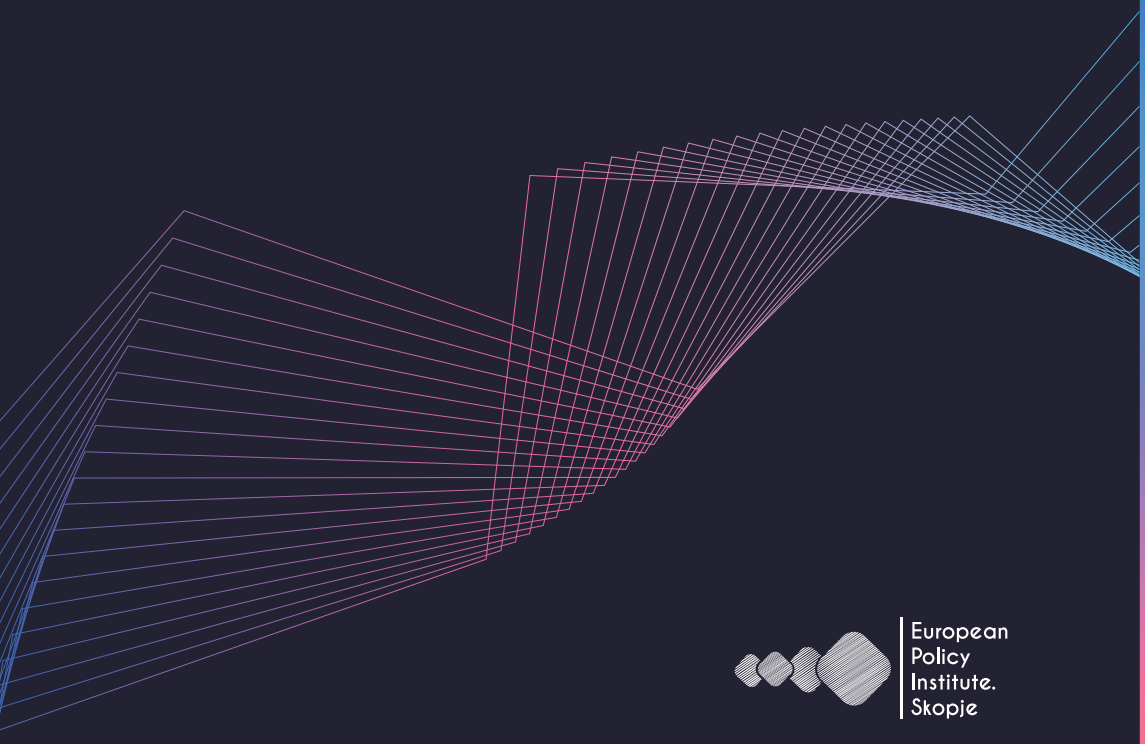
SHADOW REPORT ON CHAPTER 23

FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN
OCTOBER 2025 AND JUNE 2026



European
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Skopje

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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
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EC	European Commission
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ENER	Unique 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
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Community
MKD	Republic of North Macedonia
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MRT	Macedonian Radio Television
NPD	Network for Protection against Discrimination
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PPO	Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Agency
SCPC	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption
HPPO	Higher Public Prosecutor's Office
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

Introduction

This Shadow Report consolidates into a single coherent whole all findings, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the monitoring of the areas covered under Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. This is the eleventh 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 ten 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] October 2023 – September 2024,[9] and October 2024 – September 2025.[10]

The report covers the period from the beginning of October 2025 up to the end of June 2026. The report presents data that are also relevant prior to October 2025, provided that they were necessary for contextualization or for clarifying developments from the current reporting period and are relevant to it. This report follows the structure of Chapter 23 and precedes the annual report of the European Commission (EC). At the end of each area, recommendations are highlighted in a text box.

The reporting period was marked by the implementation of the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia under the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans,[11] which represents a comprehensive package of measures to achieve the envisioned goals in the priority areas agreed with the EC, among which is the rule of law.

1 Neda Chalovska et al., "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_Poglavje23_en.pdf.
2 Neda Chalovska, Voislav Stojanovski, and Aleksandar Jovanovski, "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/Shadow%20report%20-%20web.pdf.
3 Velimir Delovski et al., "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/Network%2023_Shadow%20Report%20_2018.pdf.
4 Iva Conevska et al., "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2018 – March 2019", European Policy Institute - Skopje, 2019, https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Shadow-Report-Eng-1.pdf.
5 Iva Conevska and Ismail Kamberi, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2019 – March 2020", European Policy Institute – Skopje, April 2020, https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Shadow-Report_2020_en.pdf.
6 Iva Conevska Vangelova and Ismail Kamberi, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period April 2020 – September 2021", European Policy Institute – Skopje, 16 December 2021, https://bit.ly/4rBt2aw.
7 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2021 – September 2022", European Policy Institute - Skopje, December 2022, https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/Shadow_report_eng.pdf.
8 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2022 – September 2023", European Policy Institute - Skopje, December 2023, https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/SH-report_2023_eng.pdf.
9 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2023 – September 2024", European Policy Institute - Skopje, December 2024, https://bit.ly/4iXnEMS.
10 Beba Zhagar and Ardita Vejseli, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2024 - September 2025", European Policy Institute - Skopje, December 2025, https://epi.org.mk/post/32883?lang=en.
11 „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

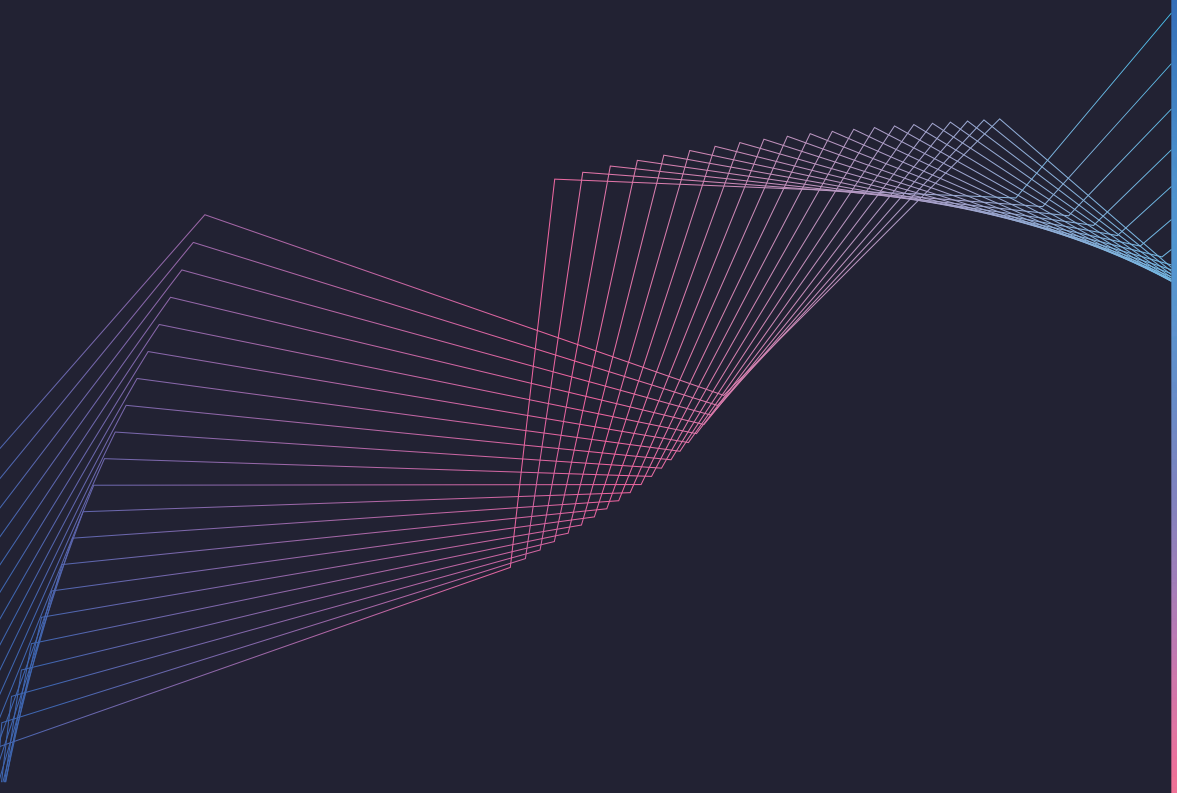
In the preparation of this report, the methodology for monitoring the areas that are the focus of work of "Network 23" – Judiciary, Anti-Corruption, and Fundamental Rights,[12] developed in 2015 and already applied in previous reports, was utilized. It included research of official sources of state and judicial institutions, analysis of media reporting regarding 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 awaited.

Consultations with civil society organizations, state institutions, and experts were also conducted for the preparation of this shadow report. Initially, consultations were held regarding the submission of relevant analyses, reports, and research related to Chapter 23. Subsequently, on 17 September 2026, 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 as well as civil society organizations in finalizing 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.

12 Natalija Shikova (ed.), „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 from Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights of European Union Legislation), Center for Change Management, https://epi.org.mk/ docs/Metodologija_mk.pdf.

Judiciary



Key developments in the reporting period

- **The Assembly adopted a new Law on the Judicial Council in December 2025, and subsequent amendments in 2026 to introduce stricter selection criteria, transparent dismissal procedures, and improved methodologies for evaluating judges.**
- **A new Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors was adopted to strengthen transparency and disciplinary procedures, while the draft Law on the Public Prosecutor's Office was withdrawn by the Government for further alignment with the EC.**
- **In September 2025, a new body was constituted for coordinated monitoring of the Sectoral Development Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) and the Reform Agenda.**
- **In March 2026, the Assembly elected a new Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia.**
- **Due to unsecured financial resources from the Ministry of Finance and a two-year blockade, in December 2025 the call for the admission of 130 candidates to the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (AJPP) was canceled, which further deepened the staff shortage in the judiciary.**
- **In June 2026, laws on judicial service and public prosecutorial service were adopted, as well as a new Law on Civil Procedure.**
- **Despite the legally prescribed 0.8%, the allocated judicial budget amounted to only 0.26% (and 0.2% for the public prosecutor's office), while the 2025 Annual Report indicated that more than half of the courts (18 out of 34) - including the Supreme Court and the Administrative Court - did not keep up with their caseloads.**

In the area of the judiciary, during this reporting period, attention was focused on the implementation of the measures under the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia within the framework of the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans[13] in the area of the judiciary, particularly on the measures related to amendments to relevant legislation. During the reporting period, significant legislative activities were undertaken, especially regarding the reform of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors. In addition, the implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028)[14] and its accompanying Action Plan,[15] which was officially presented to the public at the end of 2023,[16] continued. The Strategy represents one of the key strategic documents meant to serve as a guide for implementing reforms aimed at strengthening the independence, efficiency, and accountability of the judiciary. However, the practical implementation of the reforms is still in an initial phase, while structural challenges related to financial independence, human resources, and political pressures remain largely unchanged.

13 „Реформска агенда на Северна Македонија 2024-2027" (Reform Agenda of North Macedonia 2024–2027).
14 "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/strategiii-file-luvL.pdf
15 "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/strategiii-file-u1gU.pdf.
16 „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

In this context, the Shadow Report evaluates the legislative and institutional developments in the judiciary, their alignment with European standards, and the degree of implementation of the obligations undertaken through the Reform Agenda and within the framework of the European Union accession process.

Strategic documents

During this reporting period, the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) entered its third year of implementation. In mid-2026, the Ministry of Justice publicly released the annual report on the implementation of the Strategy for 2025.[17] Last year, the initiation of a total of 116 activities was scheduled, of which 66 have been fully implemented and 50 are in the implementation phase, reaching an overall implementation rate of nearly 57%. The most significant progress is noted in the first priority area (Judiciary and Public Prosecution in Accordance with EU Standards) and the fourth priority area (Reform of the Constitutional Court), where the implementation rate exceeds 75%. Conversely, the second priority area (Strengthening the Capacities, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of Judicial Institutions) and the sixth priority area (Monitoring and Implementation) recorded the lowest implementation rates over the past year.[18] Although the degree of completion indicates ongoing implementation of the Strategy, disparities among individual priority areas demonstrate that progress remains uneven. Of particular concern is the limited progress in areas related to institutional capacities and reform monitoring, given that these very areas constitute a prerequisite for sustainable implementation of the remaining reform measures. Furthermore, the Action Plan does not foresee specific budgeting for planned activities, representing a significant shortcoming.[19] An updated Action Plan is currently under preparation to address the identified deficiencies.[20] The absence of clear financial planning poses a substantial risk to the timely and comprehensive implementation of the Strategy, especially considering the chronic under-allocation of funds for the judiciary, a point continuously noted in European Commission reports.

In September 2025, a new Council for Monitoring Reforms in the Judiciary was established, tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) and the Reform Agenda 2024–2027 under Section 5: Fundamental Values/Rule of Law, and held its constitutive session.[21] By establishing this council, which consolidates the monitoring of

17 „Реализација на Развојната секторска стратегија за правосудство достигна 56,9%, а реформите во судството и обвинителството надминаа 81%" (Implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary reached 56.9%, while reforms in the judiciary and prosecution exceeded 81%), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/realizacijata-na-razvojnata-sektorska-strategija-za-pravosudstvo-dostigna-569-a-reformite-vo-sudstvo-to-i-obvinitelstvoto-nadminaa-81.

18 „Годишен извештај за спроведувањето на развојната секторска стратегија за правосудство 2024-2028 во 2025 година" (Annual Report on the Implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary 2024–2028 in 2025), Ministry of Justice, April 2026, https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/izvestai-regulativa-file-miql.pdf.

19 Angela Delevska and Beba Zhagar, "Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2023 – September 2024", European Policy Institute - Skopje, December 2024, https://bit.ly/4iXnEMS.

20 "Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026)", European Policy Institute (EPI), 17 September 2026.

21 „Конститутивна седница на Советот за следење на реформите во правосудството" (Constitutive session of the Council for Monitoring Reforms in the Judiciary), 24.mk, 10 September 2025, https://24.mk/details/konstitutivna-sednica-na-sovetot-za-sledenje-na-reformite-vo-pravosudstvoto.

both aforementioned documents, it is intended to enable a coordinated approach to the measures and activities undertaken toward the country's progress, serving as a body that will ensure transparency, continuity, and accountability in the reform implementation process.

In the second half of October, the Council for Monitoring Judicial Reforms held its second session. During the session, key operational documents were reviewed, including the Draft Rules of Procedure and the Methodology for Monitoring and Measuring Reform Activities.[22] In the second half of April 2026, the Council held its third session, where the findings of the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Strategy were presented. Additionally, the Council's Rules of Procedure and the Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy were adopted.[23] However, during the reporting period, it is still premature to evaluate whether the Council will contribute to more efficient coordination, accountability, and timely implementation of reform activities. A by-law is currently under preparation, through which the Council will receive a new composition.[24]

The shortage of human resources remains one of the most serious structural constraints for the functioning of the judiciary and the public prosecution. Due to the low level of implementation of the adopted human resources strategies for the judicial network[25] and the public prosecution network,[26] no improvement in the staffing situation was observed during the reporting period. The "EU Support for the Rule of Law" project prepared a Report on the Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for the Judicial Network, which showed that implementation is insufficient or has not even commenced. The judicial system of the Republic of North Macedonia is facing a severe crisis due to a shortage of judges and civil servants, as well as a lack of resources and tools (including IT tools).[27] This continues to negatively affect the efficiency, quality, and sustainability of judicial reforms. Overall, the reporting period was marked by the implementation of the strategic framework and the establishment of the institutional framework for implementing judicial reforms. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the reform process will depend on the consistent implementation of the foreseen measures, the provision of adequate human and financial resources, and the regular monitoring of the achieved results.

22 „Денес се одржа втората седница на Советот за следење на реформите во правосудниот сектор, со која претседаваше министерот за правда, Игор Филков" ("Today the second session of the Council for Monitoring Reforms in the Judiciary was held, chaired by the Minister of Justice, Igor Filkov"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 22 October 2025, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/denes-se-odrza-vtorata-sednica-na-sovetot-za-sledenje-na-reformite-vo-pravosudniot-sektor-so-koja-pretsedavase-ministerot-za-pravda-igor-filkov.

23 „Зголемен степен на реализација на реформските активности во правосудството" ("Increased degree of implementation of reform activities in the judiciary"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 22 April 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/zgolemen-stepen-na-realizacija-na-reformskite-aktivnosti-vo-pravosudstvoto.

24 "Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026".

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 Olga Teshovikj and Andrej Bozhinovski, Извештај за спроведување на Стратегијата за човечки ресурси за судската мрежа во Северна Македонија (Report on the Implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for the Judicial Network in North Macedonia), (Project "EU Support for the Rule of Law", 2025), https://bit.ly/4ggtiqc.

The Ministry of Justice should ensure the continuous and effective functioning of the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028) and the Reform Agenda, through regular monitoring, coordination, and public reporting on the progress achieved;

It is necessary to conduct regular evaluations of the implementation of the Developmental Strategy and the Action Plan, including revising measures when necessary, based on clear progress indicators;

It is required to provide relevant analysis and strategic planning of human resources in the judiciary and the public prosecution, followed by appropriate financial support for the timely filling of vacant positions.

Governing bodies

In the reporting period, the reform of the legal framework for the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors was among the key reform activities in the judiciary, given that it constitutes an obligation under the Reform Agenda and directly addresses the multi-year recommendations to strengthen the independence, transparency, accountability, and professionalism of both governing bodies.

After the EU's Peer Review Mission identified deficiencies in the Law on the Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice established a working group last year tasked with drafting a new law.[28] The working group held 23 meetings, and its efforts resulted in the adoption of the new Law on the Judicial Council by the Assembly in late December 2025.[29] The law introduced amendments aimed at strengthening the legal framework, including provisions regarding the dismissal of the President of the Judicial Council, stricter eligibility criteria for lay judges, as well as enhanced mechanisms for transparency and accountability, addressing key recommendations of the Peer Review Mission.[30] Six months later, the Assembly adopted amendments and supplements to the Law on the Judicial Council, which address three key aspects: defining precise grounds and procedures for the early dismissal of the President and Deputy President of the Council, establishing a more transparent process for selecting Council members elected by the Assembly - through the creation of a Selection Commission (comprising representatives from among judges, lawyers, civil society, and MPs), public interviews, and a scoring system - as well as revising and aligning the methodologies for the objective qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the performance of judges and court presidents.[31] These amendments establish a significant portion of the EU's Peer Review Mission's recommendations, particularly regarding selection criteria, dismissal procedures, and transparency in decision-making.

28 „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 (ENER), 13 May 2025, https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=84282.

29 „Собранието со 73 гласа „за" го донесе Законот за Судски совет" ("The Assembly passed the Law on the Judicial Council with 73 votes in favor"), A1on, 29 December 2025, https://a1on.mk/macedonia/sobranieto-so-73-glasa-za-go-donese-zakonot-za-sudski-sovet/.

30 „Објавен на ЕНЕР предлог Законот за Судскиот совет" ("Draft Law on the Judicial Council published on ENER"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/objaven-na-ener-predlog-zakon-za-sudskiot-sovet.

31 „Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија" ("Law amending and supplementing the Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 132/2026, 17 June 2026, https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nspx?param=ac93209a-53dc-4a94-968a-09047b2c9c5d.

However, considering that the new legal framework began to be applied during the reporting period, it is still too early to evaluate whether it will lead to a substantive change in the Council's practice, especially concerning the reasoning of decisions, adherence to ranking lists, and the limitation of discretion in selection and promotion.

In October 2025, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe adopted a joint opinion on the draft laws on the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Council of Public Prosecutors.[32] The Opinion recommends strengthening the role of the Council of Public Prosecutors in protecting prosecutors from external pressure and clarifying disciplinary procedures in order to prevent their abuse.[33] Following public hearings held on both laws in March[34] and April 2026,[35] the Assembly adopted the draft Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors, which amends the criteria and procedure for the election of Council members, introduces an obligation for comprehensive and reasoned explanations of decisions regarding the election, promotion, and disciplinary liability of prosecutors, enhances the transparency of the Council, and introduces clear two-instance disciplinary proceedings.[36] On the other hand, the Government withdrew the draft Law on Public Prosecutor's Office from parliamentary procedure in June,[37] which is currently undergoing alignment with remarks from the EC.[38] Consequently, the reform of the legal framework for the public prosecution remained incomplete. Although the new Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors introduces improvements regarding election, the reasoning of decisions, transparency, and disciplinary proceedings, key issues related to prosecutorial autonomy, external pressure, and the accountability system remain dependent on their future regulation under the Law on Public Prosecutor's Office.

Regarding the changes in the composition of the governing bodies, in November 2025 the Judicial Council published an announcement for the selection of a member from among prominent jurists belonging to a community that represents more than 20% of the population.[39] The parliamentary Committee on Election and Appointment Issues proposed a candidate who was employed as a misdemeanors advisor in the Ministry of Interior.[40] The proposal drew criticism from the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, which expressed concern regarding professional standards and transparency,

32 "Joint opinion on the draft laws on the Public Prosecutor's Office and on the Council of Public Prosecutors", Council of Europe - Venice Commission, 14 October 2025, https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)036-e.

33 Ibid.

34 „Поголема самостојност на обвинителите и воведување јасен систем на заслуги – одржана јавна расправа за новиот закон за Јавно обвинителство" ("Greater independence for prosecutors and the introduction of a clear merit system – public hearing held on the new Law on Public Prosecutor's Office"), 360 stepeni, 17 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/pogolema-samostojnost-na-obvinitelite-i-voveduvane-jasen-sistem-na-zaslugi-odrzhana-javna-rasprava-za-noviot-zakon-za-javno-obvinitelstvo/.

35 „Јавна расправа во Собранието за предложениот закон за Советот на јавните обвинители" ("Public hearing in the Assembly on the proposed Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors"), Nezavisen, 6 April 2026, https://nezavisen.mk/javna-rasprava-vo-sobranieto-za-predlozheniot-zakon-za-sovetot-na-javnite-obviniteli/.

36 „Закон за Советот на јавните обвинители" ("Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 102/2026, 15 May 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/zakon-za-sovetot-na-javnite-obviniteli-sl-vesnik-br-102-2026/.

37 „Предлог на закон за Јавното обвинителство" ("Draft Law on Public Prosecutor's Office"), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 June 2026, https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nspx?param=ddb91fbc-a5aa-47b3-93f4-a0b39225fb8e.

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

39 „Оглас за избор на член на Судски совет на РСМ" ("Announcement for the election of a member of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4q1YwUV.

40 „Полициски инспектор предложен за член на Судски совет" ("Police inspector proposed as a member of the Judicial Council"), TV Telma, 11 December 2025, https://telma.com.mk/2025/12/11/policziski-inspektor-predlozhen-za-chlen-na-sudski-sovet/.

particularly in the context of the upcoming legal framework that had not yet entered into force at that time.[41] In the new year, the Assembly renewed this announcement in accordance with the provisions of the new Law,[42] after which, in mid-January 2026, the Judicial Council published a Single Special List of Candidates listing six names.[43] At the end of the month, the candidate who had been a judge at the Basic Court Tetovo was elected from that list as a new member of the Council.[44] In the meantime, the President of the State proposed two female candidates for members of the Judicial Council,[45] whom the Assembly elected in accordance with the provisions of the new Law.[46] In March, two more new candidates for members of the Council were proposed by the parliamentary Committee on Election and Appointment Issues.[47] The announcement was annulled because one of the two candidates who reached the shortlist had previously been dismissed from judicial office due to incompetent and unconscientious performance, a fact he concealed in his application for Council member.[48] A new announcement for the selection of a member of the Judicial Council was published in April, after which the Committee on Election and Appointment Issues proposed two shortlisted names at a session in June.[49]

At its 28th session, the Council of Public Prosecutors made a decision on the termination of the mandate of the President of the Council due to its expiration and decided that the Vice President would lead the Council until the election of a new president.[50] On 9 December 2025, the Council of Public Prosecutors elected a new President and Vice President.[51]

41 „Блупринт групата е разочарана од начинот на кој е предложен кандидатот за нов член на Судскиот совет" ("The Blueprint Group is disappointed with the way the candidate for a new member of the Judicial Council was proposed"), Mkd.mk, 12 December 2025, https://mkd.mk/makedonija/bluprint-grupata-e-razocharana-od-nachinot-na-koj-e-predlozhen-kandidatot-za-nov-chlen-na-sudskiot-sovet/.

42 „Гаши најави нов оглас за избор на член на Судскиот совет на предлог на Собранието според новиот закон" ("Gashi announced a new call for the election of a Judicial Council member nominated by the Assembly under the new law"), 360 stepeni, 15 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/gashi-najavi-nov-oglas-za-izbor-na-chlen-na-sudskiot-sovet-na-predlog-na-sobranieto-spored-noviot-zakon/.

43 „Единствена посебна листа" ("Single Special List"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 13 January 2026, https://bit.ly/3TKu5bw.

44 „Соопштение за избран член на Судски совет" ("Announcement on the elected member of the Judicial Council"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 30 January 2026, https://bit.ly/3Un4nKc.

45 „Претседателката ги предложи Сузана Јошевска-Анастасовска и Арлинда Кадри-Шахиновиќ за членови на Судскиот совет" ("The President proposed Suzana Joshevska-Anastasovska and Arlinda Kadri-Shahinovikj as members of the Judicial Council"), 360 stepeni, 9 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/pretsedatelkata-gi-predlozhi-suzana-joshevska-anastasovska-i-arlinda-kadri-shahinovik-za-chlenovi-na-sudskiot-sovet/.

46 „Собранието ги избра Кадри-Шахиновиќ и Јошевска-Анастасовска за нови членки на Судскиот совет" ("The Assembly elected Kadri-Shahinovikj and Joshevska-Anastasovska as new members of the Judicial Council"), 360 stepeni, 12 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-gi-izbra-kadri-shahinovik-i-joshevska-anastasovska-za-novi-chlenki-na-sudskiot-sovet/.

