subjectively, without adequate protection of the freedoms and rights of man and citizen and the rights of other legal entities, with the intent to enable the acquisition of property benefits for third parties, thereby seriously violating the rights of the parties in multiple proceedings. Given the established serious disciplinary breaches, the Commission submitted a proposal to the Council of Public Prosecutors for his dismissal. Regarding the other public prosecutor from HPPO Skopje, the Commission determined that he had acted incompetently and negligently in four cases in which he withdrew an appeal or indictment, for which a disciplinary measure was imposed—a salary reduction of 30% for a duration of six months, starting from the finality of the decision.⁸⁴

The Judicial Council should ensure consistency, proportionality, and predictability in the conduct of proceedings for determining the accountability of a judge or a court president, with the aim of strengthening legal certainty and trust in disciplinary mechanisms;

In proceedings for determining accountability, it is necessary to consistently respect the standards for fair and equitable treatment, including clear, reasoned, and individualized explanations for the decisions made;

Further strengthening of the institutional and professional capacities of the Judicial Council is required, particularly in the area of preparing and reasoning decisions regarding the disciplinary accountability of judges.

82 „ОЈО Штип поднесе обвинение за малтретирање во вршење на службата и злоупотреби“ (Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Štip filed an indictment for mistreatment in the performance of duty and abuse), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 9 September 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/yoj-shtip-podnese-obvinenie-za-maltretirane-vo-vrshene-na-sluzhbata-i-zloupotrebi/>.

83 Ibid.

84 “Предлог за разрешување на вишиот обвинител Мустафа Хајрулахи, а за обвинителот Јове Цветаноски 30 отсто помала плата 6 месеци, одлучи дисциплинската комисија на обвинителството” (Proposal for dismissal of higher prosecutor Mustafa Hajrulahi, and a 30% salary reduction for 6 months for prosecutor Jove Cvetanoski, decided by the prosecution's disciplinary commission), Sakam Da Kažam (SDK), 10 September 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/predlog-za-razreshuvane-na-vishiot-obvinitel-mustafa-hajrulahi-a-za-obvinitelot-jove-tsvetanoski-30-otsto-pomala-plata-6-mesetsi-odluchi-distsiplinska-ta-komisija-na-obvinitelstvoto/>.

Professionalism and competence

During this reporting period, the functioning of the system for recruitment, selection, and promotion of judges and public prosecutors occupied a central place, with a special emphasis on the VIII generation of candidates of the AJPP, who received their certificates for successfully passing the final exam in February 2025.⁸⁵ This generation numbers a total of 97 candidates, of whom 50 are candidates for judges and 47 for public prosecutors, making it the largest generation since the Academy's founding.⁸⁶

Following the completion of the training, the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors published advertisements to fill vacancies in basic courts and basic public prosecutor's offices across the country. At the 514th session held on February 6, 2025, the Judicial Council adopted a decision to publish an advertisement for the selection of judges in the basic courts,⁸⁷ covering a total of 50 judicial posts in most courts across the country,⁸⁸ in accordance with the projection previously submitted by the Judicial Council to the AJPP at the start of the VIII generation's training. The first selection of judges under this advertisement was carried out at the 517th session held on March 10, 2025.⁸⁹ However, on March 11, 2025, the Judicial Council again published an advertisement for the selection of additional judges in basic courts,⁹⁰ covering new judicial posts beyond the initially determined number.⁹¹ Following the completed procedure, at the 521st session held on April 30, 2025,⁹² the Judicial Council carried out the selection of additional judges as follows: 2 judges in the Basic Court Veles, 1 judge in the Basic Court Struga, 7 judges in the Basic Civil Court, and 9 judges in the Basic Criminal Court, bringing the total number of selected judges from the ranks of the VIII generation candidates to 68, although the initially determined need amounted to 50 judicial posts.

85 „Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители со гордост ги претстави 97 кандидати за судии и јавни обвинители“ (The Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors proudly presented 97 candidates for judges and public prosecutors), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors «Pavel Shatev,» 5 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/48Yvzme>.

86 Ibid.

87 The announcement pertained to filling the following judicial vacancies: 4 judges at the Basic Court Prilep, 1 judge at the Basic Court Veles, 1 judge at the Basic Court Kavadarci, and 1 judge at the Basic Court Struga; additionally, 4 judges were sought for the Basic Court Bitola, 3 for the Basic Court Shtip, and 1 for the Basic Court Strumica. The recruitment also included 3 judges for the Basic Court Kumanovo, and 1 judge each for the Basic Courts in Delchevo, Kriva Palanka, Sveti Nikole, Kochani, and Kichevo, alongside 2 judicial positions for the Basic Court Gevgelija and 2 for the Basic Court Ohrid. Furthermore, 4 judges were allocated to the Basic Court Tetovo, while the highest concentration of vacancies was in the capital, with 6 judges designated for the Basic Criminal Court Skopje and 6 judges for the Basic Civil Court Skopje.

88 „Записник од 514-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ“ (Minutes of the 514th session of the Judicial Council of MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oU2a2z>.

89 „Записник од 517-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ“ (Minutes of the 517th session of the Judicial Council of MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/3YBdWnG>.

90 „Записник од 518-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ“ (Minutes of the 518th session of the Judicial Council of the RNM), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oXuOju>.

91 The advertisement referred to filling the following vacant positions for judges: one judge at the Basic Court Berovo, 2 judges at the Basic Court Veles, 1 judge at the Basic Court Vinica, 6 judges at the Basic Civil Court Skopje, 9 judges at the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, 1 judge at the Basic Court Delčev, 1 judge at the Basic Court Kavadarci, 2 judges at the Basic Court Kičevo, 2 judges at the Basic Court Kočani, 1 judge at the Basic Court Kratovo, 1 judge at the Basic Court Kriva Palanka, 1 judge at the Basic Court Negotino, 1 judge at the Basic Court Radoviš, 1 judge at the Basic Court Strumica, 2 judges at the Basic Court Struga and 2 judges at the Basic Court Shtip.

92 „Записник од 521-та седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ“ (Minutes of the 521st Session of the Judicial Council of MKD), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/3XVobmL>.

In contrast to this approach, the Council of Public Prosecutors acted more restrictively and within the established projections. On February 6, 2025, the Council published an advertisement for the selection of 47 public prosecutors in basic public prosecutor's offices,⁹³ with the vacancies distributed across several prosecutor's offices throughout the country.⁹⁴ At the session held on March 7, 2025, during which the selection of public prosecutors was conducted, although the advertisement envisaged the selection of 47 public prosecutors, 39 candidates applied—some with incomplete documentation or withdrawn applications—resulting in the Council's decision to elect 28 public prosecutors in 10 basic public prosecutor's offices.⁹⁵ Due to the unfilled positions, the Council of Public Prosecutors republished an advertisement for the selection of public prosecutors on March 12, 2025.⁹⁶ In the announcement regarding this occasion, the Council pointed out that, pursuant to the Law on the AJPP, the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors independently determine the number of required staff, while the Board of Directors of the AJPP determines the size of the generation based on those projections. In this specific case, the projections for the VIII generation envisaged 50 judges and 47 public prosecutors, resulting in a generation of 97 candidates in total. However, the additional advertisements and selections for judges conducted by the Judicial Council beyond the initially determined figure raised serious questions regarding compliance with the decisions of the AJPP Board of Directors and the impact on the functioning of the public prosecution, the AJPP, and broader institutional cooperation. In this regard, it was announced that the Ministry of Justice, the AJPP, and the PPO of the Republic of North Macedonia would be informed of these situations.⁹⁷ At the session held on May 8, 2025, the Council of Public Prosecutors performed a new selection following the second published advertisement, whereby only one public prosecutor was elected to the BPPO Skopje.

Regarding the promotion of judges and public prosecutors to higher courts and public prosecutor's offices, during this reporting period as well, multiple procedures were conducted that once again raised questions concerning the consistency in applying criteria, compliance with ranking lists, transparency, and the quality of the reasoning behind the decisions made.

The Judicial Council carried out the selection of judges in several higher courts, specifically: 2 judges in the Gostivar Court of Appeal, 3 judges in the Štip Court of Appeal, 4 judges in the Bitola Court of Appeal, 10 judges in the Skopje Court of Appeal, and 3 judges in the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia.

93 „Оглас за избор на јавни обвинители“ (Advertisement for the Election of Public Prosecutors), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/oglas-za-izbor-na-javni-obvinitelji/>.

94 The advertisement pertained to filling the following vacant positions for public prosecutors: 14 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, 2 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Gevgelija, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Kriva Palanka, 3 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Kumanovo, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Veles, 2 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Bitola, 3 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Ohrid, 3 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Prilep, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Resen, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Struga, 2 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Gostivar, 2 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Kicevo, 4 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Tetovo, 3 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Štip, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Radoviš, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Delčevo, 1 public prosecutor in the Public Prosecutor's Office Kočani, and 2 public prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Office Strumica.

95 „Одлука за избор СОИ бр. 3/25“ (Decision on selection SOI no. 3/25), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/odluka-za-izbor-soi-br-3-25/>.

96 „Оглас за избор на јавни обвинители“ (Advertisement for the selection of public prosecutors), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 12 March 2025, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/oglas-za-izbor-na-javni-obvinitelji-2/>.

97 Ibid.

During the selection for the Gostivar Court of Appeal, six candidates applied for the advertisement, one of whom withdrew their application, leaving five candidates on the final ranking list. The Judicial Council elected the first two top-ranked candidates without deviating from the ranking list. A similar approach was applied during the selection for the Štip Court of Appeal, where of the six initially registered candidates, one was rejected due to incomplete documentation and one was elected under another advertisement, resulting in the selection of three out of the four candidates on the final ranking list. In contrast to these cases, during the selection for the Bitola Court of Appeal, although five candidates applied for the advertisement, the Judicial Council elected only three judges—specifically the first-, second-, and fourth-ranked candidates—without clear reasoning for bypassing the third-ranked candidate.⁹⁸

The selection of judges in the Skopje Court of Appeal provoked the most dilemmas and criticism. For the criminal department, the first four ranked candidates were elected; however, an indicative moment was noted during the voting, where one member of the Judicial Council voted “IN FAVOR” of a candidate during the regular vote, but voted “AGAINST” the same candidate during the voting with the Badinter majority. In the civil department, the ranking list was not respected, as the third- and fourth-ranked candidates were not elected, with the explanation that they were already performing other functions, thus the Council concluded that “they made their own choice.” Additionally, some candidates did not receive a majority of votes due to the insistence of one Council member on respecting the principle of equitable representation of communities. Although it was pointed out that this principle should be applied in cases where candidates have an equal number of points, rather than by bypassing higher-ranked candidates, in practice, four candidates were bypassed in order of the ranking list, and a candidate with fewer points, but of a different ethnicity, was elected.⁹⁹

During the selection of judges in the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, the advertisement envisaged the selection of three judges each in the criminal and civil departments. For the criminal department, only two candidates applied—judges from the Skopje Court of Appeal—and both were elected. For the civil department, four candidates applied for three vacancies, opening a dilemma within the Judicial Council as to whether conditions for selection existed, given that accountability procedures were being conducted against the second- and third-ranked candidates which had not yet reached finality. Although arguments were made that the advertisement had been open for nearly two years and that it was necessary to reach a decision, as well as arguments that objective decisions could not be made under such circumstances, the Judicial Council ultimately decided to proceed with the selection and elected only the first-ranked candidate, while the other candidates were not elected. In this context, it is worth noting that for some of these selections, such as the selection of judges in the Skopje Court of Appeal, the advertisements were published as far back as 2023, and the procedures lasted nearly two years. Furthermore, the recommendation from the Peer

98 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Tutic, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавните обвинители во 2025 година“ (Monitoring Report on the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025)

99 Ibid.

Review Mission for the public release of ranking lists with candidate scores remains unfulfilled. Even two years after this recommendation was given, the Judicial Council has not implemented it in its practice. Simultaneously, no substantial improvement in the quality of the reasoning behind the votes of Judicial Council members has been observed. The argumentation remains predominantly generic and repetitive, utilizing general formulations without reference to specific indicators or objective criteria. This approach leaves the impression that discussions during selections are formal rather than substantive. The absence of clear and meaningful reasoning when voting “against” is particularly concerning, as in several cases only general and vague reasons are cited.¹⁰⁰

As for the Council of Public Prosecutors, at the session held on October 22, 2024, public prosecutors were elected as follows: one public prosecutor in the HPPO Bitola, one in the HPPO Skopje, two in the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, and two in the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption (BP-PO-POCC).¹⁰¹ Additionally, at the session held on July 16, 2025, the Council elected two more public prosecutors in the HPPO Skopje and two in the BPPO-POCC.¹⁰²

In addition to the selection and promotion of judges and public prosecutors, during this reporting period, the Judicial Council also reached decisions regarding the election of court presidents, as well as the appointment of acting presidents. Decisions were reached for the election of presidents of the Higher Administrative Court, the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as several basic and appellate courts across the country. Simultaneously, on several occasions, acting court presidents were appointed, resulting in the function being performed in an acting capacity in a total of 10 courts. This indicates a lack of timeliness in the implementation of procedures for the selection of court presidents and a prolonged duration of these procedures, which negatively affects the stability and efficiency of judicial management.¹⁰³

Within the broader context of the functioning of the recruitment and career advancement system in the judiciary, in October 2024, a new director of the AJPP was elected—a public prosecutor from the HPPO Bitola.¹⁰⁴ The manner in which the selection was conducted triggered significant public reactions, considering that the Board of Directors of the AJPP decided to carry out the procedure through a secret ballot, with the possibility of choosing between multiple candidates, without offering a clear and reasoned explanation for the necessity of such an approach. Given that the AJPP represents the sole institutional entry point into the judicial and public prosecution professions, this method of selection raised serious ques-

100 Ibid.

101 „Соопштение“ (Announcement), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2024, <https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-5/>.

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

103 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Totic, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавните обвинители во 2025 година“ (Monitoring Report on the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025)

104 „Известување од одржано продолжение на 221-ва седница на Управниот одбор на Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители“ (Announcement from the continuation of the 221st session of the Board of Directors of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev,” 14 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/4hsyaYm>.

tions regarding the transparency and credibility of the procedure, as well as the risk of possible external influences.¹⁰⁵ In this context, one of the candidates, a judge in the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, initiated an administrative dispute before the Administrative Court, claiming that the selection procedure was contrary to the Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, the Statute of the AJPP, and the Law on General Administrative Procedure, which provide for the public and transparent nature of the procedure.¹⁰⁶ However, the Administrative Court dismissed the lawsuit as unfounded.¹⁰⁷

The Judicial Council should abandon the established practice of promoting judges without substantive and individualized reasoning for its decisions. Every decision for selection or promotion must be clearly argued, based on objective criteria and verifiable data;

The Judicial Council is required to publicly and timely release the ranking lists of candidates for selection and promotion to higher courts, including scores by individual criteria, as well as clear and detailed explanations for the decisions made or for any deviation from the ranking list;

The Judicial Council should publicly release all decisions and minutes related to the procedures for the selection and promotion of judges in higher courts, in order to strengthen the transparency and public accountability of the process;

A revision of the Rulebook on the Evaluation of Judges for Selection and Promotion to a Higher Court is necessary, with the aim of establishing clear, measurable, and unambiguous criteria that will limit discretion and ensure equal treatment of candidates;

It is essential to establish a systematic mechanism for the regular monitoring and public release of data regarding the number, distribution, and workload of professional associates in the courts, as a key element for the efficient functioning of the judicial system;

Transparent publication of data for all conducted training sessions in the judiciary is required, including information on topics, target groups, participants, and the institutions implementing them, for better monitoring of continuous professional development;

It is essential to establish clear and measurable criteria for the promotion, rotation, and career development of judges and public prosecutors, based on objective indicators of expertise, efficiency, and integrity;

The number of judges and public prosecutors must be aligned with the real needs of the system, based on objective indicators such as caseload, duration of proceedings, and staffing capacities. In this regard, a revision of the judicial network is necessary for a rational determination of the need for courts and their capacity, based on functional, demographic, and workload criteria, rather than ad-hoc decisions.

¹⁰⁵ „Загрижува одлуката на Управниот одбор на Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители да го изврши изборот на директор на Академијата по пат на тајно гласање“ (Concern over the decision of the Board of Directors of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors to Elect the Academy Director via Secret Ballot), Official website of the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 2024, <https://bit.ly/4p1YnGJ>.

¹⁰⁶ „Судијата Ненад Савески поднесе тужба за начинот на кој бил избран директорот на Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители“ (Judge Nenad Saveski filed a lawsuit over the manner in which the Director of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors was elected), 360 Degrees, 15 November 2024, <https://360steopeni.mk/sudijata-nenad-saveski-podnese-tuzhba-poradi-nachin-na-koj-beshe-izbran-direktor-na-akademijata-za-sudii-i-javni-obviniteli/>.

¹⁰⁷ „Управниот суд ја одби како неоснована тужбата за начинот на кој беше избрана директорката на ACJO“ (The Administrative Court rejected as unfounded the lawsuit regarding the manner in which the AJPP Director was elected), 360 Degrees, 17 December 2024, <https://360steopeni.mk/upravniot-sud-ja-odbi-kako-neosnovana-tuzhbata-za-nachinot-na-koj-beshe-izbrana-direktorkata-na-asjo/>.

Quality of justice

Given that the VIII generation of AJPP candidates has already been covered above through the analysis of the selection procedures for judges and public prosecutors, attention in this section, from the perspective of the Academy, is focused on the situation and institutional challenges related to the IX generation of candidates for initial training.

The procedure for forming the IX generation took place with significant delays and interruptions. Namely, after two postponements,¹⁰⁸ psychological testing was conducted on October 21 and 22, 2023,¹⁰⁹ while the integrity test was carried out on November 6 and 7, 2023.¹¹⁰ However, even during this procedure, serious questions were raised regarding its compliance with the legal framework, which later received institutional confirmation. In 2024, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) determined that the AJPP had violated the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest and the Electoral Code by publishing an advertisement in January 2023 for the admission of 130 candidates—future judges and public prosecutors—during a period of parliamentary and presidential elections. According to the SCPC, the publication of the advertisement initiated an employment procedure that was not put on hold, even though this was legally mandatory during the election process. The Academy challenged the SCPC's decision before the Administrative Court; however, the court dismissed the lawsuit as unfounded and decided that the admission procedure for the 130 candidates must be stayed until the conclusion of the elections.¹¹¹ By the end of this reporting period, no further institutional steps or clear information regarding the continuation or redefinition of the procedure for this generation have been noted. Additionally, according to publicly released announcements from the AJPP, it appears that the Ministry of Finance has still not granted consent for the formation of a new generation of candidates,¹¹² deepening the uncertainty surrounding future human resource planning in the judiciary.

The Reform Agenda of Republic of North Macedonia 2024–2027 envisages the advancement of judicial integrity by revising the procedures for recruitment, selection, appointment, evaluation, promotion, transfer, and dismissal of judges and public prosecutors, as well as through the timely filling of vacancies based on the projections of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, with a deadline of December 2026.¹¹³ However, taking into account the lack of consent from the Ministry of Finance for a new generation of AJPP candidates,

¹⁰⁸ It was originally planned for 5 and 6 September 2023, but the dates were moved to 23 and 24 September 2023. Delevska and Zhagar, "Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2022 – September 2023."

¹⁰⁹ „Известување за датуми за полагање на психолошкиот тест“ (Announcement regarding dates for the psychological test), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors «Pavel Shatev,» 9 October 2023, <https://bit.ly/4iZzbEt>.

¹¹⁰ „Известување за распоред за полагање на тестот за интегритет“ (Announcement regarding the schedule for the integrity test), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors «Pavel Shatev,» 3 November 2023, <https://bit.ly/48VQGFL>.

¹¹¹ „Управен суд: Неоснована е тужбата на АСЈО за одлуката на ДКСК“ (Administrative Court: AJPP's lawsuit against the SCPC decision is unfounded), Media Information Agency – MIA, 2024, <https://bit.ly/3MydIAK>.

¹¹² „Известување од одржана 240-та седница на Управниот одбор на Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители“ (Announcement from the 240th session of the Board of Directors of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors «Pavel Shatev,» 22 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/3YxwSno>.

¹¹³ „Анекс 1 на Реформската агенда“ (Annex 1 of the Reform Agenda), Ministry of European Affairs, 2024, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/reformska-agenda-na-severna-makedonija-2024-2027-godina-file-YJ6J.pdf>.

the long and interrupted admission procedure, and the two-year training that candidates must complete, realistic projections for making a new generation of judges and public prosecutors operational are shifting toward 2030. In this context, it can already be concluded that this reform is unlikely to be implemented within the deadlines established by the Implementation Plan of the Reform Agenda.

Regarding the regular operations of the AJPP, out of the 249 planned training sessions for judges and public prosecutors in 2024, 239 were implemented. In the period from January 1 to September 30, 2025, out of the 130 planned training sessions, 122 were implemented. Of the training sessions implemented in 2024, seven were dedicated to EU law, and two to the protection of child victims through an analysis of domestic judicial practice and the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. In 2025, three training sessions in the field of EU law were implemented, while training with a broader focus on human rights was again absent, with the exception of two sessions related to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and addressing anti-Roma racism.¹¹⁴

In terms of the harmonization of judicial practice, the Department for Judicial Practice at the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia held a total of six sessions during the reporting period.¹¹⁵ In the same period, the Supreme Court adopted three principle legal opinions, two principle positions, five conclusions, and seven legal maxims (*sententiae*), which formally indicates continuous activity toward advancing legal certainty and the uniform application of the law.¹¹⁶

During this reporting period, the issue related to the decision of the Administrative Court was noted, which annulled the decision of the Assembly for the election of a judge of the Constitutional Court nominated by the Judicial Council. This case raised serious questions regarding the manner in which the Judicial Council acts when determining a proposed candidate for a Constitutional Court judge, whereby the relevant facts and omissions became fully clear only nearly two years after the initial decision in 2023. With the judgment of the Administrative Court, the mandate of the elected judge of the Constitutional Court was terminated, and they returned to the position of judge at the Skopje Court of Appeal. By the end of this reporting period, the Judicial Council had not yet conducted a new procedure for nominating a candidate for a Constitutional Court judge.

Regarding the legislative framework, the amendments to the CC from September 2023, which reduced the penalty for the criminal offense of abuse of official position and authority (Article 353), continued to have a significant impact on the judicial system. Consequently, initiatives were submitted to the Constitutional Court for the assessment of the constitutionality of the Law on Amending and Supplementing the CC in its entirety. In February 2025, the Con-

¹¹⁴ Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev”, “Response to a request for free access to public information”.

¹¹⁵ „Соопштение од одржана седница на одделот за судска практика“ (Announcement from the session of the Judicial Practice Department), Official website of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 15 April 2024, <https://bit.ly/3VFZgmv>. „Соопштение од одржана седница на одделот за судска практика“ (Announcement from the session of the Judicial Practice Department), Official website of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 April 2024, <https://bit.ly/4qaWuSK>.

¹¹⁶ Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Response to a request for free access to public information.”

stitutional Court initiated a procedure for assessing constitutionality and set a deadline of six months for the Assembly to amend and/or supplement the law.¹¹⁷ However, by the end of the reporting period, the Assembly had not adopted any legislative amendments.

As for the staffing of the courts and public prosecutor's offices, again no progress was noted in overcoming existing conditions. In March 2025, the Ministry of Finance did not grant consent for the extension of fixed-term employment,¹¹⁸ which further burdens the existing capacities of the institutions and reduces their functionality.

Regarding citizens' perception of the work of the courts, during the reporting period, 391 petitions were submitted regarding the work of the courts, court presidents, and judges, with the Judicial Council acting and deciding on 384 of them. These data indicate a continuously high level of dissatisfaction and a need for systemic improvements in the relationship between the judiciary and the public.¹¹⁹

The application of mediation as an alternative mechanism for dispute resolution remains limited. According to data from the Ministry of Justice, in 2024, the public prosecutor's offices referred only one child to mediation, in contrast to 2022 when seven children were referred and all procedures were successfully completed. For 2025, the data have not yet been processed.¹²⁰

A particularly significant event during this reporting period was the tragedy that occurred on March 16, 2025, in the "Pulse" discotheque in Kočani, in which 62 people lost their lives and 193 were injured. Subsequent investigative actions indicated serious security failures and systemic weaknesses in the functioning, oversight, and licensing of the facility's operations.

The BPPO Kočani initiated an investigative procedure against 27 physical and three legal entities, for whom there was a grounded suspicion that, as co-perpetrators, they committed a criminal offense – Grave acts against general security under Article 292 in connection with Article 288 of the CC.¹²¹ A total of 13 public prosecutors from the basic public prosecutor's offices in Kočani, Skopje, Štip, and Kumanovo were involved in the investigative procedure. In May 2025, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia informed the public that the investigative procedure was completed and expanded, bringing the total number of suspects to 46 persons.¹²²

117 „У.Бр.162/2023 и У.Бр.163/2023“ (Constitutional Court Cases U.No.162/2023 and U.No.163/2023), Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://ustavensud.mk/archives/32824>.

118 „Соопштение од 27.08.2025 година за одржаната 254-та седница на Судскиот буџетски совет“ (Announcement from the 254th session of the Judicial Budget Council), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oUgSqx>.