47 „Извештај за спроведена постапка по огласот за избор на член на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија што го избира Собранието на Република Северна Македонија, со предлог-листа на кандидати" ("Report on the procedure conducted following the call for the election of a member of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia elected by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, with a proposed list of candidates"), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nspx?param=3658272c-3145-43ae-b788-c3e354679c60.

48 „Поништен е огласот за член на Судски совет – кандидат сокрил дека бил разрешен поради несовесно работење!" ("The call for a Judicial Council member has been annulled – a candidate concealed that he had been dismissed due to unconscientious performance!"), Fokus, 26 March 2026, https://fokus.mk/ponishten-e-oglasot-za-chlen-na-sudski-sovet-kandidat-sokril-deka-bil-razreshen-poradi-nesovesno-rabotene/.

49 „Извештај за спроведена постапка по огласот за избор на член на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија што го избира Собранието на Република Северна Македонија, со предлог - листа на кандидати" ("Report on the procedure conducted following the call for the election of a member of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia elected by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, with a proposed list of candidates"), Official website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 June 2026, https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nspx?param=eb03a051-ac56-4955-810b-02dd1e6a296b.

50 „Записник од 28-ма седница" ("Minutes of the 28th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 30 September 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/zapisnik-od-28-ma-sednica/.

51 „Соопштение од одржана 32. седница" ("Announcement on the held 32nd session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 9 December 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-32-ra-sednica/.

During the reporting period, both councils also undertook several activities to enhance their internal procedures and work planning. The Judicial Council amended its Rules of Procedure regarding the procedure for proposing judges to the Constitutional Court,[52] adopted the Annual Work Program for 2026 with an Action Plan,[53] and approved the Program[54] with an Action Plan for Preventing and Monitoring Corruption in the Judiciary 2026–2029, prepared in cooperation with the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC).[55] The Council of Public Prosecutors initiated a revision of its Rules of Procedure[56] and adopted the Rulebook on the manner of conducting the procedure for ensuring and guaranteeing the autonomy of public prosecutors.[57] These activities represent positive institutional developments, though their impact will depend on consistent implementation in practice.

During the adoption[58] of the Annual Work Report of the Judicial Council for 2025,[59] weaknesses were again noted regarding the substantive transparency of the Judicial Council.[60] Although the sessions are public, the provision of the Rules of Procedure providing for the participation of representatives of the Association of Judges and civil society organizations during the review of the Annual Report was not consistently applied.[61] This shows that progress in the formal openness of the Council is still not fully accompanied by institutionalized dialogue and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the accountability process.

52 „Соопштение од продолжението на 536. седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ одржана на 4.2.2026 година" ("Announcement from the continuation of the 536th session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 4.2.2026"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 4 February 2026, https://bit.ly/3UkzbeE;
„Деловник за изменување на Деловникот за работа на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија" ("Rules on Amending the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 23/2026.

53 „Соопштение од 533. седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ одржана на 11.12.2025 година" ("Announcement from the 533rd session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 11.12.2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 December 2025, https://bit.ly/3ZEUlUg.

54 „Програма за спречување и следење на корупцијата во судството 2026-2029" ("Program for Prevention and Monitoring of Corruption in the Judiciary 2026-2029"), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, December 2025, https://bit.ly/4w04xJ3.

55 „Акциски план на програмата за спречување и следење на корупцијата во судството 2026-2029" ("Action Plan of the Program for Prevention and Monitoring of Corruption in the Judiciary 2026-2029"), Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, December 2025, https://bit.ly/4weU6x2.

56 „Соопштение за одржана работилница на тема – Разгледување на Деловникот за работа на Советот со цел унапредување на транспарентноста и отчетноста" ("Announcement on a held workshop on the topic – Reviewing the Council's Rules of Procedure to enhance transparency and accountability"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 October 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-za-odrzhana-rabotilnica-na-tema-razgleduvanje-na-delovnikot-za-rabota-na-sovetot-so-cel-unapreduvanje-na-transparentnosta-i-otchetnosta/.

57 „Правилник за начинот на водење на постапка за обезбедување и гарантирање на самостојноста на јавните обвинители" ("Rulebook on the manner of conducting the procedure for ensuring and guaranteeing the autonomy of public prosecutors"), Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 November 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/pravilnik-za-nachinot-na-vodenje-na-postapka-za-obezbeduvanje-i-garantiranje-na-samostojnosta-na-javnite-obviniteli/.

58 „Соопштение од 541-та седница на Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија - 22.04.2026 година" ("Announcement from the 541st session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - 22.04.2026"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 22 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4htxW6J.

59 „Годишен извештај за работата на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија за 2025 година" ("Annual Work Report of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, April 2026, http://sud.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/07c2cfb1-7280-49ca-91b2-c4279989f9fa/Y2026-SDN-%28GD%290428.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=pTe2UZo.

60 „Реакција по повод усвојување на извештајот за работата на Судски совет на РСМ на седницата одржана на 22 април 2026" ("Reaction regarding the adoption of the Work Report of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia at the session held on 22 April 2026"), Official website of the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 23 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4xtf504.

61 „Деловник за изменување и дополнување на деловникот за работа на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија" ("Rules on 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.

At the 39th session,[62] the Council adopted the Annual Work Report of the Council of Public Prosecutors for 2025,[63] which was subsequently submitted to the Assembly for debate and adoption.

In general, the reporting period brought significant progress in reforming the legal framework governing the work of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors. However, the main test remains its practical implementation. It is particularly necessary to demonstrate whether the new rules will result in more transparent and merit-based elections and promotions, better-reasoned decisions, more effective protection against external influences, and greater institutional accountability.

It is necessary to ensure consistent implementation of the new legal framework for the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, in accordance with the recommendations of the EU's Peer Review Mission and the Venice Commission, with a special focus on transparency, merit-based selection and promotion, and the reasoning of decisions;

It is necessary to adopt the relevant by-laws based on the new laws for the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, particularly new evaluation methodologies;

It is essential to align the text of the Law on Public Prosecutor's Office with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and secure its urgent adoption;

Governing bodies should strive for regular adherence to the principle of transparent operation and the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in monitoring their work.

Independence and impartiality

Limited progress was noted in the transparency of the work of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, while significant weaknesses in this aspect remain.

During the reporting period, moderate progress was observed regarding the Judicial Council, particularly in relation to the regular publication of announcements for held sessions and adopted decisions, as well as through the continuous live streaming of sessions via the internet, enabling public insight into the Council's work.[64]

Regarding the reasoning behind the decisions of the Judicial Council, it is obvious that the recommendation of the Peer Review Mission for detailed, reasoned, and individualized justification has not been fully implemented. The explanations are mostly brief, generic, and repetitive. Instead of analysis based on concrete professional results, measurable indicators, and relevant data, discussions are reduced to formal assertions and subjective assessments, which limits the transparency and veri-

62 „Соопштение од одржана 39. седница" ("Announcement on the held 39th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 February 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-sednica-4/.

63 „Годишен извештај за работата на Советот на јавни обвинители за 2025 година" ("Annual Work Report of the Council of Public Prosecutors for 2025"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, February 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/godishen-izveshtaj-za-rabotata-na-sovetot-za-2025-godina/.

64 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Tutikj, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавни 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", 2025, https://all4fairtrials.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/AN-SJOSS-2025.pdf.

fiability of the decisions adopted.[65] In April 2026, the Judicial Council decided behind closed doors upon a request for the repetition of procedure against a dismissed judge, even though the case was of significant public interest.[66] This raised questions regarding compliance with the principles of transparency and accountability. The Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms reacted that the specific request for repetition of procedure constitutes a matter of public interest that should be considered in a public session, without jeopardizing the integrity of the judge.[67]

In terms of transparency in the operation of the Council of Public Prosecutors, during the reporting period, announcements containing information on adopted decisions and other activities of the Council, as well as minutes from its sessions, were regularly published on the website. The Council took a step forward at its 29th session[68] by adopting its Communication and Transparency Strategy 2025–2028,[69] and later established a Commission responsible for implementing the Strategy.[70] These activities represent a positive step toward more open institutional communication, but their impact on the transparency of the Council's work can only be assessed through their consistent practical application.

Judicial independence is inextricably linked to its financial independence, which continues to pose a serious challenge. As in previous years, financial resources for the judiciary were not provided in accordance with statutory provisions during this reporting period either. According to Judicial Council data, the judicial budget during the reporting period stood at 0.26% of GDP,[71] while for the public prosecution, it amounted to 0.2% of the state budget,[72] directly impacting the capacity of the justice system and the sustainability of reforms. The continuous failure to provide the legally stipulated level of the judicial budget remains one of the key structural limitations to the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. Towards the end of last year, the Judicial Council, the Supreme Court, and the Association of Judges issued a joint open letter to the Prime Minister, reacting to his public statements regarding the judiciary and the allocated budget.[73] In the letter, they rejected assertions linking the judiciary to the overall fiscal situation of the state, including the public debt, and

65 Ibid.

66 „Судскиот совет на затворена седница одлучуваше по барањето за повторување на постапката против разрешениот судија Рибарев" ("The Judicial Council decided in a closed session upon the request for repetition of procedure against the dismissed judge Ribarev"), 360 stepeni, 15 April 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sudskiot-sovet-na-zatvorena-sednitsa-odluchuvashe-po-baraneto-za-povtoruvane-na-postapkata-protiv-razresheniot-sudija-ribarev/.

67 „Реакција по повод нетранспарентното работење на Судски совет на РСМ на седницата одржана на 15 април 2026" ("Reaction regarding the non-transparent operation of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia at the session held on 15 April 2026"), Official website of the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 16 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4zoIGd9.

68 „Соопштение од одржана 29. седница" ("Announcement on the held 29th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 November 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-29-ta-sednica/.

69 „Стратегија за комуникација и транспарентност 2025-2028" ("Communication and Transparency Strategy 2025–2028"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, November 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/strategija-za-komunikacija-i-transparentnost-2025-2028/.

70 „Соопштение од одржана 32. седница" ("Announcement on the held 32nd session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 9 December 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-32-ra-sednica/.

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

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

73 „Мицкоски: Судиите бараат судски буџет далеку над европскиот просек, дури 75 % повеќе, кој успех го постигнаа за тој буџет" ("Mickoski: Judges demand a judicial budget far above the European average, up to 75% higher, what success have they achieved for that budget"), Official website of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, 18 November 2025, https://vlada.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/intervjua/mickoski-sudiite-baraat-sudski-budzet-daleku-nad-evropskiot-prosek-duri-75-povekje-koj-uspex-go-postignaa-za-toj-budzet.

emphasized that the judiciary's financial dependence on the executive branch continues to present a challenge to judicial independence.[74]

Towards the end of June, the draft Law on Judicial Budget was published,[75] proposing the strengthening of the financial and staffing autonomy of the judiciary, including through independent management of the legally established minimum of funds and expanded competencies for the Judicial Budget Council in planning employment.[76] Given that the proposal was published at the very end of the reporting period, it remains to be seen whether the final legal framework and its implementation will provide real, rather than merely formal, strengthening of the judiciary's financial independence.

In February, a package of laws concerning salaries in the judiciary was adopted: the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Public Prosecutors, the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Judges, and the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Judicial Council.[77] The Judicial Council and the Supreme Court,[78] the Association of Public Prosecutors,[79] and the Association of Judges[80] reacted to these amendments that reduced their salaries, after which the Constitutional Court annulled the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Judges, as the coefficients for determining judicial salaries were reduced twice in 2024 and again in February 2026, which according to the Court indicates a tendency toward reducing the real amount of judicial salaries, creating a risk to their material position and thereby threatening the independence and autonomy of the judiciary.[81]

Following previous correspondence with the Ministry of Finance regarding budget funds intended for employment,[82] the Judicial Budget Council, at its 257th session, reviewed the Ministry's negative

74 „Соопштение на Судски совет, Врховен суд и Здружение на судии" ("Announcement of the Judicial Council, Supreme Court, and Association of Judges"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 November 2025, https://bit.ly/490cSn5.

75 Ministry of Justice, „Предлог на закон за судскиот буџет" ("Draft Law on the Judicial Budget"), Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER), 25 June 2026, https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=113467.

76 „Предлог-законот за судски буџет е објавен на ЕНЕР" ("Draft Law on the Judicial Budget is published on ENER"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 25 June 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/predlog-zakonot-za-sudski-budzet-e-objaven-na-ener.

77 „Закон за изменување на Законот за платите на јавните обвинители" ("Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Public Prosecutors"),
„Закон за изменување на Законот за платите на членовите на Советот на јавните обвинители" ("Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Council of Public Prosecutors"),
„Закон за изменување на Законот за платите на судиите" ("Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Judges"),
„Закон за изменување на Законот за платите на членовите на Судскиот совет" ("Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Members of the Judicial Council"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 39/2026.

78 „Соопштение на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија и Врховниот суд на Република Северна Македонија" ("Announcement of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 3 March 2026, https://bit.ly/4bDqQZB.

79 „Здружението на јавни обвинители бара Собранието да ги повлече законските измени за платите" ("The Association of Public Prosecutors requests the Assembly to withdraw the statutory amendments on salaries"), 360 stepeni, 25 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/zdruzhenieto-na-javni-obviniteli-bara-sobranieto-da-gi-povleche-zakonskite-izmeni-za-platite/.

80 „Здружението на судии бара итно одмрзнување на платите или најавува протест" ("The Association of Judges demands an urgent unfreezing of salaries or announces a protest"), 360 stepeni, 2 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/zdruzhenieto-na-sudii-bara-itno-odmrznuvane-na-platite-ili-najavuva-protest/.

81 „Уставниот суд го поништи Законот за изменување на Законот за платите на судиите донесен во февруари 2026 година во Собранието" ("The Constitutional Court annulled the Law Amending the Law on Salaries of Judges enacted in February 2026 in the Assembly"), Official website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4hYQ9cl.

82 „Соопштение од 254. седница на Судски буџетски совет - 27.08.2025 година" ("Announcement from the 254th Session of the Judicial Budget Council - 27.08.2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 August 2025, https://bit.ly/3ZbtizJ.

opinions on the annual employment plans in the judiciary for 2026. The Council agreed to request an urgent meeting with the Minister of Finance in order to resolve the withholding of consent for new employments, noting that the ongoing shortage of human resources in courts and prosecution offices continues to affect their operational capacity and efficiency.[83] At its 269th session in April 2026, members of the Judicial Budget Council agreed to resend a letter to the Ministry of Finance informing them of the issues faced by the judicial branch regarding the judicial budget, additionally requesting the provision of financial resources to begin paying recourse (annual leave allowance) to judges, salary contributions, and similar claims for which they file lawsuits and obtain final judgments, aimed at reducing legal and enforcement costs as well as late payment interest that burden the judicial budget.[84]

At the same time, the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (AJPP) has still not received consent from the same ministry to start a new generation of candidates for judges and public prosecutors, leading to the annulment of the 9th generation.[85] If this situation continues, it will further deepen the existing staffing deficit in the judiciary and the public prosecution, which will additionally impact the efficiency and quality of the justice system.

During the reporting period, public statements by high-ranking executive officials regarding specific cases handled by the public prosecution and individual public prosecutors were recorded once again. Such statements, especially when concerning ongoing cases or procedures for the selection of public prosecutors, create a risk of perceived political influence on the independence of the prosecution. Such an example this year was seen in the open case concerning the procurement of fuel oil for Thermal Power Plant "Negotino", in which the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption (BPPO-POCC) issued an order to terminate the investigation because the collected evidence did not establish that the suspects committed the criminal acts with which they were charged, nor was the existence of another criminal offense prosecuted ex officio established.[86] The ruling party VMRO-DPMNE requested the resignation of the Head of BPPO-POCC,[87] and the Prime Minister stated that he had contacted the Public Prosecutor of the Republic regarding that decision, while the Minister of Justice stated that this decision leaves an impression in the public

83 „Соопштение од 257-та седница на Судски буџетски совет - 29.10.2025 година" ("Announcement from the 257th Session of the Judicial Budget Council - 29.10.2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 29 October 2025, https://bit.ly/4kaBkmb.

84 „Соопштение од 269-та седница на Судски буџетски совет - 23.04.2026 година" ("Announcement from the 269th Session of the Judicial Budget Council - 23.04.2026"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 23 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4fV0m6X.

85 „Известување од одржана 242. седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители" ("Announcement on the 242nd Session of the Management Board of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors"), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors „Pavel Shatev", 25 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4a7XgtB.

86 „ОЈО ГОКК ја запре постапката против Капушевски, Сулкоски, Јахоски и уште девет лица за набавките на мазут за ТЕЦ „Неготино"" ("BPPO-POCC stopped the procedure against Kapushevski, Sulkoski, Jahoski and nine other persons regarding the procurement of fuel oil for TPP "Negotino""), 360 stepeni, 12 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-gokk-ja-zapre-postapkata-protiv-kapushevski-sulkoski-jahoski-i-ushte-devet-litsa-za-nabavkite-na-mazut-za-tets-negotino/.

87 „ВМРО-ДПМНЕ бара оставка од шефот на ОЈО ГОКК, Ислам Абази, по запирањето на постапката за набавките на мазут за ТЕЦ „Неготино"" ("VMRO-DPMNE demands the resignation of the Head of BPPO-POCC, Islam Abazi, following the termination of the procedure regarding the procurement of fuel oil for TPP "Negotino""), 360 stepeni, 12 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/vmro-dpmne-bara-ostavka-od-shefot-na-ojo-gokk-islam-abazi-po-zapiraneto-na-postapkata-za-nabavkite-na-mazut-za-tets-negotino/.

that high-public-interest cases are closed without a full resolution and expects its review.[88] Following an appeal by "Power Plants of North Macedonia", the case moved to the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, for which the Prime Minister stated that he expects it to properly review all facts and decide on what is contained in the appeal regarding the "scandalous" decision of BPPO-POCC.[89]

Another example of pressure exerted on the public prosecution by the executive branch is the Prime Minister's statements regarding a prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecution Office Skopje, who represented two indictments against former VMRO-DPMNE officials and the party itself in the "Talir" 1 and 2 cases. At the beginning of the year, in an interview for an internet portal, he referred to her as a "mediocrity" with a "clientelist-political matrix",[90] for which she requested a public apology and a retraction of his statement, while also submitting a written notification to the Council of Public Prosecutors indicating that such public speech by the Prime Minister violates her autonomy as a public prosecutor.[91] Later, the Prime Minister stated that she was not "in the running" in the procedure for electing a new Public Prosecutor of the Republic,[92] which is described in more detail below. At its 37th session,[93] the Council of Public Prosecutors unanimously rejected the prosecutor's initiative, reasoning that there had been no interference with her autonomy in exercising the public prosecutorial function.[94] Shortly thereafter, the new Public Prosecutor of the Republic announced the revocation of part of the authorizations given to some prosecutors enabling them to work on cases from other prosecution offices; consequently, the "Talir" 1 and 2 cases, which she was representing within BPPO-POCC, were reassigned away from her.[95] The following day, the prosecutor submitted her resignation,[96] and the Council of Public Prosecutors, without discussion, acknowledged the resignation by adopting a decision terminating her office as a public prosecutor at the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje.[97]

88 „Филков бара преиспитување на одлуката и одговори од ОЈО ГОКК за запирањето на постапката за мазутот" ("Filkov demands a review of the decision and answers from BPPO-POCC regarding the termination of the procedure for the fuel oil"), 360 stepeni, 13 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/filkov-bara-preispituvane-na-odlukata-i-odgovori-od-ojo-gokk-za-zapiraneto-na-postapkata-za-mazutot/.

89 „Мицкоски очекува Вишото јавно обвинителство да одлучи по жалбата на ЕСМ за случајот „Мазут"" ("Mickoski expects the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office to decide on ESM's appeal in the "Fuel Oil" case"), 360 stepeni, 21 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/mitskoski-ochekuva-vishoto-javno-obvinitelstvo-da-odluchi-po-zhalbata-na-esm-za-sluchajot-mazut/.

90 „Мицкоски нема да ѝ се извини на Ленче Ристовска што не ја спомнал по име и презиме, самата се препознала во изразот 'медиокритет'" ("Mickoski will not apologize to Lenche Ristovska for not mentioning her by first and last name, she identified herself in the expression 'mediocrity'"), Plusinfo, 9 January 2026, https://plusinfo.mk/mickoski-nema-da-se-izvini-na-lenche-ristovska-ne-a-spomnal-po-ime-i-prezime-samata-se-prepoznala-vo-izrazot-mediokritet/.

91 „Обвинителката Ристоска бара јавно извинување од премиерот Мицкоски поради навреди и измислени тврдења" ("Prosecutor Ristoska demands a public apology from Prime Minister Mickoski due to insults and fabricated claims"), 360 stepeni, 8 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelkata-ristoska-bara-javno-izvinuvane-od-premierot-mitskoski-poradi-navredi-i-izmisleni-tvrdena/.

92 „Ристоска до Мицкоски: Изборот на нов државен јавен обвинител мора да биде заснован на квалитет, а не на подобност" ("Ristoska to Mickoski: The selection of a new State Public Prosecutor must be based on quality, not suitability"), 360 stepeni, 20 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ristoska-do-mitskoski-izborot-na-nov-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel-mora-da-bide-zasnovan-na-kvalitet-a-ne-na-podobnost/.

93 „Соопштение од одржана 37. седница" ("Announcement from the 37th Session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 30 March 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-37-ma-sednica/.

94 „Заклучок РО бр.03-3/2 од 01.04.2026 година" ("Conclusion RO No. 03-3/2 of 01.04.2026"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 1 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/zakluchok-ro-br-03-3-2-od-01-04-2026-godina/.

95 „Савески им ги повлекува овластувањата на дел од обвинителите" ("Saveski revokes the authorizations of some of the prosecutors"), Deutsche Welle, 1 April 2026, https://www.dw.com/mk/saveski-im-gi-povlekuva-ovlastuvanata-na-del-od-obvinitelite/a-76618306?maca=maz-rss-maz-pol_makedonija_timemk-4727-xml-mrss.

96 „Обвинителката Ленче Ристоска поднесе оставка" ("Prosecutor Lenche Ristoska submitted her resignation"), 24 Vesti, 2 April 2026, https://24.mk/details/obvinitelkata-lenche-ristoska-podnese-ostavka-1.

97 „Соопштение од одржана 42. седница" ("Announcement from the 42nd Session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-42-ra-sednica/.

Digitalization of the judiciary and ACCMIS

The Information and Communication Technology Strategy for the Judicial Sector (ICT Strategy) expired in 2024,[98] which is why a measure for the preparation of a new ICT Strategy for this sector is envisioned in the Developmental Sectoral Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028). Although the Action Plan[99] foresaw the adoption of such a strategy in the third quarter of 2024, the drafting of the text has commenced, but this strategic document has still not been finalized.[100]

Regarding the work of the ICT Council, four sessions were held during the reporting period.[101] Towards the end of January, the mandate of the members of the ICT Council expired, and towards the end of May, the Minister of Justice adopted a decision establishing the ICT Council in the Judiciary. A constitutive session of the new composition of the Council has not yet been held.[102]

Regarding the distribution of cases in public prosecution offices, an electronic, automated distribution system has not yet been established. According to the Rulebook on the Internal Operations of Public Prosecutor's Offices, cases are distributed in the order of their receipt in the registry, after which, following their entry into the appropriate register, they are electronically assigned to the competent public prosecutor. According to data from the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, activities aimed at upgrading and improving the existing case management system are currently underway, with the objective of increasing the efficiency and functionality of the system.[103]

At the end of last year, the Ministry of Justice published the minutes from the Commission for Supervision of the Automated Court Case Management Information System (ACCMIS) for 2025. The supervision, conducted in 15 courts, revealed that all cases were distributed exclusively through the ACCMIS, and no instances of manual distribution were identified. The courts face significant challenges, including a shortage of judges and court staff, technological obsolescence of the ACCMIS system itself, and the finding that delegating judges is not a sustainable long-term solution.[104] Additionally, during 2026, the Ministry conducted supervision over 15 other courts.[105]

In general, during the reporting period, certain steps were taken to improve transparency and the institutional framework of the governing bodies. However, practice shows that key challenges identified

98 „Стратегија за информатичко-комуникациска технологија во правосудството за 2019 - 2024 година" ("Information and Communication Technology Strategy for the Judicial Sector for 2019–2024"), Ministry of Justice, February 2019, https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/strategiii-file-bikP.pdf.

99 „Акциски план за спроведување на Развојна секторска стратегија за правосудство (2024 - 2028)" ("Action Plan for the Implementation of the Development Sector Strategy for the Judiciary (2024–2028)"), Ministry of Justice, 2023, https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/strategiii-file-u1gU.pdf.

100 Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026".

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

102 Ibid.

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

104 „Објавени записниците од Комисијата за надзор над АКМИС во судовите за 2025 година" ("Published minutes from the Commission for Supervision of ACCMIS in courts for 2025"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 25 December 2025, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/objaveni-zapisnicite-od-komisijata-za-nadzor-nad-akmis-vo-sudovite-za-2025-godina.

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

in previous reports by the European Commission - limited reasoning of decisions, financial dependence, human resource constraints, and political pressure, continue to affect the independence of and public trust in the judicial system.

The institutional and human resource capacities of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors need to be strengthened to ensure clear, reasoned, and individualised explanations of decisions adopted;

It is necessary to eliminate political influence over the work of the courts and the public prosecutor's office;

It is necessary to ensure the consistent implementation of the communication strategies of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, through proactive, regular, and transparent communication with the public;

Consistent implementation of the legal framework for the financial independence of the judiciary is required, by providing the legally established judicial budget, which amounts to 0.8% of GDP;

Timely financial and administrative prerequisites must be ensured for the regular admission of new generations of candidates to AJPP, in accordance with the actual staffing needs of the judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Accountability

The Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on Courts regulate the procedure for determining the disciplinary responsibility of judges and court presidents. During the reporting period, a total of 114 proceedings for determining judicial disciplinary responsibility were initiated.[106] Out of these, the Judicial Council adopted a decision to terminate the proceedings in 13 cases, while disciplinary measures were imposed in two cases. During this period, no judges were dismissed.[107] Although the number of initiated disciplinary proceedings indicates that the mechanisms for determining responsibility continue to function, the number of imposed disciplinary measures remains very low. The statistical data alone do not allow for an assessment of the consistency, proportionality, and predictability of disciplinary practice, which remains one of the issues also noted in previous reports of the European Commission.

During the reporting period, particular attention was drawn to a case involving a former State Attorney and current lawyer who pleaded guilty to the criminal offence of accepting a reward for unlawful influence.[108] Additionally, he had requested €100,000 toward the end of last year to exert influence over a judge from the Appellate Court Skopje in order to have the detention measure against his client revoked. Although, in this case, he was caught in flagrante with part of the bribe and the money did not reach the judge who was deciding on the detention, the investigation showed that a search of the

106 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Response to a request for free access to public information".
107 Ibid.
108 „Поранешниот државен правобранител Фехми Стафа призна вина - ќе добие казна затвор од една година и три месеци" ("Former State Attorney Fehmi Stafa pleads guilty - to receive a prison sentence of one year and three months"), 360 stepeni, 16 April 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/poraneshniot-drzhaven-pravobranitel-fehmi-stafa-prizna-vina-ke-dobie-kazna-zatvor-od-edna-godina-i-tri-mesetsi/.

judge's parents' home uncovered €350,000 concealed within the walls of the house, for which the judge had no proof of origin and which had never been declared.[109] The Judicial Council, at an urgent session, decided to revoke the suspect judge's immunity and temporarily suspend him from exercising his judicial function until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings,[110] after which the Criminal Court Skopje ordered house arrest and the confiscation of his passport.[111] Following an anonymous complaint received from "court advisors who worked with the judge", the Judicial Council investigated the specified suspicious cases handled by the judge at the Appellate Court Skopje,[112] uncovering breaches of statutory deadlines, adjournments of public sessions without justified cause, and the deliberate pushing of cases to the point of absolute statute-of-limitations expiration.[113] In April, the BPPO-POCC filed an indictment against the judge for two criminal offenses - unlawful acquisition and concealment of property, and money laundering, and the house arrest measure was extended.[114] At the end of May, the first hearing in the proceedings against him was held, where he stated that he understood the charges against him but pleaded not guilty.[115] This case once again opened the debate on integrity in the judiciary and highlighted the importance of timely action by the Judicial Council in cases where there are serious indications of corruption or abuse of judicial office. At the same time, it represents a test of the effectiveness of disciplinary mechanisms and their coordination with criminal proceedings, while fully respecting the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial.

Another case of bribe-taking was identified in the Basic Court Gostivar, where the BPPO-POCC initiated investigative proceedings against the acting court president and a court administrator. They are suspected of having requested and received a bribe of €8,000 to exert influence over a judge in that court, as well as judges in the Appellate Court Gostivar, in relation to a civil dispute involving the person from whom they took the money.[116] At an urgent session, the Judicial Council adopted

109 „Обвинителството ја потврди затворската казна за Стафа и поднесе обвинение против апелациското судија Ѓоко Ристов" ("Prosecution confirms prison sentence for Stafa and files indictment against appellate judge Gjoko Ristov"), 360 stepeni, 17 April 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelstvoto-ja-potvrdi-zatvorskata-kazna-za-stafa-i-podnese-obvinenie-protiv-apelatsiskiot-sudija-goko-ristov/.

110 „Соопштение од 535-та итна седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ одржана на 20.01.2026 година" ("Announcement on the 535th urgent session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 20.01.2026"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 20 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4bYc6Vp.

111 „Куќен притвор за осомничениот судија за откриените „сосидани" 350.000 евра" ("House arrest for the suspect judge over the discovered "walled-in" 350,000 euros"), Radio Free Europe, 20 January 2026, https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/sudija-evra-korupcija-raspit-/33654802.html.

112 „Три судијки од Судскиот совет ги проверуваат предметите на притвореният судија Ѓоко Ристов по нова, анонимна претставка потпишана од „судски советници" од скопска апелација" ("Three female judges from the Judicial Council review the cases of detained judge Gjoko Ristov following a new, anonymous complaint signed by "court advisors" from the Appellate Court Skopje"), Sakam da kazam, 28 January 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/tri-sudijki-od-sudskiot-sovet-gi-proveruvaat-predmetite-na-pritvoreniot-sudija-goko-ristov-po-nova-anonimna-pretstavka-potpishana-od-sudski-sovetnitsi-od-skopska-apelatsija/.

113 „Работни групи на Судскиот совет утврдиле пропусти кај судијата Ѓоко Ристов – предмети се чувале во фиока до застарување" ("Working groups of the Judicial Council identified omissions regarding judge Gjoko Ristov - cases were kept in a drawer until the statute of limitations expired"), 360 stepeni, 11 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/rabotni-grupi-na-sudskiot-sovet-utvrdile-propusti-kaj-sudijata-goko-ristov-predmeti-se-chuvale-vo-fioka-do-zastaruvane/.

114 „Обвинение за Ѓоко Ристов: Апелациското судијата сам ги зазидал 350 000 евра" ("Indictment against Gjoko Ristov: appellate judge himself walled in the 350,000 euros"), 360 stepeni, 20 April 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinenie-za-goko-ristov-apelatsiskiot-sudijata-sam-gi-zazidal-350-000-evra/.

115 „Судијата Ѓоко Ристов негира вина за сосиданите 350 000 евра во семејната куќа во Неготино" ("Judge Gjoko Ristov denies guilt for the walled-in 350,000 euros in the family house in Negotino"), 360 stepeni, 28 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sudijata-goko-ristov-negira-vina-za-sozidanite-350-000-evra-vo-semejnata-kuka-vo-negotino/.

116 „Судскиот совет времено го суспендира од судија в.д. претседателот на гостиварскиот суд, осомничен за примање мито" ("Judicial Council temporarily suspends acting president of Gostivar court suspected of taking bribe"), 360 stepeni, 15 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sudskiot-sovet-vremeno-go-suspendira-od-sudija-v-d-pretsedatelot-na-gostivarskiot-sud-osomnichen-za-primanemito/.

a decision to temporarily remove the judge and acting president of the Basic Court Gostivar from office and appointed a new acting court president.[117] This response by the Judicial Council represents an important instrument for safeguarding judicial integrity while criminal proceedings are ongoing. However, the ultimate assessment of the effectiveness of the system of disciplinary responsibility will depend on the timely completion of the disciplinary and criminal proceedings and their outcome.

Regarding the disciplinary responsibility of public prosecutors, no proceedings for determining disciplinary responsibility were initiated during the reporting period.[118] The lack of initiated disciplinary proceedings within the public prosecution service does not allow for an assessment of the practice of the Council of Public Prosecutors when acting in such cases. Nevertheless, for this body as well, it remains important that disciplinary proceedings be conducted transparently, predictably, and with clearly reasoned decisions.

Overall, the reporting period was marked by several cases of serious suspicions of corruption in the judiciary, with the competent institutions taking initial measures to ensure responsibility. Nevertheless, long-term trust in the disciplinary system will depend on its consistency, predictability, transparency, and ability to react in a timely manner in cases that affect the integrity of the judiciary.

Governing bodies should ensure a consistent, predictable, and transparent application of disciplinary mechanisms in the judiciary and public prosecution, while respecting the principles of proportionality, legal certainty, and equal treatment;

In proceedings for determining responsibility, strict adherence to standards of fair and equitable process is essential, including clear, reasoned, and individualized explanations for all decisions made.

Professionalism and competence

During the reporting period, the filling of vacant judicial and public prosecution positions continued, including with candidates from the VIII generation of AJPP. Nevertheless, challenges remain in ensuring timely, transparent, and merit-based selection and promotion procedures, as well as in providing a sufficient number of judges and public prosecutors in accordance with the actual needs of the system. Out of the VIII generation of AJPP candidates, who received their certificates of successful completion of the final exam in February 2025,[119] a total of 68 were selected as judges, while 29 were selected as public prosecutors in 2025.

In the past year, the Judicial Council carried out the selection of judges for several higher courts: two judges to the Appellate Court Gostivar, three judges to the Appellate Court Shtip, four judges to the

117 „Соопштение од 545. ИТНА седница на Судски совет на РСМ - 15.05.2026 година" ("Announcement on the 545th URGENT session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - 15.05.2026"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 15 May 2026, https://bit.ly/45Ua2de.

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

119 „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 the 97 candidates for judges and public prosecutors"), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors "Pavel Shatev", 2025, https://bit.ly/48Yvzme.

Appellate Court Bitola, ten judges to the Appellate Court Skopje, and three judges to the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia.[120] For some of these selections, the procedure took a very long time, which is why in the future the Judicial Council should ensure that procedures are conducted efficiently and within a shorter timeframe. Another point of criticism is that over the past year it did not publicly publish the candidate ranking lists with scores, and the arguments presented by Council members were often generic and repetitive, lacking individualized explanations for each candidate when making decisions.[121]

In addition to the selection and promotion of judges and public prosecutors, in the past year the Judicial Council also adopted decisions on the selection of court presidents, as well as on the designation of acting court presidents. Decisions were adopted for the selection of presidents of the Higher Administrative Court, the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as of several basic and appellate courts across the country. At its 533rd session, the Judicial Council appointed an acting president of the Administrative Court.[122] Shortly thereafter, in the second half of November, it published a public announcement for the selection of a president of the Administrative Court,[123] as well as announcements for the selection of presidents of the Basic Court Berovo, the Basic Court Delchevo, and the Basic Court Radovish.[124] Alongside the Administrative Court, acting court presidents were designated on multiple occasions for other courts, resulting in a total of ten courts where the position was exercised in acting status. This indicates a lack of timeliness in conducting selection procedures for court presidents and a prolonged duration of procedures, which negatively impacts the stability and efficiency of judicial governance.[125]

During the reporting period, nine public prosecutors were selected in the basic public prosecutor's offices and four in BPPO-POCC. A total of six prosecutors ceased their functions due to fulfilling the conditions for age-based retirement, and no prosecutors were dismissed. In the same period, four public prosecutors were assigned to work in another public prosecutor's office.[126] These figures indicate an overall insufficient number of prosecutors in the country, as well as in specific prosecutor's offices where there is a need for assignments.

Following the previously initiated procedure for the dismissal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic,[127] on which the Council of Public Prosecutors issued a negative opinion due to insufficiently

120 Ivana Petkovska and Lejla Tutikj, „Извештај од мониторингот на Судскиот совет и Советот на јавни обвинители во 2025 година" ("Report from the monitoring of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2025").
121 Ibid.
122 „Соопштение од 533. седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ одржана на 11.12.2025 година" ("Announcement on the 533rd session of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 11.12.2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 December 2025, https://bit.ly/3NXKE09.
123 „Оглас за избор на претседател на Управен суд" ("Announcement for the selection of a president of the Administrative Court"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4bqlxgM.
124 „Оглас за избор на претседател на Основен суд Берово, Основен суд Делчево и Основен суд Радовиш" ("Announcement for the selection of a president of the Basic Court Berovo, the Basic Court Delchevo, and the Basic Court Radovish"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4tegvu
125 Ibid.
126 Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Response to a request for free access to public information".
127 „Мислење на Советот по предлогот на Владата за разрешување на ЈО на РСМ" ("Opinion of the Council on the Government's proposal for the dismissal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2 April 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/mislenje-na-sovetot-po-predlogot-na-vladata-za-razreshuvanje-na-jo-na-rsm/.

specified allegations that were not supported by evidence,[128] the Public Prosecutor submitted his resignation in December 2025.[129] An acting Public Prosecutor was appointed pending the election of his successor.[130] Five candidates applied in the procedure for the election of the new Public Prosecutor of the Republic,[131] four of whom were assessed by the Council as meeting the eligibility requirements and received a positive opinion.[132] During the procedure, a public statement by the Prime Minister that one of the candidates was "not in the running",[133] made before the Government formally decided on the proposed candidates,[134] prompted reactions over concerns about possible political influence on the process and equal treatment of the candidates.[135] The Government proposed another candidate,[136] who was elected by the Assembly with 66 votes[137] and assumed office on 19 March 2026.[138] The procedure again highlighted the importance of conducting the election of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic on the basis of clear, transparent, and merit-based criteria, while avoiding public political interventions that could create a perception of influence over the outcome.

The Council of Public Prosecutors conducted several procedures to fill managerial and prosecutorial positions. In March 2026, four public prosecutors were elected to the BPPO-POCC,[139] while the selection of the higher public prosecutor of HPPO Skopje, following his resignation,[140] was not completed because no candidate received the required majority, and the office functioned with an acting higher

128 „Мислење на Советот по предлогот на Владата за разрешување на ЈО на РСМ" ("Opinion of the Council on the Government's proposal for the dismissal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2 April 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/mislenje-na-sovetot-po-predlogot-na-vladata-za-razreshuvanje-na-jo-na-rsm/.

129 „Коцевски си поднесе оставка од функцијата државен Јавен обвинител" ("Kocevski resigned from the position of State Public Prosecutor"), 360 stepeni, 16 December 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/kotsevski-si-podnese-ostavka-od-funktsijata-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel/.

130 „Соопштение од одржана 35-та седница" ("Announcement on the held 35th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 22 December 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-35-ta-sednica/.

131 „Три обвинителки и двајца судии се пријавиле на огласот за државен јавен обвинител, рокот истекува на полноќ" ("Three female prosecutors and two judges applied for the announcement for State Public Prosecutor, deadline expires at midnight"), 360 stepeni, 26 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/tri-obvinitelki-i-dvajtsa-sudii-se-prijavile-na-oglasot-za-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel-rokot-istekuva-na-polnok/.

132 „Соопштение од одржана 38-ма седница" ("Announcement on the held 38th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 17 February 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-38-ma-sednica/.

133 „Ленче Ристоска апсолутно не е во игра за нов државен јавен обвинител, вели премиерот" ("Lenche Ristoska is absolutely not in the running for new State Public Prosecutor, says the Prime Minister"), 360 stepeni, 19 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/lenche-ristoska-apsolutno-ne-e-vo-igra-za-nov-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel-veli-premierot

134 „Советот на ЈО ѝ остави на Владата да избира меѓу четворица кандидати за нов државен јавен обвинител" ("Council of Public Prosecutors left it to the Government to choose among four candidates for new State Public Prosecutor"), 360 stepeni, 17 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sovetot-na-jo-ostavi-na-vladata-da-izbira-megu-chetvoritsa-kandidati-za-nov-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel/.

135 „Платформата на граѓански организации за борба против корупцијата реагира на јавните изјави на премиерот во врска со постапката за избор на државен јавен обвинител" ("The Platform of Civil Society Organisations for Fight against Corrupption reacts to the public statements of the Prime Minister regarding the selection procedure for the State Public Prosecutor"), Official website of the Platform of Civil Society Organisations for Fight against Corrupption, 20 February 2026, https://bit.ly/4wQ1FeE.

136 „Владата го предлага судијата Ненад Савески за нов државен јавен обвинител" ("The Government proposes judge Nenad Saveski as new State Public Prosecutor"), 360 stepeni, 10 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/vladata-go-predlaga-sudijata-nenad-saveski-za-nov-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel/.

137 „Ненад Савески е нов државен јавен обвинител - доби поддршка од 66 пратеници во Собранието" ("Nenad Saveski is the new State Public Prosecutor - received support from 66 MPs in the Assembly"), 360 stepeni, 18 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/nenad-saveski-e-nov-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel-dobi-poddrshka-od-66-pratenitsi-vo-sobranieto/.

138 „Савески ја презеде должноста државен јавен обвинител" ("Saveski assumed office as State Public Prosecutor"), 360 stepeni, 19 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/saveski-ja-prezede-dolzhnosta-drzhaven-javen-obvinitel/.

139 „Соопштение од одржана 40-та седница" ("Announcement on the held 40th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 March 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-40-ta-sednica/.

140 „Соопштение од одржана 32-ра седница" ("Announcement on the held 32nd session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 9 December 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-32-ra-sednica/.

public prosecutor.[141] The continued appointment of acting officials to managerial positions points to the need for more efficient and timely selection procedures based on clear and measurable criteria.

One of the candidates for prosecutor in BPPO-POCC had until then been working in the same prosecutor's office specifically on the "Pulse" case,[142] so the Council's decision not to re-elect her under this announcement sparked reactions from the parents of the fire victims due to the potential delay in the court proceedings for the case.[143] Such a decision raises concern regarding the continuity and efficiency of handling a case of high public interest.

Later, the Council made a decision[144] to re-announce the call[145] for the election of a higher public prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, the election of one public prosecutor in the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Bitola, and one public prosecutor each in the basic public prosecutor's offices in Resen, Kriva Palanka, and Kochani, as well as for the election of a basic public prosecutor for the basic public prosecutor's offices in Ohrid, Debar, Kichevo, Radovish, and Kochani.[146] The publicly announced list of candidates under this call showed that five candidates applied for the position of higher public prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, three for public prosecutor in the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Bitola, one candidate each for basic public prosecutor of the basic public prosecutor's offices in Ohrid,[147] Debar, Radovish, and Kochani, as well as one candidate for public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Resen, while other candidates had irregular documentation.[148] At the 46th session,[149] the Council decided that the incumbent acting higher public prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje would continue to perform the function starting from 12 June 2026 until the appointment of a higher public prosecutor, for a period no longer than 6 months, because none of the registered candidates for this position received the required majority of votes.[150]

141 „Соопштение од одржана 40-та седница" ("Announcement on the held 40th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 March 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-40-ta-sednica/.

142 „Предметите на кои работела обвинителката Трајчева поврзани со трагедијата во Кочани ќе бидат итно доделени на друг обвинител" ("The cases prosecutor Trajcheva worked on related to the tragedy in Kochani will be urgently assigned to another prosecutor"), 360 stepeni, 28 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/predmetite-na-koi-rabotela-obvinitelkata-trajcheva-povrzani-so-tragedijata-vo-kochani-ke-bidat-itno-dodeleni-na-drug-obvinitel/.

143 „Родителите на жртвите од „Пулс" побараа враќање на обвинителката Трајчева на случаите поврзани со трагедијата во Кочани" ("The parents of the victims of 'Pulse' requested the return of prosecutor Trajcheva to the cases related to the tragedy in Kochani"), 360 stepeni, 28 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/roditelite-na-zhrtvite-od-puls-pobaraa-vrakane-na-obvinitelkata-trajcheva-na-sluchaite-povrzani-so-tragedijata-vo-kochani/.

144 „Соопштение од одржана 37. седница" ("Announcement on the held 37th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 30 March 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-37-ma-sednica/.

145 „Оглас за избор на јавни обвинители од 21.4.2026 година" ("Announcement for the selection of public prosecutors from 21.4.2026"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/oglas-za-izbor-na-javni-obviniteli-od-21-04-2026-godina/.

146 „Соопштение од одржана 43. седница" ("Announcement on the held 43rd session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 21 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-43-ta-sednica/.

147 „Дополнување на листата на кандидати" ("Supplement to the list of candidates"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/dopolnuvanje-na-listata-na-kandidati/.

148 „Листа на пријавени кандидати по оглас – Сл. весник бр.89/2026 од 27.04.2026" ("List of registered candidates per announcement – Official Gazette No. 89/2026 of 27.04.2026"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 27 April 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/lista-na-prijaveni-kandidati-po-oglas-sl-vesnik-br-89-2026-od-27-04-2026/.

149 „Соопштение од 46-та седница" ("Announcement on the 46th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 June 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-46-ta-sednica/.

150 „Наташа Крстева-Цалева останува в. д. шефица на Вишото јавно обвинителство Скопје, одлучи Советот на ЈО" ("Natasha Krsteva-Caleva remains acting head of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, Council of Public Prosecutors decided"), 360 stepeni, 11 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/natasha-krsteva-tsaleva-ostanuva-v-d-shefitsa-na-vishoto-javno-obvinitelstvo-skopje-odluchi-sovetot-na-jo/.

At the end of November 2025, the Council published a call for the election of a basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje and a basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Tetovo.[151] The publicly announced list of candidates under this call showed that five candidates applied for basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, while only one candidate registered for the position of basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Tetovo.[152] For the position of basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, a basic public prosecutor with 12 years of experience was elected with the support of seven members of the Council,[153] while for basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Tetovo, the sole candidate - the incumbent basic public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Tetovo - was re-elected.[154]

At the 46th session, the Council of Public Prosecutors also made a decision to publish a call for the election of a basic public prosecutor for the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Kriva Palanka, for the election of one public prosecutor in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje, and for the election of three public prosecutors in BPPO-POCC.[155]

Governing bodies should ensure a transparent and merit-based application of procedures for the selection and promotion of judges and public prosecutors, through the timely publication of ranking lists and candidates' scores, as well as clear, individualized justification for every decision, especially when deviating from the established ranking order;

It is necessary to revise the system for evaluation and career advancement of judges and public prosecutors with clear, measurable, and objective criteria for expertise, efficiency, and integrity, aimed at limiting discretion and ensuring equal treatment of candidates;

It is essential to align the number and distribution of judges, public prosecutors, and professional staff with the real needs of the system, based on objective indicators regarding workload, duration of proceedings, and staffing capacities, including through the revision of the judicial and prosecutorial network;

Timely and transparent procedures for the election of managerial positions in the judiciary and the public prosecution should be implemented, and the prolonged use of acting mandates should be limited.

151 „Оглас за избор на јавни обвинители" ("Call for the election of public prosecutors"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 November 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/oglas-za-izbor-na-javni-obviniteli-3/.

152 „Листа на кандидати по оглас бр.08-84/1 од 25.11.2025 г." ("List of candidates under Call No. 08-84/1 of 25.11.2025"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 November 2025, https://sjorm.gov.mk/lista-na-kandidati-po-oglas-br-08-84-1-od-25-11-2025-g/.

153 „Избор на шеф на ОЈО Скопје: Фидоски бил убедлив на интервјуто, Бубевски - единствен со програма за работа" ("Eletion of Head of BPPO Skopje: Fidoski was convincing in the interview, Bubevski - the only one with a work program"), 360 stepeni, 20 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/izbor-na-shef-na-ojo-skopje-fidoski-bil-ubedliv-na-intervjuto-bubevski-edinstven-so-programa-za-rabota/.

154 „Соопштение од одржана 36. седница" ("Announcement on the held 36th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 20 January 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-odrzhana-36-ta-sednica/.

155 „Соопштение од 46-та седница" ("Announcement on the 46th session"), Official website of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 June 2026, https://sjorm.gov.mk/soopshtenie-od-46-ta-sednica/.

Quality of justice

The admission procedure for the IX generation of candidates at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, initiated in 2023,[156] remained blocked due to unsecured financial resources.[157] After multiple delays,[158] the Management Board of the Academy in December 2025 annulled the announcement for the admission of 130 candidates, assessing that the procedure could no longer continue based on a call published two years earlier.[159] As a result, the staffing of the judiciary and the public prosecution through a new generation originating from the Academy was further postponed.

In the Reform Agenda of the Republic of North Macedonia 2024–2027, the enhancement of judicial integrity is envisaged through the revision of procedures for recruitment, selection, appointment, evaluation, promotion, transfer, and dismissal of judges and public prosecutors, as well as through the timely filling of vacant positions based on the projections of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, with a deadline set for December 2026.[160] However, taking into account the annulled procedure for the 9th generation of candidates at the AJPP, the need to conduct a new intake, and the duration of initial training, filling vacant judicial and prosecutorial positions within the deadlines stipulated by the Reform Agenda will almost certainly not be accomplished on time. At the beginning of 2026, a new draft law on the AJPP was presented on ENER.[161] It foresees a clearer determination of the required number of judges and public prosecutors, a simplified and more transparent procedure for the admission of candidates for initial training, the improvement of training methodology, more efficient functioning of the Academy's bodies, and a more precise regulation of scoring for the practical part of the entrance exam.[162] In the second half of March, the text of the law was finalized, and in April, it was submitted to government procedure,[163] undergoing alignment with opinions received from relevant institutions.[164] At the same time, according to EC guidelines, any future solution to address the shortage of staff must preserve the principle of the AJPP remaining

156 „Известување за распоред за полагање на тестот за интегритет" ("Announcement on the schedule for taking the integrity test"), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors "Pavel Shatev", 3 November 2023, https://bit.ly/48VQGFL.

157 „Известување од одржаната 240. седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители" ("Announcement from the 240th session held by the Management Board 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.

158 „Управен суд: Неоснована е тужбата на АСЈО за одлуката на ДКСК" ("Administrative Court: AJPP's lawsuit regarding the SCPC decision is unfounded"), Media Information Agency – MIA, 2024, https://bit.ly/3MydlAK.

159 „Известување од одржана 242-ра седница на Управниот одбор на Академија за судии и јавни обвинители" ("Announcement from the 242nd session held by the Management Board of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors"), Official website of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors "Pavel Shatev", 25 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4a7XgtB.

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

161 Ministry of Justice, "Draft Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors", Single National Electronic Register of Regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia - ENER, 2 January 2026, https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=114839.

162 „Финализиран предлог-законот за Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители на дводневната изолациона сесија на работната група со поддршка од проектот „EU Support for Rule of Law"" ("Finalized draft law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors during the two-day retreat session of the working group supported by the 'EU Support for Rule of Law' project"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 19 March 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/finaliziran-predlog-zakonot-za-akademijata-za-sudii-i-javni-obviniteli-na-dvodnevnata-izolaciona-sesija-na-rabotnata-grupa-so-poddrska-od-proektot-eu-support-for-rule-of-law.