119 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Response to a request for free access to public information."

120 Ministry of Justice, "Response to a request for free access to public information."

121 „Отворена истрага за пожарот во Кочани“ (Investigation opened into the fire in Kočani), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/otvorena-istraga-za-pozharot-vo-kochani/>.

122 „Истрагата за пожарот во „Пулс“ заврши, обезбедени огромен број докази“ (Investigation into the «Puls» fire completed, massive amount of evidence secured), Official website of the Public Prosecutors Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/istragata-za-pozharot-vo-puls-zavrshi-obezbedeni-ogromen-broj-dokazi/>.

On June 13, 2025, the BPPO Kočani filed an indictment against 34 physical and three legal entities for criminal offenses that caused significant danger to the life and limb of people, as well as to property on a larger scale, committed in a place where a large number of people were gathered.¹²³ Although the indictment was initially filed with the Basic Court Kočani, the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, by Decision KR-35/25 of June 25, 2025, decided that the Basic Criminal Court Skopje is the substantively and territorially competent court to act on case KOOA.no.13/25.¹²⁴ Pursuant to this decision, on July 2, 2025, the case was delivered to the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, where, through the ACCMIS system, it was distributed to the Chamber for the Evaluation of the Indictment.

Given the workload and complexity of the case, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje continuously informed the public about the course of the proceedings. In the announcement dated August 18, 2025, the court informed that the indictment is in the evaluation phase before the competent chamber, and a total of 40 objections were submitted by the defendants and their defense counsel, which are being forwarded to the competent public prosecutor's office.¹²⁵ The court clarified that this is an exceptionally complex case with a large amount of evidence and injured parties, as well as a total of 37 indicted physical and legal entities, and that all legal actions are being taken for the timely and lawful evaluation of the indictment, with full respect for the rights of the parties.¹²⁶ By the end of this reporting period, the indictment for this case had not yet been approved by the court.

It is necessary to strengthen the role of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia in the harmonization of judicial practice by continuously adopting principle positions and principle legal opinions, as well as by establishing more frequent and more formalized meetings with the appellate courts. In this regard, it is also necessary to increase the activities and capacities of the departments for judicial practice;

Clear and consistent political will is required to resolve the issue of staffing in the judiciary and the public prosecution, through the timely provision of employment consents, strategic human resource planning, and the alignment of the number of judges, public prosecutors, and professional associates with the real needs of the system.

123 „Поднесено обвинение за трагедијата во дискотеката „Пулс“ против 34 физички и три правни лица“ (Indictment filed for the „Puls“ discotheque tragedy against 34 individuals and three legal entities), Media Information Agency – MIA, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aghBKd>.

124 „Уважен предлогот за пренесување на надлежноста во предметот за пожарот во дискотеката „Пулс“ во Кочани“ (Proposal for transfer of jurisdiction in the «Puls» discotheque fire case accepted), Official website of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4p2gJ4r>.

125 „Соопштение за јавност“ (Press Release), Official website of the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, 2025, <https://bit.ly/48HDNAv>.

126 Ibid.

Efficiency

According to data from the 2024 Annual Report of the Judicial Council, the courts in 2024 failed to overcome the influx of cases and increased the backlog by 3,724 cases.¹²⁷ Out of a total of 34 courts, 18 were up-to-date, while 16 courts were not, including the Higher Administrative Court, three appellate courts, and 12 basic courts.¹²⁸ Data on the occupancy of judicial posts indicate a further deterioration of the staffing situation. Compared to 2023, a decrease of 34 judges was recorded in 2024. As the main reasons for this trend, the Judicial Council cites the natural outflow of judges due to reaching the conditions for age-based retirement—especially following the latest amendments to the Law on Labor Relations, whereby retirement conditions are set at 64 years of age without the possibility of extending the judicial function—as well as the termination of office on other legal grounds.¹²⁹

As for the public prosecutor's offices, according to the 2024 Annual Report on the work of the public prosecutor's offices, the basic public prosecutor's offices in North Macedonia proceeded against a total of 37,255 perpetrators of criminal acts, of which reports against a total of 25,909 perpetrators were newly received. A comparison of the data shows that in the reporting year, a significant increase in the number of newly reported perpetrators was registered compared to the previous year (by approximately 10%), both in terms of adult perpetrators and children. Only the number of reports against unknown perpetrators decreased. Given the continuous reduction in both the number of public prosecutors and the number of public prosecution staff in recent years, which continued through 2024, it is clear that such an increased influx of cases in the public prosecutor's offices represents an additional challenge to capacities.¹³⁰

The lack of staffing capacity in the public prosecutor's offices is clearly visible both through the number of public prosecutors and the state of the public prosecution service. In 2024, only two-thirds of the planned public prosecutor positions were filled, while the occupancy of the public prosecution service amounted to approximately one-third of the required capacity. According to the Decision on Determining the Number of Public Prosecutors in the Public Prosecutor's Offices, adopted by the Council of Public Prosecutors, the projected number for 2024 was 261 public prosecutors, of which 169 positions were actually filled, or 64.7% of the planned number.¹³¹ Particularly concerning is the fact that four public prosecutor's offices—Resen, Delčev, Berovo, and Kriva Palanka—functioned without a single public prosecutor during 2024, which seriously calls into question the fulfillment of the constitutional function of the public prosecution and citizens' access to justice.

¹²⁷ „Годишен извештај за работата на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија за 2024 година“ (Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024), Judicial Council, 2025, <https://bit.ly/3MDkgso>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ „Извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства на Република Северна Македонија за 2024 година“ (Annual Report on the Work of the Public Prosecution Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024), Public Prosecution Office, 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/godishen-izveshtaj-2024-finalen.pdf>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

The Ministry of Justice continues with the processes of amending and supplementing laws in the field of the judiciary. According to data obtained from the Ministry of Justice, the following are in government procedure: the Law on Amending the Law on Salaries of Public Prosecutors, the Law on Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Law on Amending the Law on Salaries of Judges, the Law on Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Judicial Council, the Law on Judicial Service, the Law on Public Prosecution Service, the Law on the Judicial Council, and the Law on Civil Procedure. Meanwhile, the Law on the State Attorney's Office, the Law on Execution of Sanctions, the Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Probation, and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors have been drafted and are in the consultation phase for submission to government procedure. Additionally, working groups actively working in the Ministry of Justice on legislative texts include the working groups for amending and supplementing the Law on the AJPP, the Law on Courts, the CC, and the Law on Confiscation of Property in Civil Proceedings; the Law on Criminal Procedure has been drafted, but in the meantime, new directives have been adopted for which correspondence tables are being prepared.¹³²

It is necessary to develop a comprehensive and updated analysis of the judicial and public prosecution network, aimed at optimizing the distribution of cases in conditions of chronic staff shortages and limited institutional resources, as well as achieving better alignment between the actual influx of cases and the capacities of the courts and public prosecutor's offices;

It is necessary to develop a clear, transparent, and measurable methodology for determining the required number of judges and public prosecutors, based on objective indicators, including data from the latest population census, demographic distribution, territorial jurisdiction, and the complexity and volume of cases, for the purpose of long-term and sustainable human resource planning.

¹³² Ministry of Justice, "Response to a request for free access to public information."

**TABLE: Overview of elections, promotions, and staffing processes in the judiciary
(October 2024 – September 2025)**

1) VIII GENERATION OF THE AJPP – 2024/2025

Subsections	Projected	Elected	Remarks
Total candidates	97	97	Largest generation to date
Judges	50	68	Determined need by the Judicial Council: 50
Public prosecutors	47	29	Determined need by the Council of Public Prosecutors: 47
Awarding of certificates	February 2025	March - May 2025	Commencement of advertisements in February

2) ELECTION OF THE AJPP DIRECTOR

Subsections	Data	Remarks
Date	October 2024	
Modality	Secret ballot	No explanation provided for the secrecy
Legal issue	Contrary to the legal obligation for transparency	Lawsuit initiated before the Administrative Court
Outcome	Lawsuit dismissed	Decreased trust in transparency

3) ADVERTISEMENTS AND ELECTIONS – JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Category	Data	Remarks
Advertisement 06.02.2025	50 positions	The Judicial Council eventually elected 68 judges (exceeding by +18)
First Selection (11.03.2025)	49 judges selected	
Second Advertisement 11.03.2025	+35 new positions	Contrary to AJPP planning
Second Selection (30.04.2025)	+19 new selections	Total of 68 elected out of 50 planned
Key Deviations	1) Exceeding the projected number 2) Disregard for ranking lists 3) Irregular application of ethnic quotas	The recommendation for transparent ranking lists remains unfulfilled

4) ADVERTISEMENTS AND ELECTIONS – COUNCIL OF PUBLIC PROSECUTORS

Category	Data	Remarks
Advertisement 06.02.2025	47 positions	
Applicants	39 (5 withdrawn)	Low level of interest
Selected (07.03.2025)	28 prosecutors	Across 10 prosecutor's offices
Second Advertisement 12.03.2025	New cycle	
Second Selection 08.05.2025	1 public prosecutor	Low application rate; decreased interest

5) PROMOTIONS IN APPELLATE COURTS AND THE SUPREME COURT

Category	Data	Remarks
Gostivar Court of Appeal	2 elected	Ranking list was respected
Štip Court of Appeal	3 elected	1 application rejected
Bitola Court of Appeal	3 elected	Disregard for ranking (3rd-ranked bypassed)
Skopje Court of Appeal – Criminal	4 elected	One member voted inconsistently ("FOR/AGAINST")
Skopje Court of Appeal – Civil	Selection with deviations	Ethnic criteria prioritized over scores
Supreme Court – Criminal	2 elected	Lack of candidates
Supreme Court – Civil	1 elected	Ranking list disregarded due to ongoing accountability procedures

6) COURT PRESIDENTS

Category	Data	Remarks
Number of elected presidents	15 courts	
Number of acting (VD) presidents appointed	10 courts	Constant practice of delayed elections

2. Fight against Corruption

In the reporting period, the negative effects of the recent amendments to the CC on high-profile corruption cases continued, which contributed, among other things, to the fact that the Republic of North Macedonia recorded no significant progress in the fight against corruption. Reports from various sources, including Transparency International,¹³³ the US Department of State,¹³⁴ and “Freedom House”,¹³⁵ show no progress, pointing to the need for improvement in the fight against corruption, with a focus on increasing resources and support for the institutions implementing anti-corruption measures.

In last year's EC report for the Republic of North Macedonia, it is stated that the country's level of preparation for the fight against corruption is between “some and moderate.” The previous recommendations were given again, including the adoption of a new Criminal Code in accordance with EU legislation and international standards, improving the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest, and providing sufficient human and financial resources for the Office of the BPPO-POCC and the SCPC.¹³⁶

The assessment of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) determined that the Republic of North Macedonia has satisfactorily implemented only 17 of the 23 recommendations for preventing corruption from the compliance report of the fifth evaluation round, while the rest are partially implemented. The steps taken to improve transparency and promote the integrity of persons in top executive positions, such as the new Rules of Procedure of the Government and the creation of an electronic database for registering and verifying asset declarations for the property of elected and appointed public officials, were welcomed in the report.¹³⁷

Toward the end of February, the SCPC, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI), and with the support of the Austrian Development Agency, organized a workshop on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2021–2025) and a roadmap for the development of a new anti-corruption strategy (2026–2030). The workshop was attended by representatives of state institutions involved in the implementation of the existing strategy, as well as representatives from international organizations in the country, civil society, and the private sector.¹³⁸ In May, the SCPC held initial consultations with ex-

133 „Индекс на перцепција на корупцијата 2024: Погубна улога на корупцијата во кризата со климатските промени“ (Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: The Devastating Role of Corruption in the Climate Change Crisis), Official website of Transparency International—Macedonia, 11 February 2025, <https://transparency.mk/2025/02/11/indeks-na-percepција-на-korupcijata-2024-pogubna-uloga-na-korupcijata-vo-krizata-so-klimatskite-promeni/>.

134 U.S. Department of State, ‘2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Macedonia’, April 2025, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-macedonia>.

135 Freedom House, “States in Transition 2025: Republic of North Macedonia”, 2025, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2025>.

136 “COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT – North Macedonia 2024 Report,” European Commission, October 30, 2024, <https://bit.ly/40NhHzf>.

137 “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, July 9, 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-procedu>.

138 „Работилница за имплементација на Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судир на интереси (2021–2025) и патоказ за развој на нова антикорупциска стратегија (2026–2030)“ (Workshop on the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2021–2025) and Roadmap for the Development of a New Anti-Corruption Strategy (2026–2030)), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 28 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/42Q5sMq>.

perts,¹³⁹ and then prepared an Activity Plan and Methodology for Corruption Risk Assessment. In June, four focus groups were conducted with representatives from public institutions, state enterprises, the business sector, and civil society to assess sector-specific corruption risks.¹⁴⁰ Toward the middle of September, a consultative meeting was held with representatives of the Platform for the Fight Against Corruption to review and discuss the prepared Corruption Risk Assessment in the preparation of the Strategy and the methodology for its preparation.¹⁴¹ The approach in the preparation of the new anti-corruption strategy shows the readiness of the competent institutions for a transparent and inclusive leading of this process.

Toward the middle of June, the Government adopted the Strategy for Strengthening the Capacities for Conducting Financial Investigations and Confiscation of Property for the period 2025–2028, with an Action Plan. The strategy aims to improve the institutional frameworks for financial investigations, asset recovery, and management of confiscated property.¹⁴²

In April, the newly formed Inter-Ministerial Body for Coordination of Anti-Corruption Activities held its constitutive session. Under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister for Good Governance, the body unites the key institutions, such as the SCPC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mol), the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Financial Police, the Public Revenue Office, the Customs Administration, and the competent ministries - to improve strategic coordination in the fight against corruption.¹⁴³ This represents a positive step toward better coordination of the bodies competent in this area, provided that this body functions efficiently and regularly performs its tasks.

139 „Започнати активности за подготовкa на новата Национална стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026-2030“ (Activities Initiated for the Preparation of the New National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026-2030), official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 13 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4lyLrRz>.

140 „ДКСК започна со активности за подготовкa на Национална стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026-2030“ (SCPC initiated activities for the preparation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026–2030), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 9 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4kLKpAz>.

141 „Одржан работен состанок помеѓу Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата и Платформата на граѓански организации за борба против корупција за подготовкa на новата Национална стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026-2030“ (Working meeting held between the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and the Platform of Civil Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption for the preparation of the new National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026-2030), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 18 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3IKIO12>.

142 „Почнува битката со нелегалниот имот - Владата со нова Стратегија за финансиски истраги“ (The battle against illegal property begins - Government with a new Strategy for Financial Investigations), Plusinfo.mk, 17 June 2025, <https://plusinfo.mk/pochnuva-bit-kata-so-nelegalniot-imot-vladata-so-nova-strategi-a-za-finansiski-istragi/>.

143 „Промовирано ново тело за борба против корупцијата“ (New body for the fight against corruption promoted), Radio Free Europe, 8 April 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33377265.html>.

Institutional Framework

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

The reporting period was marked by personnel changes at the top of the SCPC. In July, the President of the SCPC resigned¹⁴⁴ following an indictment for disclosing official secrets¹⁴⁵ in the “Additive” case.¹⁴⁶ The offenses the President was charged with were denied by her, stating that her contact with the individual who was later accused occurred before the initiation of the proceedings and that she had no further involvement.¹⁴⁷ Following a temporary ban on professional activity imposed by the Criminal Court Skopje, the President withdrew from performing her work duties.¹⁴⁸ The SCPC announced that it would continue to function, and no other member resigned while awaiting the outcome of the investigation.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, according to the investigation, the President ordered an auditor from the State Audit Office (SAO) to take an exam on her behalf, which enabled her to obtain a security clearance certificate for access to information classified as a state secret.¹⁵⁰ This led to another indictment against her for computer forgery, while the SAO removed the auditor from performing audits and revoked his security clearance certificate.¹⁵¹ Shortly thereafter, the President of the SCPC resigned from her position and submitted a request to the SAO to return to her previous position as assistant to the chief state auditor¹⁵² while toward the end of September, the court proceedings against her for the aforementioned criminal offenses began.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁴ „Собранието ја констатира оставката на претседателката на ДКСК, Татјана Димитровска“ (Parliament confirms the resignation of the SCPC President, Tatjana Dimitrovska), 360 Degrees, 29 July 2025, <https://360steperi.mk/sobranieto-ja-konstatira-ostavka-na-pretsedatelkata-na-dksk-tatjana-dimitrovska/>.

¹⁴⁵ „Антикорупциска, со потпис на Димитровска, отфрлила две пријави поврзани со случајот „Адитив““ (Anti-Corruption, signed by Dimitrovska, rejected two complaints related to the «Aditiv» case), Telma TV, 25 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/25/antikorupcziska-so-potpis-na-dimitrovska-otfrlila-dve-prijavi-povrzani-so-sluhajot-aditiv>.

¹⁴⁶ „Обвинение за Димитровска од ДКСК – отдавала службени тајни преку Вибер, а сертификатот за тајност ѝ го полагал друг“ (Indictment for Dimitrovska from SCPC – leaked official secrets via Viber, and someone else took her security clearance exam), 360 Degrees, 18 July 2025, <https://360steperi.mk/obvinenie-za-dimitrovska-od-dksk-oddavala-sluzhbeni-tajni-preku-viber-a-sertifikatot-za-tajnost-i-go-polagal-drug/>.

¹⁴⁷ „Димитровска од ДКСК не дава оставка: „Жалам за комуникацијата со семејниот пријател, не влијаев на истрагата““ (Dimitrovska from SCPC refuses to resign: “I regret the communication with a family friend, I did not influence the investigation”), TV 21, 30 April 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/dimitrovska-od-dksk-ne-dava-ostavka-zhalam-za-komunikatsijata-so-semejniot-prijatel-ne-vlijave-na-istragata/>

¹⁴⁸ „Претседателката на ДКСК остана без пасош и забрана за работа во Антикорупциска“ (SCPC President’s passport seized and banned from working at Anti-Corruption), Sitel Television, 24 April 2025, <https://Sitel.com.mk/pretsedatelkata-na-dksk-osta-na-bez-pasosh-i-zabranata-za-rabota-vo-antikorupciska-0>.

¹⁴⁹ „Не се чувствуваат повикани да поднесеме оставки, вели заменик-претседателката на ДКСК“ (We do not feel called to resign, says the Vice-President of the SCPC), 360 Degrees, 30 April 2025, <https://360steperi.mk/ne-se-chuvstuvame-povikani-da-podneseme-ostavki-veli-zamenik-pretsedatelkata-na-dksk/>.

¹⁵⁰ „Ревизор ѝ го положил тестот на претседателката на ДКСК за таа да може да чита државни тајни – обвинение и нови дела за Татјана Димитровска“ (An auditor passed the test for the President of the SCPC so she could read state secrets – indictment and new charges for Tatjana Dimitrovska), Sloboden Pechat, 18 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/revizor-i-go-polozhil-testot-na-vpretsedatelkata-na-dksk-za-taa-da-mozhe-da-chita-drzhavni-tajni-obvinenie-i-novi-dela-za-tatjana-dimitrovska>.

¹⁵¹ „Ревизорот што ѝ го положил тестот на Татјана Димитровска за „државна тајна“ е исклучен од ревизиите“ (The auditor who passed the “state secret” test for Tatjana Dimitrovska has been excluded from audits), Sloboden Pechat, 23 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/revizorot-sho-%D1%9D-go-polozhil-testot-na-tatjana-dimitrovska-za-drzhavna-tajna-e-iskluchen-od-reviziite/>.

¹⁵² „Екс-антикорупционерката Димитровска се враќа во Државниот завод за ревизија“ (Ex-anti-corruption official Dimitrovska returns to the State Audit Office), Libertas, 30 July 2025, <https://libertas.mk/eks-antikorupcionerkata-dimitrovska-se-vra-a-vo-drzhavniot-zavod-za-revizi-a/>.

¹⁵³ „Почнува судењето против поранешната претседателка на Антикорупциска, Татјана Димитровска“ (Trial against the former President of Anti-Corruption, Tatjana Dimitrovska, begins), 360 Degrees, 30 September 2025, <https://360steperi.mk/pochna-sudene-to-protiv-poraneshnata-pretsedatelka-na-antikorupska-tatjana-dimitrovska/>.

At the beginning of August, the Assembly adopted a decision to publish a public announcement for the election of a new President of the SCPC, after which a commission was formed to select candidates for that position.¹⁵⁴ Thirteen candidates applied,¹⁵⁵ but the Assembly halted the selection due to the upcoming local elections in the country.¹⁵⁶ During the reporting period, two members of the SCPC changed in the position of Deputy President based on the principle of rotation, with a mandate of six months, once in February¹⁵⁷ and again in August.¹⁵⁸

At the end of 2024, the SCPC¹⁵⁹ and the PPO¹⁶⁰ investigated whether the newly appointed director of the National Security Agency (NSA) fulfilled the requirements for the position. The SCPC concluded that it had no competence to assess the academic achievements of the director but determined that he formally fulfilled the requirements.¹⁶¹ At the same time, this case raised the issue of a possible conflict of interest regarding one of the members of the SCPC,¹⁶² who had lectured at the same university from which the director graduated.¹⁶³ The SCPC responded that the member had requested to be recused from this case. However, her colleagues did not agree,¹⁶⁴ arguing that there was no conflict of interest because she had only been a guest lecturer at that university and had never received any financial compensation for her lectures.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁴ „Формирана комисијата за селекција на кандидатите за претседател на ДКСК“ (Commission formed for the selection of candidates for the President of the SCPC), Nova Makedonija, 13 August 2025, <https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/formirana-komisijata-za-selekcija-na-kandidatite-za-pretsedatel-na-dksk/>.

¹⁵⁵ „За претседател на ДКСК се пријавиле 13 кандидати, еве ги имињата“ (13 candidates applied for the President of the SCPC, here are the names), 360 Degrees, 18 August 2025, <https://360stopeni.mk/za-pretsedatel-na-dksk-se-prijavile-13-kandidati-eve-gi-iminata/>.

¹⁵⁶ „Запрена постапката за избор на претседател на ДКСК“ (Procedure for the selection of the SCPC President halted), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 August 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/ns-newsarticle-zaprena-postapka-ta-za-izbor-na-pretsedatel-na-dksk.nspx>.

¹⁵⁷ „Билјана Каракашева Шулеј нова заменик претседателка на ДКСК“ (Biljana Karakasheva Shulev new Vice-President of the SCPC), TV Telma, 21 February 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/02/21/biljana-karakasheva-shulev-nov-zamenik-pretsedatelka-na-dksk/>.

¹⁵⁸ „Цвета Ристовска, професорката на Бојан Христовски и на дузина академски граѓани што го протрча приватниот факултет за една година, ќе ја води Антикорупциската комисија за изборите“ (Cveta Ristovska, the professor of Bojan Hristovski and a dozen academic citizens who ran through the private faculty in one year, will lead the Anti-Corruption Commission for the elections), Sdk.mk, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4GR36SU>.

¹⁵⁹ „Антикорупциска отвора предмет за назначувањето на Бојан Христовски за директор на АНБ“ (Anti-Corruption opens a case for the appointment of Bojan Hristovski as Director of the ANS), Sloboden Pechat, 22 October 2024, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/antikorupciska-otvora-predmet-za-naznachuvanjeto-na-bojan-hristovski-za-direktor-na-anb/>.

¹⁶⁰ „Обвинителство отвори предистрага за назначувањето на Христовски за директор на АНБ“ (Public Prosecutor's Office opened a pre-investigation into the appointment of Hristovski as Director of the ANS), Sloboden Pechat, 1 November 2024, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/obvinitelstvo-otvori-predistraga-za-naznachuvanjeto-na-hristovski-za-direktor-na-anb/>.

¹⁶¹ „Антикорупциска се прогласи за ненадлежна за валидноста на TOEFL сертификатот на Христовски“ (Anti-Corruption declared itself incompetent for the validity of Hristovski's TOEFL certificate), 360 Degrees, 24 December 2024, <https://360stopeni.mk/antikorupciska-se-proglasi-za-nenadlezhnata-za-validnost-na-toefl-sertifikatot-na-hristovski/>.

¹⁶² „Има ли судир на интереси во ДКСК?“ (Is there a conflict of interest in the SCPC?), Telma TV, 25 December 2024, <https://telma.com.mk/2024/12/25/ima-li-sudir-na-interesi-vo-dksk/>.

¹⁶³ „Ристовска од Антикорупциска, која го водеше предметот со дипломата на Христовски, предава на истиот универзитет“ (Ristovska from Anti-Corruption, who led the case regarding Hristovski's diploma, teaches at the same university), Sloboden Pechat, 25 December 2024, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/ristovska-od-antikorupciska-koja-go-vodeshe-predmetot-so-diplomata-na-hristovski-predava-na-istiot-univerzitet/>.

¹⁶⁴ „Цвета Ристовска барала да биде изземена од предметот за Христовски, но нејзините колеги одбили – вели претседателката на ДКСК“ (Cveta Ristovska requested to be recused from the Hristovski case, but her colleagues refused – says the President of the SCPC), 360 Degrees, 30 December 2024, <https://360stopeni.mk/tsveta-ristovska-barala-da-bide-izzemena-od-predmetot-za-hristovski-no-nejzinitete-kollegi-odbile-veli-pretsedatelkata-na-dksk/>.