163 „Предлог-законот за Академијата за судии и јавни обвинители е во владина процедура" ("Draft Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors is in government procedure"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 27 April 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/predlog-zakonot-za-akademijata-za-sudii-i-javni-obviniteli-e-vo-vladina-procedura.

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

the sole entry point into the judiciary and public prosecution, without leading to a shortening of the initial training.

As for the regular operations of the AJPP, out of the planned 210 training sessions for judges and public prosecutors in 2025, 188 training sessions were implemented. In the period from January 1 to June 30, 2026, out of the planned 129 training sessions, 112 were conducted. Of the completed training sessions in 2025, eight were dedicated to EU law, five to the analysis of domestic judicial practice focusing on cases related to human rights, and seven to the protection of child victims. In 2026, three training sessions were conducted in the field of EU law, along with five training sessions each for cases involving human rights protection and child victims.[165]

Regarding the harmonization of judicial practice, the Department for Judicial Practice at the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia held two sessions during the reporting period. In the same period, the Supreme Court adopted one principal legal opinion, two principal positions, and 20 conclusions, which formally indicates continuous institutional engagement toward the harmonization of judicial practice.[166] However, the number of adopted principal positions and legal opinions alone does not allow for an assessment of the degree to which they are consistently applied by lower courts.

The procedure for the election of a judge to the Constitutional Court proposed by the Judicial Council further raised questions regarding legal certainty and the predictability of selection criteria. Following the annulment of the previous election by the Administrative Court,[167] the repeated procedure under the new announcement[168] led to differing interpretations of the requirement for necessary judicial tenure,[169] while the parliamentary procedure to fill the vacant seat was not completed by the end of the reporting period. As a result, the Constitutional Court continued to operate with eight out of the designated nine judges.[170]

Regarding public perception of the judiciary's performance, a total of 402 complaints were submitted during the reporting period concerning the work of the courts, court presidents, and judges, with the Judicial Council acting and deciding upon 315 of them.[171] These data point to a persistently high level of dissatisfaction and highlight the need for systemic improvements in the relationship between the judiciary and the public.

165 Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors "Pavel Shatev", "Response to a request for free access to public information".
166 Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Response to a request for free access to public information".
167 „Судскиот совет два дена ќе расправа по точките од 534. седница на чиј дневен ред е и преседанот со судијката Дуковска" ("The Judicial Council will debate for two days on the agenda items of the 534th session, which includes the precedent with Judge Dukovska"), 360 stepeni, 12 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sudskiot-sovet-dva-dena-ke-rasprava-po-tochkite-od-534-sednitsa-na-chij-dneven-red-e-i-presedanot-so-sudijkata-dukovska/.
168 „Оглас за пријавување заинтересирани кандидати за судија на Уставен суд на РСМ" ("Call for registration of interested candidates for a judge of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 6 February 2026, https://bit.ly/4hwZiJb.
169 „Судскиот совет ја предлага Мери Дика за уставна судијка, Елизабета Дуковска испадна поради (не)доволен стаж" ("The Judicial Council proposes Meri Dika for constitutional judge, Elizabeta Dukovska dropped out due to (in)sufficient tenure"), 360 stepeni, 25 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sudskiot-sovet-ja-predlaga-meri-dika-za-ustavna-sudijka-elizabeta-dukovska-ispadna-poradi-ne-dovolen-stazh/.
170 „Каде заглави изборот на Мери Дика за уставна судијка, а каде законите за ЈО и за високо образование" ("Where did the election of Meri Dika for constitutional judge stall, and where are the laws on the Public Prosecutor's Office and higher education"), 360 stepeni, 14 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/video-kade-zaglavi-izborot-na-meri-dika-za-ustavna-sudijka-a-kade-zakonite-za-jo-i-za-visoko-obrazovanie/.
171 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Response to a request for free access to public information".

Regarding mediation, certain changes took place during the reporting period. Over the past year, a new national coordinator for mediation was appointed,[172] and in May 2026, an amendment to the Law on Mediation was adopted, modifying the provisions governing the issuance of mediator licenses, as well as the mandate, termination of mandate, and dismissal of members of the National Council for Mediation.[173] According to data from the Ministry of Justice, a total of 262 cases were resolved through mediation during the reporting period, of which 35 involved insurance disputes, 28 pertained to labor disputes, and 199 concerned commercial disputes.[174] However, the overall application of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism remains limited.

The issue of taking the bar examination in the Albanian language has sparked political and social tensions, following the Minister of Justice's statement that there is no constitutional or legal basis for it, emphasizing that all judicial proceedings and official acts are primarily conducted in Macedonian.[175] In response, DUI filed criminal charges against the minister, alleging violations of the Constitution, the Law on the Use of Languages, and non-discrimination principles.[176] The situation also sparked student protests under the slogans "Unite with the students - all together" and "Knowledge has no forbidden language," calling for the examination to be made available in Albanian.[177] Seeking a resolution, the Prime Minister met with the co-leaders of the "Vlen" coalition, concluding that state institutions are working on a framework for language usage that fully complies with the Constitution and existing laws to ensure legal certainty.[178]

172 „Решение за именување национален координатор за медијација" ("Decision on the appointment of a national coordinator for mediation"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 39/2025, https://dejure.mk/akti/akt/reshenie-za-imenuvanje-na-nacionalen-koordinator-za-medijacija.

173 „Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за медијација" ("Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Mediation"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 111/2026.

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

175 „Министерот Филков не гледа уставна основа да се полага правосудниот испит на албански јазик" ("Minister Filkov sees no constitutional basis for taking the bar examination in the Albanian language"), 360 stepeni, 9 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ministerot-filkov-ne-gleda-ustavna-osnova-da-se-polaga-pravosudniot-ispit-na-albanski-jazik/.

176 „ДУИ поднесе кривична против министерот за правда за попречување на имплементацијата на албанскиот јазик" ("DUI filed criminal charges against the Minister of Justice for obstructing the implementation of the Albanian language"), 360 stepeni, 17 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/dui-podnese-krivichna-protiv-ministerot-za-pravda-za-poprechuvane-na-implementatsijata-na-albanskiot-jazik/.

177 „Знаењето нема забранет јазик - порачаа студентите на протестот за полагање на правосудниот испит на албански" ("'Knowledge has no forbidden language' – students declared at the protest for taking the bar examination in Albanian"), 360 stepeni, 18 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/foto-video-znaeneto-nema-zabranet-jazik-porachaa-studentite-na-protestot-za-polagane-na-pravosudniot-ispit-na-albanski/.

178 „Средба на Мицкоски со Касами и со Меџити: се бара уставно решение за употреба на јазиците при полагање на правосудниот испит" ("Meeting of Mickoski with Kasami and Medziti: a constitutional solution is sought for the use of languages during the bar examination"), 360 stepeni, 18 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sredba-na-mitskoski-so-kasami-i-so-medhiti-se-bara-ustavno-reshenie-za-upotreba-na-jazitsite-pri-polagane-na-pravosudniot-ispit/.

It is necessary to ensure timely and sustainable human resource planning in the judiciary and the public prosecution, including the provision of adequate financial resources for the regular enrollment of new generations of trainees at the AJPP, while preserving the Academy as the sole entry point to the judiciary and maintaining the duration and quality of initial training;

It is essential to strengthen the role of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia in ensuring harmonized judicial practice, through regular monitoring of the application of principal positions and legal opinions and enhanced coordination with appellate courts;

Continuous training for judges and public prosecutors should be improved, particularly in the fields of EU law, the ECHR, and international human rights standards;

Additional measures must be taken for a broader and more effective application of mediation, including increased referral of appropriate cases to mediation and regular monitoring of its outcomes.

Efficiency

According to data from the 2025 Annual Report of the Judicial Council, the courts managed to cope with the inflow of cases during the past year, reducing the backlog by 119 cases despite a remaining total of 134,610 unresolved cases.[179] Out of 34 courts, 16 were up-to-date, while 18 courts were evaluated as non-up-to-date, including the Supreme Court, the Administrative Court, the Higher Administrative Court, two appellate courts, and 13 basic courts.[180] Although on an aggregate level the courts handled the annual case flow and slightly reduced the backlog, data by individual courts show uneven efficiency across the system, with more than half of the courts rated as non-up-to-date. Of particular concern is that these include the Supreme Court, the Administrative Court, and the Higher Administrative Court, indicating that efficiency challenges are not limited to basic courts alone.

As for public prosecutor's offices, according to the Annual Report on the Work of Public Prosecutor's Offices in 2025, the basic public prosecutor's offices in the Republic of North Macedonia acted against a total of 77,089 perpetrators of criminal offenses, of which newly received charges were filed against a total of 25,615 perpetrators. A comparison of the data shows a slight decrease in the reporting year regarding adult and unknown perpetrators, meaning that the workload remains at approximately the same level, with a noticeable decrease recorded only among juvenile perpetrators (by about 10%). Over the past year, there has been an improvement in the staffing of public prosecutors, with an increase of 25 public prosecutors compared to 2024.[181] On the other hand, the situation within the public prosecutor's service exhibits a negative trend. In 2025, only one-third of the required capacities were filled, representing a decrease of nearly 5% in the total number of ser-

179 „Годишен извештај за работата на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија за 2025 година" ("Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2025"), Official website of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, April 2026, http://sud.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/07c2cfb1-7280-49ca-91b2-c4279989f9fa/Y2026-SDN-%28GD%290428.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=pTe2UZo.

180 Ibid.

181 „Извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства на Република Северна Македонија во 2025 година" ("Report on the Work of Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia in 2025"), Public Prosecution Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2026, https://jorm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/iii-finalen-gi-25-gotov-1.pdf.

vice employees compared to 2024.[182] Particularly concerning is the fact that two public prosecutor's offices - Resen and Kriva Palanka - operated throughout 2025 without a single public prosecutor, severely undermining the fulfillment of the constitutional function of the public prosecution and citizens' access to justice.

Data regarding judicial staffing capacity indicates a further deterioration of human resource conditions. During 2025, the number of judges increased by 68 following the graduation of the latest generation of candidates who had completed the Academy, but the shortage of professional and administrative support staff needed to support their work worsened. The Judicial Council's report highlights that not a single employment or promotion within the judiciary was realized over the past year due to the Ministry of Finance not granting the required approval.[183] The increase in the number of judges without simultaneously filling vacant positions in the professional services does not ensure a corresponding strengthening of the courts' operational capacity and may limit the impact of the new judicial appointments on the efficiency of proceedings. In response to the findings established during court inspections conducted throughout 2024 and 2025, the Minister of Justice informed the public in early 2026 that the Ministry of Justice had submitted a notification to the Ministry of Finance emphasizing the urgent necessity of staffing hires within the judicial and prosecutorial services.[184]

The Ministry of Justice continues the process of amending and supplementing laws in the judicial field. In addition to the Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Law on Judicial Service[185] and the Law on Public Prosecutorial Service[186] were also adopted toward the end of June during the reporting period. The Ministry of Justice indicated that the Law on Judicial Service introduces a new system for position classification, recruitment, and promotion of judicial employees, strengthens the administrative autonomy of the judiciary, and provides for a new salary system as well as a special status for judicial professional staff.[187] According to them, the Law on Public Prosecutorial Service, in turn, provides for the establishment of a new human resource management system, the improvement of career development conditions and the material standing of employees, the strengthening of the competencies of the Council of the Public Prosecutorial Service, and the introduction of more efficient disciplinary procedures.[188] However, employees in the public prosecutorial service reacted that the new legal solution concerning them does not represent a reformative step forward, as it retains existing mechanisms of dependency in human resource management, fails to address staffing shortages, and does not provide for a substantive

182 Ibid.

183 „Годишен извештај за работата на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија за 2025 година" ("Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2025").

184 „Филков бара од финансии итни вработувања во судската и јавнообвинителската служба" ("Filkov requests urgent hires from Finance for the judicial and public prosecution services"), 360 stepeni, 23 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/filkov-bara-od-finansii-itni-vrabotuvana-vo-sudskata-i-javnoobvinitelskata-sluzhba/.

185 „Закон за Судска служба", ("Law on Judicial Service"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 146/2026.

186 „Закон за јавнообвинителска служба", ("Law on Public Prosecutor's Service"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 146/2026.

187 „Собранието ги усвои законите за судска и јавнообвинителска служба" ("The Assembly adopted the laws on judicial and public prosecutor's service"), 360 stepeni, 26 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-gi-usvoi-zakonite-za-sudska-i-javnoobvinitelskata-sluzhba/.

188 Ibid.

improvement in the material status of employees.[189] The adoption of both laws creates a new normative framework for human resource management in the judicial and public prosecutorial services. Nevertheless, given that the laws were enacted immediately prior to the end of the reporting period, their practical effect on administrative autonomy, filling vacant positions, career development, and the material standing of staff cannot yet be assessed.

At the end of June, the draft Law on Courts was published on ENER,[190] proposing the optimization of the judicial network through the reorganization of basic courts and a more efficient structure for appellate courts.[191] Given long-standing staffing and organizational weaknesses, the optimization should be grounded in an updated functional analysis, case volume and complexity, demographic and territorial indicators, and citizens' access to justice.

The new Law on Civil Procedure was presented at a public hearing in the Assembly at the beginning of June.[192] It introduces mandatory representation by an attorney, regulates key issues such as expert testimony, service of process, and small claims disputes, reduces fines for procedural participants, advances electronic operations and service, introduces representative lawsuits for the protection of the collective interests of consumers for the first time, and enables the holding of hearings electronically.[193] This law was adopted after the end of the reporting period.

Draft Law on Criminal Procedure was published on ENER at the end of June 2026. Following the conclusion of consultations, it will be submitted to the EC for an opinion, after which it will enter government procedure.[194]

The State Attorney's Office submitted a proposal for amendments to the Law on the State Attorney's Office to the Ministry of Justice, and a draft version of the amendments has been prepared.[195]

Overall, the data for 2025 shows uneven efficiency within the judicial system. Although at the aggregate level the courts managed to handle the inflow of cases, more than half of the courts remained backlogged, while the chronic shortage of professional and administrative staff continues to limit

189 „Јавнообвинителски службеници реагираа дека новото законско решение не е реформски исчекор" ("Public prosecutorial service staff reacted that the new legal solution is not a reformative step forward"), 360 stepeni, 12 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/javnoobvinitelski-sluzhbenitsi-reagiraa-deka-novoto-zakonsko-reshenie-ne-e-reformski-ischekor/.

190 Ministry of Justice, „Предлог на Закон за судовите" ("Draft Law on Courts"), Single National Electronic Register of Regulations the Republic of North Macedonia – ENER, 30 June 2026, https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=122914.

191 „Предлог-законот за судовите е објавен на ЕНЕР" (""Draft Law on Courts published on ENER""), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 30 June 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/predlog-zakonot-za-sudovite-e-objaven-na-ener.

192 „Јавна расправа во Собранието за Предлог-законот за парнична постапка – еден од најзначајните реформски закони во областа на правосудството" ("Public hearing in the Assembly on the Draft Law on Civil Procedure – one of the most significant reform laws in the field of judiciary"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 9 June 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/javna-rasprava-vo-sobranieto-za-predlog-zakonot-za-parnicna-postapka-eden-od-najznacajnite-reformski-zakoni-vo-oblasta-na-pravosudstvoto.

193 „Владата го утврди Предлог-законот за парничната постапка, со кој се намалуваат паричните казни за учесниците во постапката" ("The Government established the Draft Law on Civil Procedure, which reduces fines for participants in the procedure"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 31 March 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/vladata-na-denesnata-sednica-na-predlog-na-ministerstvoto-za-pravda-go-utvrdi-predlog-zakonot-za-parnicna-postapka.

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

195 Ibid.

their operational capacity. Similar structural weaknesses are observed in the public prosecution, where the increase in the number of prosecutors has not been matched by adequate staffing of the public prosecutorial service. The new legal solutions for the services and the planned optimization of the judicial network represent an opportunity for improvement, but their impact will depend on the provision of adequate resources and consistent implementation.

An updated functional analysis of the judicial and public prosecutorial network should be prepared and, based on it, the network should be rationalised while preserving effective access to justice for citizens;

It is necessary to establish a clear and measurable methodology for determining the required number and distribution of judges, public prosecutors, and professional staff, based on case volume and complexity, workload, demographic and territorial indicators, and projections for future staffing needs;

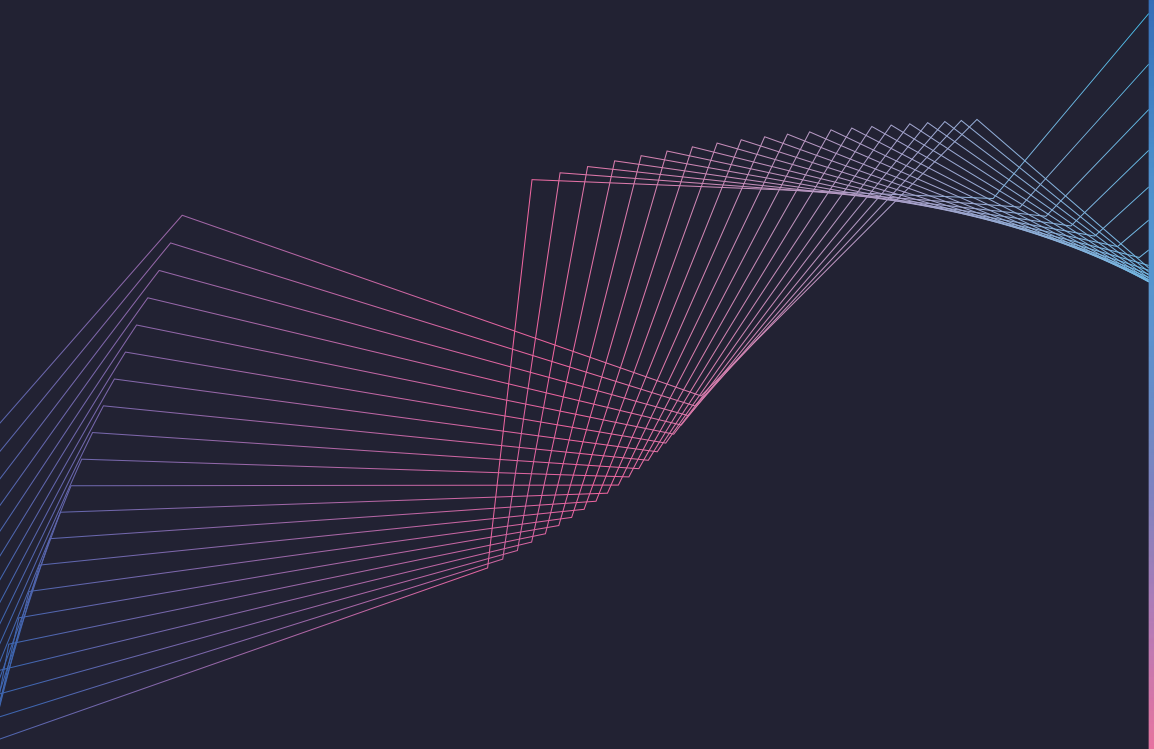
Timely approvals and financial resources must be provided to fill vacant positions in the judicial and public prosecution services, with priority given to institutions operating with critically insufficient staffing capacity.

TABLE: Overview of key quantitative data in the judiciary for the period October 2025–June 2026

Category	Data description	Numerical Value
Implementation of Strategies	Planned activities in the Developmental Strategy for 2025	116
	Fully implemented activities	66
	Activities in the implementation phase	50
	Overall implementation rate of the Strategy	almost 57%
Judiciary Budget	Judicial budget during the reporting period (as a share of GDP)	0,26%
	Public prosecution budget during the reporting period (as a share of GDP)	0,2%
	Statutory minimum for the judicial budget (as a share of GDP)	0,29%
Accountability and Complaints	Initiated proceedings to establish judicial responsibility	114
	Discontinued disciplinary proceedings against judges	13
	Disciplinary sanctions imposed on judges	2
	Dismissed judges and public prosecutors	0
	Submitted complaints regarding the work of courts and judges	402
	Complaints handled and decided upon by the Judicial Council	315

Category	Data description	Numerical Value
Staffing: Election of Judges	Elected judges from the VIII generation of the AJPP	68
	Elected judges to the Appellate Court Skopje	10
	Elected judges to the Appellate Court Bitola	4
	Elected judges to the Appellate Court Shtip	3
	Elected judges to the Appellate Court Gostivar	2
	Elected judges to the Supreme Court	3
	Courts where court presidents served in an acting capacity	10
Staffing: Election of Prosecutors	Elected public prosecutors from the VIII generation of the AJPP	29
	Elected public prosecutors to basic public prosecutor's offices	9
	Elected public prosecutors to the BPPO-POCC	4
	Parliamentary votes cast for the election of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic	66
	Public prosecutors temporarily assigned to another prosecutor's office	4
	Prosecutors whose office terminated (old-age retirement)	6
	Total increase in the number of public prosecutors (compared to 2024)	25
	Public prosecutor's offices without a single prosecutor (Resen and Kriva Palanka)	2
	Staffing capacity utilization in the public prosecutorial service	1/3
	Reduction of employees in the public prosecutorial service	approximately 5%
Court Efficiency	Total number of courts	34
	Up-to-date courts	16
	Backlogged courts (incl. 2 appellate and 13 basic courts)	18
	Total remaining unresovled cases	134.610
	Number of cases exceeding the previous unresolved case count	119
	General legal opinions adopted by the Supreme Court	1
	General positions adopted by the Supreme Court	2
	Conclusions adopted by the Supreme Court	20
Efficiency of Public Prosecutor's Offices	Total criminal perpetrators processed	77.089
	Newly received criminal complaints filed against perpetrators	25.615
	Reduction in the number of juvenile perpetrators of criminal offences	approximately 10%
AJPP Training	Planned training sessions for 2025	210
	Conducted training sessions in 2025	188
	Planned training sessions for 2026 (up to June 30)	129
	Conducted training sessions in 2026 (up to June 30)	112

Fight against Corruption



Key developments in the reporting period

- Public perception indicates that corruption continues to represent a serious and multifaceted challenge in North Macedonia and is perceived as a systemic problem linked to institutional weaknesses, insufficient oversight, and the ineffectiveness of the justice system.
- The latest Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International shows no substantive change. North Macedonia scores 40 points and ranks 84th. Although its position improved by four places, the unchanged score reflects a lack of significant progress in the perception of anti-corruption efforts.
- The National Council for Financial Investigations and Asset Confiscation was constituted to improve coordination among competent institutions. However, following its inaugural session, the Council held no further meetings, and the position of Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance, designated to head it, no longer exists.
- Activities related to transparency and corruption prevention continued. A pilot transparency assessment of eight municipalities yielded a score of 52 points, indicating that local transparency and accountability remain underdeveloped.
- The Integrity Watch platform provides public access to data on political party financing, public procurement, and concessions.
- In the area of whistleblower protection, a national and regional report were prepared alongside public awareness activities, though a new law aligned with the EU Directive has still not been adopted.
- The composition of the SCPC was completed with the election of a new president in December 2025 and the filling of a vacant member seat in June 2026.
- Data for 2025 demonstrates increased proactivity by the SCPC. The number of cases opened on its own initiative increased from 78 to 194, particularly in the area of asset declarations, while the number of initiatives submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office in corruption-related cases increased from four to eight. At the same time, the total number of decisions adopted decreased from 742 to 583.
- The implementation rate of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2021–2025) remained low. In 2025, only 23% of evaluated activities were implemented, bringing total implementation for the 2021–2025 period to 37%.
- The new National Strategy 2026–2030 was adopted by the SCPC on June 19, 2026, with a six-month delay, and submitted to the Assembly for adoption.
- The SCPC also undertook activities to strengthen scrutiny of the asset declarations of public officials.
- In the field of lobbying, the first individual lobbyist was registered, though no lobbying activities by registered entities have been recorded to date.
- Increased activity was observed within the Public Prosecutor's Office, particularly the BP-PO-POCC, regarding cases of corruption, abuse of official position, public procurement, money laundering, and financial crime. Some proceedings involved current and former public officials, heads of public institutions, and judicial representatives.

- **Progress was noted in the IPARD-related case, where an indictment was filed against five persons and one individual was convicted following a guilty plea. Multiple investigations were opened into suspected abuses in public procurement, tax fraud, money laundering, and abuse of official position. Notable cases include the indictment against a judge of the Appellate Court Skopje for unlawful acquisition and concealment of property and money laundering, the investigation against the Director of the State Agriculture Inspectorate for accepting a bribe, as well as proceedings against a former Director of the Customs Administration and other persons for alleged abuses in public procurement.**
- **In January 2026, amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted in response to the negative consequences of the September 2023 amendments for the prosecution of corruption and organised crime. However, the amendments did not fully restore the previous legal framework, while the preparation of a new Criminal Code is ongoing.**
- **In parallel, other significant legislative amendments are being prepared. In May 2026, a public hearing was held on the Draft Law on Asset Confiscation in Civil Proceedings, and on June 24, the Draft Law on Criminal Procedure was published on ENER. The new Law on Whistleblower Protection also remains under preparation.**

Corruption remains a persistent and multifaceted challenge in North Macedonia, characterized by institutional weaknesses and continuous public concern, even though economic pressures, such as the rise in prices over the past year, were the primary concern for citizens. There is an increased tolerance toward corrupt practices and a decreased willingness among citizens to actively oppose them. More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents believe that the main driver of corruption is the pursuit of rapid personal enrichment by political and institutional elites, the inefficiency of the judiciary (75%), and unaddressed structural weaknesses and insufficient administrative oversight (74%), further confirming the perception of systemic vulnerability.[196]

The 31st edition of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) presents a concerning picture of a long-term decline in leadership to address corruption, with limited signs of progress.[197] Namely, in the new report on the Corruption Perceptions Index, the country scores 40 points, which means there is no substantive progress in the fight against corruption, but rather a constant serving as a baseline from which things ought to improve. Formally, we are ranked four places higher on the leaderboard than last year, in 84th position. This improvement indicates that last year we performed better in the fight against corruption than four other countries. It also shows that the country is well below the minimum threshold of 50 points, the lower boundary below which a country cannot be said to have satisfactory activities aimed at combating corruption.[198] Corruption continues to be perceived as a systemic problem, with weaknesses in institutional performance, oversight, and the judiciary identified as key factors enabling its prevalence.

196 "Corruption Assessment Report (CAR) 2025", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, December 2025, https://mcms.mk/images/docs/2025/CAR_2025_Executive_Summary_ENG.pdf

197 „Индекс на перцепција на корупцијата 2025: Падот на лидерството ја поткопува глобалната борба против корупцијата" ("Corruption Perceptions Index 2025: Decline in leadership undermines the global fight against corruption"), Transparency International Macedonia, 10 February 2026, https://transparency.mk/2026/02/10/indeks-na-percepcija-na-korupcijata-2025-padot-na-liderstvoto-ja-potkopuva-globalnata-borba-protiv-korupcijata/.

198 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026.

At the constitutive session of the National Council for Financial Investigations and Asset Confiscation, the Prime Minister of North Macedonia announced an intensified fight against high-level corruption, indicating that over 50 cases that had been concealed or ignored for years are currently in process, with new cases expected to be opened.[199] The establishment of the Council represents a step toward better institutional coordination of financial investigations and asset confiscation. To date, apart from its constitutive session, the Council has held no other meetings. Additionally, the position of Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance, designated to head the Council, no longer exists, further calling into question its future operation.[200] Nevertheless, its effectiveness can only be assessed based on concrete results in conducting parallel financial investigations, as well as freezing, seizing, and confiscating crime-acquired assets.

Regarding whistleblowing and whistleblower protection in the past period, two dedicated reports were prepared on this topic.[201] The National Report Assessing the State of Whistleblower Protection in North Macedonia analyzes the legal framework and its alignment with the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive, identifies key gaps and weaknesses, and offers concrete recommendations to enhance the system.[202] Special attention is given to the integration of gender equality and the protection of vulnerable categories of whistleblowers.[203] The regional report "Whistleblower Protection in the Western Balkans: Progress and Challenges" examines the legal and institutional framework for whistleblower protection across five Western Balkan countries - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Kosovo. The report contains qualitative and quantitative data, practical examples, and recommendations for improvement.[204]

On the occasion of World Whistleblower Day - June 23, an online awareness-raising campaign was launched to emphasize the importance of whistleblowers and their protection, featuring the participation of representatives from institutions competent for external reporting of irregularities, as well as the Ministry of Justice.[205] Additionally, informative content and blogs on whistleblowing and whistleblower protection are continuously being prepared, including materials addressing the topic from a gender perspective and highlighting recommendations for enhancing the legal protection of whistleblowers.[206]

During 2025, a pilot assessment of the Local Self-Government Transparency Index was conducted using Transparency International's methodology. The assessment covered 8 municipalities, one from

199 „Украденото мора да се врати кај народот – порача Мицкоски на конститутивната седница на Националниот совет за финансиски истраги и конфискација на имот" ("'What was stolen must be returned to the people,' Mickoski stated at the constitutive session of the National Council for Financial Investigations and Asset Confiscation"), 360 stepeni, 2 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ukradenoto-mora-da-se-vrati-kaj-narodot-poracha-mitskoski-na-konstitutivnata-sednitsa-na-natsionalniot-sovet-za-finansiski-istragi-i-konfiskatsija-na-imot/.

200 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.

201 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026.

202 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026.
„Северна Македонија – Национален извештај за проценка на состојбата со заштитата на укажувачите" ("North Macedonia – National Report Assessing the State of Whistleblower Protection"), https://transparency.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/nacionalen_izveshtaj_za_procenka_na_sostojbata_so_zashtita_na_ukazhuvachite.pdf

203 Ibid.

204 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026.

205 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026. https://transparency.mk/2026/06/23/svetski-den-na-ukazhuvachiteporivot-da-se-sprotivstavime-na-nepravilnostite-e-posilen-od-koja-bilo-posledica

206 Ibid.

each planning region, selected based on population size: Aerodrom, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Strumica, Tetovo, and Shtip. Transparency was evaluated across 91 questions regarding information accessibility, municipal operations, and citizens' access to institutions and services. The findings revealed that local transparency and accountability remain at an unsatisfactory level, requiring additional efforts to ensure timely and accessible public information. Bitola received the highest rating (67 points), while Ohrid scored the lowest (39 points), with an overall average score of 52 points.[207]

The Integrity Watch platform provides open and easy access to data concerning areas particularly exposed to corruption risks - political party financing, public procurement, and the exploitation of mineral resources and hydroelectric power plants. Through searchable and comparable data, citizens, journalists, and researchers can track who finances political parties and who receives public contracts and concessions.[208]

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

Following the start of judicial proceedings against the former President of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) and the subsequent selection procedure, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia elected a new President in December 2025.[209] Additionally, following the resignation of another member, the composition of the SCPC was completed in June 2026[210] following a repeated call for applications.[211]

In the period under review, a political party submitted a request for the recusal of a member of the SCPC. The SCPC acted upon the request in accordance with the applicable legal framework governing the recusal of the President and members of the SCPC, issuing a decision by which the request was rejected.[212]

In April 2026, the SCPC adopted its 2025 Annual Work Report, detailing the activities undertaken pursuant to its legal competencies. These include: the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (NS 2026–2030), handling suspected cases of corruption and conflict of interest, monitoring the legality of political party and election campaign financing, recording and tracking asset declarations and interests, conducting misdemeanor proceedings, anti-corruption proofing of laws and bylaws, strengthening personal and institutional integrity, whistleblower protection, lobbying, as well as an overview of working conditions and the SCPC's overall capacity to fulfill these competencies.[213]

207 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026. https://transparency.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/indeks_na_transparentnost_na_lokalnata_samouprava_za_2025_godina.pdf.
208 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Transparency International Macedonia, 7 September 2026. https://integritywatch.mk/?l=mk.
209 „Собранието го изгласа Адем Чучуљ за нов претседател на ДКСК" ("Assembly voted Adem Chuchulj as new President of SCPC"), 360 stepeni, 3 December 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-go-izglasa-adem-chuchul-za-nov-pretsedatel-na-dksk/
210 „Катерина Зајковска даде свечена изјава и официјално ја презеде функцијата член на ДКСК" ("Katerina Zajkovska took a solemn oath and officially assumed the position of SCPC member"), Official Website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 18 June 2026, https://bit.ly/4xOaqWR.
211 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.
212 Contribution to the Shadow Report by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 11 September 2026.
213 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Годишен извештај за работа на ДКСК за 2025 година" ("2025 Annual Work Report of the SCPC"), 1 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4yBXynx.

Specifically, compared to 2024, in 2025 the SCPC showed greater proactivity in opening cases on its own initiative, with the number rising from 78 to 194, particularly in the area of asset declaration and monitoring. At the same time, the total number of decisions issued decreased from 742 to 583, as did the number of initiatives for establishing responsibility and initiated misdemeanor proceedings. A positive trend was observed in corruption cases, where initiatives submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office increased from 4 to 8, alongside an increase in advisory activities concerning conflicts of interest. Overall, the data points to increased SCPC initiative in 2025 through the increased number of self-initiated cases and criminal prosecution initiatives. Variations in the number of decisions across specific areas should be analyzed taking into account the number, structure, and complexity of cases, as well as the type of the measures undertaken.[214]

The SCPC adopted the Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy 2021–2025 for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025, as well as the Final Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy 2021–2025 for the entire period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025.[215] In 2025, a total of 137 activities were evaluated, of which 23% were implemented, 44% were not implemented, and 33% remain in progress. The greatest progress was recorded in the education and economy and business sectors, whereas the lowest implementation rates were noted in the political system, environment, and public enterprises and joint-stock companies sectors. The highest number of unimplemented activities was recorded in the urban planning and spatial planning sector. Out of 318 evaluated activities, 37% were implemented, 34% were not implemented, and 29% remain in progress. The report includes concluding observations and recommendations to improve the implementation of the measures.[216] The low level of implementation of the Strategy represents a systemic and inter-institutional problem.[217] The Analysis of the Factors Affecting the Level of Implementation of the National Strategy 2021–2025, published in January 2025, should also be taken into account, as it was intended to serve as a roadmap for the preparation of the new five-year national strategy.[218]

The SCPC carried out the key preparatory activities for the new National Strategy 2026–2030. It prepared a Methodology for assessing corruption risks for the purposes of developing the National Strategy 2026–2030, conducted a corruption risk assessment, and adopted a Methodology for the development of the National Strategy 2026–2030. The process was inclusive and involved broad participation from institutions, civil society organisations, the private sector, the media, as well as domestic and international experts. Between October and December 2025, 21 workshops were held, following which the Draft Strategy was put out for public consultation from 27 May to 8 June

214 Contribution to the Shadow Report by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 11 September 2026.
215 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Годишен извештај за работа на ДКСК за 2025 година" ("2025 Annual Work Report of the SCPC"), 1 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4yBXynx.
216 Ibid.
217 Contribution to the Shadow Report by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 11 September 2026.
218 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Анализа на фактори кои влијаат врз степенот на спроведување на Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2021–2025" ("Analysis of Factors Affecting the Level of Implementation of the Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021–2025"), October 2024, https://bit.ly/4zkWtQL. Contribution to the Shadow Report by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), 11 September 2026.

2026.[219] The new National Strategy 2026–2030 was adopted by a decision of the SCPC on 19 June 2026, with a six-month delay, and submitted to the Assembly for adoption,[220] meaning there is currently no active National Strategy in place.[221] The new National Strategy includes an assessment of the financial implications of the proposed measures, including the resources required for their implementation, as well as clearly defined responsibilities and mandates of institutions for each activity. This enables more accurate resource planning and facilitates monitoring of institutional responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy.[222]

The SCPC promoted its first Action Plan for the Promotion of the Gender Perspective 2026–2030, which serves as a practical framework for fairer, more inclusive, and more accountable policies. Through this framework, the SCPC aims to strengthen its capacities to identify and mitigate corruption risks related to gender.[223]

Following the local elections held in October 2025, the SCPC published its reports on election campaign donations, presenting statistical data on campaign financing transparency. During the first reporting period, only 35% of participants submitted their donation reports on time, including all 19 coalitions, but only 18 political parties and 24 independent candidates.[224] In the second reporting period, compliance dropped to 33%, with reports submitted by all 19 coalitions, 17 political parties, and 21 independent candidates.[225] Regarding mayoral asset declarations, the SCPC revealed significant non-compliance with the legal obligation to report assets: 35 former mayors failed to submit an asset declaration upon leaving office, while 19 newly elected mayors failed to submit an asset declaration within the mandatory 30-day deadline after taking office. The SCPC announced it would initiate misdemeanor proceedings against these individuals.[226]

The SCPC also adopted the special reports on the financing of the election campaigns for the 2025 local elections and the 2026 re-run elections. The reports address the legality and transparency of campaign financing, based on data provided by competent institutions and participants in the electoral

219 „Национална стратегија 2026-2030/ Консултативен процес за Национална стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026-2030“ (“National Strategy 2026–2030 / Consultation process for the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026–2030”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, https://bit.ly/45xNf76.

220 „Одлука за донесување на Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси 2026–2030 со Акционен план за нејзино спроведување“ (“Decision on the adoption of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026–2030 with Action Plan for its implementation”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 19 June 2026, https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Одлука-за-донесување-на-Национална-стратегија-2026-2030-бр.10-17-34.pdf.

221 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.

222 Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026)”, European Policy Institute (EPI), 17 September 2026.

223 „ДКСК го промовира првиот родов Акциски план 2026-2030“ (“SCPC promotes the first gender Action Plan 2026–2030”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 9 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4qxsZft

224 „Извештаи за примени донации доставија 35% од вкупниот број на учесници во изборната кампања“ (“Reports on received donations were submitted by 35% of the total number of participants in the election campaign”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 14 October 2025, https://bit.ly/4qq5Tr8.

225 „Извештаи за примени донации во законскиот рок, доставија 33% од вкупниот број на учесници во изборната кампања“ (“Reports on received donations within the legal deadline were submitted by 33% of the total number of participants in the election campaign”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 22 October 2025, https://bit.ly/4wDH50e.

226 „ДКСК констатира непочитување на обврската за пријавување имотна состојба од 35 поранешни и 19 новоизбрани градоначалници“ (“SCPC identifies non-compliance with asset disclosure obligation by 35 former and 19 newly elected mayors”), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 17 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4x7K8is.

process. They note the established findings, identify potential irregularities, and provide recommendations for enhancing the control and accountability system for election campaign financing.[227]

Under its Annual Plan for 2026, the SCPC foresees the verification of the asset status and interests of 60 public officials, selected on the basis of corruption risk assessment.[228] The plan covers the judiciary, the legislative and executive branches, as well as local self-government, as sectors exposed to higher corruption risks. Specifically, it envisages checks on 10 judges, 10 public prosecutors, 10 MPs, 10 ministers, 10 mayors, and 10 former mayors whose terms ended following the 2025 local elections. These verifications will be conducted throughout 2026. The SCPC highlights key risks such as influence over legislative and other decision-making, discretionary powers, management of public funds, public procurement, concessions, employment practices, and the favoring of private interests.[229] Through this initiative, the SCPC aims to strengthen its proactive approach in monitoring the assets of public officials, in line with recommendations from the European Commission and GRECO for more intensive and systemic verification in this area.[230] The SCPC verifies the accuracy of the submitted data, an effort that requires additional staffing to execute properly. Concurrently, the number of systemic checks has increased, which are also monitored through appointment and dismissal data published in the Official Gazette.[231]

The SCPC adopted and published the Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Integrity System in 2025, providing an overview of the establishment and execution of integrity policies, with a specific focus on central and local government bodies.[232] While 2025 demonstrated a broader reach and a gradual improvement of the integrity system, its practical application remains uneven and often superficial. The primary weaknesses relate to managing conflicts of interest and discretionary powers, assessing corruption risks, conducting training, and internal monitoring; conversely, better results were observed in formalised mechanisms such as public procurement rules and protected whistleblowing. Overall, the findings indicate that despite institutional progress, the consistent application of integrity mechanisms remains constrained, particularly at the local level.[233] At the central level, out of 73 institutions, 48 fully completed the monitoring questionnaire, while 25 failed to complete it. At the local level, out of 69 municipalities that accessed the SCPC portal, 40 (59%) fully completed the questionnaire, whereas 29 partially or entirely failed to comply.[234]

227 „ДКСК ги усвои посебните извештаи за финансирањето на изборните кампањи за локалните избори 2025 и повторените избори 2026" ("SCPC adopts special reports on the financing of election campaigns for the 2025 local elections and the 2026 re-run elections"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 3 April 2026, https://bit.ly/466PrT9.

228 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Годишен план за следење на имотната состојба и судирот на интереси за 2026 година" ("Annual Plan for Monitoring Asset Declarations and Conflict of Interest for 2026"), https://bit.ly/4gCVViL.

229 „Антикорупциска одлучи: Идната година ќе го проверува имотот на 60 високи функционери" ("Anti-Corruption Commission decided: Next year it will check the assets of 60 high-ranking officials"), 30 December 2025, https://sitel.com.mk/antikorupciska-odluchi-idnata-godina-kje-go-proveruva-imotot-na-60-visoki-funkcioneri.

230 „Чучуљ: ДКСК ја проверува имотната состојба на 60 високи функционери, како сегашни така и поранешни" ("Chuchulj: SCPC is checking the asset status of 60 high-ranking officials, both current and former"), Lokalno, 3 June 2026, https://lokalno.mk/chuchulj-dksk-ja-proveruva-imotnata-sostojba-na-60-visoki-funkcioneri-kako-segashni-taka-i-poraneshni/.

231 Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026)", European Policy Institute (EPI), 17 September 2026.

232 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Извештај од спроведеното следење на примената на системот на интегритет во 2025 година" ("Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Integrity System in 2025"), March 2026, https://bit.ly/3SjE6vU.

233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.

Combined, out of 142 institutions across both central and local level, 88 (62%) fully completed the questionnaire on the implementation of the integrity system/policy, while 54 (38%) did not complete it fully or at all. The monitoring results highlight varying response rates across state institutions,[235] with non-response or partial compliance posing a notable reporting gap and an ongoing challenge for future inter-institutional cooperation.

In April 2026, the SCPC conducted a public awareness campaign on lobbying, presenting the findings in June 2026. The campaign aimed to better inform the public about the legal framework, registered lobbying, and transparency in policy-making processes.[236] As part of the initiative, four roundtables were held with relevant stakeholders, highlighting the need for broader promotion and practical application of the Law on Lobbying, further education, and legislative enhancements. The SCPC announced that recommendations from these consultations would be submitted to the Ministry of Justice and the working group tasked with potential legislative amendments. However, the campaign faced criticism from civil society organisations (CSOs) because, despite CSOs being legally exempt from the Law on Lobbying, campaign materials presented an example of a CSO hiring a lobbyist to advocate for public policies, a point raised directly during a dedicated roundtable for CSOs and the media.[237] Following the campaign, the SCPC formally registered its first individual lobbyist, adding to the previously registered three lobbying organizations and five lobbying organisation representatives.[238] Nevertheless, none of the registered lobbyists or lobbying organisations have submitted activity reports to date, leaving the official Register with zero recorded lobbying activities since their initial enrollment.[239]

The SCPC strengthened institutional cooperation by signing memorandums with the Administrative Court,[240] Transparency International - Macedonia,[241] the Ministry of Public Administration,[242] and the Judicial Council,[243] aimed at digital connectivity, preventing corruption, enhancing integrity, transparency, coordinated action in the public sector, and strengthening public trust in institutions.

In June 2026, the SCPC and the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, with support from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, held a working meeting to enhance the integrity policy

235 Ibid.

236 „ДКСК ги презентираше резултатите од кампањата за подигање на јавната свест за лобирањето" ("SCPC presents results from the public awareness campaign on lobbying"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 4 June 2026, https://bit.ly/4xa1s6m.

237 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.

238 „32. седница на ДКСК" ("32nd Session of the SCPC"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 19 May 2026, https://bit.ly/3SAMFCC.

239 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.

240 „ДКСК и Управниот суд потпишаа меморандум за соработка за дигитално поврзување и Управниот суд ја потпиша политиката за интегритет" ("SCPC and the Administrative Court signed a memorandum of cooperation for digital connectivity and the Administrative Court signed the integrity policy"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 15 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4hGhksu.

241 „ДКСК и Транспаренси Интернешнл – Македонија потпишаа Меморандум за соработка" ("SCPC and Transparency International – Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 27 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4bY0G3T.

242 „ДКСК и Министерството за јавна администрација потпишаа меморандум за соработка" ("SCPC and the Ministry of Public Administration signed a memorandum of cooperation"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 29 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4g8ExRq.

243 „Потпишан меморандум за соработка со Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија" ("Memorandum of Cooperation signed with the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 13 May 2026, https://bit.ly/3UDMR4y.

within public prosecutor's offices, aimed at strengthening integrity mechanisms and mitigating corruption risks in the prosecutorial system.[244] The Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia expressed readiness to implement the integrity system, a commitment also echoed by the Council of Public Prosecutors.[245]

At the Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, an official handover act for the Gift Registry Platform was signed by the SCPC. The platform enables a centralized, secure, and more efficient registration and reporting process for gifts received by public officials and employees across state institutions. With full ownership of the digital tool transferred to the SCPC, complemented by targeted training for designated officials,[246] the SCPC subsequently published the Catalog of Gifts for Elected and Appointed Officials, detailing all declared gifts for 2025.[247]

In accordance with Article 23 of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 12/2019), the SCPC acts on cases initiated on its own initiative or based on submitted reports. According to data provided by the SCPC,[248] during the period of January – June 2026:

> In the area of corruption and abuse of official position, 283 cases were opened, 281 based on reports and 2 ex officio. A total of 262 cases were completed, resulting in 178 decisions on corruption and 12 decisions regarding the financing of election campaigns.
>
> For conflict of interest, 54 cases were opened, of which 51 based on reports and 3 ex officio, and with 38 decisions adopted.
>
> In the field of recording and monitoring asset status, 423 cases were opened, of which 28 based on reports and 395 ex officio. A total of 92 decisions were adopted.
>
> The SCPC issued 197 misdemeanor payment orders, 187 of which related to the failure to submit an asset and interest declaration form or a change-of-asset notification form. Due to unpaid payment orders, 26 requests for initiating misdemeanor proceedings were filed.

These figures reflect a substantial workload managed by the SCPC, however, evaluating its effectiveness requires assessing the long-term outcomes of these cases, the number and nature of initiated actions, and the response from the competent institutions.

244 „Зајакната соработка меѓу ДКСК и Јавното обвинителство на Република Северна Македонија за унапредување на системот на интегритет" ("Strengthened cooperation between SCPC and the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia for enhancing the integrity system"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 5 May 2026, https://bit.ly/45tVtx7.

245 Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026)", European Policy Institute (EPI), 17 September 2026.

246 „ЕУ и Советот на Европа ја поддржуваат дигитализацијата на регистрацијата на подароци за јавните службеници во Северна Македонија" ("EU and Council of Europe support digitalisation of gift registration for public officials in North Macedonia"), Programme Office of the Council of Europe in Skopje, 30 January 2026, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/mk/web/horizontal-facility/news-on-corruption/-/asset_publisher/DV79UgcvnlJe/content/eu-and-council-of-europe-support-digitalisation-of-gift-registration-for-public-officials-in-north-macedonia.

247 „СООПШТЕНИЕ ЗА ЈАВНОСТ" ("PRESS RELEASE"), Official website of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 5 May 2026, https://podaroci.dksk.mk/gift-submission/public-figures?page=0&rowsPerPage=5.

248 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 'Response to request for free access to public information'.

Public Prosecutor's Office

During the reporting period, progress was recorded in the handling of the case involving suspected corruption in the allocation of funds from the IPARD program. The BPPO-POCC filed an indictment against five individuals for criminal offenses related to giving and receiving bribes and receiving a reward for unlawful influence, which was subsequently approved by the Basic Criminal Court Skopje. In a related proceeding, an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy was sentenced to ten months in prison following a guilty plea. Court proceedings against the remaining defendants continued throughout the reporting period. The case also had broader ramifications for the implementation of the IPARD program, with the disbursement of funds being suspended until May 2026.[249]

Additionally, an investigation was opened into potential abuse of official position and authority within the Commodity Reserves Agency. Four former officials and an expert witness are suspected of abuse of official position for submitting false information to the Government to justify the write-off of a shortage of 1,500 tons of wheat and 500 tons of barley (valued at approximately €473,000 or 29.1 million denars).[250]

In December 2025, a former State Attorney was arrested on suspicion of receiving a reward for unlawful influence.[251] According to the investigation, he requested and subsequently accepted a substantial sum of money to exert his influence to bribe a judge at the Appellate Court Skopje to revoke a detention order for a prisoner.[252] He remains in custody after the Basic Criminal Court Skopje extended his detention for an additional 30 days.[253] Following the investigation, the BPPO-POCC filed an indictment with the Basic Criminal Court Skopje.[254]

Investigations have also been opened in the following cases: money laundering and usury against 12 suspects operating a criminal group that offered loans at extortionate interest rates;[255] abuse of public call procedure, award of public procurement contract or public-private partnership, and embezzlement in service against 32 physical and legal entities that abused public procurement

249 „10 месеци затвор за службеничката којашто призна дека примила поткуп за манипулација со пари од ЕУ за поддршка на земјоделството" ("10 months in prison for the official who admitted to taking a bribe to manipulate EU agricultural support funds"), Sakam da kazham, 5 May 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/10-mesetsi-zatvor-za-sluzhbenichkata-koja-prizna-deka-primila-potkup-za-manipulatsija-so-pari-od-eu-za-poddrshka-na-zemjodelstvoto/.

250 „Поведена постапка против 5 лица за злоупотреби со стоковите резерви" ("Proceedings initiated against 5 persons for abuses involving commodity reserves"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 November 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/povedena-postapka-protiv-5-licza-za-zloupotrebi-so-stokovite-rezervi/.

251 „Уапсен е Фехми Стафа, поранешен државен правобранител" ("Fehmi Stafa, former State Attorney, arrested"), 360 stepeni, 14 December 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/uapsen-e-fehmi-stafa-poraneshen-drzhaven-pravobranitel/.

252 „Наредба за истрага против едно лице за примање награда за противзаконито влијание" ("Order for investigation against one person for receiving a reward for unlawful influence"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 14 December 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/naredba-za-istraga-protiv-edno-licze-za-primane-nagrada-za-protivzakonito-vlijanie/.

253 „Поранешниот државен правобранител Фехми Стафа останува во притвор – судот му го продолжи за нови 30 дена" ("Former State Attorney Fehmi Stafa remains in custody – court extends detention by another 30 days"), 360 stepeni, 14 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/poraneshniot-drzhaven-pravobranitel-fehmi-stafa-ostanuva-vo-pritvor-sudot-mu-go-prodolzhi-za-novi-30-dena/.

254 „ОЈОГОКК поднесе обвинение против поранешниот државен правобранител, Стафа, за земање поткуп за да влијае врз судија" ("BPPO-POCC filed an indictment against former State Attorney Stafa for taking a bribe to influence a judge"), 360 stepeni, 20 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-gokk-podnese-obvinenie-protiv-poraneshniot-drzhaven-pravobranitel-stafa-za-zemane-potkup-za-da-vlijae-vrz-sudija/.