¹⁶⁵ „Соопштение за јавност“ (Press Release), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 26 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/40RZMAR>.

At the beginning of December 2024, the SCPC adopted amendments to its Rules of Procedure, introducing a random and equal distribution of cases among its members.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the SCPC adopted the Work Program for 2025,¹⁶⁷ as well as the Annual Plan for Monitoring Asset Status and Conflict of Interest for 2025¹⁶⁸ and the Annual Plan for Conducting Anti-Corruption Checks of Legislation for 2025.¹⁶⁹ In its Work Program, the SCPC listed several priorities for this year. These are: monitoring and assessing the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021–2025; conducting anti-corruption checks of legislation; acting upon reports of suspected corruption; monitoring the legality of political party financing; and preventing corruption in the electoral process.

During 2024, the SCPC received 689 reports of suspected corruption and opened 78 cases ex officio. It adopted a total of 742 decisions: 353 related to corruption, 98 on conflict of interest, 60 on the financing of election campaigns, and 231 regarding asset declarations.¹⁷⁰ The 2024 Annual Report on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest showed that only 18% of the planned activities were fully implemented, 32% are in progress, and 50% have not been started. The greatest progress was noted in law enforcement bodies and the health and education sectors, while a limited level of implementation was recorded in the sectors of urban planning, environment, agriculture, and sports.¹⁷¹ Additionally, the SCPC published its Report on the monitoring of the application of the integrity system for 2024, which covers 72 central government institutions, 72 local authorities, and 16 judicial institutions.¹⁷² The report noted widespread deficiencies, including the absence of internal rules on conflict of interest, insufficient regulation regarding gifts and hospitality, low rates of ISO certification, and limited training and monitoring related to integrity.

In the first nine months of 2025, the SCPC received 351 reports of suspected corruption, 15 cases were formed based on election-related reports, and 5 cases were formed ex officio. It adopted a total of 241 decisions related to corruption, 65 on conflict of interest, 72 on recording

166 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Деловник за изменување на Деловникот за работа на Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата бр.02-3087/1 од 06.12.2024 година“ (Rules of Procedure amending the Rules of Procedure of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption No. 02-3087/1 of 06.12.2024), 2024, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02-3087-1.pdf>.

167 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Програма за работа на ДКСК за 2025 година“ (2025 Work Program of the SCPC), 31 December 2024, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/10-3236-1.pdf>.

168 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Годишен план за следење на имотната состојба и судирот на интереси за 2025 година“ (Annual Plan for Monitoring Asset Status and Conflict of Interest for 2025), 31 December 2024, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/08-3237-1.pdf>.

169 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Годишен план за спроведување на антикорупциска проверка на легислативата за 2025 година“ (Annual Plan for the Implementation of Anti-Corruption Assessment of Legislation for 2025), 31 December 2024, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/11-3234-1.pdf>.

170 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Годишен извештај за работата на Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата за 2024“ (Annual Report on the work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption for 2024), March 2025, https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ГИ-за-работата-на-ДКСК-за-2024_за-web-без-прилози.pdf.

171 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption , „Годишен извештај за спроведување на Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2021 - 2025 за период од 01.01.2024 година до 31.12.2024 година“ (Annual Report on the implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021-2025 for the period 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024), March 2025, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Годишен-извештај-Национална-Стратегија-2024.pdf>.

172 „Интегритетот како столб на доброто владеење - ДКСК со обемен извештај и повик за поголема институционална одговорност“ (Integrity as a pillar of good governance - SCPC with an extensive report and a call for greater institutional accountability), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 26 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/3RrTgLx>.

and monitoring asset status, and issued 77 misdemeanor payment orders, the majority of which were for failing to submit an asset and interest declaration or a form for reporting changes in asset status.¹⁷³

At the beginning of the year, the SCPC announced its intention to regularly publish information on enforcement activities in accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest.¹⁷⁴ It also published the names of former and current officials fined in the past year for violating the law.¹⁷⁵

The SCPC conducted an anti-corruption audit of the Law on Free Access to Public Information.¹⁷⁶ The Platform of Civil Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption criticized the SCPC's recommendations, warning that they could restrict institutional transparency and increase the risk of corruption, especially in public procurement.¹⁷⁷ In response to the fire in Kočani, the SCPC also reviewed corruption risks related to the issuance of licenses, permits, and oversight in several legal acts, including the Law on Catering Industry, the Law on Protection and Rescue, and other relevant legislation regulating inspections, local self-government, and the handling of explosive materials.¹⁷⁸

During the summer period, the SCPC carried out preparatory activities ahead of the upcoming local elections. Working meetings were held with the State Election Commission (SEC)¹⁷⁹ and the Public Prosecutor's Office.¹⁸⁰ A memorandum of cooperation was signed with the SEC and the SAO to strengthen their commitment to direct cooperation, coordination, and mutual assistance in the implementation of legal provisions on the financing of election campaigns, the exchange of information and data, and timely action upon potentially identified election irregularities.¹⁸¹ The SCPC also issued a public notification to inform all state institutions,

173 State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, "Response to a request for free access to public information", October 7, 2025.

174 „Соопштение за јавност од 26.02.2025 година“ (Press Release of 26.02.2025), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 26 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jeZZVf>.

175 „Информации за изречени глоби – 2024 година (Согласно член 98 од ЗСКСИ)“ (Information on fines imposed in 2024 – Pursuant to Article 98 of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 26 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/442o650>.

176 „Извештај за антикорупциска проверка на одредбите од Законот за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер“ (Report on the anti-corruption assessment of the provisions of the Law on Free Access to Public Information), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 17 April 2025, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/11-1351-1.pdf>.

177 „Платформата на граѓански организации за борба против корупцијата реагира на препораките на ДКСК дадени во Извештајот од спроведена антикорупциска проверка на Законот за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер“ (The Platform of Civil Organizations in the Fight Against Corruption responds to the recommendations of the SCPC presented in the Report of the Anti-Corruption Review of the Law on Free Access to Public Information), Official website of the Platform, 17 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/453QORD>.

178 „Извештај за антикорупциска проверка на одредби кои се однесуваат на издавањето на лиценци, одобренија, дозволи за работа на угостителски објекти и слично, како и за вршење надзор...“ (Report on the anti-corruption assessment of provisions regarding the issuance of licenses, approvals, and work permits for hospitality facilities, and supervision...), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 17 April 2025, <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/11-1117-2.pdf>.

179 „Соработка во насока на унапредување на интегритетот во изборниот процес“ (Cooperation aimed at enhancing integrity in the electoral process), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 16 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4h1Qmt2>.

180 „Работна средба на ДКСК и Јавното обвинителство во пресрет на локалните избори 2025“ (Working meeting between the SCPC and the Public Prosecutors Office ahead of the 2025 local elections), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 16 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3VTa4xc>.

181 „ДИК, ДКСК и ДЗР потпишаа меморандум за соработка во пресрет на локалните избори“ (SEC, SCPC, and SAO signed a memorandum of cooperation ahead of the local elections), 360 Degrees, 18 September 2025, <https://360stopeni.mk/dik-dksk-i-dzr-potpissha-memorandum-za-sorabotka-vo-presret-na-lokalnite-izbori/>.

political parties, participants in the election process, as well as the broader public about the legal possibilities for the use of budget funds in accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest and the Electoral Code.¹⁸² It also informed the public that, in accordance with the legal obligation of all public funds, public enterprises, and all other legal entities that dispose of state funds, they are obliged to submit data to the SCPC for all official vehicles at their disposal. However, only 42% of them submitted such data.¹⁸³

Toward the end of 2024, the SCPC was admitted as a full member of the anti-corruption network European Partners Against Corruption/European Anti-Corruption Network (EPAC/EACN).¹⁸⁴ It also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia¹⁸⁵ and the Macedonian-American Alumni Association,¹⁸⁶ with the aim of defining joint activities for the prevention of corruption and the strengthening of integrity.

Public Prosecutor's Office

The latest report on the public prosecutor's offices points to the continuous challenge they face regarding the increasing number of cases in relation to the decreased number of public prosecutors; remarkably, four public prosecutor's offices in the country remained without a single public prosecutor in 2024 – Resen, Delčevo, Berovo, and Kriva Palanka. Outdated technical equipment and insufficient financial resources, together with the limited staffing of the public prosecutor's offices, remain the main challenges for these institutions.¹⁸⁷

The PPO continued investigating politically sensitive cases, and the Public Prosecutor issued a mandatory instruction for all public prosecutors in the country to prioritize cases of corruption and those of particular public interest.¹⁸⁸ Such cases should also receive priority from the investigative centers of the public prosecutor's offices in order to protect the public interest. In 2025, an amendment to this instruction followed regarding the procedures for providing data and information on bank accounts, property, or items of interest located abroad that are relevant to cases related to corruption and apply to all persons involved in acts of

¹⁸² „Известување“ (Announcement), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 11 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4mTIDhU>

¹⁸³ „Само 42% од институциите доставуваја податоци за службени возила пред локалните избори 2025“ (Only 42% of institutions submitted data for official vehicles before the 2025 local elections), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 29 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/46SSEFQ>.

¹⁸⁴ „Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата стана членка на антикорупциската мрежа EPAC/EACN“ (The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption became a member of the anti-corruption network EPAC/EACN), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 27 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/4hcry0b>.

¹⁸⁵ „Потпишан меморандум за соработка помеѓу Државната комисија за спречување на корупција и Стопанската комора на Северна Македонија“ (Signed memorandum of cooperation between the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 25 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/3WC8qRl>.

¹⁸⁶ „Потпишан меморандум за соработка – зајакнување на стратешката соработка со Македонско-американската алумни асоцијација“ (Signed memorandum of cooperation – strengthening strategic cooperation with the Macedonian-American Alumni Association), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 19 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/4gfzrIP>.

¹⁸⁷ Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства на Република Северна Македонија во 2024 година“ (Annual Report on the work of the Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia in 2024), 23 June 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/godishen-izveshtaj-2024-finalen.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ „Соопштение за одржана седница“ (Announcement of a held session), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 3 December 2024, <https://jorm.gov.mk/soopshenie-za-odrzhana-sednica-5/>.

corruption, regardless of their role or status. These amendments resulted from a meeting held with representatives of the specialized analytical center at Europol, responsible for the fight against corruption, where opportunities for establishing deeper cooperation in cases related to corruption were reviewed.¹⁸⁹

This reporting period was marked by the fire that broke out in a nightclub in the city of Kočani, where 59 young people lost their lives and over 160 people were hospitalized.¹⁹⁰ The PPO formed a team of five public prosecutors,¹⁹¹ which initiated an investigation against 27 individuals and three companies,¹⁹² but due to the complexity of the case, six more public prosecutors joined the team.¹⁹³ Their preliminary findings revealed several deficiencies at the facility: there was no hydrant nor a sufficient number of fire extinguishers; it was not registered as a catering facility, but as a light industry facility with a work permit from the Ministry of Economy issued 15 years ago; it was lined with materials for sound insulation and visual effects that were easily flammable; and pyrotechnic materials were used without a permit.¹⁹⁴ These findings led to various institutional reactions: detention or house detention was ordered for a total of 24 suspects for serious crimes against public safety;¹⁹⁵ the Mayor of Kočani resigned;¹⁹⁶ and the SCPC conducted an anti-corruption audit of the relevant legislation to enable the detection and prevention of potential corruption risks.¹⁹⁷ Simultaneously, citizens reacted by organizing protests in Kočani¹⁹⁸ and other cities across the country,¹⁹⁹ while the Platform of Civil Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption addressed public demands

189 „Преку системот на Европол ќе се обезбедуваат податоци за банкарски сметки и имот во странство на корумпирани бизнисмени и функционери“ (Data on bank accounts and property abroad of corrupt businessmen and officials will be provided through the Europol system), Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 12 February 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/preku-sistemot-na-evropol-kje-se-obezbeduvaat-podatoci-za-bankarski-smetki-i-imot-vo-stranstvo-na-korumpirani-biznismeni-i-funkczioneri/>.

190 „Зошто пожарот во клубот во Кочани беше толку смртоносен?“ (Why was the fire in the Kočani club so deadly?), Deutsche Welle (DW), 18 March 2025, <https://www.dw.com/mk/zosto-pozarot-vo-improviziraniot-noken-club-vo-kocani-bese-tolku-smrtonosen/a-71940018>.

191 „Коцевски: Формиран е тим од пет јавни обвинители за трагедијата во Кочани“ (Kocevski: A team of five public prosecutors has been formed for the tragedy in Kočani), Radio MOF, 16 March 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/kocevski-formiran-e-tim-od-pet-javni-obvinителi-za-tragedijata-vo-kochani/>.

192 „Јавното обвинителство отвори истражна постапка за 27 лица и три компанији во врска со пожарот во Кочани“ (The Public Prosecutor’s Office opened an investigation procedure for 27 individuals and three companies regarding the fire in Kočani), Radio MOF, 21 March 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/javnoto-obvinitelstvo-otvori-istratzhna-postapka-za-27-lica-i-tri-kompanii-vo-vrska-so-pozharot-vo-kochani/>.

193 „Соопштение од 24.03.2025 година“ (Announcement of 24.03.2025), Official website of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 24 March 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/soopshenie-150/>.

194 „Дискотеката била полна со запаливи материјали, немала хидрант, а за концертот немало договор“ (The disco was full of flammable materials, had no hydrant, and there was no contract for the concert), Radio MOF, 16 March 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/diskotekata-bila-polna-so-zapalivi-materijali-nemala-hidrant-a-za-koncertot-nemalo-dogovor/>.

195 „Двајцата поранешни градоначалници на Кочани одат во куќен притвор“ (The two former mayors of Kočani are placed under house arrest), TV Telma, 28 March 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/03/28/dvajczata-poraneshni-gradonachalniczi-na-kochani-odat-vo-kuken-pritvor/>.

196 „Градоначалникот на Кочани Љупчо Папазов поднесе оставка“ (The Mayor of Kočani, Ljupčo Papazov, resigned), Radio MOF, 17 March 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/gradonachalnikot-na-kochani-ljupcho-papazov-podnesse-ostavka/>.

197 „ДКСК: Започнавме постапка за антикорупциска проверка на законите за уостителска дејност, заштита и спасување, Законот за инспекциски надзор, Законот за локалната самоуправа“ (SCPC: We have initiated a procedure for an anti-corruption review of the laws on catering, protection and rescue, the Law on Inspection Supervision, and the Law on Local Self-Government), Official website of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 24 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4lCGCXV>.

198 „Протест во Кочани - правда и крај на корупцијата“ (Protest in Kočani - justice and an end to corruption), Radio Free Europe, 17 March 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33350703.html>.

199 „Од денеска протести во Кочани во 15 часот, од понеделник и во Скопје“ (Protests in Kočani from today at 3 PM, from Monday in Skopje as well), 24.mk, 22 March 2025, <https://24.mk/details/od-deneska-protesti-vo-kochani-vo-15-chasot-od-ponedelnik-i-vo-skopje>

to the competent institutions, the fulfillment of which should lead to the end of the practice of impunity, selective justice, and merely formal fulfillment of obligations.²⁰⁰ The detention measures imposed by the court for the suspects were extended,²⁰¹ and the investigation was expanded to include additional individuals suspected of serious crimes against public safety.²⁰² Several police officers were arrested in connection with the case.²⁰³ The BPPO Kočani published a public call for testimonies and evidence from citizens.²⁰⁴ The investigation was completed at the end of May.²⁰⁵ By the middle of June, indictments were filed against 34 physical and three legal entities, while proceedings against 11 individuals were discontinued due to a lack of evidence.²⁰⁶

In the “Tvrđina” (Fortress) case, the Criminal Court Skopje imposed prison sentences of fourteen and a half years and nine years and ten months, respectively, against two former intelligence officers for abuse of official position and authority and for falsification of official documents related to the destruction of communication monitoring systems in the former Administration for Security and Counterintelligence. A former Minister of Interior was acquitted of the charges, as the prosecution failed to prove that she had committed the criminal offense for which she was accused.²⁰⁷

In the “Aditiv” (Additive) case, concerning alleged abuse of public procurement and money laundering related to the procurement of coal additives for AD ESM - REK Bitola and REK Oslomej, three additional suspects were identified, including the current President of the SCPC.²⁰⁸ The Criminal Court Skopje confirmed the indictment, and the judicial proceedings

200 „Платформата на граѓански организации за борба против корупцијата упати барања до надлежните институции кои ќе овозможат да се прекине праксата на неказнивост, селективна правда и формално исполнување на обврски“ (The Platform of Civil Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption addressed demands to the competent institutions that will allow an end to the practice of impunity, selective justice, and formal fulfillment of obligations), Official website of the Platform, 28 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jKut1r>.

201 „Продолжен притворот за сите осомничени за пожарот во Кочани, тројца одат во куќен притвор“ (Detention extended for all suspects in the Kočani fire, three placed under house arrest), Kanal 5, 11 April 2025, <https://kanal5.com.mk/prodolzen-pritvort-za-site-osomnicheni-za-pozharot-vo-kochani-trojca-odat-vo-kukjen-pritvor/a694010>.

202 „Прошириена истрагата за пожарот во кочанската дискотека“ (Expansion of the investigation into the fire at the Kočani disco), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 12 April 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/proshirena-istragata-za-pozharot-vo-kochanska-diskoteka/>.

203 „Се апсат актуелни началници и полицијаци кои биле на смена за време на трагедијата во Кочани“ (Current chiefs and police officers on shift during the Kočani tragedy are being arrested), Sdk.mk, 12 June 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/vecher-va-se-apsat-aktuelni-nachalnitsi-i-politsajtsi-koi-bile-na-smena-za-vreme-na-tragedijata-vo-kochani/>.

204 „Отворен повик за истрагата за пожарот во Кочани“ (Open call regarding the investigation into the fire in Kočani), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 16 May 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/otvoren-povik-za-istragata-za-pozharot-vo-kochani>.

205 „Истрагата за пожарот во „Пулс“ заврши, обезбедени огромен број докази“ (The investigation into the “Pulse” fire has concluded, a vast amount of evidence secured), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 30 May 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/istragata-za-pozharot-vo-puls-zavrshi-obezbedeni-ogromen-broj-dokazi/>.

206 „Запрена истрагата за ексминистите Дритон Кучи и Беким Незири, меѓу 34-те обвинети за пожарот во диското „Пулс“ остануваат Крешник Бектеши и Ваљон Сарачини“ (Investigation halted for ex-ministers Driton Kuči and Bekim Neziri, while Kreshnik Bekteshi and Valon Saracini remain among the 34 accused for the “Pulse” disco fire), Sdk.Mk, 13 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4m75B51>.

207 „Избеганите началници на УБК, Грујевски и Бошковски со највисоки казни, Јанкулоска доби ослободителна – пресуди за предметот „Тврѓина““ (The escaped UBK chiefs, Grujevski and Boškovski, receive highest sentences, Jankuloska acquitted – verdicts in the «Tvrđina» case), TV Telma, 13 January 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/01/13/izbeganite-nachalniczi-na-ubk-grujevski-i-boshkovski-so-najvisoki-kazni-jankuloska-dobi-osloboditelna-presudi-za-predmetot-tvrđina/>.

208 „Осомничени уште три лица во предметот „Адитив““ (Three more individuals suspected in the “Aditiv” case), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 24 April 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/osomnicheni-ushte-tri-licza-vo-predmetot-aditiv/>.

commenced.²⁰⁹ Several hearings were held, the prosecution requested convictions and property confiscation,²¹⁰ while the defendants pleaded not guilty and presented their initial defense arguments.²¹¹

Following an investigation initiated by the BPPO-POCC, an indictment was filed against 36 persons (doctors, lawyers, and other officials) organized into two criminal groups that mediated and illegally facilitated the acquisition of rights to social care and disability pensions in exchange for money over the past two years. The case, titled “Sindrom” (Syndrome), revealed reasonable suspicion of several criminal offenses: criminal association, accepting and giving bribes, and receiving a reward for unlawful influence. To date, 13 defendants have entered into plea agreements with the prosecution, and based on these, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje has rendered several verdicts. For the remaining defendants, the PPO proposed to the court that the precautionary measures already imposed on them be extended.²¹²

The trial of the former directors of the Clinic for Radiotherapy and Oncology in Skopje began within the framework of the “Onkologija 2” (Oncology 2) case. 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 2.2 billion denars through the illegal purchase of drugs without the consent of the Health Insurance Fund. At the hearing on September 12, both defendants stated they did not feel guilty, and the judicial proceedings are ongoing.²¹³

In the case against the former director of the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje found her guilty of abuse of official position and authority and sentenced her to two years in prison. It was determined that she acted contrary to the Law on Public Procurement and the Law on the Establishment of the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility when concluding contracts with associates, experts, and trainers, as she did not issue a public call and discriminated against potential candidates, giving preference to certain individuals and acting contrary to the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.²¹⁴

Following the inclusion of a former Deputy Prime Minister and a judge on the US State Department’s blacklist for alleged corruption and influence over the judiciary of the Republic of

209 „Кривичен го одобри обвинението за „Адитив“, се чека датум за почеток на сudeњето“ (Criminal Court approved the “Aditiv” indictment, trial start date pending), 360 Степени (360 Degrees), 7 May 2025, <https://360stopeni.mk/krivichen-g0-odobri-obvinenieto-za-aditiv-se-cheka-datum-za-pochetok-na-sudeneto/>.

210 „Обвинителството бара осудителна пресуда и конфискација на имотот на обвинетите во случајот „Адитив““ (The Prosecution seeks a guilty verdict and confiscation of assets of the defendants in the “Aditiv” case), A1 On, 29 May 2025, <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/obvinitelstvoto-bara-osuditelna-presuda-i-konfiskacija-na-imotot-na-obvinetite-vo-sluchajot-aditiv/>.

211 „Рочиште за „Адитив“: Одбраната даваше воведни зборови“ (Hearing for “Aditiv”: Defense presented opening statements), 24 TB, 26 June 2025, <https://24.mk/details/rochishte-za-aditiv-odbranata-davashe-vovedni-zborovi>.

212 „Предмет „Синдром“ – 36 обвинети и 13 спогодби“ (Case “Syndrome” – 36 defendants and 13 plea bargains), 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-spogodbi/>.

213 „Ексдиректорите на Онкологија не се чувствуваат виновни за несовесно работење и за финансиски криминал на клиниката“ (Ex-directors of Oncology plead not guilty to malpractice and financial crime at the clinic), 360 Degrees, 12 September 2025, <https://360stopeni.mk/eksdirektorite-na-onkologija-ne-se-chuvstvuaat-vinovni-za-nesovesno-rabotene-i-za-finansiski-kriminal-na-klinikata/>.

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

North Macedonia,²¹⁵ the PPO initiated an investigation against them.²¹⁶ Subsequently, the PPO filed an indictment against the former Deputy Prime Minister and several other individuals for embezzlement and abuse of official position and authority, and submitted a proposal for detention for two of them before the Basic Criminal Court Skopje,²¹⁷ while simultaneously requesting the issuance of national and international warrants for them.²¹⁸

In the reporting period, numerous other investigations into corrupt behavior were initiated, including: against a public prosecutor suspected of abuse of official position and authority;²¹⁹ against the son of a former high-ranking official suspected of disclosing official secrets;²²⁰ a former director of the Service for General and Common Affairs of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia suspected of receiving bribes and embezzlement while performing official duties;²²¹ five physical person and one legal entity suspected of abuse of official position and authority, falsification of an official document, and abuse of the public procurement procedure for the selection of a company for the physical security of 14 toll stations of the Public Enterprise "State Roads";²²² and two police officers suspected of abuse of official position and authority, falsification of an official document, and obstruction of justice to prevent the presentation of evidence in proceedings conducted before the BPPD Kumanovo.²²³

Additionally, during this period, criminal charges were filed due to reasonable suspicion of abuse of official position and authority against the following persons: a former Minister of Culture;²²⁴ a former Minister of Defense;²²⁵ two former directors of the Fund for Innovation

215 „Артан Груби и судијата Енвер Беџети завршија на американската црна листа“ (Artan Grubi and Judge Enver Bejeti end up on the American black list), Alsat M, 10 December 2024, <https://alsat.mk/mk/artan-grubi-i-sudijata-enver-bedheti-zavrshija-na-amerikanskata-tsrna-lista/>.

216 „Обвинителството оформи предмет по ставањето на Груби и судијата Беџети на „црната листа“ на САД“ (The Prosecution opened a case following the placement of Grubi and Judge Bejeti on the US "black list"), 360 Degrees, 11 December 2024, <https://360stopeni.mk/obvinitelstvoto-oformi-predmet-po-stavaneto-na-grubi-i-sudijata-bedheti-na-tsrnata-lista-na-sad/>

217 „Детали од истражната постапка за проневера во „Државна лотарија“, предложени мерки за обезбедување“ (Details of the investigative procedure for embezzlement in "State Lottery", proposed precautionary measures), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 16 December 2024, <https://jorm.gov.mk/detalii-od-istrazhnata-postapka-za-pronevera-vo-drzhavna-lotarija-predlozheni-merki-za-obezbeduvane/>.

218 „Скопското обвинителство издаде наредба до МВР да распише национална, а потоа и меѓународна потерница по Груби и Бајрами“ (The Skopje Prosecutor's Office ordered the Ministry of Interior to issue a national, and then an international warrant for Grubi and Bajrami), Vecer.mk, 17 December 2024, <https://www.vecer.press/skopskoto-obvinitelstvo-izdade-naredba-do/>.

219 „Истрага против јавен обвинител за злоупотреба на службена положба и малтретирање“ (Investigation against a public prosecutor for abuse of official position and harassment), 24 Info, 11 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/40InVtt>.

220 „Приведен син на поранешен функционер поради оддавање службена тајна“ (Son of a former official detained for disclosing official secrets), 24 Info, 29 December 2024, <https://24info.mk/priveden-sin-na-poraneshen-funkczioner-poradi-oddavane-sluzhbena-tajna/>.

221 „Истрага за поткуп и проневера во СОЗР“ (Investigation into bribery and embezzlement in SOZR), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 6 February 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/istraga-za-potcup-i-pronevera-vo-sozr/>.

222 „Истрага за злоупотреби при јавна набавка во ЈП „Државни патишта““ (Investigation into abuses during public procurement in PE "State Roads"), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 March 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/istraga-za-zloupotrebi-pri-javna-nabavka-vo-jp-drzhavni-patistha/>.

223 „Под истрага двајца полициски службеници“ (Two police officers under investigation), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 March 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/pod-istraga-dvajcza-policiski-sluzbennici/>.

224 „Екс министерката Костадиновска заработка кривична пријава за Универзална“ (Ex-minister Kostadinovska earned criminal charges for Universal Hall), Sitel TV, 31 October 2024, <https://sitet.com.mk/eks-ministerkata-kostadinovska-zaraboti-krivichna-prijava-za-univerzalna/>.

225 „Кривична за ексминистерката Славјанка Петровска и најава за протест од Независниот синдикат на професионални војници“ (Criminal charges for ex-minister Slavjanka Petrovska and a protest announcement from the Independent Union of Professional Soldiers), Sloboden Pechat, 7 November 2024, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/krivichna-za-eksministerkata-slavjanka-petrovska-i-najava-za-protest-od-nezavisniot-sindikat-na-profesionalni-vojnici/>.

and Technological Development;²²⁶ a former director of the Directorate for Technological Industrial Development Zones, three civil servants in the Bureau for Public Procurement and four employees in the State Commission for Public Procurement Appeals, who acted together regarding the abuse of a public procurement procedure;²²⁷ a mayor of a municipality in Skopje, five employees in the same municipality, and a legal entity from Skopje;²²⁸ an executive director of a shopping center in Skopje and three other employees in that enterprise;²²⁹ the acting director of a public enterprise in Bitola;²³⁰ the acting director of the General Hospital in Ohrid;²³¹ a former head of the Department of Aviation Units of the MoI;²³² a former director of the Mining and Energy Combine “Bitola”;²³³ the current Mayor of Kičevo;²³⁴ the former Mayor of Lozovo;²³⁵ the former acting President of the Council for Advancement and Oversight of the Audit of the Republic of North Macedonia;²³⁶ and against the current Mayor of Struga.²³⁷

Criminal charges were also filed for other corruption-related crimes against: fifteen customs officers from the Customs Administration and a police officer for receiving bribes and abuse of official position and authority;²³⁸ against twelve police officers for fraud in the service and

226 „Кривични пријави против двајца поранешни директори на Фондот за иновации“ (Criminal charges against two former directors of the Fund for Innovation), Sloboden Pechat, 12 December 2024, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/krivichni-prijavi-protiv-dvajca-poraneshni-direktori-na-fondot-za-inovacii/>.

227 Финансиска полиција: Кривична пријава против 8 лица за злоупотреби во ТИРЗ (Financial Police: Criminal charges against 8 individuals for abuses in TIDZ), TV 21, 30 December 2024, <https://mk.tv21.tv/finansiska-politsija-krivichna-prijava-protiv-8-litsa-za-zloupotrebivo-tirz/>.

228 „Кривична пријава против скопскиот градоначалник и пет вработени во општини: Овозможиле фирмада стекне противправна имотна корист“ (Criminal charges against the Skopje mayor and five municipal employees: Enabled a company to acquire illegal property benefit), Makfax, 3 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/4ga6KWb>.

229 „МВР поднесе кривична пријава против поранешниот директор и тројца вработени во ГТЦ“ (MoI filed criminal charges against the former director and three employees in GTC), Mkd.mk, 17 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4jwxdjQ>.

230 „Обвинение за злоупотреба на службената положба во јавно претпријатие во Битола“ (Indictment for abuse of official position in a public enterprise in Bitola), Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 18 December 2024, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinenie-za-zloupotreba-na-sluzbennata-polozhba-vo-javno-pretprijatie-vo-bitola/>.

231 „Кривична пријава за директорот на охридската општа болница!“ (Criminal charges for the director of the Ohrid General Hospital!), TV 21, 6 February 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/krivichna-prijava-za-direktorot-na-ohridskata-opshta-bolnitsa/>.

232 „МВР со кривична пријава за екс началникот на Одделот за воздухопловни единици“ (MoI with criminal charges against the former head of the Department of Aviation Units), 24info.mk, 8 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/44uPc4Q>.

233 Финансиска поднесе кривична против екс директорот на ЕСМ Матевски (Financial Police filed criminal charges against former ESM director Matevski), TV Telma, 13 February 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/02/13/finansiska-podnese-krivichna-protiv-eks-direktorot-na-esm-matevski/>.

234 „Кривична за Дехари, како градоначалник на Кичево за адвокатски услуги го оштетил општинскиот буџет за околу 64.000 евра“ (Criminal charges for Dehari: as Mayor of Kičevo, he damaged the municipal budget by about 64,000 euros for legal services), Nova Makedonija, 26 May 2025, <https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/chronika/krivichna-za-dehari-kako-gradonachalnik-na-kichevo-za-advokatski-uslugi-go-oshtetil-opshtinskiot-budjet-za-okolu-64-000-evra/>.

235 „Кривична за екс-градоначалник на Лозово, со пари на општината финансирал пешачка патека која не била изградена“ (Criminal charges for ex-mayor of Lozovo: financed a pedestrian path that was never built with municipal money), Telma TV, 18 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/18/krivichna-za-eks-gradonachalnik-na-lozovo-so-pari-na-opshtinata-finansiral-peshacka-pateka-koja-ne-bila-izgradena/>.

236 „Обвинителен предлог за злоупотреба на службена положба и овластување“ (Indictment proposal for abuse of official position and authority), Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 23 July 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinителен-предлог-за-zloupotreba-na-sluzbena-polozhba-i-ovlastuvane/>.

237 ОЈО Струга му поднесе обвинение на Рамиз Мерко за договорот за осветлување на коритото на Црн Дрим (BPO Struga filed an indictment against Ramiz Merko for the contract regarding the lighting of the Crn Drim riverbed), 360 Degrees, 17 September 2025, <https://360stopeni.mk/ojo-struga-mu-podnese-obvinenie-na-ramiz-merko-za-dogovorot-za-osvetluvane-na-koritoto-na-tsrn-drim/>.

238 „Петнаесет царинци и полицаец уапсени во голема полициска акција под кодно име „Премин““ (Fifteen customs officers and a police officer arrested in a major police operation codenamed “Premin”), Radio MOF, 16 October 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/petnaeset-carinici-i-policaec-uapseni-vo-golema-policiska-akcija-pod-kodno-ime-premin/>.

abuse of official position and authority;²³⁹ against a construction inspector in the Municipality of Kumanovo for receiving bribes;²⁴⁰ four persons accused of abuse of official position and authority and abuse of the public procurement procedure during the implementation of the project for the facade and lighting of the Government building;²⁴¹ a former director of the communal enterprise of the municipality of Gazi Baba for embezzlement in the performance of service;²⁴² fifteen customs officers and one police officer accused of committing the crimes of receiving bribes and abuse of official position and authority;²⁴³ and a police officer²⁴⁴ and a surgeon²⁴⁵ suspected of receiving bribes on several different occasions.

239 „12 полицајци со измислени екстра работни часови земале бонус плати“ (12 police officers took bonus salaries with fabricated extra working hours), A1on, 25 December 2024, <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/12-policaajci-so-izmisleni-ekstra-rabotni-chasovi-ze-male-bonus-plati/>.

240 „Додека примала 4.000 евра поткуп уапсена градежна инспекторка вработена во општина Куманово“ (Construction inspector employed in Kumanovo municipality arrested while receiving a 4,000-euro bribe), Sakam da kazham, 1 November 2024, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrezha/dodeka-primala-4-000-evra-potcup-uapsena-gradezhna-inspektorka-vrabotena-vo-opshtina-kumanovo/>.

241 „Обвинение за четири лица инволвирани во изведбата на проектот за фасада и илуминација на зградата на Владата“ (Indictment against four persons involved in the execution of the facade and illumination project of the Government building), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 7 February 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinenie-za-chetiri-licza-involvira-ni-vo-izvedbata-na-proektot-za-fasada-i-iluminacija-na-zgradata-na-vladata/>.

242 „Обвинение против поранешен директор – давал плати на хонорарци кои биле во странство“ (Indictment against a former director – paid salaries to freelancers who were abroad), TV Telma, 16 January 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/01/16/obvinenie-pro-tiv-poraneshen-direktor-daval-plati-na-honorarci-koj-bile-vo-stranstvo/>.

243 „Обвинение за 16 лица во предметот „Премин“, за две лица постапката е запрена“ (Indictment for 16 persons in the “Premin” case; proceedings stayed for two individuals), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 January 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinenie-za-16-licza-vo-predmetot-premin-za-dve-licza-postapkata-e-zaprena/>.

244 „Полициски службеник „падна“ со 50 евра поткуп, пронајдени пари и документација“ (Police officer «caught» with a 50-euro bribe, money and documentation found), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 18 January 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/policziski-sluzhbenik-padna-so-50-evra-potcup-pronajdeni-pari-i-dokumentaczija/>.

245 „Битолски хирург осомнichen за примање поткуп“ (Bitola surgeon suspected of receiving a bribe), Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 29 January 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/bitolski-hirurg-osomnichen-za-primane-potcup/>.

Legal Framework

As a response to the EC recommendation for a new Criminal Code, the Ministry of Justice stated that it has prepared a new draft and submitted it to the EC for an opinion.²⁴⁶ In addition, the Ministry of Justice announced that it will soon prepare amendments to the current Criminal Code,²⁴⁷ which are expected to remove the harmful implications of the latest amendments from 2023. These changes should improve the provisions related to the fight against corruption by increasing the existing penalties for the criminal offense of abuse of official position and authority and by expanding the scope of criminal offenses to enable extended confiscation.²⁴⁸

In mid-February, a draft Law on Amending the Law on the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest was published on the Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER). It was noted that these amendments and additions aim to address the identified deficiencies in the Law on the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest, which have a negative impact on the efficiency of the SCPC and the implementation of established prohibitions and responsibilities.²⁴⁹

The SCPC²⁵⁰ and the Platform of Civil Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption²⁵¹ expressed concern about the proposed amendments to the Law on Public Procurement, which, according to them, were rushed without broad public consultation or thorough analysis. They criticized the abolition of administrative control over public procurement by the Bureau for Public Procurement and the proposed changes in the composition of the State Commission for Public Procurement Appeals, claiming that this could weaken anti-corruption measures.

246 „Правда подготвила нов Кривичен законик, испратен е на мислење во Брисел“ (Justice Ministry prepared a new Criminal Code, sent to Brussels for opinion), Sloboden Pechat, 31 October 2024, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/pravda-podgotvila-nov-krivichen-zakonik-ispraten-e-na-mislenje-vo-brisel/>.

247 „Известувања за почеток на процесот за подготвотка на закон“ (Announcement for the start of the law preparation process), Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia, 16 April 2025, <https://pravda.gov.mk/vest/6845>.

248 „Прво кратки и важни измени, а потоа нов Кривичен законик: Министерот Филков најавува итна ревизија на контроверзните измени од 2023 година“ (First short and important amendments, then a new Criminal Code: Minister Filkov announces urgent revision of the controversial 2023 amendments), Plusinfo.mk, 13 January 2025, <https://plusinfo.mk/prvo-kratki-i-vazhni-izmeni-a-potoa-nov-krivichen-zakonik-ministerot-filkov-na-avuva-itna-revizi-a-na-kontroverznite-izmeni-od-2023-godina/>.

249 „Предлог на Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси“ (Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest), Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER), 17 February 2025, https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemID=66368.

250 „Државната комисија за спречување на корупцијата повикува на транспарентност и анализа при донесување на измените на Законот за јавните набавки“ (The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption calls for transparency and analysis when adopting amendments to the Law on Public Procurement), State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 12 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4jxiGnE>.

251 „Платформа против корупција: Наместо да ја зајакнува, преку измени на Законот за јавни набавки се укинува контролата на тендерите“ (Anti-Corruption Platform: Instead of strengthening it, amendments to the Law on Public Procurement abolish tender control), Radio MOF, 12 December 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/platorma-protiv-korupcija-namesto-da-za-zajaknuva-preku-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-javni-nabavki-se-ukinuva-kontrolata-na-tenderi/>.

Following these reactions, the amendments were withdrawn from the emergency procedure and submitted under the regular legislative procedure,²⁵² in which the Assembly adopted them, including the contested provisions.²⁵³

Urgent strengthening of the human and financial resources of the SCPC, the BPPO-POCC, and other public prosecutor's offices, due to the chronic lack of capacity which directly limits the efficiency in handling cases of high public interest;

Improvement of inter-institutional coordination through the functional and regular operation of the newly formed Inter-Ministerial Body for the Fight Against Corruption, with clear results and accountability;

Establish standards for a rapid and coordinated institutional response, alongside reforms in the inspection services, increased transparency, and digitized tracking of permits and licenses following the fire in Kočani;

Increasing integrity in the public administration through stricter rules, systematic training, and enhanced supervision, given the large number of cases of identified conflicts of interest and corrupt practices;

Consistent implementation of the Strategy for Strengthening Capacities for Financial Investigations and Confiscation, including the development of advanced analytical tools and strengthened inter-institutional cooperation;

Adoption of a new Criminal Code in full compliance with international standards, which will overcome the harmful consequences of the 2023 amendments and strengthen legal certainty in the fight against corruption;

Revision of the contested provisions in the Law on Public Procurement and ensuring greater transparency, in accordance with the remarks of the SCPC and the civil sector, with the aim of reducing corruption risks in public procurement processes.

²⁵² „Пратениците на ВМРО-ДПМНЕ го повлекоа од скратена постапка и го поднесоа во редовна истиот предлог за измени на Законот за јавни набавки со кои се засилува корупцијата“ (VMRO-DPMNE MPs withdrew from shortened procedure and submitted in regular procedure the same proposal for amendments to the Law on Public Procurement which strengthen corruption), Sakam da kazham (SDK.mk), 16 December 2024, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pratenitsite-na-vmro-dpmne-go-povlekoaa-predlogot-za-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-javni-nabavki-so-koi-se-zasiluvasho-koruptsijata/>.

²⁵³ „Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за јавните набавки“ (Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Public Procurement), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 14/2025.

TABLE: Key Indicators for the Fight Against Corruption (2024–2025)

Institution / Area	Indicator / Event	Data (2024–2025)
SCPC – Reports and Cases	Corruption reports (2024)	689 reports
	Cases opened ex officio (2024)	78 cases
	Adopted decisions (Total 2024)	742 decisions
	– Corruption	353 decisions
	– Conflict of interest	98 decisions
	– Election campaign financing	60 decisions
	– Asset declarations	231 decisions
SCPC – National Strategy 2021–2025	Activities fully implemented	18%
	Activities in progress	32%
	Activities not started	50%
SCPC – Integrity System (2024)	Covered institutions	72 central, 72 local, 16 judicial
	Main deficiencies	Lack of conflict of interest rules, weak gift sections, low ISO-certification
SCPC – 2025 Data (First 9 months)	New reports	351 reports
	Election-related cases	15
	Cases opened ex officio	5
	Decisions on corruption	241
	Decisions on conflict of interest	65
	Decisions on asset records	72
	Misdemeanor orders	77 (mostly for non-submission of assets)
GRECO – Implementation of Recommendations	Implemented	17 out of 23
	Partially implemented / Unfulfilled	6 out of 23
Criminal Cases – High Corruption	“Syndrome”	36 indicted; 13 plea agreements
	“Oncology 2”	Damage > 2.2 billion MKD
	Kočani Fire	59 victims, 160 hospitalized; 34 indicted
	“Tvrđina” (Fortress)	14.5 and 9.8 years in prison
Legal Framework	New Criminal Code	Draft submitted to the EC
	Law on Public Procurement	Amendments criticized; but adopted in regular procedure

3. Fundamental rights

In last year's EC report for the country, it was noted that the country is partially aligned with EU law and standards on fundamental rights, with serious problems in the systematic implementation of the legal framework. In accordance with last year's recommendations, there is a need to provide support for vulnerable children, including child victims of violence, Roma, and children with disabilities, as well as a need to rectify the substandard conditions in prisons. Additionally, the need for the adoption of amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman was highlighted—amendments required to obtain “A” status accreditation based on the Paris Principles—and the implementation of recommendations from the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture.²⁵⁴

The 2024 US Department of State Report on Human Rights in the Republic of North Macedonia²⁵⁵ determined that there were no significant changes in this area during the past year. It highlighted problems in various fields, such as restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence and threats of violence against journalists, emphasizing that political polarization and influence over the media undermine editorial independence and freedom of expression.

²⁵⁴ Commission Staff Working Document - North Macedonia 2024 Report, European Commission, 30 October 2024, <https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2024-10/North%20Macedonia%20Report%202024.pdf>.

²⁵⁵ 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: North Macedonia (United States Department of State), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-macedonia>.

Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights

During 2024, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled on 192 applications against the Republic of North Macedonia, of which 180 were rejected or declared inadmissible. The Court rendered 10 judgments in 12 cases, establishing violations of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.²⁵⁶ In the first seven months of 2025, the ECtHR ruled on 94 applications against the Republic of North Macedonia.²⁵⁷ In the first half of 2025, the Bureau for the Representation of the Republic of North Macedonia before the ECtHR published the Annual Report on its work in 2024,²⁵⁸ stating that the number of applications submitted to the ECtHR against the Republic of North Macedonia shows a relatively stable trend. However, as in previous years, this number in 2024 remains above the European average according to the Index of submitted applications per 10,000 inhabitants, which stands at 2.00 for the country, compared to the European level of 1.83. An increase of nearly 44% compared to 2023 was noted in the number of applications decided by a judgment during 2024. Simultaneously, the Annual Report on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Execution of ECtHR Decisions for 2024 was also published.²⁵⁹

During the reporting period, the most significant development was the process for electing a new national judge to the ECtHR and the associated controversies regarding its transparency and legality. In the first half of 2025, the first process for electing a new national judge to the ECtHR began. The Selection Commission held a series of meetings, first publishing the public call²⁶⁰ and subsequently interviewing 12 candidates.²⁶¹ On May 9, a shortlist of three candidates was established (a former prosecutor from the Special Prosecutor Office, a judge from the Court of Appeal Skopje, and a lawyer).²⁶² However, in the second half of 2025, the Government annulled the previous list of three candidates, stating that none of the proposed candidates met the criteria.²⁶³ This sparked reactions from the previous candidates²⁶⁴ and

²⁵⁶ European Court of Human Rights – Country Brief (2025), https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/CP_Republic_of_North_Macedonia_ENG#:~:text=The%20Court%20dealt%20with%20314,European%20Convention%20on%20Human%20Rights.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ „Годишен извештај за работата на Меѓуресорската комисија за извршување на одлуките на ЕСЧП за 2024 година“ (Annual report on the work of the Inter-ministerial Commission for the Execution of ECtHR Decisions for 2024), Bureau for the Representation of the Republic of North Macedonia before the ECtHR, 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bj31XF>.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Јавен оглас за избор на кандидати за судија на Република Северна Македонија во Европскиот суд за човекови права“ (Public call for the selection of candidates for a judge of the Republic of North Macedonia at the European Court of Human Rights), Ministry of Justice of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 April 2025, <https://pravda.gov.mk/vest/6841>.

²⁶¹ „Тројца кандидати го минаа филтерот за Европскиот суд за човекови права“ (Three candidates passed the filter for the European Court of Human Rights), Telma TV, 9 May 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/05/09/trojca-kandidati-go-minaa-filterot-za-evropskiot-sud-za-chovekovi-prava/>.

²⁶² „Составена листата од тројца кандидати за судија во ЕСЧП од Македонија: Апостолски, Ристовска и Гайдова“ (List of three candidates for ECtHR judges from Macedonia composed: Apostolski, Ristovska, and Gajdova), Mkd.mk, 9 May 2025, <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/sostavena-listata-od-trojca-kandidati-za-sudii-vo-eschp-od-makedonija-apostolski-ristovska-i-gajdova/>.

²⁶³ „Владата ја понишила предлог-листата со кандидатите за судија во Стразбур, утврдила дека Ристоска, Гайдова и Апостолски не ги исполнуваат условите“ (The Government canceled the draft list of candidates for a judge in Strasbourg, determined that Ristoska, Gajdova, and Apostolski do not meet the requirements), Sloboden Pechat, 29 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/vladata-ja-ponishtci-predlog-listata-so-kandidatite-za-sudija-vo-strazbur-utvrdila-deka-ristoska-gajdova-i-apostolski-ne-gi-ispolnuvaat-uslovite/>.

²⁶⁴ „Ристоска: Владата да каже кои кандидати не ги исполнуваат условите за судот во Стразбур“ (Ristoska: The Government should state which candidates do not meet the requirements for the Strasbourg Court), Sloboden Pechat, 29 July 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/ristoska-vladata-daccc-kazhe-koi-kandidati-ne-gi-ispolnuvaat-uslovite-za-sudot-vo-strazbur/>.

the civil sector,²⁶⁵ who criticized the decision as non-transparent and legally contentious. Consequently, a new Selection Commission was formed,²⁶⁶ which introduced amendments, extended the application deadline to 30 days, and republished the public call on September 4 and 11, 2025.²⁶⁷ Interviews for the candidates are scheduled for the month of October.

On November 5, 2024, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the case of Zahariev v. North Macedonia. The applicant claimed that he was prosecuted by domestic courts despite his immunity from criminal liability at the time the indictment was filed, contrary to the provisions of the Vienna Convention, and that the courts failed to provide an adequate explanation in response to his arguments. The ECtHR ruled that there was a violation of Article 6, paragraph 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and decided that the finding of a violation in itself constitutes sufficient satisfaction for the applicant, opting not to award compensation for non-material damage.²⁶⁸

On November 26, 2024, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the case of NDI SOPOT S.A. v. North Macedonia, which concerned arbitration regarding a joint venture agreement concluded between a Polish private joint-stock company (NDI SOPOT S.A.) and a private company from North Macedonia. The applicant company complained under Article 6, paragraph 1 of the ECHR that the proceedings regarding the recognition of the partial award were unfair because the findings of the courts in North Macedonia at all levels were arbitrary and clearly unreasonable. The ECtHR ruled that there was a violation of Article 6 of the ECHR and ordered the state to pay 3,600 euros to the applicant company for non-material damage and 15,000 euros to cover the costs of the proceedings.²⁶⁹

On March 4, 2025, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the case of K.M. v. North Macedonia. The case concerns the alleged failure of North Macedonia to protect a fourteen-year-old girl from sexual abuse, in relation to an incident in which an adult allegedly stroked her leg and touched her breasts and shoulders. The ECtHR ruled that the domestic criminal-law framework in force at the material time failed to provide the necessary protection of the applicant's rights under Article 8 of the ECHR. It established that the lack of an effective criminal-law response to the alleged sexual abuse, which resulted in the dismissal of the applicant's criminal charges, did not correspond to the mandatory respect for the best interests of the child. It also determined that the domestic civil law provisions, as applied in practice by the domestic courts, failed to provide the applicant with the necessary protection from sexual abuse. The ECtHR ruled that there was a violation of Article 8 of the ECHR.²⁷⁰

265 „Владината одлука за поништување на листата на кандидати за судија во ЕСЧП е нетранспарентна и правно спорна“ (The Government's decision to cancel the list of candidates for a judge in the ECtHR is non-transparent and legally disputed), Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 31 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oKNwf2>.

266 „Нов почеток во судската битка за Страсбур“ (New beginning in the judicial battle for Strasbourg), Radio Free Europe, 6 August 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/sud-strazbur-kandidati/-33495184.html>.

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

268 ECtHR, "Case of Zahariev v. North Macedonia (No. 26760/22)", 5 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/4gY63R6>.

269 ECtHR, "Case of NDI SOPOT S.A. v. North Macedonia (A.No. 6035/17)", 26 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/3PDxle2>.

270 ECtHR, Case of K.M. v. North Macedonia (A. No. 59144/16)', 4 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4irHRX4>.