255 „Под истрага 12 лица осомничени за лихварство и перење пари" ("Under investigation: 12 persons suspected of usury and money laundering"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 22 October 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/pod-istraga-12-licza-osomnicheni-za-lihvarstvo-i-perene-pari/.

procedures at the Prilep Hospital, and against 8 physical persons; 1 legal entity suspected of rigging a tender for relocating equipment from TPP Oslomej to TPP Bitola to favor a specific company;[256] abuse of official position and authority against 2 owners of private elderly care homes in Skopje, who housed more individuals than permitted under substandard conditions;[257] criminal association, abuse of public call procedure, abuse of official position, and money laundering against 33 individuals: officials at ESM Heat Distribution alongside company owners, who manipulated a tender to award the contract to a higher bidder;[258] and criminal association, usury, and money laundering against 8 individuals who organized illegal unlicensed gambling in Skopje.[259]

A Serbian national, owner of two companies, managers in the Public Revenue Office (PRO), and several other owners and managers of legal entities are among the twenty suspects in the operation conducted by the BPPO-POCC at multiple locations across the country.[260] The Criminal Court Skopje accepted the proposal of the BPPO-POCC and ordered detention for eight of the suspects accused of tax evasion, money laundering, and abuse of official position, who were arrested in the BPPO-POCC operation.[261]

The Basic Criminal Court Skopje sentenced the former director of the PHI Specialized Hospital for Geriatric and Palliative Medicine to four years in prison, and an employee of the institution to one year and ten months in prison, in the "Geriatrics" case concerning bribery and receiving a reward for unlawful influence.[262]

With cross-examination of a former director of the Financial Operations Department at the Health Insurance Fund serving as a witness, the trial for the "Oncology 2" case continued in the Basic Criminal Court Skopje.[263]

256 „Нова истрага за злоупотреби во РЕК Битола" ("New investigation into abuses at TPP Bitola"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 9 October 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/nova-istraga-za-zloupotrebi-vo-rek-bitola/.

257 „Истрага за злоупотреби и малтретирање во приватни установи за сместување стари лица" ("Investigation into abuses and mistreatment in private facilities for housing elderly persons"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 October 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/istraga-za-zloupotrebi-i-maltretitane-vo-privatni-ustanovi-za-smestuvane-stari-licza/.

258 „Спроведена координирана акција за економско-финансиски криминал – поведена истрага против 33 лица" ("Coordinated action on economic and financial crime conducted – investigation opened against 33 persons"), Official website of the Public Prosecuor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 19 December 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/sprovedena-koordinirana-akczija-za-ekonomsko-finansiski-kriminal-povedena-istraga-protiv-33-licza/.

259 „Реализирана акција за недозволено приредување игри на среќа и перење пари – осум лица опфатени со истраги" ("Operation conducted regarding unlawful organizing of games of chance and money laundering – eight persons covered by investigations"), Official website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 12 December 2025, https://jorm.gov.mk/realizirana-akczija-za-nedozvoleno-prireduvane-igri-na-sreka-i-perene-pari-osum-licza-opfateni-so-istragi/.

260 „Акцијата на ОЈОГОКК била изведена по известување од АНБ – осомничени се 20 лица за финансиски криминал тежок 4,8 милиони евра" ("BPPO-POCC operation was conducted following a report from the NSA – 20 persons suspected of financial crime worth 4.8 million euros"), 360 stepeni, 16 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/aktsijata-na-ojo-gokk-bila-izvedena-po-izvestuvane-od-anb-osomnicheni-se-20-litsa-za-finansiski-kriminal-tezhok-4-8-milioni-evra/ .

261 „Одреден им е 30-дневен притвор на осуммина од осомничените за милионскиот финансиски криминал" ("30-day detention ordered for eight of the suspects in the multi-million financial crime"), 360 stepeni, 16 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/odreden-im-e-30-dneven-pritvor-na-osummina-od-osomnichenite-za-milionskiot-finansiski-kriminal/.

262 „Четири години затвор за ексдиректорот Арифи и една година и десет месеци за Амити во случајот „Геријатрија"" ("Four years in prison for former director Arifi and one year and ten months for Amiti in the 'Geriatrics' case"), 360 stepeni, 21 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/chetiri-godini-zatvor-za-eksdirektorot-arifi-i-edna-godina-i-deset-mesetsi-za-amiti-vo-sluchajot-gerijatrija/.

263 „Случај „Онкологија 2": Ексдиректор во ФЗО вели дека Фондот немал обврска да врши финансиски контроли во Клиниката за онкологија" ("'Oncology 2' case: Former HIF director says the Fund had no obligation to conduct financial audits at the Oncology Clinic"), 360 stepeni, 23 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sluchaj-onkologija-2-eksdirektor-vo-fzo-veli-deka-fondot-nemal-obvrska-da-vrshi-finansiski-kontroli-vo-klinikata-za-onkologija/.

The Financial Police Office submitted a criminal complaint to the BPPO-POCC against the President of the Energy, Water Services and Municipal Waste Management Services Regulatory Commission on suspicion of committing a criminal offense - abuse of official position and authority.[264] The BPPO-POCC is to decide on further proceedings regarding the submitted criminal complaint.[265]

The Public Prosecutor's Office Prilep filed an indictment against eight individuals and one legal entity for embezzlement and abuse of public procurement at the Prilep Hospital. The former director and three employees are charged with embezzling over 9.6 million denars from patient co-payments through fictitious work orders between 2022 and July 2024. Additionally, the director approved payments from the "patient food" line item for products not intended for hospitalized patients, causing an additional damage of 1.4 million denars.[266]

The Ministry of Interior filed a criminal complaint against the former mayor of Kicevo on suspicion of abuse of official position and authority.[267]

The BPPO-POCC proposed that, for the remainder of the proceedings in the "Lottery" case, the former First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister defend himself from house arrest and have his travel document confiscated, instead of serving detention in the "Skopje" prison.[268] He was detained at the Kosovo–North Macedonia border upon entering the country after more than a year in hiding.[269] An investigation into suspected abuses at the State Lottery, which caused damage exceeding 501 million denars, was opened in December 2024.[270]

The Financial Police submitted an extensive criminal complaint against the former acting director of the Public Enterprise "Communal Hygiene" - Skopje, who is charged with three criminal offenses: abuse of official position, forgery of documents, and attempted embezzlement in office.[271]

264 „Финансиска поднесе кривична пријава против претседателот на РКЕ, Бислимоски" ("Financial Police files criminal charges against ERC President Bislimoski"), 360 stepeni, 29 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/finansiska-podnese-krivichna-prijava-protiv-pretsedatelot-na-rke-bislimoski/.

265 „Финансиската полиција поднесе кривична пријава против претседателот на Регулаторна, Марко Беслимовски, за штета од над 14 милиони денари" ("Financial Police filed a criminal complaint against the President of Regulatory, Marko Bislimoski, for damages exceeding 14 million denars"), Skopje1, 29 January 2026, https://skopje1.mk/finansiskata-policija-podnese-krivicna-prijava-protiv-pretsedatelot-na-regulatorna-marko-beslimovski-za-steta-od-nad-14-milioni-denari.

266 „Обвинение за поранешната директорка и за уште седуммина за проневери и злоупотреби во Прилепската болница" ("Indictment against former director and seven others for embezzlement and abuse in Prilep Hospital"), 360 stepeni, 29 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinenie-za-poraneshnata-direktorka-i-ushte-sedummina-za-proneveri-i-zloupotrebi-vo-prilepskata-bolnitsa/.

267 „Кривична за ексградоначалникот на Кичево – вработил четири лица и им дозволил да не одат на работа, а да земаат плата" ("Criminal charges against former mayor of Kicevo – employed four persons and allowed them to draw salaries without attending work"), 360 stepeni, 29 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/krivichna-za-eksgradonachalnikot-na-kichevo-vrabotil-chetiri-litsa-i-im-dozvolil-da-ne-odat-na-rabota-a-da-zemaat-plata/ .

268 „Обвинителството предлага Груби да оди во куќен притвор – се пријавил доброволно и во Шутка не може да му се гарантира безбедноста" ("Prosecution proposes house arrest for Grubi – surrendered voluntarily and security cannot be guaranteed in Shutka"), 360 stepeni, 23 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelstvoto-predlaga-grubi-da-odi-vo-kuken-pritvor-se-prijavil-dobrovolno-i-vo-shutka-ne-mozhe-da-mu-se-garantira-bezbednosta/ .

269 „Артан Груби реши да се врати во Македонија, приведен е на ГП 'Блаце'" ("Artan Grubi decided to return to Macedonia, detained at 'Blace' border crossing"), 360 stepeni, 23 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/artan-grubi-reshi-da-se-vrati-vo-makedonija-priveden-e-na-gp-blatse/.

270 „Осуммина под истрага за злоупотреби во Државна лотарија" ("Eight persons under investigation for abuses in the State Lottery"), Deutsche Welle, 16 December 2024, https://www.dw.com/mk/osummina-pod-istraga-za-zloupotrebi-vo-drzavna-lotarija-mvr-go-povikuva-artan-grubi-da-se-vrati-vo-zemjata/a-71068387 .

271 „Финансиска поднесе кривична за поранешниот директор на 'Комунална хигиена' – овозможил физички лица да стекнат корист од 68 500 евра" ("Financial Police files criminal charges against former director of 'Communal Hygiene' - enabled individuals to acquire benefit of 68,500 euros"), 360 stepeni, 13 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/finansiska-podnese-krivichna-za-poraneshni-ot-direktor-na-komunalna-higiena-ovozmozhil-fizichki-litsa-da-steknat-korist-od-68-500-evra/.

A particularly significant development during the reporting period was the filing of an indictment against a judge of the Appellate Court Skopje for unlawful acquisition and concealment of property and money laundering, following the discovery of 350,000 euros in undeclared cash for which, according to the Public Prosecutor's Office, no lawful origin had been established. The case is linked to the proceedings against a former State Attorney for unlawful influence over a judge.[272]

In March 2026, the BPPO-POCC opened an investigation against the Director of the State Agriculture Inspectorate under suspicion of receiving a bribe. According to the BPPO-POCC, the suspect requested 50,000 euros to approve the import of goods and to ensure the smooth handling of future imports. After the money was handed over, he was arrested, and the BPPO-POCC submitted a proposal for ordering a detention measure.[273]

In February 2026, the BPPO-POCC opened an investigation against 20 individuals suspected of organized tax fraud, money laundering, and abuse of official position, which allegedly damaged the state budget by approximately 4.8 million euros. As part of a coordinated operation, searches were conducted at 16 locations, resulting in the discovery of documentation, cash, weapons, and counterfeit seals. The BPPO-POCC requested detention for several of the suspects, while proposing precautionary measures to secure the presence of others and prohibiting them from performing official duties.[274]

The BPPO-POCC announced the opening of a major proceeding against 18 physical and 8 legal entities for embezzlement in service, money laundering, and other related criminal offenses. Although this case pertains to economic crime, it was among the most significant anti-corruption and financial investigations in the first half of the year.[275]

The BPPO-POCC launched an investigation and proposed detention against four persons, including the former Director of the Customs Administration (CA). Among the individuals covered by the investigation are a former Assistant Director of the CA, a manager of a legal entity, and an employee of the same entity, due to suspicions of abuse in a public procurement procedure and unlawful influence. According to suspicions, in the period between July 2023 and March 2024, by favoring a specific economic operator and restricting competition, an unlawful material benefit of over 18.4 million denars was enabled.[276] The Skopje Basic Criminal Court accepted the proposal and ordered thirty-day detention for the suspects.[277]

272 „Затворска казна за адвокатот, обвинение за апелациониот судија" ("Prison sentence for the lawyer, indictment for the appellate judge"), Official Website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 17 April 2026, https://jorm.gov.mk/zatvorska-kazna-za-advokatot-obvinenie-za-apelacziniot-sudija/.

273 „Наредба за истрага за примање поткуп, се бара притвор" ("Investigation order for bribery, detention requested"), Official Website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 20 March 2026, https://sl1nk.com/lv3k94o.

274 „20 лица под истрага за штета на буџетот на државата од големи размери" ("20 persons under investigation for large-scale damage to the state budget"), Official Website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 16 January 2026, https://jorm.gov.mk/20-licza-pod-istraga-za-shteta-na-budhetot-na-drzhavata-od-golemi-razmeri/.

275 „18 физички и 8 правни лица инволвирани во проневера во служба и перење пари и други приноси од казниво дело" ("18 physical and 8 legal entities involved in embezzlement in service and laundering of money and other proceeds of crime"), Official Website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 18 June 2026, https://jorm.gov.mk/18-fizichki-i-8-pravni-lic-za-involvirani-vo-pronevera-vo-sluzhba-i-perene-pari-i-drugi-prinosi-od-kaznivo-delo/.

276 „Отворена истрага за злоупотреби во Царинската управа – ОЈОГОКК бара притвор за Богоев и за уште три лица" ("Investigation opened for abuses in the Customs Administration – BPPO-POCC requests detention for Bogoev and three other persons"), 360 stepeni, 3 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/otvorena-istraga-za-zloupotrebi-vo-tsarinskata-uprava-ojo-gokk-bara-pritvor-za-bogoev-i-za-ushte-tri-litsa.

277 „Кривичен им одреди 30-дневен притвор на Богоев и на тројцата други осомничени за злоупотреби во Царината" ("Criminal Court orders 30-day detention for Bogoev and three other suspects for abuses in Customs"), 360 stepeni, 3 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/krivichen-im-odredi-30-dneven-pritvor-na-bogoev-i-na-trojtsata-drugi-osomnicheni-za-zloupotrebi-vo-tsarinata/.

During the reporting period, increased prosecutorial activity was observed in several cases related to corruption, abuse of official position, public procurement, and financial crime, including cases against current and former public office holders. In a portion of the cases, investigations resulted in the filing of indictments and the initiation of court proceedings. However, assessing the effectiveness of the criminal prosecution of corruption will require monitoring the further procedural progress and final outcome of these cases, particularly in high-level corruption instances, including the number of final convictions and the effectiveness of the confiscation of unlawfully acquired property.

Legal framework

The adoption of a new Law on Whistleblower Protection remained unfinished during the reporting period. In order to align the Law on Whistleblower Protection with EU Directive 2019/1937, the Ministry of Justice prepared a draft law on protected reporting and whistleblower protection. The proposal is currently in the inter-ministerial consultation phase, which will conclude after receiving an opinion from the EC.[278] The proposed legal solution aims to improve the whistleblower protection system and further align it with European standards. The Platform of Civic Organisations for Fight against Corruption highlighted the unjustified delay of the procedure and demanded its urgent adoption.[279]

In January 2026, the Assembly adopted amendments to the Criminal Code following the serious consequences of the September 2023 amendments on the prosecution of corruption and organized crime, including through the reduction of penalties and the shortening of statutes of limitations. The amendments re-introduced a specific provision in Article 353 for abuse of official position and authorization related to public procurement, which had been deleted in 2023. However, the new solution does not represent a return to the legal framework in force prior to the 2023 amendments, and part of the expert and civil society public assessed that the amendments do not fully overcome their negative consequences. The Platform of Civil Society Organisations for Fight against Corruption requested a return to the provisions that applied before the September 2023 amendments and the subsequent adoption of a completely new Criminal Code. The adoption of a new Criminal Code, aligned with EU law and international standards, remains a key recommendation of the European-Commission.[280] The Ministry of Justice reported that the new Criminal Code has been prepared and

aligned with the latest relevant EU legislation. It will be sent to the EC for an opinion, and upon receiving the opinion, it will enter government procedure.[281]

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

279 „Платформата за борба против корупција бара итно донесување на предлогот на Закон за заштита на укажувачи" ("The Platform for the Fight Against Corruption demands urgent adoption of the draft Law on Whistleblower Protection"), Radio MOF, 16 December 2025, https://www.radiomof.mk/platformata-za-borba-protiv-korupcija-bara-itno-donesuvanje-na-predlogot-na-zakon-za-zashtita-na-ukazhuvachi/.

280 „Собранието ги донесе измените на Кривичниот законик, поддршка даде и СДСМ" ("Assembly adopted the amendments to the Criminal Code, SDSM also provided support"), 360 stepeni, 28 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sobranieto-gi-donese-izmenite-na-krivichniot-zakonik-poddrshka-dade-i-sdsm/.

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

In May 2026, a public hearing was held on the Draft Law on Confiscation of Property in Civil Proceedings, the purpose of which is to establish a mechanism for the confiscation of property whose legal origin cannot be proven, independently of criminal proceedings, with provided procedural guarantees for the protection of the rights of affected persons. The adoption of an effective legal framework for the confiscation of illegally acquired property is particularly significant in the context of the European Commission's continuous recommendations to improve results in the seizure and confiscation of property related to corruption.[282]

On 24 June 2026, the Draft Law on Criminal Procedure was published on ENER for public consultation. The reform of the criminal procedure framework is being implemented in parallel with the preparation of a new Criminal Code and constitutes part of the obligations outlined in the Reform Agenda.[283]

Despite the activities to amend the anti-corruption and criminal law framework, at the end of the reporting period several key reforms remained unfinished. In particular, there remains a need for the adoption of a new Criminal Code aligned with EU law and international standards, as well as the establishment of an effective legal framework for whistleblower protection and for the seizure and confiscation of illegally acquired property.

To ensure effective implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2026–2030 and its Action Plan, clear institutional accountability, measurable results, and regular tracking of execution must be provided, taking into account the low implementation level of the previous Strategy;

It is necessary to strengthen the track record (processing of cases and concrete outcomes) in the investigation, prosecution, and sanctioning of corruption, particularly at a high level, through timely and effective action, final court decisions, and effective seizure and confiscation of illegally acquired property;

Institutional follow-up of findings and initiatives from the SCPC and other oversight institutions must be reinforced, establishing systematic monitoring of their further outcomes, including actions taken by the Public Prosecutor's Office and other competent bodies;

A coherent and effective anti-corruption legal framework must be ensured by addressing the consequences of the 2023 Criminal Code amendments, aligning with European standards, and establishing an effective legal framework for whistleblower protection, financial investigations, and property confiscation;

Adequate human, financial, and technical capacities must be provided for the SCPC, BPPO-POCC, and other prosecution offices to enable independent, timely, and effective processing of corruption cases, particularly complex cases and instances of high-level corruption.

282 „Јавна расправа по Предлог-законот за конфискација на имот во граѓанска постапка" ("Public hearing on the Draft Law on Confiscation of Property in Civil Proceedings"), Official Website of the Ministry of Justice, 18 May 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/javna-rasprava-po-predlog-zakonot-za-konfiskacija-na-imot-vo-gragjanska-postapka.

283 „Предлогот на Законот за кривичната постапка е објавен на ЕНЕР" ("The draft Law on Criminal Procedure has been published on ENER"), Official Website of the Ministry of Justice, 24 June 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/predlog-na-zakonot-za-krivicnata-postapka-e-objaven-na-ener.

TABLE: Key Indicators for the fight against corruption

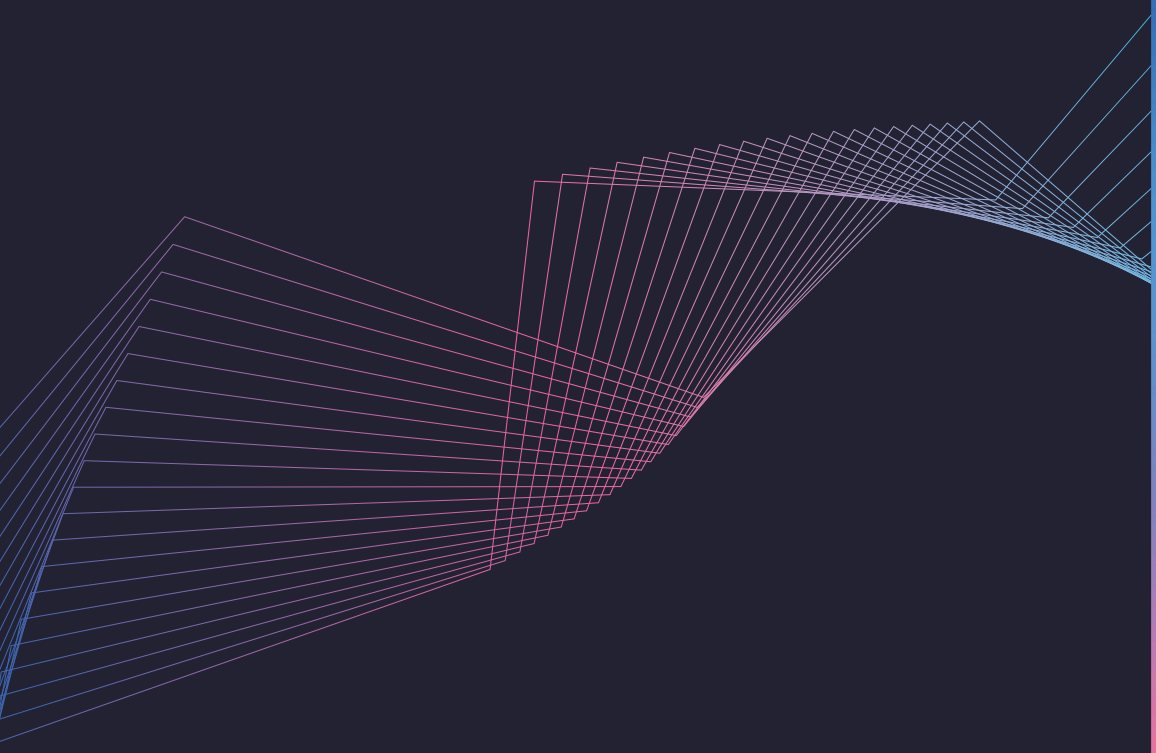
Institution/ Area	Indicator/Event	Data
SCPC - Reports and Cases	Formed cases – corruption and abuse of official position	283 cases
	– upon reports	281
	– ex officio (own initiative)	2
	Completed cases	262
	Adopted decisions – corruption	178
	Formed cases – conflict of interest	54 cases
	– upon reports	51
	– ex officio (own initiative)	3
	Adopted decisions – conflict of interest	38
	Formed cases – asset status	423 cases
	– upon reports	28
	– ex officio (own initiative)	395
	Adopted decisions – asset status	92
	Adopted decisions – election campaign financing	12
	Misdemeanor payment orders	197, of which 187 for failure to submit an asset and interests declaration or a form reporting changes
	Requests for initiating misdemeanor proceedings due to unpaid orders	26
SCPC - National Strategy 2021–2025	Evaluated activities in 2025	137 activities
	Implemented activities in 2025	23%
	Ongoing activities in 2025	33%
	Unimplemented activities in 2025	44%
	Evaluated activities for the entire 2021–2025 period	318 activities
	Implemented activities 2021–2025	37%
	Ongoing activities 2021–2025	29%
	Unimplemented activities 2021–2025	34%
	Reviewed reports during the period	612, mainly related to corruption and conflict of interest
SCPC – National Strategy 2026–2030	Preparation of the new Strategy	21 workshops (October–December 2025); public consultations (27 May–8 June 2026)
	Adoption by the SCPC	19 June 2026
SCPC – Integrity System	Scope/Institutional Response	At the central level, out of 73 institutions, 48 fully answered the questionnaire and 25 did not complete it; out of 69 local self-government units that accessed the SCPC portal, 40 (59%) fully completed the questionnaire on the application of the integrity system, while 29 partially or failed to fulfill this obligation.[284] Out of a total of 142 institutions at central and local levels, 88 institutions (62%) fully completed the questionnaire, while 54 institutions (38%) did not complete it fully or at all

284 Ibid.

Institution/ Area	Indicator/Event	Data
SCPC – Integrity System	Judicial Sector	2025 – transitional year; initiated enhancement of mechanisms through new questionnaires, methodology, and handbooks
	Main Deficiencies	Uneven and partial practical application, especially at the local level; weaknesses in managing conflicts of interest, discretionary powers, corruption risks, and internal monitoring
Criminal Prosecution / Significant Cases	"IPARD"	Indictment filed; one prison sentence of 10 months following a guilty plea
	"Geriatrics"	First-instance prison sentences: 4 years, and 1 year and 10 months
	"Oncology 2"	The trial continued during the reporting period; the amount of >2.2 billion denars should not be included until confirmed by a specific source.
	"State Lottery"	Damage exceeding 501 million denars; proceedings continued during the reporting period
	Organized tax fraud, money laundering, and abuse of official position	20 persons under investigation; estimated budget damage of approximately 4.8 million euros; searches at 16 locations
	State Agriculture Inspectorate	Investigation against the director on suspicion of receiving a bribe of 50,000 euros
	Former State Attorney / Related Case	Indictment filed; case related to unlawful influence over a judge
	Appellate Court Judge / Related Case	Indictment; the case states 350,000 euros of unproven legal origin
	Customs Administration	Investigation against 4 persons, including former director; suspicion of abuses in public procurement and unlawful material benefit exceeding 18.4 million denars
Legal Framework	Criminal Code – Amendments and Additions	Adopted in January 2026; re-introduced a specific provision in Article 353 for abuse related to public procurement. The amendments do not represent a full return to the pre-2023 framework
	New Criminal Code	Not adopted during the reporting period; its adoption, aligned with EU law and international standards, remains a key recommendation
	Draft Law on Whistleblower Protection	Unadopted by the end of the reporting period
	Draft Law on Confiscation of Property in Civil Proceedings	Public hearing held in May 2026
	Draft Law on Criminal Procedure	Published on ENER on 24 June 2026
	Draft Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest	Prepared by the working group in May–June 2025 and still not adopted by the Government[285]

285 Contribution to the Shadow Report by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), 27 August 2026.

Fundamental rights



Key developments during the reporting period

- The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found violations of the right to a fair trial (Article 6) in four cases concerning the dismissal of judges by the Judicial Council;
- The Government through a unilateral declaration, acknowledged a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR regarding the physical ill-treatment of a convict by a prison officer and the subsequent lack of an effective investigation through a unilateral declaration;
- In January 2026, the Assembly elected a new Ombudsperson, followed by a public announcement to fill all eight deputy ombudsperson positions;
- Draft amendments to the Law on Personal Data Protection entered government procedure in April 2026, aiming to align with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and ensure the financial and staffing independence of the Personal Data Protection Agency;
- Drafts for a new Law on Probation (with a public hearing held in May 2026) and amendments to the Law on Execution of Sanctions were published;
- In January 2026, a government working group was established to create a mechanism for protection against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs);
- The Program Council elected a new Director of MRT, while journalist associations warned that proposed legal amendments reducing the funding baseline threaten the broadcaster's independence;
- Urgent amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted making bodily injuries resulting from domestic violence ex officio prosecutable offences, in response to the State Audit Office's report on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and high rates of femicide;
- Amendments to the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons were adopted to cover persons with autism, alongside amendments to the Law on the Assessment System for Persons with Disabilities;
- A new draft Law on Social Housing was published, while the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD) and domestic courts ruled against the State for systemic discrimination involving the confiscation of passports and identity documents of Roma individuals.

Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights

Throughout the reporting period, the process of selecting candidates for a judge at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the accompanying controversies were dominant, alongside new case law concerning North Macedonia. The procedure conducted so far highlighted structural, ethical, and procedural challenges in the overall process.

Following the confirmed candidates[286] and interviews conducted in October 2025[287] by the Committee for the Selection of a Candidate from the Republic of North Macedonia for a judge at the European Court of Human Rights, the process was followed by reactions and criticism regarding transparency, uniformity of evaluation criteria, and potential conflicts of interest. Civil society organizations criticized the interview process itself,[288] while the SCPC opened three cases related to members of the Selection Committee[289] and recommended recusal during decision-making for certain candidates.[290] In November 2025, the Committee proposed three candidates,[291] and the Government adopted the proposal in January 2026.[292] Following the opinion of the Advisory Panel of Experts of the Council of Europe that one of the candidates did not fully meet the required criteria, a new candidate was proposed in May 2026.[293] The development of the procedure points to the need for the national selection process to ensure clear and pre-established criteria, a unified evaluation methodology, effective safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest, and full compliance with Council of Europe standards.[294]

During 2025, the ECtHR decided on 205 applications against the Republic of North Macedonia, marking an increase in the number of applications compared to 2024. Out of these 205 applications, 194 were rejected or declared inadmissible. The Court delivered 7 judgments across 11 cases, six of which established a violation of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights

286 „Комисијата ги утврди кандидатите што ќе бидат поканети на интервју за судија во ЕСЧП во Стразбур" ("The Committee determined the candidates to be invited for an interview for a judge at the ECHR in Strasbourg"), Official website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 8 October 2025, https://ustavensud.mk/archives/35996.

287 „Се интервјуираат кандидатите за судија со ЕСЧП во Стразбур" ("Candidates for judge at the ECtHR in Strasbourg are interviewed"), 360 stepeni, 20 October 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/se-intervjuiraatkandidatite-za-sudija-vo-eschp-vo-strazbur/.

288 „Извештај за постапката за избор на кандидати за избор на судија во ЕСЧП" ("Report on the procedure for the selection of candidates for the election of a judge at the ECtHR") (Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 2025), https://bit.ly/4acazdA.

289 „Три члена на комисијата за Стразбур оспорени пред Антикорупциската комисија" ("Three members of the Strasbourg committee challenged before the Anti-Corruption Commission"), Sloboden pechat, 10 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/tri-chlena-na-komisijata-za-strazbur-osporeni-pred-antikorupciskata-komisija/ .

290 „И Стразбур тешко ќе се снајде со заплеткаиот јазол од судир на интереси меѓу комисијата и кандидатите" ("Strasbourg will also find it difficult to cope with the tangled knot of conflicts of interest between the committee and the candidates"), Sloboden pechat, 13 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/i-strazbur-teshko-kje-se-snajde-so-zapletkaniot-jazol-od-sudir-na-interesi-megju-komisijata-i-kandidatite/.

291 „Професорот Сашо Георгиевски и адвокатите Јордан Апостолски и Наташа Бошковска предложени за судија во ЕСЧП" ("Professor Sasho Georgievski and lawyers Jordan Apostolski and Natasha Boshkovska proposed for judge at the ECtHR"), Nova Makedonija, 26 November 2025, https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/profesorot-sasho-georgievski-i-advokatite-jordan-apostolski-i-natasha-boshkovska-predlozheni-za-sudija-vo-eschp/.

292 „Владата ја усвоила информацијата за активностите на Комисијата за избор на кандидати за судија во Стразбур" ("The Government adopted the information on the activities of the Committee for the Selection of Candidates for Judge in Strasbourg"), 360 stepeni, 13 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/vladata-ja-usvoila-informatsijata-za-aktivnostite-na-komisijata-za-izbor-na-kandidati-za-sudija-vo-strazbur.

293 „По мислењето на советодавниот панел, комисијата предложи нов кандидат за судија во Стразбур" ("Following the opinion of the advisory panel, the committee proposed a new candidate for judge in Strasbourg"), Official Website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, 11 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4zBdWph.

294 „Известување за нови критериуми за избор на судија во Европскиот суд за човекови права" ("Notification regarding new criteria for the selection of a judge at the ECtHR"), Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms, 5 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4qBqzMI.

(ECHR).[295] In the first seven months of 2026, the ECtHR decided on 145 applications against North Macedonia, of which 140 were rejected or declared inadmissible, and 5 judgments were delivered. During the reporting period, the ECtHR ruled on five significant cases concerning North Macedonia involving violations of the right to a fair trial under Article 6 of the ECHR. Four of these decisions were linked to proceedings for establishing accountability and the dismissal of judges by the Judicial Council, in which Article 6 violations occurred. In the cases Ribarev v. North Macedonia,[296] Gerovska-Popchevska v. North Macedonia,[297] Ilievska and Zdraveva v. North Macedonia,[298] and Skrcheski v. North Macedonia,[299] issues related to access to legal remedies, the application of procedural rules, jurisdiction, and the fairness of proceedings before the Judicial Council were examined. These cases once again highlight the need for disciplinary and dismissal proceedings against judges to ensure clear procedural guarantees, predictable application of the legal framework, and effective access to a remedy. Furthermore, in the fifth case, the violation of Article 6 was limited to a specific proceeding for two applicants. Namely, in the case Taleski and Others v. North Macedonia,[300] the ECtHR did not find a violation of Article 6 (1) regarding the legislative intervention that enabled the annulment of presidential pardons and the continuation of criminal proceedings. However, the Court found a violation of the right to an adversarial procedure with respect to two of the applicants due to the non-disclosure of the higher public prosecutor's submissions during the appeal proceedings.

The Ombudsperson

After several months period during which the institution operated with limited leadership capacity,[301] [302] the Assembly elected a new Ombudsperson on 23 January 2026.[303] In March, a public call was issued for the selection of eight deputy ombudspersons in the areas of Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Shtip, Bitola, and Strumica,[304] thereby initiating the process of filling leadership positions within the

295 European Court of Human Rights, "European Court of Human Rights – Country Profile," 2026, 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.

296 Case of Ribarev v. North Macedonia, Application no. 39987/22 (European Court of Human Rights, 13 November 2025), https://bit.ly/4adjPOx,.

297 Case of Gerovska-Popčevska v. North Macedonia (No. 2), Application no. 30989/20 (European Court of Human Rights, 5 May 2026), https://bit.ly/4xkhevD.

298 Case of Ilievska and Zdraveva v. North Macedonia, Applications nos. 19689/21 and 42794/22 (European Court of Human Rights, 13 November 2025), https://bit.ly/4gskSxz.

299 ase of Skrcheski v. North Macedonia, Application No. 37954/21 (European Court of Human Rights, 12 May 2026), https://bit.ly/3S6Y5xW.

300 Case of Taleski and Others v. North Macedonia, Applications Nos. 34261/23 and 7877/24 (European Court of Human Rights, 23 June 2026), https://bit.ly/4irET8y.

301 „Дали не ви треба народен правобранител, ја прашуваат власта вработените во институцијата, која од први јануари ќе згасне, оти Собранието 5 месеци не избра омбудсман" ("'Do you not need an Ombudsman?' staff ask the authorities regarding the institution, which will cease operation on 1 January because the Assembly failed to elect an Ombudsman for 5 months"), Sakam da kazham, 24 December 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/dali-ne-vi-treba-naroden-pravobranitel-ja-prashuvaat-vlasta-vrabotenite-vo-institutsijata-koja-od-prvi-januari-ke-zgasne-oti-sobranieto-5-mesetsi-ne-izbra-ombudsman/.

302 „Соопштение до јавноста за состојбите во институцијата Народен правобранител" ("Public announcement on the situation in the institution of the Ombudsman"), Official website of the Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, 24 December 2025, https://ombudsman.mk/single/announcement/sostojbite-np.

303 „Фатон Сељами е избран за нов народен правобранител" ("Faton Seljami was elected as the new Ombudsman"), 360 stepeni, 23 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/faton-selami-e-izbran-za-nov-naroden-pravobranitel/.

304 „Оглас за заменици на народен правобранител за Република Северна Македонија за подрачјето на Скопје, Куманово, Тетово, Штип, Битола и Струмица - НПР Бр.1650/1" ("Call for deputy ombudspersons for the Republic of North Macedonia for the areas of Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Shtip, Bitola, and Strumica - NPR No. 1650/1"), Official website of the Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, 23 March 2026, https://bit.ly/4gUCmBJ.

institution, which is particularly significant given that during the reporting period the institution operated without a single deputy ombudsperson. The election of a new Ombudsperson represents an important step toward stabilizing the institution, but it does not overcome long-standing structural weaknesses related to its financial and functional independence.

Criticism regarding the financial independence of the Ombudsperson institution continued during this reporting period as well. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)[305] of the Council of Europe, along with the European Commission's Progress Report,[306] recommend that the Ombudsperson manage its own budget independently rather than relying on approvals from the Ministry of Finance. In 2025, the Ombudsperson's budget was further reduced to 92.8 million denars due to the restrictive policy of the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, the allocated funds for special mechanisms were insufficient, and their full utilization for engaging experts was impeded by legal and administrative barriers. This situation leads to the institution facing obstructions in performing its essential duties.[307] Furthermore, out of 183 planned positions, only 82 were filled by December 2025. Filling less than half of the planned positions leaves the institution facing a critical need to strengthen its human resources in order to provide adequate staffing support for carrying out its legally defined mandates at all levels.

Additionally regarding functional independence, the adoption of legal amendments through the Draft Law on the Ombudsperson remains key to strengthening institutional independence and fulfilling the conditions for A-status accreditation in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles, a need that was also identified in the European Commission's Progress Report.[308] Passing the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsperson is also among the priorities of the new Ombudsperson;[309] however, by the end of the reporting period, the legal amendments had not been adopted.

In 2025, the trend of submitted complaints by area and sub-area remained nearly identical to previous years. The OOmbudsperson acted upon/reviewed a total of 2,921 complaints, of which 2,400 were received/filed in 2025 and 521 cases were carried over from the previous year. The highest number of received/filed complaints pertained to the protection of rights in the area of the judiciary, with 307 complaints (12.79%); consumer rights with 264 complaints (11%); labor relations with 219 complaints (9.13%); and children's rights with 198 complaints (8.25%).[310] A drastic increase in re-

305 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of North Macedonia Subject to Interim Follow-Up, CRI(2026)4 (Council of Europe, 2026), https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/48802ad4d0.

306 European Commission, "Commission Staff Working Document – North Macedonia Report 2025", SWD(2025) 753, 4 November 2025, https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/267b368e-6b55-4a42-bb72-6395593de4da_en?filename=north-macedonia-report-2025.pdf.

307 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2025" ("Annual report on the degree of ensuring, respecting, promoting, and protecting human rights and freedoms 2025"), (2026), https://ombudsman.mk/media/documents/GI-2025.pdf.

308 European Commission, "Commission Staff Working Document – North Macedonia Report 2025".

309 „Враќањето на довербата во народниот правобранител е приоритет – порача новиот омбудсман Фатон Сељами по стапувањето на функцијата" ("Restoring trust in the Ombudsman is a priority - said the new ombudsman Faton Seljami upon taking office"), 360 stepeni, 26 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/vrakaneto-na-doverbata-vo-narodniot-pravobranitel-e-prioritet-poracha-noviot-ombudsman-faton-selami-po-stapuvaneto-na-funktsijata/.

310 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2025" ("Annual report on the degree of ensuring, respecting, promoting, and protecting human rights and freedoms 2025").

ceived/filed complaints in 2025 was recorded in the area of environment due to a series of ecological incidents that occurred in the country. Among the initial initiatives of the Ombudsperson was the activity aimed at harmonizing the laws regulating the bar examination in the Albanian language, including legal practice, notary services, and enforcement agents.[311]

Torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

In February 2026, in the case of "Musliu v. North Macedonia",[312] the Government acknowledged a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR through a unilateral declaration in a case involving physical ill-treatment of a convicted person by a prison officer and the absence of an effective investigation. The case further confirms the deficiencies in the mechanisms for preventing, reporting, and investigating allegations of ill-treatment within the penitentiary system.[313]

In 2025, the Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) acted upon 57 submissions alleging the use of physical force by police officers against citizens, of which 4 complaints were substantiated as the criminal offense of "Ill-treatment in the performance of duty".[314] Although institutional mechanisms exist for handling allegations of police misconduct, there remains a need for timely, independent, and effective investigations and appropriate follow-up action in cases of alleged torture, ill-treatment, and unlawful use of means of coercion.

In 2025, the Ombudsperson acted upon 34 cases regarding torture, inhumane, and degrading treatment by police officers and prison police officers, which is a significant increase from 2024, when there were 25 cases.[315] Concurrently, 27 complaints were submitted by convicted individuals, detainees, or their family members regarding physical ill-treatment, excessive use of force, or humiliating and degrading behavior towards them, committed by prison police officers. The rise in the number of cases and complaints further underscores the need for effective investigation of ill-treatment allegations and for providing functional and independent oversight mechanisms. Additionally, the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) continues to face a severe staffing deficit with only three employees, which is further exacerbated by an inadequate public procurement system for engaging

311 „Омбудсманот со иницијатива за правосудниот испит – ДУИ: Законот за јазиците го регулира прашањето" ("The Ombudsman with an initiative for the bar examination – DUI: The Law on Languages regulates the issue"), TV 21, 31 March 2026, https://mk.tv21.tv/ombudsmanot-so-initsijativa-za-pravosudniot-ispit-dui-zakonot-za-jazitsite-go-regulira-prashaneto/ .

312 DECISION, Application No. 43315/22, Fitim MUSLIU v. North Macedonia (European Court of Human Rights, 26 February 2026), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-249030%22]}.

313 „Прва одлука на Европскиот суд за човекови права за повреда на член 3 од ЕКЧП во затворски предмет" ("First decision of the European Court of Human Rights on a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR in a prison case"), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 27 February 2026, https://mhc.org.mk/news/prva-odluka-na-evropskiot-sud-za-chovekovi-prava-za-povreda-na-chlen-3-od-ekchp-vo-zatvorski-predmet/.

314 Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards, „Извештај за работата на одделот за внатрешна контрола, криминалистички истраги, и професионални стандарди во 2025 година" ("Report on the work of the Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards in 2025"), (Ministry of Interior, 2026),https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-documents/oddel-za-vnatresna-kontrola-kriminalisticki-istragi-i-profesionalni-standardi-document-vcUK.pdf.

315 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2025" ("Annual report on the degree of ensuring, respecting, promoting, and protecting human rights and freedoms 2025").

external experts. Although the budget for 2026 has been increased to 955,000 denars compared to 2025, and cooperation has been established with UNHCR and MYLA for field support, the need for independent staff reinforcement remains critical.[316]

Prisons and detention

According to the Council of Europe's annual statistics (SPACE I), North Macedonia ranks among the group of countries with moderately overcrowded prisons, with an index of 104 inmates per 100 available places and a rate of 146 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants. At the same time, the country is at the very top in Europe regarding the average length of prison sentences, which stands at 18 months, which is double the European average of 8.8 months.[317] This twice-as-high average prison sentence compared to the European average highlights the underutilization of alternative sanctions and the restrictive approach of the judiciary in penal policy, which further contributes to prison overcrowding.

According to the data in the 2025 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson, 187 complaints were received in 2025 regarding the protection and exercise of the rights of convicted persons and detainees, as well as conditions in penitentiary institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia, pointing to overcrowding, poor hygienic conditions, and deficiencies in healthcare that violate human dignity and compromise the safety and health standards of prisoners. Despite partial renovations and construction works undertaken by the authorities, the Ombudsperson highlights that these measures remain insufficient and appeals for the urgent provision of humane and appropriate living conditions.[318] Through direct and urgent interventions by the Ombudsperson, several severe cases of rights violations involving incarcerated individuals were successfully resolved: a 14-year-old girl who had been locked up for 22 hours a day in the Idrizovo Penitentiary Institution was transferred to the Tetovo Educational-Correctional Facility in Volkovija, where appropriate living conditions were secured for her;[319] and a convicted person with an amputated leg in the Shtip prison, who was initially accommodated on the third floor, was relocated to an easily accessible cell with provided access to hospital treatment.[320] Additionally, aimed at humanizing living conditions and supporting the well-being of prisoners' children, a child-friendly area

316 Faton Seljami et al., „Годишен извештај 2025" ("Annual report 2025"), (National Preventive Mechanism - Ombudsman, 2026), https://ombudsman.mk/media/documents/NPM_Godisen_izvestaj-2025-Mk-Alb-Ang_1662f73d.pdf,.

317 „Македонија со умерено пренатрупани затвори и меѓу водечките со најдолг просек на затворски казни – годишна статистика на Советот на Европа" ("Macedonia with moderately overcrowded prisons and among the leading with the longest average prison sentences - annual statistics of the Council of Europe"), Telma TV, 19 May 2026, https://telma.com.mk/2026/05/19/makedonija-so-umereno-prenatrupani-zatvori-i-megu-vodechkite-so-najdolg-prosek-na-zatvorski-kazni-godishna-statistika-na-sovetot-na-evropa/.

318 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права 2025" ("Annual report on the degree of ensuring, respecting, promoting, and protecting human rights and freedoms 2025").

319 „14-годишното девојче што 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 Facility"), 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/.

320 „Осуденик без една нога го сместиле на третиот кат во штипскиот затвор – секој ден маки мачел со скалите" ("A convict without one leg was placed on the third floor of the Shtip prison – struggled every day with the stairs"), Sloboden pechat, 8 October 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/osudenik-bez-edna-noga-go-smestile-na-tretiot-kat-vo-shtipskiot-zatvor-sekoj-den-maki-machel-so-skalite/.

was put into operation at the Idrizovo Penitentiary Institution[321] with support from the European Union and the Council of Europe, while the female section in the Tetovo Educational-Correctional Facility was equipped through a project funded by the European Union.[322]

Deficiencies regarding inhumane conditions and overcrowding in penal-correctional facilities were also highlighted by the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). In the 2025 report, in prisons such as Idrizovo, Skopje, Shtip, Prilep, and Bitola, the number of incarcerated individuals regularly exceeds the designated capacity, leading to a drastic deterioration of material conditions, such as a lack of daylight, poor ventilation, and concerning levels of unhygienic conditions.[323] This excessive strain on prison infrastructure not only violates human dignity but also creates constant tension among prisoners, which frequently escalates into interpersonal conflicts.[324] Further confirmation of the compromised security system and security risks in the facility is the recent filing of criminal charges against five individuals, three of whom are prisoners in the Idrizovo Penitentiary Institution, for forming a terrorist organization and online glorification of ISIS.[325] Concurrently, healthcare in prisons remains at a critical level; the persistent shortage of medical staff and essential medications forces prisoners to procure their own therapy, making access to medical care one of the greatest challenges.[326] Additionally, during a visit to the "Demir Hisar" Psychiatric Hospital, it was established that individuals under criminal sanctions are being admitted who abuse and manipulate the measure of mandatory psychiatric treatment, thereby compromising security and placing pressure on staff and other patients in a facility that already struggles with poor spatial conditions and a severe shortage of medical personnel.[327]

Although certain interventions, renovations, and positive steps have been registered by the institutions, such as the pilot project for introducing telemedicine aimed at improving access to specialized healthcare for prisoners,[328] the conclusion of all relevant reports remains that partial measures are still insufficient. Additionally, one of the key systemic steps toward reducing prison overcrowding is the new Draft Law on Probation, which was published on ENER in 2025 with the objective of establishing a more efficient probation system through the expansion of alternative measures, better resocialization, and the reduction of recidivism. It is intended to harmonize regulations under the jurisdiction of the

321 „Денеска се отвора детско катче во Идризово, изградено со поддршка од ЕУ и Советот на Европа" ("Child-friendly corner opens today in Idrizovo, built with support from the EU and the Council of Europe"), Press24.Mk, 21 November 2025, https://press24.mk/deneska-se-otvora-detsko-katche-vo-idrizovo-izgradeno-so-poddrshka-od-eu-i-sovetot-na-evropa/.

322 „Создаваме подобра средина за девојчињата во ВПУ Тетово" ("Creating a better environment for girls in the Educational-Correctional Facility Tetovo"), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 20 November 2025, https://mhc.org.mk/news/sozdavame-podobra-sredina-za-devojchinjata-vo-vpu-tetovo/.

323 Faton Seljami et al., „Годишен извештај 2025" ("Annual report 2025"), (National Preventive Mechanism - Ombudsman, 2026), https://ombudsman.mk/media/documents/NPM_Godisen_izvestaj-2025-Mk-Alb-Ang_1662f73d.pdf,.

324 „Тепачка помеѓу затвореници во „Идризово" – еден е повреден" ("Fight between prisoners in 'Idrizovo' – one is injured"), 360 stepeni, 2 April 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/tepachka-pomegu-zatvorenitsi-vo-idrizovo-eden-e-povreden/.

325 „Кривична пријава за петмина, од кои тројца затвореници во Идризово, за формирање терористичка организација што го велича ИСИС на интернет" ("Criminal charges against five people, three of whom prisoners in Idrizovo, for forming a terrorist organization glorifying ISIS online"), Sakam da kazham, 17 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/krivichna-prijava-za-petmina-od-koi-trojtsa-zatvorenitsi-vo-idrizovo-za-formirane-teroristichka-organizatsija-shto-go-velicha-isis-na-internet/.

326 „Пронајден е починат осуденик во штипскиот затвор" ("Deceased convict found dead in Shtip prison"), 360 stepeni, 16 December 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/pronajden-e-pochinat-osudenik-vo-shtipskiot-zatvor/.

327 Faton Seljami et al., „Годишен извештај 2025" ("Annual report 2025").

328 „Северна Македонија иницира воведување на телемедицина во здравствената заштита во пенитенцијарните установи" ("North Macedonia initiates introduction of telemedicine in healthcare within penitentiary institutions"), Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, 23 February 2026, https://bit.ly/3UiK94E.

Sanctions Enforcement Directorate in order to address inconsistencies in legal solutions and align with international probation standards.[329] On 12 May 2026, a public hearing was also held on the draft law.[330] As a direct practical measure in this direction, the country's first case was recorded where a 79-year-old convicted person is serving a three-month home detention sentence with an electronic monitor, namely an ankle bracelet, instead of an effective prison sentence.[331] The Draft Law amending and supplementing the Law on Execution of Sanctions was published on ENER in June 2025, after which a public hearing was held in September. The proposed amendments are intended to reform the penitentiary system in line with national and international standards.[332] It has not yet been adopted.

An additional systemic challenge is presented by the fact that following the expiration of the previous National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System (2021–2025), the state has not yet adopted a new multi-year strategy and corresponding Action Plan for the period after 2025. This vacuum in the strategic framework for the 2026–2030 period leaves reforms in the penitentiary sector without clearly defined institutional priorities, deadlines, and budgetary commitments to overcome prison overcrowding and inhumane conditions.

Personal data protection

During the reporting period, important steps were taken toward fulfilling the recommendations set out in the European Commission's 2025 Progress Report. In December 2025,[333] the Committee on Election and Appointment Issues voted on a Draft Decision proposing a new Director of the Personal Data Protection Agency (PDPA), who was subsequently appointed; that same month, the Agency's Annual Work Programmes for 2026 were adopted,[334] setting the operational guidelines for the upcoming period. Aimed at strengthening the regulatory framework, draft amendments to the Law on Personal Data Protection were published on ENER in February 2026,[335] and in April 2026, the draft law entered official government procedure, initiating the final phase of its adoption.[336] This legislative text represents a crucial step toward addressing systemic observations noted in the EC report, as it secures the complete autonomy and independence of the PDPA's operations, allowing it to manage its human and financial resources without external approvals or opinions from other

329 Ministry of Justice, "Response to a request for free access to public information", 12 August 2026.

330 „Филков: Новиот Закон за пробација воспоставува поефикасен систем, посилна ресоцијализација и поголема заштита на жртвите" ("Filkov: The new Law on Probation establishes a more efficient system, stronger resocialization, and greater victim protection"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 12 May 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/novosti/filkov-noviot-zakon-za-probacija-vospostavuva-poefikasen-sistem.

331 „79-годишен велешанец, прв Македонец што ќе носи алка наместо да лежи во затвор" ("79-year-old Veles resident, first Macedonian to wear an ankle bracelet instead of serving time in prison"), 24 Vesti, 2 October 2025, https://24.mk/details/79-godishen-veleshanec-prv-makedonec-koj-kje-nosi-alka-namesto-da-lezhi-vo-zatvor.

332 Ministry of Justice, "Response to a request for free access to public information", 12 August 2026.

333 „Накил Фетаи, предложен за нов директор на Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци" ("Nakil Fetai proposed as new director of the Personal Data Protection Agency"), MIA, 2 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4qBlfs.

334 „Донесени годишни програми за работа на Агенцијата за 2026 година" ("Adopted annual work programmes of the Agency for 2026"), Official Website of the Personal Data Protection Agency, 15 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4wQhX6C.

335 „Предлог-измените на Законот за заштита на личните податоци се објавени на ЕНЕР" ("Draft amendments to the Law on Personal Data Protection published on ENER"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 19 February 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/predlog-izmenite-na-zakonot-za-zastita-na-licnite-podatoci-se-objaveni-na-ener.