On June 24, 2025, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the case of M.L. v. North Macedonia, finding a violation of Article 8 of the ECHR, which guarantees the right to respect for private and family life. The case concerned a restraining order that prohibited the applicant from approaching his daughter or visiting her home and school, as well as the failure of the domestic courts to periodically review the necessity of the measure as required by domestic law. The ECtHR found that the domestic courts imposed this restriction but failed to provide an adequate explanation to justify its severity and proportionality, thereby preventing the applicant from effectively understanding or challenging the measure.²⁷¹

In August, the ECtHR accepted an application filed by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, in which municipal and national institutions are accused of failing to fulfill their legal obligations to protect the right to a healthy environment and public health.²⁷² The lawsuit relates to the case of the toxic municipal landfill in the city of Struga, after domestic courts, including the Basic Court in Struga and the Court of Appeal in Bitola, declared themselves incompetent to resolve the case regarding the municipal landfill.²⁷³

²⁷¹ M.L. v. North Macedonia (ECtHR, 24 June 2025). [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#/{%22respondent%22:\[%22MKD%22\],%22documentcollection-id%22:\[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22\],%22itemid%22:\[%22001-243782%22\]}.](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#/{%22respondent%22:[%22MKD%22],%22documentcollection-id%22:[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22],%22itemid%22:[%22001-243782%22]})

²⁷² „Европскиот суд за човекови права во Страсбург ќе расправа за струшката депонија“ (The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg will discuss the Struga landfill), MIA – Media Information Agency, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/43uZnVU>.

²⁷³ '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/>.

The Ombudsman

According to the data in the Annual Report for 2024,²⁷⁴ published in April 2025, the Ombudsman handled/reviewed 3,148 complaints, of which 2,705 were from 2024 and 443 were carried over from the previous year. The highest number of identified violations (173 cases, or 23.28%) related to civil status and other internal matters, where the authorities acted upon the Ombudsman's recommendations in 94.80% of cases. This was followed by the judiciary sector, with 96 violations (12.92%) and a compliance rate of 67.71%, and consumer rights, where there were 76 violations (10.23%), with 88.16% of recommendations implemented. A key issue highlighted during the reporting period was the large volume of complaints related to the issuance of personal documents and travel documents, including problems with scheduling, processing delays, and delays in the delivery of personal documents and passports. The report also reiterated concerns regarding structural issues related to the limited financial, organizational, and functional independence of the Ombudsman. It noted a lack of funds for implementing projects and insufficient human resources, as well as the constant delay in adopting the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman, as this prevents the institution from applying for "A-status" accreditation from the United Nations (UN).²⁷⁵ From January to September 2025, the Ombudsman handled/reviewed 2,365 complaints, of which 1,844 were from 2025 and 443 were carried over from the previous year.²⁷⁶ By field, the highest number of complaints were in the judiciary (292) and consumer rights (222).

In December 2024, the Ombudsman presented the Report on Monitoring the Implementation of the Principle of Adequate and Equitable Representation for 2023.²⁷⁷ The analysis showed that only a few institutions, such as the Assembly, several ministries, and several local self-government units, effectively respect this principle. In contrast, the Supreme Court, the Office of the President, the Government Secretariat, and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts have the poorest performance in this regard.²⁷⁸

In the 2024 Annual Report of the National Preventive Mechanism,²⁷⁹ the Ombudsman highlighted insufficient staffing and financial capacities for the full, effective, and efficient

274 „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2024“ (Annual Report on the Degree of Ensuring Respect, Promotion, and Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms 2024), Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, March 2025, <https://ombudsman.mk/CMS/Upload/NarodenPravobranitel/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2024/GI-2024.pdf>.

275 „Зибери: Народниот правобранител се соочува со сериозни проблеми иако има фундаментална улога во заштитата на човековите права и слободи“ (Ziberi: The Ombudsman faces serious problems despite having a fundamental role in protecting human rights and freedoms), Civil Media, 23 April 2025, <https://civilmedia.mk/ziberi-narodniot-pravobranitel-se-soochuva-so-seriozni-problemi-iako-ima-fundamentalna-uloga-vo-zashtitata-na-chovekovite-prava-i-slobodi/>.

276 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, Response to a request for free access to public information, October 20, 2025.

277 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia „Извештај за следење на примената на начелото на соодветната и правична застапеност за 2023 година“ (Report on monitoring the application of the principle of adequate and equitable representation for 2023), December 2024 <https://ombudsman.mk/CMS/Upload/NarodenPravobranitel/upload/documents/SPZ/SPZ-2023-Mak.pdf>.

278 „Во МАНУ, МЕПСО и Врховниот суд не се почитува правична застапеност при вработувањето, вели Народниот правобранител“ („In MANU, MEPSO, and the Supreme Court, fair representation is not respected during employment, says the Ombudsman“), 360 Degrees, 10 December 2024, <https://360stopeni.mk/vo-manu-mepso-i-vrhovniot-sud-ne-se-pochitava-pravichna-zastapenost-pri-vrabotuvane-veli-narodniot-pravobranitel/>.

279 Naser Ziberi et al., „Годишен извештај 2024“ („Annual Report 2024“), National Preventive Mechanism - Ombudsman, 2025, <https://ombudsman.mk/CMS/Upload/NarodenPravobranitel/upload/NPM-dokumenti/2024/NPM%20Godisni%20izvestaj-2024-Mk-Alb-Ang.pdf>.

implementation of its competencies. The report expressed concern regarding inadequate accommodation facilities in the country's prisons, leading to overcrowding, as well as untimely healthcare, insufficient staffing, and the engagement of unprofessional and unqualified personnel. Furthermore, it was determined that conditions in police stations are seriously below minimum standards, lacking adequate infrastructure, trained staff, specialized rooms, and security systems, which poses risks to the rights and dignity of detained persons. Additionally, regarding the detention and accommodation of migrants/foreigners and asylum seekers, the report emphasizes the need to strengthen human resource capacities in the field of healthcare for those in contact with migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, as well as the improvement of mental health services and psychosocial support through mobile teams.

During the reporting period, the most significant development was the process of electing a new Ombudsman.²⁸⁰ Specifically, on July 10, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia voted on a decision to publish a public call for the election of a new Ombudsman, after the mandate of the previous one ended on July 12 and was officially noted on July 17 by the President of the Assembly.²⁸¹ However, reactions followed from the Ombudsman himself, who stated that he had repeatedly informed both the Assembly and the Government of the need to start the reappointment procedure on time, claiming that their inaction represents a violation of the law regulating the operation of the Ombudsman.²⁸² Although a candidate from the VLEN coalition was proposed at a session held on July 31,²⁸³ he did not receive the necessary Badinter majority, leaving the institution without a head of function²⁸⁴ and operating with only two deputy ombudsmen.²⁸⁵

280 59 седница на Собрание на Република Северна Македонија - „Одлука за распишување оглас за избор на Народен правобранител“ (59th Session of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia - “Decision to announce a call for the election of an Ombudsman”), Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 July 2025, <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.aspx?param=6ba3bfae-e0bc-4142-958b-6b94753ca57d>.

281 „Собранието констатира престанок на функцијата на Народниот правобранител Насер Зибери“ (“The Assembly concludes the termination of the term of office of the Ombudsman Naser Ziberi”), 360 Degrees, 17 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-konstati-rra-prestanok-na-funksijata-na-narodniot-pravobranitel-naser-ziberi/>.

282 „Собранието сè уште не одредило наследник – Народниот правобранител Насер Зибери во пензија“ (“The Assembly has yet to determine a successor – Ombudsman Naser Ziberi retires”), TV21, 15 July 2025, <https://mk.tv21.tv/sobranieto-se-ushte-ne-odredilo-nasled-nik-narodniot-pravobranitel-naser-ziberi-vo-penzija/>.

283 „Фатон Сељами предложен за нов Народен правобранител“ (“Faton Seljami proposed for the new Ombudsman”), Kanal 5, 31 July 2025, <https://kanal5.com.mk/faton-sejami-predlozen-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/> a710693.

284 „Адвокатот на граѓаните десеткуван пред избори“ (“The Citizens’ Lawyer decimated before elections”), Sloboden Pechat, 20 August 2025, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/advokatot-na-gragjanite-desetkuvan-pred-izbori/>.

285 „Кабинетот на Гashi: Потпишана е одлуката за оглас за нов Народен правобранител“ (“Gashi’s Cabinet: The decision to announce a call for a new Ombudsman has been signed”), 360 Degrees, 15 July 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/kabinetot-na-gashi-potpishana-e-odluka-ta-za-oglas-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/>.

Torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment

Bo During 2024, the Ombudsman handled 25 complaints regarding torture, inhuman, and degrading treatment by police officers and members of the prison police. Of the submitted complaints, 10 relate to the use of excessive force or ill-treatment in the line of duty by police officers, while 15 cases relate to members of the prison police. Compared to 2023, there were six more complaints in 2024 regarding torture and inhuman treatment by police and prison staff. Notably, the number of cases where convicted persons complained of ill-treatment by prison police officers increased significantly, rising from 6 to 15.

In 2024, the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mol) took measures to investigate a total of 995 cases of alleged illegal, unprofessional, and unethical conduct by Ministry employees. These investigations resulted in 25 criminal charges for 28 criminal offenses, including: "causing public danger," "abuse of official position and authority," "ill-treatment in the line of duty," "negligent operation in the service," "sexual assault with abuse of position," and others.²⁸⁶ In comparison, during the first nine months of 2025, the Department took measures to investigate a total of 987 cases of alleged illegal, unprofessional, and unethical conduct. These led to 52 criminal charges for 57 criminal offenses, such as: "Abuse of official position and authority," "negligent operation in the service," "serious crimes against public safety," "endangering safety," "assault on an official while performing security duties," "Ill-treatment in the line of duty," and others.²⁸⁷ Although the number of investigated cases in 2024 and the first nine months of 2025 does not differ greatly, the number of criminal charges and criminal offenses filed has doubled. This indicates that the severity of the identified violations has increased. Furthermore, 2025 shows a rise in more serious forms of illegal conduct, suggesting either a worsening trend of misconduct within the Ministry or an improved internal detection of abuses.

For six years now, not a single complaint of torture or inhuman treatment has been submitted by a convicted person to the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Ministry of Interior, „Извештај за работата на Одделот за внатрешна контрола, криминалистички истраги и професионални стандарди во деветте месеци од 2024 година“ („Report on the work of the Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards in the nine months of 2024“), 16 October 2024, https://mvr.gov.mk/Upload/Editor_Upload/Izvestaj%20devet%20meseci.pdf.

²⁸⁷ Ministry of Interior, „Извештај за работата на одделот за внатрешна контрола, криминалистички истраги и професионални стандарди во деветте месеци од 2025 година“ („Report on the work of the Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards in the nine months of 2025“), 24 October 2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-documents/oddel-za-vnatresna-kontrola-kriminalisticki-istragi-i-profesionalni-standardi-document-dSGm.pdf>.

²⁸⁸ „Годишен извештај за ефикасноста на правната заштита на човековите права во Република Северна Македонија за 2024 година“ („Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Legal Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024“), (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association – MYLA), March 2025, <https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GODISEN-IZVESTAJ-ZA-COVEKOVI-PRAVA-MZMP-2024.pdf>.

Prisons and detention

According to the data in the 2024 Annual Report of the Ombudsman,²⁸⁹ 184 complaints were received regarding the protection and realization of the rights of convicted and detained persons, as well as the conditions in the penitentiary institutions of the Republic of North Macedonia—an increase of 18 compared to 2023. The report highlights the burden of an excessive number of convicts in the institutions as well as healthcare issues. According to the Council of Europe's Annual Penal Statistics on Prison Populations (SPACE I) for 2024, prison overcrowding remains a critical challenge in one-third of European prison administrations; the total number of inmates per 100 available places increased from 93.5 to 94.9 between January 31, 2023, and January 31, 2024, while North Macedonia reported moderate overcrowding.²⁹⁰

Regarding overcrowding, convicted persons are forced to sleep in shifts and in hallways.²⁹¹ Despite the legal framework allowing for alternative sanctions such as house arrest and electronic monitoring, these measures were rarely applied. Specifically, in the reception ward of the Idrizovo prison, there were 48 convicted persons in a space intended for 10, while other facilities remain underutilized.²⁹² The provision of healthcare in prison institutions was severely inadequate. In Idrizovo, one doctor was allegedly responsible for over 1,300 prisoners, which is a cause for serious concern regarding access to healthcare.²⁹³ In this regard, the Health Insurance Fund and the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions initiated a reform intended to ensure that all convicted persons receive health insurance immediately upon entering the prison system. Previously, they had to wait up to a month for health insurance.²⁹⁴ Additionally, steps are being taken to introduce a standardized registry of injuries to improve data collection and inform evidence-based prison policy reforms.²⁹⁵

The Ombudsman's report also highlights ongoing problems with access to civil registry services. In one case, a convicted person in Idrizovo served their entire sentence without a formal identification document, as documents such as a birth certificate and ID number were

289 „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2024“ (“Annual Report on the Degree of Ensuring Respect, Promotion, and Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms 2024”).

290 “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>.

291 Ibid.

292 „Во приемното одделение во Идризово петмина затвореници на место за еден“ (“In the reception ward of Idrizovo, five prisoners for the space of one”), Telma TV, 10 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/10/vo-priemnoto-oddelenie-vo-idrizovo-petmina-zatvorenici-na-mesto-za-eden/>.

293 „Само еден лекар на 1.316 осудени лица во најголемиот затвор во државата, затворот во Идризово“ (“Only one doctor for 1,316 convicts in the country's largest prison, Idrizovo prison”), MKD.mk, 12 April 2025, <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/samo-eden-lekar-na-1-316-osudenii-lica-vo-najgolemiot-zatvor-vo-drzhavata-zatvorot-vo-idrizovo/>.

294 „Затворениците нема повеќе да се лекуваат во болниците како да се неосигури, туку за нив ќе се плаќа само партциципација“ (“Prisoners will no longer be treated in hospitals as if uninsured, but will only pay a co-payment”), Sloboden Pechat, 13 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4210Zod>.

295 Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, “North Macedonia's authorities discussed the setting of a standardized register of injuries in prisons,” 26 February 2025, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/skopje/-/north-macedonia-s-authorities-discussed-the-setting-of-a-standardized-register-of-injuries-in-prisons>.

only issued after nearly four years following the Ombudsman's intervention.²⁹⁶ The Ministry of Justice published a new draft Law on Probation, which brings essential changes aimed at improving justice, protecting victims, and increasing the efficiency of the probation service.²⁹⁷ On May 21, the Council of Europe Office in Skopje announced the development of new Standard Operating Procedures for prison staff to enhance professionalism and standardize practices across the entire penitentiary system.²⁹⁸

In February, the Union of Prison Police and Administration, within the Independent Union of State Administration, highlighted the problems faced by prison officers. It emphasized the need to improve employee rights and conditions within the prison system.²⁹⁹ There are serious deficiencies in prisoner supervision, internal control, and security procedures for both staff and convicts. This is confirmed by numerous incidents, such as attacks on prison staff³⁰⁰ and fights among prisoners in both the male³⁰¹ and female wards,³⁰² a physical attack on a guard during a court transfer,³⁰³ and an assault on a prison police officer.³⁰⁴

296 „Без матичен број и извод од родени, издржувал казна во Идризово со отисок од прст – Извештај на Омбудсманот за 2024 година“ (“Without a personal identification number and a birth certificate, he served a sentence in Idrizovo using a fingerprint – Ombudsman’s Report for 2024”), Telma TV, 15 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/15/golem-broj-prestavki-do-narodniot-pravobranitel/>.

297 „Нов предлог Закон за пробација објавен на ЕНЕР“ (“New draft Law on Probation published on ENER”), Ministry of Justice, 5 September 2025, <https://pravda.gov.mk/vest/6874>.

298 Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, “New standard operating procedures in North Macedonia to ensure enhanced human rights safeguards and operational effectiveness,” 21 May 2025, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/skopje/-/new-standard-operating-procedures-in-north-macedonia-to-ensure-enhanced-human-rights-safeguards-and-operational-effectiveness>.

299 „Затворските полицијци се жалат дека криминалици ги малтретираат после работа: Напуштаат работа бидејќи е неиздржливо да се работи во скопските затвори“ (“Prison officers complain that criminals harass them after work: They are leaving their jobs because it is unbearable to work in Skopje prisons”), PlusInfo.mk, 4 February 2025, <https://plusinfo.mk/zatvorskite-polica-ci-se-zhalat-deka-kriminalcigi-maltreriaat-posle-rabota-napushtaat-rabota-bide-i-e-neizdrzhivo-da-se-raboti-vo-skopskite-zatvori/>.

300 „Осуденик претепал затворски полицаец“ (“Convict beat up a prison officer”), 24 Info, 14 January 2025, <https://24info.mk/osudenik-pretepal-zatvorski-policaec/>.

301 „Нападнат затвореник во Идризово“ (“Convict attacked in Idrizovo”), 24 Info, 16 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/3RIT3DD>.

302 „Женска“ тепачка во Идризово, осуденичка е тешко повредена“ (“‘Female’ fight in Idrizovo, a female convict is seriously injured”), Skopje Info, 25 May 2025, <https://skopjeinfo.mk/zhenska-tepacika-vo-idrizovo-osudenichka-e-teshko-povredena>.

303 „Затвореник од Идризово нападнал чувар“ (“An inmate from Idrizovo attacked a guard”), 24 Info, 20 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Ely5HX>.

304 „Осуденик нападна затворски полицаец во Идризово“ (“An inmate attacked a prison officer in Idrizovo”), Telma, 25 August 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/08/25/osudenik-napadna-zatvorski-policzaec-vo-idrizovo/>.

Personal data protection

In 2024, a total of 249 complaints were submitted to the Personal Data Protection Agency (PDPA), 247 of which concerned abuses on social networks.³⁰⁵ The most characteristic reports involved fake profiles, breached profiles, unauthorized publication of photos and videos on social media profiles, misuse of personal data, and more. Among these, 12 complaints pertained to the violation of the right to personal data protection for children on social networks.

On November 29, 2024, the Strategy for the Implementation of the Right to Protection of Personal Data in the Republic of North Macedonia 2025–2030³⁰⁶ was adopted. It outlines the PDPA's activities for the next five years, aimed at achieving four key objectives:

1. Ensuring the full autonomy and independence of the PDPA;
2. Harmonizing legislation;
3. Raising awareness and encouraging a culture of personal data protection;
4. Implementing accountability tools.³⁰⁷

Toward the end of the year, the PDPA adopted³⁰⁸ several annual programs, including the Work Program for 2025,³⁰⁹ as well as its Annual Supervision Program³¹⁰ and the Annual Training Program for controllers and processors.³¹¹ Simultaneously, the PDPA adopted³¹² several relevant bylaws in 2024, including:

305 „Годишен извештај 2024“ (“Annual Report 2024”), Personal Data Protection Agency, April 2025, <https://azlp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/GODISEN-IZVESTAJ-AZLP-2024.pdf>.

306 Personal Data Protection Agency, “Promotion of the Strategy for the Implementation of the Right to Personal Data Protection in the Republic of North Macedonia 2025–2030,” 30 November 2024, <https://azlp.mk/en/promotion-of-the-strategy-for-the-implementation-of-the-right-to-personal-data-protection-in-the-republic-of-north-macedonia-2025-2030/>.

307 PDPA “Strategy for the Implementation of the Right to Personal Data Protection in the Republic of North Macedonia 2025–2030”, November 2024, https://azlp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Strategija_2025-2030_mk.pdf.

308 „Донесени годишни програми за работа на Агенцијата за 2025 година“ (Annual Work Programs of the Agency for 2025 adopted), Personal Data Protection Agency, 24 December 2024, <https://azlp.mk/en/annual-work-programs-of-the-agency-for-2025-adopted/>.

309 Personal Data Protection Agency, „Програма за работа на Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци за 2025 година“ (Work Program of the Personal Data Protection Agency for 2025), December 2024, <https://azlp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Programa-za-rabota-na-AZLP-za-2025.pdf>.

310 „Годишна програма за супервизија за 2025 година“ (Annual Supervision Program for 2025), Personal Data Protection Agency, December 2024, <https://bit.ly/40qREpt>.

311 „Годишна програма за обуки на контролори и обработувачи за 2025 година“ (Annual Training Program for Controllers and Processors for 2025), Personal Data Protection Agency, December 2024, <https://azlp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Godisna-programa-za-obuki-za-2025.pdf>.

312 „Донесен и објавен нов Правилник за безбедност на обработката на личните податоци“ (New Rulebook on the Security of Personal Data Processing adopted and published), Personal Data Protection Agency, 26 December 2024, <https://azlp.mk/en/new-rulebook-on-the-security-of-personal-data-processing-adopted-and-published/>.

- A new Rulebook on the Security of Personal Data Processing,³¹³ which began to be applied on July 1, 2025;
- A Rulebook amending the Rulebook on the Method of Reporting Personal Data Security Breaches;³¹⁴
- A Rulebook amending the Rulebook on the Method of Conducting Supervision.³¹⁵

In the 2024 Annual Report, the PDPA highlighted persistent structural weaknesses,³¹⁶ including limited staffing (17 employees, of whom only three are in management positions) and dependence on the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Administration for budget and hiring approvals. These constraints compromise the operational and financial independence of the PDPA, which is contrary to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).³¹⁷ Currently, as of October 2025, the PDPA has a total of 16 employees (12 administrative officers, 3 auxiliary-technical staff, and 1 person employed on a fixed-term basis) and a Deputy Director. This represents only a 30% occupancy rate of the positions according to the systematized jobs in the PDPA.³¹⁸ Due to the departure of employees (experts and law graduates), the functioning of sectors has been completely disrupted, particularly the Sector for Legal and General Affairs, as well as the functioning of the Misdemeanor Commission, where the processing of misdemeanor cases has decreased by more than 50%. In 2025, the Ministry of Finance granted approval for the employment of only one person, and regarding requests for employee promotions, all 4 requests were rejected.³¹⁹ All these factors negatively affect the implementation of the Strategy for the Protection of Personal Data 2025-2030. Additionally, the Agency has prepared a Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Protection of Personal Data; these amendments are intended to ensure the full autonomy and independence of the Agency's functioning, allowing it to manage its resources (human and financial) without influence (opinions and approvals) from other institutions, as provided for in the EU General Data Protection Regulation.³²⁰

On April 10, 2025, the BPPO Skopje initiated criminal proceedings against 43 persons, including an employee of the Health Insurance Fund, for falsifying documents and electronic signatures to fraudulently obtain quick loans in the name of citizens without their knowledge,

313 „Правилник за безбедност на обработката на личните податоци“ (Rulebook on the Security of Personal Data Processing), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 266/24

314 „Правилник за дополнување на Правилникот за начинот на известување за нарушување на безбедноста на личните податоци“ (Rulebook amending the Rulebook on the manner of notification for personal data security breaches), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 266/24

315 „Правилник за изменување и дополнување на Правилникот за начинот на вршење на супервизија“ (Rulebook amending and supplementing the Rulebook on the manner of conducting supervision), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 266/24

316 „Годишен извештај за работата на Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци за 2024 година“ (Annual Report on the Work of the Personal Data Protection Agency for 2024), <http://bit.ly/44VvZrB>

317 „Агенцијата за заштита на лични податоци работи со тројца супервизори“ (“The Personal Data Protection Agency operates with only three supervisors”), Mkd.mk, 16 April 2025, <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/agenцијата-за-заштита-на-лични-податоци-работи-со-трејца-супервизори/>.

318 Contribution to the Shadow Report by the Personal Data Protection Agency, November 28, 2025.

319 Ibid.

320 Ibid.

primarily pensioners. The case revealed a systemic vulnerability in data protection.³²¹ The Minister of Internal Affairs publicly emphasized the need for stronger protective measures and the immediate prosecution of the persons involved.³²² In June 2025, the public debate on data security intensified. A report revealed that only half of the civil registries have been digitized despite costs of 8.5 million euros, raising concerns regarding efficiency and data security. Additionally, media outlets reported allegations that a private gynecologist misused patient data to claim compensation for services that were never provided.³²³

The Assembly should ensure a transparent and depoliticized process for the election of a new Ombudsman, in accordance with the Paris Principles and national legislation;

Election of five deputies to the Ombudsman, in order to ensure the full and efficient functioning of the Ombudsman at both central and local levels;

The State should provide adequate financial resources and sufficient staffing for the Personal Data Protection Agency, with the aim of effectively implementing the Law on Protection of Personal Data as well as the Strategy for the Protection of Personal Data 2025–2030.

321 „Истрага против 43 лица меѓу кои и вработен во Фондот за здравство, фалсификувале потписи и лични карти и со нив земале брзи кредити на туѓо име“ (Investigation against 43 individuals including a Health Insurance Fund employee for forging signatures and IDs to take out quick loans in others' names), Sakam da kazham, 10 April 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/istraga-protiv-43-litsa-megu-koi-i-vraboten-vo-fondot-za-zdravstvo-falsifikuvale-potpisi-i-lichni-karti-i-so-niv-zemale-brzi-krediti-na-tugo-ime/>.

322 „Тошковски: Организаторите на измамата со брзи кредити ќе бидат итно изведени пред суд“ (Toshkovski: The organizers of the quick loan fraud will be urgently brought before the court), Telma TV, 11 April 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/04/11/toshkovski-organizatorite-na-izmamata-so-brzi-krediti-ke-bidat-itno-izvedeni-pred-sud/>.

323 „Скандал со матичните гинеколози – лажеле дека жени направиле ПАП-тест за да земат пари од ФЗОМ!“ (Scandal with family gynecologists – they lied that women had PAP tests to take money from the HIF!), Sloboden pečat, 14 June 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/video-skandal-so-matichnite-ginekolozzi-lazhele-deka-zheni-napravile-pap-test-za-da-zemati-pari-od-fzom/>.

Freedom of expression

On April 22, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted amendments to the Law on Media, expanding the legal definition of “media” to include online portals, which are now subject to registration with the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS). The amendments aim to improve transparency and relax requirements regarding the number of employees necessary for registration.³²⁴ Although welcomed by the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM),³²⁵ civil society organizations noted deficiencies, including insufficient compliance with EU media regulations, an absence of measures to protect against political influence, and limited protection against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP).³²⁶ Additionally, after the Assembly’s failed attempt in February to secure the required two-thirds majority³²⁷ to elect new members to the Council of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS),³²⁸ the Assembly finalized the appointment of new members to the AAVMS Council on June 24.³²⁹

The Republic of North Macedonia has experienced a regression in its ranking according to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders. The country is currently ranked 42nd, representing a drop of six places compared to the previous year. The report highlighted growing pressure on critical journalism, as well as the influence of political interests through advertising and public funding.³³⁰

Within the framework of the final event of the EU-funded Twinning project “Strengthening the Capacities of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the Public Broadcaster,” a trilingual Handbook for Recognizing Disinformation was promoted in January 2025.³³¹ The publication explains in a simple and practical way how to recognize and verify disinformation, photos, videos, and fake profiles on social networks, as well as the most common

324 „Собранието ги донесе измените на Законот за медиуми со поблаги услови за регистрација на интернет-порталите“ (Parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Media with milder conditions for the registration of online portals), 360 Degrees, 22 April 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-gi-donese-izmenite-na-zakonot-za-mediumi-so-poblagi-uslovi-za-registratsija-na-internet-portalite/>.

325 Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers, „ССНМ: Ги поздравуваме измените во Законот за медиуми, но тоа треба да е само дел од процесот за целосно усогласување со регулативата на ЕУ“ (SSNM: We welcome the amendments to the Media Law, but they should only be part of the process for full alignment with EU regulations), 25 April 2025, <https://ssnm.org.mk/soopstjenja/ssnm-gi-pozdravuvame-izmenite-vo-zakonot-za-mediumi-no-toa-treba-da-e-samo-del-od-procesot-za-celosno-usoglasuvanje-so-regulativata-na-eu>.

326 Metamorphosis Foundation for Internet and Society, „Оценка на измените на Законот за медиуми во Северна Македонија – делумен чекор кон европските стандарди“ (Evaluating North Macedonia’s Media Law Reforms—A Partial Step Toward European Standards), 23 April 2025, <https://metamorphosis.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/ocenka-na-izmenite-na-zakonot-za-mediumi-vo-severna-makedonija-%E2%80%94-delumen-chekor-kon-evropskite-standardi-2.pdf>.

327 „Собранието денеска не ги изгласа новите членови на АВМУ, бидејќи не се постигна двотретинско мнозинство“ (The Parliament did not elect the new members of the AAVMS today because a two-thirds majority was not reached), 24 Vesti, 13 February 2025, <https://24.mk/details/sobranieto-deneska-ne-gi-izglosa-novite-chlenovi-na-avmu>.

328 „Седум кандидати за АВМУ го поминаа комисискиот филтер во Собрание“ (Seven candidates for AAVMS passed the committee filter in Parliament), TV Telma, 29 January 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/01/29/sedum-kandidati-za-avmu-go-pominaa-komisiskiot-filiter-vo-sobranie/>.

329 „Избрани новите членови на Советот на АВМУ“ (New members of the AAVMS Council elected), Meta.mk, 24 June 2025, <https://meta.mk/izbrani-novite-chlenovi-na-sovetot-na-avmu/>.

330 North Macedonia country fact file , Reporters without Borders, 2 May 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/country/north-macedonia>.

331 Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, „Прирачник за препознавање дезинформации“ (Handbook for Recognizing Disinformation), 2025, https://mediumskapismenost.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/pripracnik-za-prepoznavanje-dezinformacii_nov.pdf.

techniques used in their creation, including fake experts, manipulative logical constructions, selective presentation of facts, and conspiracy theories.

The findings of the AAVMS report “Gender in Media 2024: Gender Issues and the Manner of Representing Women and Men in Prime Time on National Televisions”³³² indicate that series and serials are the most broadcast content in prime-time slots (45%), followed by news programs (24%) and feature films (22%), while documentaries, humor, and music programs are the least represented. In content dominated by Turkish production series, women were shown on screen for a longer duration (52% of appearance and speech time), whereas in other types of programs, the duration and presence of men on screen was significantly higher. In the majority of the analyzed content, the objectification and sexualization of women were minimal or absent, which represents a positive indicator for advancing respect for gender equality in the media. Additionally, examples of gender-sensitive and inclusive language were noted in certain news programs, while gender-stereotypical language was rarely present, and neutral formulations dominated in the vast majority of programming content.

In the report by the Metamorphosis Foundation and International IDEA, “Enablers and Drivers of Foreign Interference and Information Manipulation During Elections in North Macedonia,”³³³ presented in June, it is highlighted that the decline in the quality of journalism is linked to the economic insecurity of male and female journalists, who earn less than the average salary in the country. In this regard, the persistent socio-economic insecurity for media workers remains a concern, with over 2,100 employees holding more than 3,000 job positions in the sector.³³⁴ In response, professional associations—including the AJM, SSNM, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and the Research Institute for Social Development (RESIS)—issued a joint declaration calling for strengthened labor rights, safe working conditions, and the establishment of a Public Fund for Media Pluralism. Additionally, the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM) requested an urgent increase in the minimum wage to protect 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 portion of them earn only the minimum wage.³³⁵

At the initiative of the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM), the foundations were laid in November 2024 for the formation of the Network of Women in Media in

332 Prof. Vladimir Bozhinovski et al., „Родот во медиумите 2024: Родовите прашања и начинот на претставување на жените и мажите во ударното време на националните телевизии“ (Gender in the Media 2024: Gender Issues and the Representation of Women and Men in Prime-Time National Television), Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 2025, <https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Rodot-vo-mediumite-2024.pdf>.

333 Despina Kovachevska et al., „Овоможувачи и поттикнувачи на странско мешање и манипуирање со информации за време на изборите во Северна Македонија“ (Enablers and Incentives of Election-Related Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference in North Macedonia), Metamorphosis Foundation for Internet and Society and International IDEA, 15 October 2025, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/2025-11/fimi-north-macedonia-MC.pdf>.

334 „Во медиумската професија 2,100 луѓе извршуваат над 3,000 работни позиции“ (In the media profession, 2,100 people perform over 3,000 job positions), Radio MOF, 27 May 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/vo-mediumskata-profesija-2-100-lugje-izvrshuvaat-nad-3-000-rabotni-pozicii/>.

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

North Macedonia “Ednakvi” (Equal).³³⁶ This network was created as a response to injustices, discrimination, and violations of the rights of women journalists and media workers. It aims to act informally to protect those rights and improve reporting on gender-sensitive topics.³³⁷ Furthermore, an initiative for a new Code of Ethics for Journalists was launched.³³⁸ Several consultative meetings were held with journalists and other media workers to discuss contemporary needs and challenges facing the media sector.³³⁹ The drafting of the new Code of Ethics also began, intended to advance professional ethics and media accountability.³⁴⁰

Following the announcement of the upcoming local elections scheduled for October 2025, the AAVMS began monitoring broadcasters in the same manner as before the start of an election campaign. Until the start of the official campaign, the AAVMS will conduct daily monitoring of nine national television programming services with the highest average reach, while all other programming services will be monitored based on complaints.³⁴¹ The Coordinating Body for reporting and acting upon complaints during elections or referendums was reactivated and held its first meeting³⁴² as a mechanism for the protection and respect of the right to freedom of expression and information.³⁴³ During the reporting period, the State Election Commission (SEC) received a total of 352 requests for registration in the register of broadcasters, print media, electronic media, and internet portals for the 2025 Local Elections, of which 33 are television stations, 42 are radio stations, eight are print media, and 246 are internet portals. Approximately 6.5 million euros will be spent on paid political advertising in the media, representing 66% of the SEC's total budget for the local elections.³⁴⁴

336 „Под покровителство на ССНМ тргна иницијативата за формирање на мрежа на жени во медиумите“ (Under the auspices of SSNM, the initiative to form a network of women in the media has started), Official website of the SSNM, 4 November 2024, <https://ssnm.org.mk/aktivnosti/pod-pokrovitelstvo-na-ssnm-trgna-inicijativata-za-formiranje-na-mreza-na-zheni-vo-mediumite>.

337 „Промовирана Мрежата на жени во медиумите „Еднаква““ (The network of women in the media «Ednakva» was promoted), Radio MOF, 10 December 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/promovirana-mrezhata-na-zheni-vo-mediumite-ednakva/>.

338 „Иницијатива за нов етички кодекс: Зачекување кон современи медиумски стандарди“ (Initiative for a new ethical code: Stepping toward modern media standards), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 10 November 2024, <https://znm.org.mk/inicijativa-za-nov-etichki-kodeks-zachekoruvanje-kon-sovremeneni-mediumski-standardi/>.

339 „Новинари и медиумски работници во Струмица дискутираа околу изработката на новиот Етички кодекс на новинарите“ (Journalists and media workers in Strumica discussed the development of the new Code of Ethics for journalists), Radio MOF, 24 November 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/novinari-i-mediumski-rabotnici-vo-strumica-diskutiraa-okolu-izrbotkata-na-novi-etichki-kodeks-na-novinarite/>.

340 „Започна процесот за изработка на нов етички кодекс за новинарите и медиумите во Северна Македонија“ (The process for drafting a new code of ethics for journalists and media in North Macedonia has begun), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 27 December 2024, <https://znm.org.mk/zapochna-procesot-za-izrbotka-na-nov-etichki-kodeks-za-novinarite-i-mediumite-vo-severna-makedonija/>.

341 „АВМУ ќе врши мониторинг на медиумското известување во предизборниот период“ (AAVMS will monitor media reporting in the pre-election period), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 9 August 2025, <https://avmu.mk/avmu-kje-vrshi-monitoring-na-mediumskoto-izvestuvanje-vo-predizborniot-period/>.

342 „Одржан состанок на Координативното тело за пријавување и постапување по претставки за време на избори или референдум“ (Meeting held by the Coordination Body for reporting and processing complaints during elections or referendums), Official website of the Code of Conduct for the Online Space during Election Processes and Referendums, 21 August 2025, <https://onlajnkodeks.mk/odrzhan-sostanok-na-koordinativnoto-telo-za-prijavuvanje-i-postapuvanje-po-prestavki-za-vreme-na-izbori-ili-referendum/>.

343 „Реактивиран механизмот за жалби поврзани со изборните активности во онлајн просторот“ (The mechanism for complaints related to election activities in the online space has been reactivated), Vistinomer, 14 August 2025, <https://vistinomer.mk/reaktiviran-mehanizmot-za-zhalbi-povrzani-so-izbornite-aktivnosti-vo-onlajn-prostorot/>.

344 „За рекламирање за локалните избори во ДИК регистрирани 246 портали, 33 телевизии и 42 радиостаници, ќе се потрошат 6,5 милиони евра од буџетот“ (246 portals, 33 TV stations, and 42 radio stations registered at the SEC for advertising for the local elections, 6.5 million euros from the budget will be spent), 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-radiostanitsi-ke-se-potroshat-6-5-milioni-evra-od-budhet/>.

Public Broadcasting Service

Throughout 2025, the process for electing a new Program Council for the Public Broadcasting Service of North Macedonia (MRT) went through several key phases. In April, the Parliamentary Commission on Issues of Elections and Appointments completed the verification of applications and determined that 24 candidates fulfilled the requirements for membership in the Program Council out of the total submitted applications.³⁴⁵ Next, in April, the Commission established the draft decision for the appointment of new members to the Program Council of Macedonian Radio-Television with 12 candidates.³⁴⁶ Subsequently, in June, the new members of the Program Council were voted in,³⁴⁷ finally providing the body with a full composition after six years of operating with acting members.

³⁴⁵ „Вкупно 24 кандидати на листата за Програмски совет на МРТ“ (Total of 24 candidates on the list for the MRT Program Council), *Biznisvesti.Mk*, 10 April 2025, <https://biznisvesti.mk/vkupno-24-kandidati-na-listata-za-programski-sovet-na-mrt/>.

³⁴⁶ Предложени нови членови на Програмскиот совет на МРТ“ (Proposed new members of the MRT Program Council), *Macedonian Radio-Television*, 28 April 2025, <https://mrt.com.mk/node/127689>.

³⁴⁷ „Избрани новите членови на Советот на АВМУ и Програмскиот совет на МРТВ“ (New members of the AAVMS Council and MRT Program Council elected), *Vecher*, 24 June 2025, <https://vecer.mk/makedonija/izbrani-novite-chlenovi-na-sovetot-na-avmu-i-programskiot-sovet-na-mrtv/>.

Pressure on journalists

In 2024, the AJM registered four cases of attacks³⁴⁸ and threats against journalists and media workers, which is a decrease compared to 2023. All four incidents were reported to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoI), and one was directly reported to the PPO. Despite the reduction in the number of attacks in comparison to the previous year 2023, it is concerning that these cases were not quickly resolved, and information from the PPO regarding the course of the proceedings is lacking.³⁴⁹ Of the four registered cases, two incidents were against two female journalists. In June, professional organizations adopted a Declaration for the Defense of Professional Journalism, calling for an end to attacks and discrediting campaigns against journalists.³⁵⁰

The research "Challenges and Progress: The Safety of Female Journalists in North Macedonia 2024"³⁵¹ highlights that female journalists face persistent threats of physical, verbal, and online violence. Online abuse significantly increased, with bullying comments and cyber-threats endangering the personal safety and professional stability of female journalists. Additionally, sexual harassment targeting female journalists is highlighted, especially those reporting on sensitive or unconventional topics or holding visible public positions regarding certain social segments or issues. In this regard, media organizations condemn attacks against female journalists, linking them to the increased trend of gender-based threats³⁵² and calling for an institutional response³⁵³ and gender-sensitive protective measures.³⁵⁴

During the reporting period, numerous forms of pressure on journalists and media crews were noted: unauthorized filming and distribution of a video in which a journalist appears;³⁵⁵ arson directed at the vehicle of an editor of a local television and online medium;³⁵⁶ online

348 Милан Спировски и Верче Тодоровска-Костовска, „Северна Македонија - Индикатори за степенот на слободата на медиумите и индекс на безбедноста на новинарите 2024“ (North Macedonia – Indicators on the Level of Media Freedom and Journalists’ Safety Index 2024), Safejournalists.net, August 2025, https://znm.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/AJM_Indicator-Report-2024_MKD.pdf.

349 Ibid.

350 „Усвоена Декларација за одбрана на професионалното новинарство на Годишно собрание на ЗНМ“ (Declaration on the Defense of Professional Journalism adopted at the Annual Assembly of AJM), Makfax, 26 June 2025, [https://makfax.com.mk/makedonija/усвоена-декларација-за-одбрана-на-про/](https://makfax.com.mk/makedonija/усвоена-декларација-за-одбрана-на-про-/).

351 Милан Спировски и Верче Тодоровска-Костовска, „Северна Македонија - Предизвици и напредок: Безбедноста на новинарите во Северна Македонија 2024“ (North Macedonia – Challenges and Progress: Safety of Women Journalists in North Macedonia 2024), Safejournalists.net, August 2025, <https://znm.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/woman-MKD-MKD-2025.pdf>.

352 „Женската медиумска мрежа ЕДНАКВА и ССНМ со поддршка за новинарката Вренцовска“ (The Women’s Media Network EDNAKVA and SSNM support journalist Vrencovska), Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers, 6 January 2025, <https://ssnm.org.mk/aktivnosti/zhenskata-mreza-ednakva-i-ssnm-so-poddrrshka-za-novinarkata-vrencovska/>.

353 „ЗНМ бара итна истрага за запаленото возило на дописничката на СДК.МК“ (AJM calls for an urgent investigation into the burned vehicle of SDK.MK’s correspondent), Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 6 January 2025, [https://znm.org.mk/зnm-бара-итна-истрага-за-запаленото-во/](https://znm.org.mk/зnm-бара-итна-истрага-за-запаленото-во-/).

354 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Осуда за малициозното таргетирање на новинари и медиуми од Драган Павловиќ Латас“ (AJM and SSNM: Condemnation of malicious targeting of journalists and media by Dragan Pavlović Latas), Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 26 February 2025, <https://znm.org.mk/зnm-и-сснм-осуда-за-малициозното-тарре/>.

355 „ЗНМ и ССНМ повикуваат на итна истрага за прекршување на правата на новинарката Мирослава Симоновска“ (AJM and SSNM call for an urgent investigation due to the violation of the rights of journalist Miroslava Simonovska), Radio MOF, 2 November 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/znm-i-ssnm-povikuvat-na-itna-istraga-poradi-prekrshuvanje-na-pravata-na-novinarkata-miroslava-simonovska/>.

356 „Запалено возилото на новинарот Серсемов, ЗНМ бара итна акција на МВР“ (The vehicle of journalist Sersemov was set on fire, AJM demands urgent action from the MoI), Radio MOF, 24 October 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/zapaleno-voziloto-na-novinarkot-sersemov-znm-bara-itna-akcija-na-mvr/>.

threats³⁵⁷ and inappropriate language directed at journalists on social media,³⁵⁸ prohibiting a media crew from filming a court hearing in the Basic Court Bitola,³⁵⁹ an MP preventing journalists from taking a statement from the new director of the National Security Agency (NSA);³⁶⁰ restrictions during reporting after the tragedy in Kočani,³⁶¹ a set-on-fire vehicle owned by a female journalist;³⁶² misuse of personal images and hate speech/sexual harassment directed at female journalists engaged in investigative journalism;³⁶³ a physical attack on a media crew reporting on a landfill that caught fire at the beginning of July;³⁶⁴ and online harassment of a female journalist.³⁶⁵

The MoI, PPO, and the courts should ensure a rapid and effective investigation and sanctioning of all cases of attacks, threats, harassment, and pressure against journalists, with special protocols for the protection of female journalists from gender-based violence;

To strengthen the socio-economic conditions and labor rights of journalists and media workers, including the adoption of a collective agreement, fair wages, and safe working conditions;

Institutions and media regulators to support continuous training for media literacy and the fight against disinformation, including the broad application of the Handbook for Recognizing Disinformation;

Media houses to adopt and implement gender-sensitive policies, including zero tolerance for sexual harassment and the promotion of gender-balanced reporting;

When covering electoral processes, the AAVMS and the SEC should ensure fair representation, transparency, and access for all media, with clear procedures for submitting and resolving complaints regarding violations.

357 „Новинарка пријавила закани од лажен профил на социјални мрежи“ (A journalist reported threats from a fake social media profile), Mkd.mk, 3 November 2024, <https://mkd.mk/novinarka-prijavila-zakani-od-lazhen-profil-na-socijalni-mrežhi/>.

358 „ЗНМ ја осудува непримерната комуникација кон новинарот Срѓан Стојанчов“ (AJM condemns the inappropriate communication toward journalist Srdjan Stojančov), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 12 November 2024, <https://znm.org.mk/znm-ja-osuduva-neprimernata-komunikatsija-kon-novinarat-srgjan-stojančov/>.

359 „Поднесена пријава за недолично однесување на судијка од битолскиот суд“ (Complaint filed for inappropriate behavior of a judge from the Bitola court), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 6 November 2024, <https://znm.org.mk/podnesena-prijava-za-nedolichno-odnesuvanje-na-sudijka-od-bitolskiot-sud/>.

360 „Попречувањето на новинарската работа е недозволено, вели ЗНМ за недоличното однесување на пратеникот Ковачки“ (Obstructing journalistic work is impermissible, says AJM regarding the inappropriate behavior of MP Kovački), SakamDaKazham, 12 November 2024, [https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/poprechuvaneto-na-novinarskata-rabota-e-nedovolivo-veli-znm-za-nedolichnoto-odnesuvane-na-prateničkot-kovachki/](https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/poprechuvaneto-na-novinarskata-rabota-e-nedovolivo-veli-znm-za-nedolichnoto-odnesuvane-na-pratеникот-kovachki/).

361 „ЗНМ и СЕММ: Апел за внимателно и етичко известување за трагедијата во Кочани“ (AJM and SEMM: Appeal for careful and ethical reporting on the tragedy in Kočani), Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 16 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/427xKlv>.

362 „Запалена колата на дописничката на Сакам да кажам од Охрид“ (The car of the correspondent of Sakam Da Kazham from Ohrid was set on fire), Sakam Da Kazham, 6 January 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/zapalena-kolata-na-dopisnichkata-na-sakamdačkazham-mk-od-ohrid/>.

363 „Од што се плаши Латас кога ве поттикнува да ќе силувате и линчувате“ (What is Latas afraid of when he encourages you to rape and lynch us), Investigative Reporting Lab (IRL), 27 February 2025, <https://irl.mk/od-shto-se-plashi-latas-koga-ve-pottiknuva-da-ne-siluvate-i-linchuvate/>.

364 „Чадот од Визбегово го „задуши“ Скопје“ (The smoke from Vizbegovo “suffocated” Skopje), 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>.

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

Rights of the Child

On August 8, the Government of North Macedonia adopted the National Action Plan for the Rights of Children 2025–2029, taking a significant step toward fulfilling its obligations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and implementing the European Child 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 involve the formation of a specialized body for monitoring children's rights, which will be tasked with coordinating the plan's implementation and providing systemic oversight of the Convention's execution.³⁶⁶ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)³⁶⁷ welcomed the Government's decision to adopt the National Action Plan for the Rights of Children 2025–2029, stating that the measure to create a National Committee for the Rights of Children and the adoption of the National Action Plan fulfill important EU accession criteria established in the country's Rule of Law Roadmap.

According to the State Statistical Office (SSO), the number of reported children who broke the law in 2024³⁶⁸ increased by 12.2% compared to 2023, while the number of children convicted of criminal offenses decreased by 2.3%. A total of 486 children were reported, of whom 300 were convicted after being found guilty of criminal offenses against life and limb, against the freedoms and rights of man and citizen, against human health, against property, against public traffic safety, or against public order. One case stands out with immense concern, revealing a serious systemic failure in the treatment of female juveniles: a 14-year-old female convict was held locked in a cell for 22 hours a day because there is no separate facility for female juveniles in the women's wing of the Idrizovo prison.³⁶⁹ The Ombudsman opened a case regarding the child and succeeded in transferring her to the Tetovo Educational-Correctional Institution in Volkovija, where she now has an entire facility at her sole disposal.³⁷⁰

366 „Усвоен Националниот акциски план за правата на децата (2025–2029) – системски исекор за заштита и унапредување на детските права“ (National Action Plan for the Rights of Children (2025–2029) adopted – a systemic step forward for the protection and promotion of children's rights), Ministry of Social Policy, Demography, and Youth of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 August 2025, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/avgust-2025-ns_article-usvoen-nacionalniot-akciski-plan-za-pravata-na-decata-2025-2029-sistemski-isekor-za-zashchita-i-unap.nspx.

367 „УНИЦЕФ го поздравува усвојувањето на Националниот Акциски план за правата на децата 2025–2029 – Изјава од претставничката на УНИЦЕФ Лесли Милер“ (UNICEF welcomes the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Children 2025–2029 – Statement by UNICEF Representative Lesley Miller), UNICEF North Macedonia, 15 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/3NDQT9P>.

368 State Statistical Office (SSO) „Пријавени, обвинети и осудени полнолетни сторители на кривични дела и деца во судир со законот, 2024 година“ (Reported, accused and convicted adult perpetrators of crimes and children in conflict with the law, 2024), 29 May 2025, <https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?rbtxt=51>.

369 „14-годишно девојче седи само во келија во „Идризово“ по 22 часа на ден, кај Тетово има дом за малолетници без услови за девојчиња“ (A 14-year-old girl sits alone in a cell in “Idrizovo” for 22 hours a day, near Tetovo there is a juvenile home with no conditions for girls), Sloboden Pechat, 9 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/14-godishno-devojche-sedi-samo-vokelija-vo-idrizovo-po-22-chasa-na-den-kaj-tetovo-ima-dom-za-maloletnici-bez-uslovi-za-devojchinja/>.

370 „14-годишното девојче кое беше заклучено по 22 часа на ден во „Идризово“, е префрлено во Воспитно-поправниот дом „Тетово““ (The 14-year-old girl who was locked up for 22 hours a day in “Idrizovo” has been transferred to the “Tetovo” Educational-Correctional Home), Sloboden Pechat, 9 October 2025, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/14-godishnoto-devojche-koe-beshe-zaklucheno-po-22-chasa-na-den-vo-idrizovo-prefrleno-e-vo-vospitno-popravniot-dom-tetovo/>.

The right to education is being violated in educational-correctional institutions. In the juvenile correctional home in Tetovo, 26 children had no form of instruction, with 12 of them being completely illiterate, 7 having no opportunity to complete primary education, and 7, despite having primary education, being unable to continue to secondary education.³⁷¹ At the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year, the Ombudsman stated that classes at the Educational-Correctional Institution in Tetovo did not begin on September 1. Subsequently, he raised this issue with the Ministry of Education and Science, but they did not respond to his expressed concerns.³⁷²

Vulnerable groups and the principle of non-discrimination

The first session of the National Coordination Body for Equality and Non-Discrimination was held in February. The Minister of Social Policy, Demography, and Youth emphasized the importance of this body as a practical mechanism with broad responsibilities in monitoring implementation, proposing improvements, and coordinating the state's efforts within the framework of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (2022–2026). A second Action Plan (2025–2026) is currently in preparation, aiming to consolidate inter-institutional cooperation and systematic responses to inequality.³⁷³

371 „Државата на 7 штитеници во ВП дом „Тетово“ им го прекинала образоването, на уште толку не им дала да продолжат со средното“ (The state cut off the education of 7 wards in the “Tetovo” juvenile home, and prevented as many from continuing with high school), Sakam Da Kazham, 12 May 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/drzhavata-na-7-shtitenitsi-vo-vp-dom-tetovo-im-go-prekinala-obrazovanieto-na-ushte-tolku-ne-im-dala-da-prodolzhat-so-srednoto/>.

372 „Нема настава во Воспитно-поправниот дом „Тетово“ – Министерството за образование молчи за проблемот“ (No classes in the “Tetovo” Educational-Correctional Home – The Ministry of Education remains silent on the problem), Sloboden Pechat, 24 September 2025, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/nema-nastava-vo-vospitno-popravniot-dom-tetovo-ministerstvoto-za-obrazovanie-molchi-za-problemot/>.

373 „Прва конститутивна седница на Националното координативно тело за следење на состојбите со недискриминација и реализацијата на законите, подзаконските акти и стратешки документи во оваа област“ (First constitutive session of the National Coordination Body for monitoring the situation with non-discrimination and the implementation of laws, bylaws, and strategic documents in this area), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography, and Youth, 12 February 2025, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/fevruari-2025-ns_article-odrzana-prvata-konstitutivna-sednica-na-nacionalnoto-koordinativno-telo-za-sledenje-na-sostojbite-so-.nspx.

Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination

Toward the end of last year, the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD) underwent changes. In accordance with the principle of a rotating presidency, the CPPD elected a new president and vice-president on October 1, 2024.³⁷⁴ Subsequently, on February 17, the Assembly published a public call for the election of one member of the CPPD with a five-year mandate.³⁷⁵ The selection process for the new member concluded on April 1.³⁷⁶ The appointment of a candidate with party ties on April 8³⁷⁷ drew criticism from the Network for Protection against Discrimination (MPD), who expressed concern regarding independence, professionalism, and adherence to legal criteria.³⁷⁸ In January, a new Rulebook for the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD) was adopted to contribute to the institutional framework for tackling discrimination.³⁷⁹

According to the 2024 annual report,³⁸⁰ the CPPD worked on a total of 485 cases for protection against discrimination, of which 407 were newly opened in 2024 and 78 were carried over from the previous year. Of the 407 new cases, 405 were complaints filed by citizens and organizations, while the remaining two were proceedings initiated by the CPPD *ex officio*. A total of 316 decisions were made, of which 38% were decisions establishing discrimination and 52% were decisions to reject the complaint, i.e., for non-action or termination of the procedure. Among the decisions rendered on the merits, discrimination was established in 56 cases (37%), while in 96 cases (63%) discrimination was not found. The highest number of complaints was filed for protection against discrimination based on national or ethnic affiliation (27%), while by field, most complaints were filed for protection against discrimination in the area of work and labor relations (39%). The most frequent place where discrimination occurred was in public

374 „Нов претседател на КСЗД“ (New President of the CPPD), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (KSZD/ CPPD), 1 October 2024, <https://kszd.mk/izbran-e-nov-prestsedatel-na-komisijata-za-spolnachuvanje-i-zashtita-od-diskriminacija/>.

375 „Одлука за објавување јавен оглас за избор на член на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација“ (Decision to publish a public announcement for the election of a member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 17 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jrXM8Q>

376 „Осум кандидати за член на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација ги претставија нивните кандидатури“ (Eight candidates for a member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination presented their candidacies), Sitel Television, 1 April 2025, <https://sitel.com.mk/osum-kandidati-za-chlen-na-komisijata-za-sprechuvanje-i-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-gi-prestavija>.

377 „Никола Затуроски избран за член на Регулаторната комисија за домување, Вецко Здравески за член на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација“ (Nikola Zaturoski elected as member of the Housing Regulatory Commission, Vecko Zdraveski as member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination), MIA – Media Information Agency, 8 April 2025, <http://bit.ly/3Goqmdj>.

378 „Собранието ја урива суштината на КСЗД преку именување членови под партиски клуч кои не ги исполнуваат законските услови“ (The Assembly undermines the essence of the CPPD by appointing members under a party key who do not meet the legal requirements), Network for Protection against Discrimination, 4 April 2025, <https://mzd.mk/vesti/sobranieto-ja-uriva-sushtinata-na-kszd-preku-imenuvane-chlenovi-pod-partiski-kluch-koj-ne-gi-ispolnuvaat-zakonskite-uslovi/>.

379 „Деловник за работа на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација“ (Rules of Procedure of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 4/2025.

380 „Годишен извештај за работата на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација за 2024 година“ (Annual Report on the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2024), Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD), April 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LDCB8C>

sector institutions (37 cases or 66%), but cases were also established in the private sector (9 cases or 16%), as well as on social networks and the media (10 cases or 18%). Additionally, the CPPD highlighted that women filed more discrimination complaints than men in 2024.³⁸¹

In the first nine months of 2025, 319 complaints were submitted to the CPPD, and 4 cases for protection against discrimination were opened *ex officio*. During the reporting period, the CPPD rendered a total of 229 decisions, of which discrimination was established in 45 cases, was not established in 54 cases, and 130 cases were rejected, meaning they were not acted upon or the procedure was terminated. The cases in which discrimination was established related to the fields of work and labor relations (24 cases), education, science, and sports (5 cases), access to goods and services (4 cases), public information and media (3 cases), healthcare (2 cases), culture (1 case), housing (1 case), and the exercise of the right to compensation for disability (1 case). In some cases, the CPPD established discrimination in two fields: education, science, and sports and access to goods and services (2 cases); work and labor relations and access to goods and services (1 case); and housing and access to goods and services and infrastructure.³⁸²

In July, the CPPD also issued a general recommendation to municipalities, calling on them to take systemic and non-discriminatory measures and activities to ensure adequate housing, urban planning, legalization of homes, connection to public infrastructure, as well as administrative support and services for members of the population living in informal and substandard settlements, especially for Roma.³⁸³

In the report “Report on Intersectional and Multiple Discrimination against Roma Women and Girls in Access to Justice”³⁸⁴ published in June, the CPPD points out that in the Republic of North Macedonia, there is a high degree of discrimination against Roma women and girls in access to justice, the judiciary, and administration; however, this factual situation is not sufficiently recognized by the victims of discrimination, which is further expressed by insufficient knowledge of the available mechanisms for protection against discrimination. Additionally, public and administrative officials in the administration and judiciary still operate with a high level of unconscious bias and a lack of gender and cultural sensitivity, especially toward the Roma ethnic community. The absence of mandatory and continuous training for administrative officials on recognizing and preventing discrimination results in institutional behavior

381 „КСЗД: Жените почесто од мажите пријавиле дискриминација врз основите пол, род или образование“ (CPPD: Women reported discrimination based on sex, gender, or education more often than men), A1 On, 16 April 2025, <https://alon.mk/macedonia/kszd-zhenite-pochesto-od-mazhite-prijavile-diskriminacija-vrz-osnovite-pol-rod-ili-obrazovanie/>.

382 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination of the Republic of North Macedonia, Response to a request for free access to public information, October 17, 2025.

383 „Општа препорака за домување“ (General Recommendation on Housing), Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD), 9 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4p5oKG3>

384 Anastasija Muratovska et al., „Извештај за потешки форми на дискриминација - Извештај за интерсексиска и повеќекратна дискриминација кон жените и девојчиња Ромки во пристапот до правда“ (Report on severe forms of discrimination - Report on intersectional and multiple discrimination against Roma women and girls in access to justice), Anastasija Muratovska et al., Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD), June 2025, <https://kszd.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/18.06.CPPD-INTERSECTIONAL.pdf>.

that often maintains and deepens the marginalization of Roma women. Roma women are almost completely absent from public administration and decision-making positions in institutions, which could influence a change in institutional behavior toward the Roma community.

During the reporting period, the CPPD continued to operate with seriously insufficient financial and human resources, which directly limits its capacity for the full implementation of its legal competencies. Although 46 positions are systematized, only 17 (36%) are filled, and the budget primarily covers salaries, without funds for development, field work, or technical upgrades.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁵ Contribution to the Shadow Report by the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, December 1, 2025

Rights of persons with disabilities

In October 2024, an Inter-party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was formed within the new parliamentary composition. It aims to raise public awareness and ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are translated into specific legal provisions that guarantee the exercise of their rights and create conditions for equal opportunities.³⁸⁶

During the period covered by the report, there were several developments, including in legislation, related to the rights of persons with disabilities. In January, the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT) began consultations on a new Law on the Accessibility of State Websites and Applications for Persons with Disabilities, aimed at ensuring that public sector websites and mobile applications are accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities.³⁸⁷ This legal initiative is directed toward alignment with EU standards for digital accessibility. The law was adopted in September,³⁸⁸ but it still excludes the private sector and omits coverage of digital assistive devices, which largely remain inaccessible or unsupported by the state.³⁸⁹ Additionally, regarding the accessibility for persons with disabilities, in December 2024, the AAVMS held working meetings with national televisions and providers of audio-visual services on demand, with the aim of clarifying the obligations arising from the new Rulebook on Accessibility to Media Services. Under the rulebook, which has been applied since 2025, national televisions and on-demand services are obliged to gradually enable accessibility for a portion of their content for persons with hearing and visual impairments. At the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, all providers submitted accessibility action plans, and from 2026, they will submit annual reports on the implementation of these obligations.³⁹⁰ The AAVMS summarized the plans and published an overview of media content adapted for persons with sensory disabilities.³⁹¹ For easier communication, an online contact point was established at the address dostapnost@avmu.mk, intended for information, complaints, and annual reports related to the accessibility of media services.

³⁸⁶ „Формирана ИППГ за правата на лицата со попречност“ (Inter-party Parliamentary Group for the rights of persons with disabilities formed), Racin.mk, 30 October 2024, <https://racin.mk/vesti/formirana-ippg-za-pravata-na-liczata-so-poprechenost/>.

³⁸⁷ „Андоновски: За прв пат Закон за пристапност на лицата со попречност до државните веб страници и апликации“ (Andonovski: For the first time, a Law on Accessibility of persons with disabilities to state websites and applications), Official website of the Ministry of Public Administration, 16 January 2025, <https://mdt.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/andonovski-za-prv-pat-zakon-za-pristapnost-na-licata-so-poprecnost-do-drzavnite-veb-stranici-i-aplikacii>.

³⁸⁸ „Указ за прогласување на Законот за пристапност на веб-страниците и мобилните апликации на институциите од јавниот сектор“ (Decree on the Promulgation of the Law on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Institutions), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 193/2025, <https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/zakoni-mdt-file-YJSL.pdf>.

³⁸⁹ „Прв клик кон пристапноста - институциите ќе ги прилагодат сајтовите за лицата со попречност, но нееднаквоста останува“ (First click toward accessibility - institutions will adapt websites for persons with disabilities, but inequality remains), Prizma.mk, 19 August 2025, <https://prizma.mk/prv-klik-kon-pristapnosta/>.

³⁹⁰ Contribution to the Shadow Report by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, November 20, 2025.

³⁹¹ „Преглед на програми што аудиовизуелните медиумски услуги ќе ги направат пристапни за лицата со сетилна попречност во 2025 година“ (Overview of programs that audiovisual media services will make accessible for persons with sensory disabilities in 2025), Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 2025, <https://avmu.mk/2025/03/13/преглед-на-пристапни-програми-за-лица/>.

In July, the Government of North Macedonia proposed amendments to the Law on the Employment of Disabled Persons, which will enable the employment of persons with autistic spectrum disorders and persons with other pervasive developmental disorders.³⁹² In February, the Ministry of Education and Science announced that students with disabilities in secondary education would begin receiving educational assistants starting in September 2025. The Ministry promised to provide additional support throughout the school year wherever necessary, in order to contribute to a more inclusive educational system.³⁹³ The public call for the engagement of 328 educational assistants to support children with disabilities in primary schools was published in June,³⁹⁴ while the public call for the engagement of educational assistants to support children with disabilities in secondary schools was published in August.³⁹⁵ However, the Minister of Education and Science further stated that permanent employment of educational assistants is not possible,³⁹⁶ despite reactions from parents and educational assistants.³⁹⁷

Additionally, parents and guardians of persons with disabilities are demanding formal recognition of the profession “parent-guardian,” which would provide them with social protection and labor rights.³⁹⁸ In anticipation of the local elections scheduled for October 2025, persons with disabilities in North Macedonia still face significant structural obstacles in exercising their right to vote. Despite the judgment of the Court of Appeal Skopje, which confirmed that the Government and the State Election Commission committed discrimination against persons with disabilities, it has still not been implemented.³⁹⁹ Clear deadlines and monitoring mechanisms are needed to implement the court ruling, ensuring physical accessibility of polling stations and adapted electoral material for persons with disabilities to guarantee equal and unhindered participation for all voters.

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

393 „Средношколците со попреченост од септември ќе добијат образовни асистенти“ (High school students with disabilities will receive educational assistants starting from September), Sloboden Pechat, 19 February 2025, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/srednoshkolcите-so-poprechenost-od-septemvri-kje-dobijat-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

394 „Јавен оглас за вработување на 328 образовни асистенти“ (Public announcement for the employment of 328 educational assistants), Primary School with Resource Center «Dr. Zlatan Sremec» – Skopje, 20 June 2025, <http://www.zlatansremec.edu.mk/vest-statija/85511/javen-oglas-za-vrabetuvanje-na-328-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

395 „Јавен оглас за вработување на 83 образовни асистенти“ (Public announcement for the employment of 83 educational assistants), State Secondary School for Rehabilitation and Education «St. Naum Ohridski» – Skopje, 6 August 2025, <https://www.dsuv-naumohridski.edu.mk/aktivnost/85874/javen-oglas-za-vrabetuvanje-na-83-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

396 „Јаневска: Нема трајно вработување за образовните асистенти“ (Janevska: No permanent employment for educational assistants), Radio Free Europe, 20 July 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/janevska-nema-trajno-vrabetuvanje-za-obrazovnite-asistenti/33477668.html>.

397 „Родители и специјални едукатори извикани со новиот бран вработувања на образовни асистенти“ (Parents and special educators left hanging by the new wave of educational assistant hiring), Radio MOF, 19 July 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/roditeli-i-spesijalni-edukatori-izviseni-so-noviot-bran-vrabetuvanja-na-obrazovni-asistenti/>.

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

399 „Џабе судска пресуда, нема кој да им каже на партиите да изработат изборен материјал за лицата со попреченост и на општините да стават рампи за инвалидски колички на избирачките места“ (A court verdict is in vain; there is no one to tell the parties to prepare election materials for persons with disabilities and the municipalities to install ramps for wheelchairs at polling stations), Sakamn Da Kazham, 12 August 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/dhabe-sudska-presuda-nema-koj-da-im-kazhe-na-partiite-da-izrabotat-izboren-materijal-za-litsata-so-poprechenost-i-na-opshtinite-da-stavat-rampi-za-invalidski-kolichki-na-izbirachkite-mesta/>.

Gender

At the end of 2024, the Gender Equality Platform⁴⁰⁰ and the Network for Protection against Discrimination⁴⁰¹ criticized the proposed amendments to the Law on Primary Education⁴⁰² and the new Law on Secondary Education,⁴⁰³ which remove gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity as grounds for discrimination. They argued that this undermines protection against discrimination and appealed to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to align these laws with the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. The CPPD also stated that such changes would negatively affect the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, gender equality, and the protection of youth with different sexual orientations and gender identities from violence and discrimination. Finally, the CPPD emphasized that these amendments are contrary to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination.⁴⁰⁴ The MoES responded, clarifying that the term “and others” in the anti-discrimination provisions of the aforementioned laws covers all types of discrimination.⁴⁰⁵ Nevertheless, in April 2025, both the Law on Primary Education⁴⁰⁶ and Law on Secondary Education⁴⁰⁷ entered into force.

Continuing with legislative reforms, in January, the Assembly adopted the amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (first reading), which strengthens institutional responsibility for providing gender-sensitive services.⁴⁰⁸ In February, the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adopted a

400 „Платформата за родова еднаквост реагира на предлог законите за основно и средно образование каде се тргнати зборовите „родова еднаквост““ (The Gender Equality Platform reacts to the draft laws on primary and secondary education where the words “gender equality” have been removed), Radio MOF, 1 November 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/platformatza-za-rodova-ednakvost-reagira-na-predlog-zakonite-za-osnovno-i-sredno-obrazovanie-kade-se-trgnati-zborovite-rodova-ednakvost/>.

401 „МЗД: Измените на законите за основно и средно образование се контрадикторни за Законот за спречување на дискриминацијата“ (NPAD: Amendments to the laws on primary and secondary education are contradictory to the Law on Prevention of Discrimination), Mkd.mk, 18 December 2024, <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/mdl-izmenite-na-zakonite-za-osnovno-i-sredno-obrazovanie-se-kontradiktorni-za-zakonot-za-sprechuvanje-diskriminacija/>.

402 MoES, „Предлог на Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за основното образование“ (Draft Law on Amending the Law on Primary Education), (ENER), 22 November 2024, https://ener.gov.mk/default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_det&itemid=h7Y8u2U3.

403 Ministry of Education and Science, „Предлог на Закон за средното образование“ (Draft Law on Secondary Education), (Electronic National Register of Regulations), 18 September 2024, <https://bit.ly/3PIYbGU>.

404 „Реакција од Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација по измените и дополнувањата на Законот за основно образование“ (Reaction from the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination regarding the amendments to the Law on Primary Education), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 5 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4jf6kjY>

405 „МЗД: Законските измени за основно и средно образование се обид за озаконување на дискриминацијата, наместо грижа и заштита“ (NPAD: Legal changes for primary and secondary education are an attempt to legalize discrimination instead of care and protection), Sloboden Pechat, 5 November 2024, <https://www.slobodenpechat.mk/mzd-zakonskite-izmeni-za-osnovno-i-sredno-obrazovanie-se-obid-za-ozakonuvanje-na-diskriminacijata-namesto-grizha-i-zashtita/>.

406 „Закон за изменување на Законот за основно образование“ (Law on ammending and supplementing the Law on Primary Education), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 74/2025.

407 „Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за основно образование“ (Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Primary Education), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 78/2025.

408 „Собранието донесе неколку законски решенија“ (The Assembly adopted several legal solutions), Kurir, 22 January 2025, <https://kurir.mk/vesti/makedonija/sobranieto-donese-nekolku-zakonski-reshenija/>.

new Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Assembly for the period 2025-2027,⁴⁰⁹ and inter-institutional cooperation for gender equality was strengthened with the formation of a working group for the preparation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for the same period.⁴¹⁰ Additionally, following public backlash from civil society, including the National Network against Violence against Women⁴¹¹ and the Gender Equality Platform,⁴¹² the Ministry of Internal Affairs in March withdrew the proposed amendments to the Law on Police⁴¹³ that would have allowed police officers accused of domestic violence to retain their weapons while proceedings were ongoing. However, further reactions regarding this law occurred in July, when the Gender Equality Platform responded to draft amendments to the Law on Police submitted to the Assembly, which proposed the abolition of the provision mandating respect for the principle of equality during employment within the police. The response stated that the removal of this article sends a dangerous message that gender equality and inclusiveness are irrelevant in building security institutions; such a proposal causes serious concern due to numerous cases of inappropriate treatment and ineffective protection by the police, especially in cases of gender-based and domestic violence.⁴¹⁴

In October 2024, the newly formed Institutional Group for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) policy-making held its first coordination meeting, involving representatives of key institutions to test GESI tools within the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process.⁴¹⁵

The Commission for Monetary Compensation to Victims of Violent Crimes and Rape reported that by February it had received 8 claims for compensation, including from victims of child sexual abuse,⁴¹⁶ and launched a website with the support of the OSCE Mission to Skopje.⁴¹⁷

409 „Усвоен Акцискиот план за унапредување на рамноправноста меѓу жените и мажите“ (Action Plan for the Advancement of Equality between Women and Men adopted), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jiM1C5>.

410 Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth „Состанок на работна група за подготовкa на националниот Акциски план за родова еднаквост 2025-2027“ (Meeting of the working group for the preparation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2025-2027), Resource Center for Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting, 10 February 2025, <https://mtspresursencentar.mk/event/meeting-of-the-working-group-for-the-preparation-of-the-national-action-plan-for-gender-equality-2025-2027-2025-02-10>.

411 „Реакција на предложените измени на Законот за полиција“ (Reaction to the proposed amendments to the Law on Police), National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 27 February 2025, <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/reaktsija-na-predlozhenenite-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-politsija/>.

412 „Реакција на предложените измени на Законот за полиција“ (Reaction to the proposed amendments to the Law on Police), Gender Equality Platform, 27 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/3EdYPdq>.

413 „МВР ги повлече измените на Законот за полиција кои ги изложува на ризик жртвите на семејно насиљство“ (Mol withdrew the amendments to the Law on Police that exposed victims of domestic violence to risk), Gender Equality Platform, 4 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4los2TQ>.

414 „Реакција на предложените измени на Законот за полиција“ (Reaction to the proposed amendments to the Law on Police), National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 27 February 2025, <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/reaktsija-na-predlozhenenite-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-politsija/>.

415 „Формирана институционална група за креирање политики за родова еднаквост“ (Institutional group formed for creating gender equality policies), Radio MOF, 11 October 2024, <https://www.radiomof.mk/formirana-institucionalna-grupa-za-kreiranje-politiki-za-rodova-ednakvost/>.

416 „Проработете Комисијата за паричен надоместок на жртвите на насиљство и силување, услов да се побара помош е делото да е пријавено во МВР или во Обвинителство“ (Commission for financial compensation of victims of violence and rape becomes operational; condition for aid is reporting the crime to Mol or the Prosecution), Sakam Da Kazham, 8 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4i4fP30>.

417 Ministry of Justice, „Промовирана веб-страницата на Комисијата за паричен надоместок на жртви од кривично дело со насиљство“ (The website of the Commission for Monetary Compensation to Victims of Violent Crimes promoted), 8 February 2025, <https://pravda.gov.mk/vest/6821>.

By September, however, the Commission reported that the number of claims had increased sevenfold, receiving a total of 54 compensation requests from victims of violence; nonetheless, it approved only one payment of 500 euros, while the rest were rejected as unfounded (32) or remain in progress (21).⁴¹⁸

In March, the working group for the improvement and implementation of the standard operating procedure for referral centers for victims of sexual violence held its first meeting.⁴¹⁹ The goal of the working group is to identify shortcomings and challenges in the functioning of the sexual violence referral centers established in three public health institutions—procedures that are currently not aligned with the Istanbul Convention—and, based on this, to propose amendments and improvements to the standard operating procedure.⁴²⁰ At the beginning of September, the National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, together with the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, organized a workshop where a 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.⁴²¹ Towards the end of 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 (Istanbul Convention) was held, where all documents and activities adopted and implemented up to that point were presented.⁴²²

The Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD) filed a lawsuit against the Government and the Ministry of Health before the Basic Civil Court Skopje for failing to include female farmers in the provision of the Law on Health Insurance that lists the beneficiaries of maternity leave compensation. Although an annual program exists for allocating funds for maternity leave compensation for female farmers, a systematic solution to this issue has not yet been achieved.⁴²³

418 „Од 54 барања за надомест на жртви на насиљство и за убиство на блиски, државата одобрила само една исплата од 500 евра“ (Out of 54 requests for compensation for victims of violence and murder of relatives, the state approved only one payment of 500 euros), Sakam Da Kazham, 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/>.

419 „Средба на работната група за унапредување на центри за жртви на сексуално насиљство“ (Meeting of the working group for the advancement of centers for victims of sexual violence), Kanal 5 , 13 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/3XPDnCl>.

420 „Потребни се измени на процедурата за пријавување жртви на сексуално насиљство“ (Changes needed in the procedure for reporting victims of sexual violence), Telma TV, 13 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jqMTUQ>.

421 „Опсерваторијата за фемициди: Нов механизам за заштита и превенција“ (The Femicide Observatory: A new mechanism for protection and prevention), Official website of the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 9 September 2025, <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/opservatorijata-za-femitsidi-nov-mehanizam-za-zashchita-i-preventsija/>.

422 „Одржана конститутивна седница на Националното координативно тело за имплементација на Конвенцијата на Совет на Европа за спречување и борба против насиљство врз жените и семејното насиљство“ (Constitutive session held for the National Coordinating Body for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, 25 September 2025, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/pocet-na-ns_article-odrzana-konstitutivna-sednica-na-nacionalnoto-koordinativno-telo-za-implementacija-na-konvencijata-n-n.aspx.

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

In November 2024, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography, and Youth signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the National Council for Gender Equality, emphasizing its commitment to collaboration in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination.⁴²⁴ The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy and UN Women also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to empower women in rural communities and promote gender equality in the agricultural sector.⁴²⁵

424 „Лимани и Тодоровска потпишаа меморандум: Преземаме сè за промоција на родовата еднаквост и недискриминација“ (Limani and Todorovska signed a memorandum: We are doing everything to promote gender equality and non-discrimination), Sloboden Pechat, 25 November 2024, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/limani-i-todorovska-potpishaa-memorandum-prezema-s%d1%90-za-promocija-na-rodovata-ednakvost-i-nediskriminacija/>.

425 Press Release: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and UN Women sign Memorandum of Understanding to advance equal opportunities of women and men in agriculture), Официјална веб-страница на Official UN Women website, 17 October 2024, <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/stories/press-release/2024/10/the-ministry-of-agriculture-forestry-and-water-economy-and-un-women-sign-memorandum-of-understanding-to-advance-equal-opportunities-of-women-and-men-in-agriculture>.

Hate Speech

In 2024,⁴²⁶ the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights registered 1,391 reports of hate speech on the platform www.govornaomraza.mk, mostly based on national (601), ethnic (566), and political affiliation (236), as well as sexual orientation and gender identity (230). A large portion of the cases relate to election campaigns, events connected to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTIQ+) community, public events, and celebrations of ethnic symbols. Institutions are not acting with due diligence; during 2024, 7 criminal charges were filed, but without concrete indictments. In the first half of 2025,⁴²⁷ the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights registered over 200 cases of hate speech on the platform, with the highest numbers in January (69) and February (74). Ethnic and national communities are most frequently targeted, but in February and June, an increase in homophobic speech toward the LGBTIQ+ community was noted.

In August, the PPO Kumanovo opened an investigation into hate speech due to insulting and nationalistic chants by a section of fans during the Macedonia-Romania basketball match in a sports hall in Kumanovo.⁴²⁸

During the 2025 Local Elections, the Coordinating Body for acting upon the Code of Conduct in the Online Space implemented activities aimed at encouraging fair and ethical communication in the digital space. To promote the Code and raise public awareness, profiles were created on the social networks Facebook and Instagram with messages and videos in Macedonian and Albanian regarding the importance of responsible online behavior and the possibility of submitting complaints. During the election process, the Body reviewed eight complaints. In two complaints, a violation of Article 5 of the Code was established due to the use of discriminatory or offensive language by political candidates. These activities indicate an increased awareness of the significance of the Code as an instrument for self-regulation and protection against hate speech and manipulative communication in the online space during elections.⁴²⁹ In the period of June–July 2025,⁴³⁰ the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights conducted seven one-day training sessions for police officers and other employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, aimed at strengthening their capacities to recognize, document, and act in cases of hate speech.

426 „Состојбата со говорот на омраза во 2024 година“ (The state of hate speech in 2024), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 20 January 2025, <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/sostojbata-so-govorot-na-omraza-vo-2024-godina/>.

427 „Состојбата со говорот на омраза во првата половина од 2025 година“ (The state of hate speech in the first half of 2025), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 29 September 2025, <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/sostojbata-so-govorot-na-omraza-vo-prvata-polovina-od-2025-godina/>

428 „Обвинителството истражува говор на омраза во Куманово за репрезентативниот натпревар Македонија-Романија“ (Prosecution investigates hate speech in Kumanovo regarding the Macedonia-Romania national team match), Telma TV, 4 August 2025, <https://telma.com.mk/2025/08/04/obvinitelstvoto-istrazuva-govor-na-omraza-vo-kumanovo-za-reprezentativniot-natprevar-makedonija-romanija/>.

429 Contribution to the Shadow Report by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, November 20, 2025

430 „Зајакнување на капацитетите на полициските службеници за постапување во случаи на говор на омраза“ (Strengthening the capacities of police officers to act in cases of hate speech), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 25 September 2025, <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/zajaknuvanje-na-kapacitetite-na-policiskite-sluzhbenici-za-postapuvanje-vo-sluchai-na-govor-na-omraza/>.

Hate Crimes

In the last three months of 2024,⁴³¹ ⁴³² ⁴³³ a total of 27 hate-motivated incidents were recorded by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (HCHR). The majority of these are related to the criminal offense of violence (21 cases), physical or grievous bodily harm (1 case), property damage (2 cases), causing national, racial, or religious hatred, discord, and intolerance (2 cases), destruction of symbols (1 case), and others.

LGBTI+

According to a study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on the LGBTI+ community in North Macedonia⁴³⁴ published in May, only 21% of respondents can speak openly about their identity—far below the European average of 51%—while 74% actively avoid public manifestations of affection due to fear of harassment. Furthermore, 43% avoid certain areas to reduce the risk of attack. Bullying and discrimination in schools further marginalize LGBTI+ individuals, with 68% having faced mockery, insults, or threats due to their identity. Educational institutions often fail to provide an inclusive environment, as 63% of students hide their identity at school, while 61% state that LGBTI+-related topics are never covered as part of the curriculum.

In early October 2024, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje rendered a verdict based on a plea bargain for violence committed due to sexual orientation and belonging to the LGBT community. The hate crime occurred during a public gathering in 2022, when the defendant approached the victim, insulted them, and physically attacked them. The court imposed a suspended sentence—a one-year prison sentence, which will not be executed if the perpetrator does not commit another crime in the next three years—as well as an alternative measure of protective supervision for a duration of two years.⁴³⁵ In May 2025, in another court case, the Basic Criminal Court Skopje convicted a person for the criminal offense of “Spreading racist and xenophobic material through a computer system.” A 30-year-old man received a suspended one-year sentence for inciting hatred toward the LGBTI+ community in online comments

⁴³¹ „Месечник за криминалот од омраза – октомври, 2024 година“ (Monthly Hate Crime Report – October 2024), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 11 November 2024, <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/sostojba-so-govorot-na-omraza-mesechen-izveshtaj-za-oktovri-2024-godina-2/>.

⁴³² „Месечник за криминалот од омраза – ноември, 2024 година“ (Monthly Hate Crime Report – November 2024), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 17 October 2024 <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/sostojba-so-govorot-na-omraza-mesechen-izveshtaj-za-noemvri-2024-godina-2/>.

⁴³³ „Месечник за криминалот од омраза – декември, 2024 година“ (Monthly Hate Crime Report – December 2024), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 17 January 2025, <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/mesechnik-za-kriminalot-od-omraza-dekemvri-2024-godina/>.

⁴³⁴ ‘EU LGBTIQ Survey III- LGBTIQ Equality at a Crossroads: Progress and Challenges - Country Data - North Macedonia’, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/lgbtiq_survey-2024-country_sheet-north_macedonia.pdf.

⁴³⁵ „Условна казна за скопјанец кој нападнал припадник на ЛГБТ заедницата“ (Conditional sentence for a Skopje man who attacked a member of the LGBT community), A1 on, 3 October 2024, <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/uslovna-kazna-za-skopjanec-koj-napadna-pripadnik-na-lgbt-zaednicata/>.

related to the Pride Parade held in Skopje in 2022. The verdict included a suspended sentence and judicial supervision, representing a rare legal response to hate speech based on sexual orientation.⁴³⁶

In July, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) published a rulebook on the method of reporting and protecting students who are victims of violence, abuse, and neglect (primary education).⁴³⁷ The Gender Equality Platform reacted by criticizing the Ministry for not prioritizing measures to address violence, discrimination, and exclusion in education, claiming that the new rulebook normalizes harmful practices instead of preventing them, especially for students belonging to the LGBTI+ community.⁴³⁸

The Gender Equality Platform issued a proclamation before the 2025 local elections, requesting all political parties to adopt dignified local policies for marginalized communities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI+) communities and others at the intersection of social injustice.⁴³⁹

On the occasion of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, calls were renewed for the adoption of an out-of-court procedure for legal gender recognition, the depathologization of trans identities, and full access to health insurance for all procedures related to gender affirmation.⁴⁴⁰ On June 21, the sixth consecutive Pride Parade was held in Skopje under the slogan “We will stand/survive together!”,⁴⁴¹ highlighting that the long-awaited Law on Legal Gender Recognition, submitted by seven MPs, has been “kept in a drawer” for two years without public debate or action. They stated that this delay is not a bureaucratic oversight but a “conscious decision by the state to continue the injustice against transgender people.”⁴⁴²

436 „Обвинет призна вина за ширење омраза кон маргинализирана група“ (Defendant pleaded guilty to spreading hate toward a marginalized group), Official website of the Public Prosecution of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 May 2025, <https://jorm.gov.mk/obvinet-prizna-vina-za-shirene-omraza-kon-marginalizirana-grupa/>.

437 „Правилник за начинот за пријавување и заштита на ученик-жртва на која било од формите на насилиство, злоупотреба и занемарување (основно образование)“ (Rulebook on the manner of reporting and protection of a student-victim of any form of violence, abuse, and neglect (primary education)), Ministry of Education and Science, 7 July 2025, <https://arhiva.mon.gov.mk/content/?id=10254>.

438 „Реакција: Справувањето со насилиството нема свое место во политиките на МОН“ (Reaction: Addressing violence has no place in the policies of the MES), Платформа за родова еднаквост (Gender Equality Platform), 12 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LK3Hud>.

439 „Проглас за претстојните локални избори 2025: Достоинствени локални политики за маргинализираните заедници“ (Manifesto for the upcoming 2025 local elections: Dignified local policies for marginalized communities), Gender Equality Platform, 5 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4oyDWL>.

440 „Здружението за поддршка на трансродови лица бара целосна заштита на нивните права“ (The Association for Support of Transgender Persons demands full protection of their rights), Trn.Mk, 1 April 2025, <https://trn.mk/zdruzhenieto-za-poddrshka-na-transrodovi-licza-bara-celosna-zashtita-na-nivnite-prava/>.

441 „Граѓаните на Скопје Прајд 2025 го кренеа гласот за безбедно образование, правда за Кочани и Палестина“ (Citizens at Skopje Pride 2025 raised their voices for safe education, justice for Kochani and Palestine), Radio MOF, 21 June 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/galerijavideo-gragjanite-na-skopje-prajd-2025-go-krenaa-glasot-za-bezbedno-obrazovanie-pravda-za-kochani-i-palestina/>.

442 „Институционално насилиство е што две години седи во фиока Законот за правно признавање на родот, рекоа учесниците на скопската Парада на гордоста“ (Institutional violence is that the Law on Legal Gender Recognition has been sitting in a drawer for two years, said the participants of the Skopje Pride Parade), Sakam Da Kazham, 21 June 2025, <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/institucionalno-nasilstvo-e-shto-dve-godini-sedi-vo-fioka-zakonot-za-pravno-priznavane-na-rodot-rekoaa-uchesnitsite-na-skopskata-parada-na-gordosta/>.

Roma

The visit of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights to North Macedonia⁴⁴³ in April resulted in serious observations regarding the rights of Roma and the right to a healthy environment for all citizens in the Republic of North Macedonia. The report recognizes progress, including the adoption of the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030 and improvements in primary school enrollment, but highlights persistent deficiencies in implementation, continuous discrimination, school segregation, and weak protection from police abuse. It also emphasizes that Roma communities are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards due to inadequate housing and waste management. The Commissioner urged the Government to adopt concrete measures to improve living conditions and access to education, reduce environmental and health risks, and guarantee equal access to opportunities. Regarding the right to a healthy environment for all citizens, the Commissioner emphasized its essence as a fundamental right and noted how prolonged environmental degradation—including pollution, poor waste management, and the lack of effective enforcement of environmental regulations—negatively affects the health and well-being of the Roma population and all citizens.

In this regard, in April, the CPPD determined that the Public Enterprise “Communal Hygiene” - Skopje discriminated against the citizens of the Shuto Orizari municipality, violating their right to a healthy environment through inadequate collection and transport of waste in the municipality.⁴⁴⁴ Additionally, in September, the Director of the Directorate for Protection and Rescue within the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia stated in a public appearance that Roma families living in the Vardarishte informal settlement should be evicted “summarily, and by force if necessary.”⁴⁴⁵ This statement followed a large fire that broke out at the Vardarishte landfill. The Ombudsman emphasized that the state must seek appropriate and sustainable housing solutions instead of resorting to forced evictions, criticizing public statements calling for the forced relocation of Roma communities as stigmatizing, discriminatory, and contrary to the Constitution, the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030, and international human rights law.⁴⁴⁶

The non-governmental organization “Romalitico” published its Shadow Report on the implementation of public policies for Roma in North Macedonia for the period July 2024 – February 2025.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Country Memorandum -Memorandum on the Human Rights of Roma and on Issues Related to the Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment in North Macedonia', Council of Europe, <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-north-macedonia-by-michael-o-flaherty-council-of-europe-/1680b6bc39>.

⁴⁴⁴ Комисија за спречување и заштита од дискриминација (КСЗД), Мислење по претставка бр. 08-66 (750) од 29.04.2025 (Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, Opinion on Complaint No. 08-66 (750) dated 29.04.2025), 29 April 2025

⁴⁴⁵ „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“ (Stojanche Angelov «will move the Roma from Vardarishte by short procedure and by force» – Shukova reacts: This is the peak of inhumanity and reveals the true face of this government), Civil Media, 16 September 2025, <https://civilmedia.mk/stojanche-angelov-po-kratka-postapka-i-na-sila-ke-gi-seli-romite-od-vardarishte-shukova-so-reaktsija-ova-e-vrv-na-nechovechnosta-i-go-otkriva-vistinskoto-litse-na-ovaavlast/>.

⁴⁴⁶ „Потребни се решенија за достоинствено домување, а не присилно иселување, вели Народниот правоборанител“ (Solutions for dignified housing are needed, not forced eviction, says the Ombudsman), 360 Degrees, 17 September 2025, <https://360stepeni.mk/potrebeni-se-reshenija-za-dostoinstveno-domuvane-a-ne-prisilno-iseluvane-veli-narodniot-pravobranitel/>.

⁴⁴⁷ Извештај во сенка за имплементацијата на политиките за роми во Северна Македонија (Romalitico - Roma Policy Analysis, 2025), <https://romalitico.org/15/05/2025/vesti/izveshtaj-vo-senka-za-implementacijata-na-politikite-za-romi-vo-severna-makedonija/>.

The report concludes that the Roma community continues to face serious challenges, especially in the areas of employment, education, healthcare, housing, and civil registration. The number of registered unemployed Roma in the ESA is around 10% (10,388 Roma), while only 472 or 1.3% of children enrolled in public kindergartens in the 2024/2025 school year are Roma, 150 of whom are exempt from participation fees as part of government measures for socially vulnerable families.

In July, a significant court ruling was reached: the Basic Civil Court Skopje determined that the failure of the Registry Office to integrate persons from the “Special Birth Registry” into the regular Birth Registry constitutes discrimination and disproportionately affects Roma, who as a result lacked access to rights and services.⁴⁴⁸ Towards the end of July, the MoES published two public announcements for the 2025-2026 school year: one for hiring 50 Roma educational mediators to support primary education, and a new announcement for hiring 35 mediators for the first time in secondary education.⁴⁴⁹ In August, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee determined that North Macedonia violated the rights of two Roma citizens at the Tabanovce border crossing. In two cases, in 2014 and 2015, they were not allowed to leave the country despite having valid passports and documentation.⁴⁵⁰

The first meeting of the National Coordination Body for the Roma Strategy was held in February.⁴⁵¹ The body is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Roma Strategy 2022-2030 and ensuring inter-institutional coordination for measures that promote inclusion, equality, and the socio-economic development of Roma communities. The session confirmed the government’s commitment to advancing the rights of citizens from the Roma community and improving the efficiency of relevant policies.

Increase the financial and human resources of the CPPD, including creating realistic conditions for technical development, field work, and systemic functioning;

Ensure stable employment, training, and allocation of educational assistants for the realistic functioning of inclusive education;

During future amendments to the Electoral Code, provide specific and clearly defined provisions to ensure accessibility and non-discriminatory participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process, developed in consultation with organizations for persons with disabilities;

Revise educational legislation to restore clear anti-discrimination provisions;

⁴⁴⁸ „Клучна судска пресуда за Ромите во ризик од бездржавјанство во Северна Македонија“ (Key court ruling for Roma at risk of statelessness in North Macedonia), Macedonian Young Lawyers Association 17 јули 2025, <https://myla.org.mk/51418>.

⁴⁴⁹ „МОН објави два повика за ромски образовни медијатори, за првпат и во средно образование“ (MES published two calls for Roma educational mediators, for the first time in secondary education as well), Radio MOF, 1 August 2025, <https://www.radiomof.mk/mon-objavi-dva-povika-za-romski-obrazovni-medijatori-za-prvpat-i-vo-sredno-obrazovanie/>.

⁴⁵⁰ “UN Human Rights Committee condemns North Macedonia for anti-Roma discrimination at borders,” European Roma Rights Centre, 27 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/49PUmLn>.

⁴⁵¹ „Салиу: Се одржа првот состанок на Националното координативно тело за следење на имплементацијата на Стратегијата за инклузија на Ромите 2022-2030“ (Salju: First meeting of the National Coordinating Body for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2030 held), Official Website of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, 24 February 2025, <https://vlada.mk/node/38358>.

Implement existing laws for the prevention and protection against violence against women and establish a sustainable mechanism for dealing with femicide;

Establish standardized procedures for recording, investigating, and prosecuting hate speech, followed by mandatory training for the prosecution, judiciary, and police;

Ensure a systemic solution for the right to housing for Roma by implementing transparent and non-discriminatory criteria for social housing and investing in a safe, infrastructurally equipped, and sustainable residential environment within Roma communities.

TABLE: Key Institutional Indicators (Fundamental Rights)

Institution/Field	Indicator	Period	Description
European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)	Total applications decided by ECtHR	2024	192 applications against North Macedonia
	Rejected / inadmissible applications	2024	180 rejected/inadmissible
	Judgments with violation	2024	10 judgments in 12 cases, established violations of the ECtHR
	Decided applications	Jan–Jul 2025	94 applications
	Application index per 10,000 inhabitants	2024	2.00 for North Macedonia compared to 1.83 European average
	Judgments (growth)	2024 vs. 2023	44% increase in the number of judgments
Ombudsman – Total Workload	Total processed complaints	2024	3.148 complaints (2,705 new from 2024; 443 carried over from 2023)
	Most violations – Civil status/Internal affairs	2024	173 cases (23.28%), 94.80% compliance with Ombudsman recommendations
	Violations in Judiciary	2024	96 cases (12.92%), 67.71% compliance rate
	Violations – Consumer rights	2024	76 cases (10.23%), 88.16% implemented recommendations
	Total complaints	Jan–Sept 2025	2,365 complaints (1,844 new from 2025; 443 carried over from 2024)
	Top complaints by field	Jan–Sept 2025	292 in Judiciary; 222 Consumer rights
National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)	Special report for 2024	2024	Noted overcrowding, staff shortages, poor infrastructure, lack of healthcare; clearly marks structural weaknesses

Institution/Field	Indicator	Period	Description
Torture – Ombudsman	Complaints of torture/inhumane treatment	2024	25 complaints (10 police, 15 prison police); +6 compared to 2023
Mol – Internal Control	Investigated cases of illegal/unethical conduct	2024	995 cases
	Filed criminal charges	2024	25 charges for 28 criminal offenses
	Investigated cases	Jan–Sept 2025	987 cases
	Criminal charges / offenses	Jan–Sept 2025	52 charges for 57 criminal offenses
	Trend	2024 vs. 2025	Similar number of cases, double the criminal charges more serious violations / improved detection
Sanctions Enforcement Administration	Complaints regarding rights/prison conditions	2024	184 complaints (18 more compared to 2023)
	Complaints of torture from convicts	Last 6 years	0 filed with the Administration (sharp contrast with NPM findings)
Idrizovo Prison (Example)	Persons in admission department	2024	48 convicts in a space for 10
	Doctor-to-prisoner ratio	2024	1 doctor for over 1,300 prisoners
PDPA – Personal Data Protection Agency	Total complaints	2024	249 complaints, 247 of which relate to social networks; 12 regarding children's rights
	Employees – Formal	2024	17 employees, 3 in management positions
	Employees – October 2025	2025	16 employees (30% occupancy of systematization)
	Consequences of shortage	2024–2025	Processing of misdemeanor cases reduced by 50%
CPPD – Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination	Total cases	2024	485 cases (407 new, 78 carried over from 2023)
	Decisions rendered	2024	316 decisions: 38% establishing discrimination, 52% rejected/terminated
	Decisions Establishing Discrimination	2024	56 cases (37%) established; 96 (63%) – not established
	Grounds – Most common	2024	27% national/ethnic affiliation; 39% in the area of work and labor relations

Institution/Field	Indicator	Period	Description
	Complaints / Ex Officio	Jan–Sept 2025	319 complaints; 4 cases initiated ex officio
	Decisions	Jan–Sept 2025	229 decisions (45 established, 54 not established discrimination, 130 rejected/terminated)
	CPPD Staff	2024–2025	46 systematized positions, 17 filled (36%)
SSO – Children in Conflict with the Law	Children reported for criminal offenses	2024	486 children (12.2% more compared to 2023)
	Convicted children	2024	300 children (2.3% fewer compared to 2023)
PDPA – Strategy and Capacities	Employment and Autonomy	2024–2025	16–17 persons, 30% occupancy, dependent on MoF and MIPA direct negative impact on the 2025–2030 Strategy

TABLE: Thematic Indicators (Torture, Media, Children, LGBTI, Roma, Hate Speech)

Theme / Group	Indicator	Period	Description
Torture and Ill-treatment	Complaints to the Ombudsman	2024	25 (10 police, 15 prison police), +6 compared to 2023
	Cases investigated by Internal Control (MoI)	2024	995 cases, 25 criminal charges / 28 offenses
	Investigated cases (MoI)	Jan–Sept 2025	987 cases, 52 charges / 57 offenses (stricter profile)
Prisons and Detention	Complaints regarding rights/ conditions in prison	2024	184 complaints (+18 compared to 2023)
	Overcrowding – Idrizovo Prison example	2024	48 persons in an admission unit for 10; other facilities underutilized
	Healthcare	2024	1 doctor for over 1,300 prisoners
Children – Rights and Justice	Children in conflict with the law	2024	486 reported children (+12.2% from 2023); 300 convicted (-2.3% from 2023)
	Education in Tetovo Correctional Home	2024	26 children without any instruction; 12 illiterate; 7 without primary; 7 without secondary access
	Juvenile female in Idrizovo	2024	14-year-old held locked for 22 hours a day due to lack of a separate facility

Theme / Group	Indicator	Period	Description
PDPA – Data Protection	Total complaints	2024	249 total; 247 related to social networks; 12 regarding children's rights violations
	Structural vulnerability	April 2025	Criminal case involving 43 persons (fake quick loans, data abuse)
	Digitalization of registries	2025	Only ½ digitalized, despite €8.5 million spent
Media and Freedom of Expression	Index – Reporters Without Borders rank	2024	42nd place, drop of 6 positions
	Attacks on journalists (AJM)	2024	4 cases (2 against female journalists) – all reported to MoI, 1 to PPO
	Focus on election media costs	2025 Local Elections	€6.5 million for political advertising (66% of SEC budget)
Hate Speech (HCHR)	SEC – Registered media for elections	2025	352 requests (33 TV, 42 radio, 8 print, 246 portals)
	Reports of hate speech	2024	1.391 reports on govornaomraza.mk
	By grounds	2024	601 national, 566 ethnic, 236 political, 230 sexual orientation/gender identity
Hate Crimes	Criminal charges	2024	7 criminal charges
	Reports	1st half of 2025	Over 200 cases (69 in Jan, 74 in Feb; rise in homophobic speech in Feb and June)
	Incidents (HCHR)	Oct–Dec 2024	27 incidents (21 violence, 1 bodily harm, 2 property damage, 2 incitement of hatred, 1 destruction of symbols, others)
LGBTI+ (FRA Report)	Persons able to speak openly about identity	2024	21% (compared to 51% EU average)
	Persons avoiding public expressions of affection	2024	74%
	Persons avoiding certain areas	2024	43%
	Experienced mockery/insults/threats in school	2024	68%
	Students hiding their identity	2024	63%
	Students where LGBTI+ topics are never mentioned	2024	61%

Theme / Group	Indicator	Period	Description
Roma – Socio-economic data (Romalitico)	Registered unemployed Roma (ESA)	2024/25	10.388 persons (~10% of total registered unemployed)
	Roma children in public kindergartens	SY 2024/25	472 children (1.3% of total enrolled)
	Roma children exempt from fees	SY 2024/25	150 children
CPPD – Roma Discrimination	General recommendation to municipalities	2025	Call for systemic measures: housing, infrastructure, legalization, services for informal settlements
Victim Compensation – Commission for Financial Compensation to Victims of Crimes of Violence and Rape	Claims for compensation	by Feb 2025	8 claims (including children – sexual abuse)
	Claims for compensation	by Sept 2025	54 claims; 1 payment approved (€500); 32 rejected, 21 in progress

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