336 „Законот за заштита на личните податоци влегува во владина процедура" ("Law on Personal Data Protection enters government procedure"), Official website of the Ministry of Justice, 27 April 2026, https://www.pravda.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/zakonot-za-zastita-na-licnite-podatoci-vleguva-vo-vladina-procedura.

state institutions, fully aligned with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and EC recommendations. Additionally, the legislative amendments will enable the successful implementation of the Personal Data Protection Strategy 2025–2030.

However, despite positive legislative initiatives, the PDPA continues to face a series of systemic challenges. According to its 2025 Annual Report, the PDPA suffers from a significant shortage of human resources, operating with only (17 employees, representing just 30% of its systematized job positions filled). This severe staffing deficit directly conflicts with the continuous increase in workload: in 2025, a total of 147 complaints were filed overall, while citizen complaints and reports specifically concerning social media reached 229, of which 8 pertained to violations of children's personal data protection rights on social platforms. Based on the grounds for reporting, the most characteristic complaints from natural persons relate to fake profiles, hacked profiles, the unauthorized publishing of personal photos, video, and audio recordings on 20 third-party social media profiles, as well as online insults, defamation, and blackmail.[337] Regarding the implementation of the Personal Data Protection Strategy 2025–2030, the PDPA Annual Report notes that the foundations for operational execution were established in 2025 by aligning annual work programs and expanding educational activities to raise awareness and foster a culture of data protection. The Agency stresses that the dynamic and full realization of its strategic objectives until 2030 remains seriously undermined by the critical lack of human resources and insufficient inter-institutional cooperation.

Provide effective investigations and accountability for torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, and improve conditions in penitentiary institutions, particularly healthcare, material conditions, and staffing capacities, with broader application of probation and alternative sanctions.

Strengthen the independence, staffing, and financial capacities of independent human rights institutions, particularly the Ombudsperson and the PDPA, through adequate resources and transparent, merit-based selection and appointment procedures.

Adopt the Draft Law on the Ombudsperson to enable autonomous management of financial and human resources without prior approvals from the Ministry of Finance, which is a condition for acquiring "A-status" under the UN Paris Principles.

Finalize the selection procedure for the Ombudsperson's deputies for regional offices in a timely manner, in order to ensure the full and uninterrupted functioning of regional networks for the protection of citizens' rights, through merit-based selection and appointment procedures.

It is necessary to create conditions for strengthening the capacities of the National Preventive Mechanism, through a gradual increase in the number of employees and the easing of procedures for engaging external experts for field visits.

Prepare and adopt a new National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System for the period beyond 2025, accompanied by an appropriate Action Plan and allocated budgetary resources to address overcrowding and improve prison conditions.

Strengthen the staffing capacity of the Agency for Personal Data Protection to enable more effective handling of the growing number of complaints from citizens concerning social networks, digital abuse and the protection of personal data.

337 Personal Data Protection Agency, „Годишен извештај за 2025 година" ("Annual Report for 2025"), (2026), https://azlp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/AZLP-Godisen-izvestaj-2025-%D0%9C%D0%9A.pdf.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression and media freedom during the reporting period continued to face structural challenges, including political polarization, pressure and disparaging public discourse directed at journalists, the risk of SLAPP lawsuits, and the limited economic sustainability of media outlets.[338] In the 2026 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, North Macedonia dropped from 42nd to 45th place and was classified in the "problematic" category.[339] The closure of the Macedonian service of Radio Free Europe in March 2026 due to financial constraints further reduced the number of newsrooms providing independent news reporting, with potential repercussions for media pluralism.[340] Public opinion research conducted by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) confirmed that citizens increasingly rely on social media and television for news, while simultaneously exhibiting a low level of trust in news reporting.[341]

Regarding the election process, during the period from October to December 2025, the AAVMS conducted monitoring of media coverage, noting occasional exceptions to balanced reporting,[342] and initiated misdemeanor proceedings against several television stations for violations of election silence.[343] [344] During the same period, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) requested urgent institutional protection and unhindered access for media workers due to obstructions faced during their accreditation at polling stations.[345]

Implementation of legislation/institutions

On the institutional and regulatory front, steps were taken toward aligning with modern digital trends through the opening of a public consultation[346] on the draft and the final adoption of the

338 „Македонија падна за 3 места во Индексот за слобода на медиумите на Репортери без граници, сега е во групата со „проблематична" состојба, а за првпат пола свет е во „тешка" или „многу сериозна" состојба" ("Macedonia dropped 3 places in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, now in the group with a 'problematic' status, while for the first time half the world is in a 'difficult' or 'very serious' situation"), Sakam da kazham, 30 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/makedonija-padna-za-3-mesta-vo-indeksot-za-sloboda-na-mediumite-na-reporteri-bez-granitsi-sega-e-vo-grupata-so-problematichna-sostojba-a-za-prvpat-pola-svet-e-vo-teshka-ili-mnogu-seriozna-sostojba/.

339 "World Press Freedom Index – North Macedonia," Reporters Without Borders, 7 May 2026, https://rsf.org/en/country/north-macedonia.

340 „Се затвора македонскиот сервис на Радио Слободна Европа" ("The Macedonian service of Radio Free Europe is closing"), Sakam da kazham, 25 March 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/se-zatvora-makedonskiot-servis-na-radio-slobodna-evropa/.

341 „Истражувањето на мислењето на јавноста за медиумите во фокусот на јавниот состанок на АВМУ" ("Public opinion research on media featured at AAVMS public meeting"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 30 March 2026, https://bit.ly/3SW21Sk .

342 „Изготвен извештај за предизборното медиумско претставување од 10 август до 28 септември 2025" ("Report prepared on pre-election media coverage from 10 August to 28 September 2025"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 7 October 2025, https://bit.ly/3UaM6Qz.

343 „АВМУ: Поведени се прекршочни постапки против две телевизии за прекршување на изборниот молк" ("AAVMS: Misdemeanor proceedings initiated against two television stations for violation of election silence"), 360 stepeni, 19 October 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/avmu-povedeni-se-prekrshochni-postapki-protiv-dve-televizii-za-prekrshuvane-na-izborniot-molk/.

344 „АВМУ поведе прекршочни постапки против уште две телевизии за непочитување на изборниот молк" ("AAVMS initiated misdemeanor proceedings against two more television stations for non-compliance with election silence"), 360 stepeni, 20 October 2025, https://360stepeni.mk/avmu-povede-prekrshochni-postapki-protiv-ushte-dve-televizii-za-nepochituvane-na-izborniot-molk/.

345 „ЗНМ: Да се обезбеди почитување и непречена работа на медиумските работници на гласачките места" ("AJM: Respect and unhindered work for media workers at polling stations must be ensured"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 19 October 2025, https://bit.ly/3UlZyB5.

346 „Отворена јавна расправа за Нацрт-водич за инфлуенсер(к)и, влогер(к)и, креатор(к)и на содржини" ("Public consultation opened on the Draft Guidelines for influencers, vloggers, and content creators"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 21 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4y5dnT3.

Guidelines for Influencers, Vloggers, and Content Creators,[347] which ensure compliance with the provisions of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and related bylaws by influencers, vloggers, and content creators; as well as through the appointment of a new Director of the AAVMS[348] in December 2025. Additionally, in May 2026, consultations began on the new Draft Code of Journalists of Macedonia.[349] The Code was promoted after the conclusion of the reporting period. A positive step was the formation of a government working group in January to establish a mechanism for protection against the abuse of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP).[350] The working group held its first meeting in March.[351]

Public Broadcasting Service

The management and reform process of the Macedonian Radio-Television (MRT) reached a key turning point with the announcement of a public call for the selection of a new Director and Deputy Director.[352] The journalistic community insisted that the entire process be conducted through a fully transparent, lawful and credible procedure.[353] Following the review of candidates, the Programme Council elected a new Director.[354] Meanwhile, the call for Deputy Director was annulled because none of the candidates received the required number of votes,[355] prompting the announcement of a new public call.[356] During public debates on the future of the public broadcaster, the new Director announced measures to modernise the institution, rejuvenate its workforce and advance digitalisation. At the same time, journalists' associations warned that the government's proposed amendments to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, aimed at reducing the funding base, could seriously jeopardise reforms and the financial independence of both MRT and the media regulator.[357]

Pressure on journalists

During the period covered by the report, intense and multifaceted pressure on journalists and media outlets was observed, which negatively impacts free reporting.

347 „Усвоен Водич за инфлуенсер(к)и, влогер(к)и, креатор(к)и на содржини" ("Adopted Guidelines for influencers, vloggers, and content creators"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 25 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4xmOEJN.

348 „Избран директор на Агенцијата за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги" ("Director elected for the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 26 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4gwPFYN.

349 „НОВИОТ НАЦРТ-КОДЕКС НА НОВИНАРИТЕ НА МАКЕДОНИЈА ОТВОРЕН ЗА КОМЕНТАРИ" ("The new Draft Code of Journalists of Macedonia open for comments"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 5 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4wVi3Kj.

350 „Владата формира работна група за воспоставување механизам за заштита од злоупотребата на т.н. стратешки тужби против јавното учество" ("Government forms working group to establish a mechanism for protection against the abuse of so-called strategic lawsuits against public participation"), Nezavisen, 27 January 2026, https://nezavisen.mk/vladata-formira-rabotna-grupa-za-vospostavuvanje-mehanizam-za-zashtita-od-zloupotrebata-na-t-n-strateshki-tuzhbi-protiv-javnoto-uchestvo/.

351 „Владата го отвори процесот за анти-SLAPP механизам: сега се очекуваат конкретни решенија" ("Government initiates process for anti-SLAPP mechanism: concrete solutions now expected"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 26 March 2026, https://bit.ly/4hXa2R9.

352 „Јавен конкурс за избор на Директор на МРТ и Заменик на директорот на МРТ" ("Public call for the election of a Director of MRT and a Deputy Director of MRT"), Macedonian Radio-Television, 24 March 2026, https://mrt.com.mk/node/141446.

353 „ЗНМ: По истекот на рокот за избор во МРТ, јавноста очекува кредибилен и целосно транспарентен процес" ("AJM: Following the expiration of the MRT election deadline, the public expects a credible and fully transparent process"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 17 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4zFJo5M.

354 „По спроведен јавен конкурс, програмскиот совет избра нов директор на МРТ" ("Following a public call, the Program Council elected a new Director of MRT"), Macedonian Radio-Television, 23 April 2026, https://mrt.com.mk/node/14272.

355 „Програмскиот совет на МРТ го поништи конкурсот за заменик-директор, ќе следува нов оглас" ("The Program Council of MRT annulled the call for deputy director, a new call will follow"), Macedonian Radio-Television, 8 May 2026, https://mrt.com.mk/node/143359.

356 „Јавен конкурс за избор на заменик на директорот на МРТ" ("Public call for the election of a Deputy Director of MRT"), Macedonian Radio-Television, 15 June 2026, https://mrt.com.mk/node/144747.

357 „ЗНМ: Без стабилно финансирање нема суштински реформи во МРТ" ("AJM: Without stable funding, there are no essential reforms in MRT"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 21 May 2026, https://bit.ly/45QKduM.

Physical attacks and threats

The physical safety and personal integrity of media workers were severely threatened through several incidents. A serious incident occurred in December 2025, when a physical intrusion and attack took place in the studio of "Infomax" during a live broadcast,[358] which was condemned by political parties[359] and the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM),[360] after which the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje filed an indictment against the perpetrator.[361] Additionally, death threats,[362]

serious threats to personal safety, including direct threats to life and family,[363] forced deletion of recorded materials,[364] as well as invasion of privacy and an online smear campaign targeting a female journalist[365] were recorded. As a preventive framework, the Declaration on Enhancing the Safety of Women Journalists in the Western Balkans was adopted.[366]

Digital attacks and abuses

Digital security was severely threatened through massive bot attacks and attempts to degrade the reach of "Sloboden Pecat"'s social media profiles in November 2025,[367] as well as in January[368] and April 2026,[369] which were reported to the MoI;[370] as well as through the organized sending of unfounded reports to the Council for Media Ethics of Macedonia (CMEM).[371]

358 „Нападнати новинарите на 'Инфомакс', напаѓачот ја искршил вратата и насилно влегол за време на емисија во живо" ("Infomax journalists attacked, attacker broke the door and forcibly entered during a live broadcast"), Sakam da kazham, 11 December 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/napadnati-novinarite-na-infomaks-napagachot-ja-iskrshil-vratata-i-nasilno-vlegol-za-vreme-na-emisija-vo-zhivo/.

359 „И ВМРО-ДПМНЕ со реакција: Партијата го осудува упадот во 'Инфомакс' и бара целосно расчистување на случајот" ("VMRO-DPMNE also reacts: The party condemns the intrusion into 'Infomax' and demands full resolution of the case"), Skopje1.mk, 11 December 2025, https://skopje1.mk/i-vmro-dpmne-so-reakcija-partijata-go-osuduva-upadot-vo-infomaks-i-bara-celosno-rascistuvanje-na-slucajot.

360 „ЗНМ: Остра осуда за нападот врз редакцијата на 'Инфомакс'" ("AJM: Strong condemnation of the attack on the 'Infomax' editorial office"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 11 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4chzX2j .

361 „ОЈО Скопје поднесе обвинение против мажот што насилно упадна во студиото на порталот 'Инфомакс'" ("BPPO Skopje files indictment against man who forcibly invaded the studio of portal 'Infomax'"), Telma TV, 18 December 2025, https://telma.com.mk/2025/12/18/ojo-prodolzhen-pritvorot-na-napagachot-vrz-vrabotenite-na-infomaks/.

362 „ЗНМ бара итна реакција на институциите по заканите кон новинарот Видиновски" ("AJM demands immediate reaction from institutions following threats against journalist Vidinovski"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 3 February 2026, https://bit.ly/4y5G0zt.

363 „ЗНМ: Заканите кон Рами Мислими мора да добијат брза и ефикасна судска разрешница" ("AJM: Threats against Rami Mislimi must receive a swift and effective judicial resolution"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 15 July 2026, https://bit.ly/4cAkkTZ.

364 „ЗНМ го осудува попречувањето на новинарска екипа во Тетово и бара итна истрага" ("AJM condemns the obstruction of a journalistic crew in Tetovo and demands an immediate investigation"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 30 June 2026, https://bit.ly/4gqp2FZ.

365 „ЗНМ бара реакција од надлежните институции за случајот со новинарката Анета Блажевска" ("AJM demands a reaction from competent institutions regarding the case with journalist Aneta Blazevska"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 17 June 2026, https://bit.ly/45Tc39O.

366 „Мрежата SafeJournalists ја усвои Декларацијата за унапредување на безбедноста на новинарките од Западен Балкан" ("The SafeJournalists Network adopted the Declaration on Enhancing the Safety of Women Journalists in the Western Balkans"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 15 October 2025, https://bit.ly/4d7uJq9.

367 „Профилите на „Слободен печат" беа цел на координиран ботски напад – читателите масовно нè поддржаа" ("The profiles of 'Sloboden pechat' were the target of a coordinated bot attack – readers massively supported us"), Sloboden pechat, 7 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/profilite-na-sloboden-pechat-bea-cel-na-koordiniran-botski-napad-chitatelite-masovno-n%d1%90-poddrzhaa/.

368 „ЗНМ бара итно постапување по пријавата за онлајн напади врз 'Слободен печат'" ("AJM demands immediate action following the report of online attacks on 'Sloboden pechat'"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 5 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4zL0OOo

369 „Бараме итна истрага за серијата онлајн напади кон 'Слободен печат'" ("We demand an immediate investigation into the series of online attacks against 'Sloboden pechat'"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 7 April 2026, https://bit.ly/45PpR5f.

370 „ЗНМ поднесе пријава до МВР за малициозен онлајн напад на профилите на „Слободен печат"" ("AJM filed a report to the MoI regarding a malicious online attack on the profiles of 'Sloboden pechat'"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 15 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4bf5D8T.

371 „Советот за етика во медиумите лани разгледал 96 од добиените 244 жалби, по пожарот во Кочани во еден ден примил 140 поплаки" ("The Council for Media Ethics reviewed 96 of the 244 complaints received last year; after the Kochani fire, it received 140 complaints in a single day"), Sakam da kazham, 16 February 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/sovetot-za-etika-vo-mediumite-lani-razgledal-96-od-dobienite-244-zhalbi-po-pozharot-vo-kochani-vo-eden-den-primil-140-poplaki/.

Political pressure

Continuous pressure from political actors and high-ranking officials[372] was observed through public labeling and disqualification on TV channels in January,[373] April,[374] [375] and May[376] 2026, as well as a selective approach by state institutions such as MEPSO by denying access to certain critical media outlets.[377]

Judicial and legal pressures

During the reporting period, institutional judicial pressure continued in two cases. In January, the Basic Court Gostivar rendered a problematic verdict against a journalist for abuse of personal data due to publishing a judge's name.[378] In February, the pressure on investigative journalism culminated with the decision of the Appellate Court Skopje,[379] which raised concerns at both national[380] and international levels;[381] an additional indirect pressure was represented by the statement from the BPPO generally requesting restraint when commenting on the trial in the "Pulse" case.[382]

372 „Функционерите да се однесуваат со почит кон новинарите" ("Officials to show respect towards journalists"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 26 March 2026, https://bit.ly/3UZkQoe.

373 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Остра осуда за континуираните напади и етикетирања на новинари и медиуми" ("AJM and SSNM: Strong condemnation of continuous attacks and labeling of journalists and media"), Official Website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 21 January 2026, https://bit.ly/3UoLcQv.

374 „Медиумите одговараат пред својата публика, а не пред партиите" ("The media are accountable to their audience, not to political parties"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 3 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4gzLJq6.

375 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Политичките партии не смеат јавно да таргетираат новинари и медиуми" ("AJM and SSNM: Political parties must not publicly target journalists and media"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 14 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4gnVOaR.

376 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Персоналните политички пресметки со новинари и медиуми стануваат загрижувачка пракса" ("AJM and SSNM: Personal political reckonings with journalists and media are becoming a worrying practice"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 12 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4qG80XQ.

377 „ЗНМ: Јавните институции мора да обезбедат еднаков пристап за сите медиуми" ("AJM: Public institutions must ensure equal access for all media"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 8 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4cba4RS.

378 „Соопштение за јавност" ("Press release"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 31 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4gZd4Dm.

379 „Апелација пресуди во корист на Анѓушев – ја одби жалбата на ИРЛ за тужбата од бизнисменот дека бил клеветен пред пет години" ("Appellate Court ruled in favor of Angjushev – rejected IRL's appeal regarding the lawsuit by the businessman claiming defamation five years ago"), 360 stepeni, 25 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/apelatsija-presudi-vo-korist-na-angushev-ja-odbi-zhalbata-na-irl-za-tuzhbata-od-biznismenot-deka-bil-kleveten-pred-pet-godini/.

380 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Одбивањето на жалбата на ИРЛ од Апелациското суд Скопје дополнително нè мотивира да стоиме зад истражувачкото новинарство" ("AJM and SSNM: The rejection of IRL's appeal by the Appellate Court Skopje further motivates us to stand behind investigative journalism"), 360 stepeni, 25 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/znm-i-ssnm-odbivane-na-zhalbata-na-irl-od-apelatsiski-ot-sud-skopje-dopolnitelno-ne-motivira-da-stoime-zad-istrazhuvachkoto-novinarstvo/.

381 „МФН и ЕФН: Апелациското суд ги нарушува принципите на слободното новинарство" ("IFJ and EFJ: The Appellate Court violates the principles of free journalism"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 27 February 2026, https://bit.ly/4qFBwgq.

382 „ЗНМ и ССНМ: Повикот на ОЈО за „воздржаност" може негативно да се протолкува" ("AJM and SSNM: BPPO's call for 'restraint' may be interpreted negatively"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 29 March 2026, https://bit.ly/46sFJdZ.

Self-regulation and professional standards

Parallel to external pressures, the reporting period emphasized the need for consistent adherence to the Code of Ethics. Issues regarding professional standards were raised through the reaction of the Council of Honor of AJM regarding unethical reporting in the case of the deceased student,[383] reactions to vulgar speech in podcasts,[384] and inappropriate conduct at a press conference,[385] confirming that strengthening self-regulation is key to maintaining media credibility.

Strengthen media freedom and independence and the protection of journalists through timely action on threats and attacks.

The Government and Assembly should guarantee a stable, predictable, and fully independent funding model for the Macedonian Radio-Television (MRT) and the AAVMS, thereby safeguarding their editorial independence, digitalization, and ongoing reform processes.

Accelerate the dynamics and work of the dedicated working group on strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) to timely define concrete legal and institutional mechanisms that prevent unfounded judicial proceedings and protect investigative journalism.

Strengthen media self-regulation by finalizing and adopting the new Code of Journalists, alongside the consistent application of the Guidelines for Influencers and Content Creators.

383 „Одлука на Советот на честа на ЗНМ по претставките против новинарот Невриј Адеми" ("Decision of the Council of Honor of AJM regarding the complaints against journalist Nevrij Ademi"), Official website of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, 14 November 2025, https://bit.ly/3NL2d3R.

384 „Соопштение за јавност" ("Press release"), Official website of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 16 June 2026, https://bit.ly/4gp71Ib.

385 „ЗНМ реагира за однесувањето на новинар на прес-конференција во Тетово" ("AJM reacts to the behavior of a journalist at a press conference in Tetovo"), Radio MOF, 25 March 2026, https://www.radiomof.mk/znm-reagira-za-odnesuvanjeto-na-novinar-na-pres-konferencija-vo-tetovo/.

Rights of the child

During the reporting period, certain strategic and legislative reform processes were undertaken. In April 2026, the process for drafting the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee commenced, aimed at overcoming barriers faced by the most vulnerable categories of children.[386] As an additional sectoral development, in March 2026, the new National Education Strategy 2026–2032 was adopted,[387] a process that began in November 2025.[388]

According to the State Statistical Office (SSO),[389] the number of reported children in conflict with the law in 2025 increased by 3.9% compared to 2024, whereas the number of children convicted of criminal offenses decreased by 34.7%. A total of 505 children were reported, of whom 196 were convicted after being found guilty primarily of offenses against property, life and body, public traffic safety, public order, sexual freedom and morality, and human health. Despite the higher number of reported children in conflict with the law, the NPM annual report shows a lack of specially equipped child-interview rooms in police stations. In most visited police stations, such rooms do not exist, resulting in interviews being conducted in the standard offices of juvenile delinquency inspectors. This institutional inadequacy constitutes a direct violation of child-friendly justice standards, as the lack of a child-friendly environment increases stress, intimidation, and the risk of secondary traumatization for children in conflict with the law.

A critical review of children's health rights is underscored in UNICEF's global report, according to which as many as 99.9% of children in North Macedonia are exposed to harmful air pollution, droughts, and extreme heatwaves.[390] Additionally, regarding reproductive rights, the phenomenon of early pregnancies remains a significant concern. Data published in late December show that births among mothers under 15 years of age in North Macedonia remain significantly above the European Union average.[391] This indicates a deep systemic failure in prevention, health, and reproductive education in schools, as well as limited access to health and social services for minors, directly threatening their physical and psychological development.

386 „Одржана првата работилница за развој на Национален акциски план за Европска гаранција за деца" ("First workshop held for the development of the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee"), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics, and Youth, 6 April 2026, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/odrzana-prvata-rabotilnica-za-razvoj-na-nacionalen-akciski-plan-za-evropska-garancija-za-deca.

387 „Усвоена е новата Стратегија за образование 2026-2032" ("The new Education Strategy 2026–2032 has been adopted"), Official website of the Ministry of Education and Science, 26 March 2026, https://mon.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/usvoena-e-nova-strategija-za-obrazovanie-2026-2032.

388 „Јаневска: изработивме нова Стратегија за образование, преку ЕНЕР ја ставаме на јавен увид и можност за дополнување" ("Janevska: We have drafted a new Education Strategy, putting it up for public consultation and feedback via ENER"), Official website of the Ministry of Education and Science, 24 November 2025, https://mon.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/janevska-izrabotivme-nova-strategija-za-obrazovanie-preku-ener-ja-stavame-na-javen-uvid-i-moznost-za-dopolnuvanje.

389 „Пријавени, обвинети и осудени полнолетни сторители на кривични дела и деца во судир со законот, 2025 година" ("Reported, accused and convicted adult perpetrators of criminal offences and children in conflict with the law, 2025"), Official website of the State Statistical Office, 28 May 2026, https://bit.ly/45PUXJY.

390 „Децата во Македонија се изложени на загаден воздух и суша, вели нов извештај на УНИЦЕФ" ("Children in Macedonia exposed to polluted air and drought, says new UNICEF report"), Sakam da kazham, 16 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/detsata-vo-makedonija-se-izlozheni-na-zagaden-vozduh-i-susha-veli-nov-izveshtaj-na-unitsef/.

391 „12 foshnje nga nëna nën 15 vjeç në një vit: Shtatzënitë e hershme në RMV, mbi mesataren e BE-së" ("12 babies born to mothers under 15 years old in one year: Early pregnancies in Republic of North Macedonia above the EU average"), Portalb, 29 December 2025, https://portalb.mk/12-foshnje-nga-nena-nen-15-vjec-ne-nje-vit-shtatzenite-e-hershme-ne-rmv-mbi-mesataren-e-be-se-2/.

The most critical and concerning aspect in the section on children's rights relates to the alarming prevalence of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. The Ombudspersons's analysis of child sexual abuse in the Republic of North Macedonia[392] shows that child sexual abuse is an ongoing and systemic problem, with a total of 508 cases of child sexual abuse recorded between 2020 and 2024, involving 455 girls and 52 boys. In 2025, 98 child victims were recorded. During the reporting period, there were a series of child sexual abuse cases, further confirming the findings of previous years: multiple sexual abuse of a 16-year-old girl by her stepfather;[393] human trafficking and sexual exploitation of a 15-year-old girl, which resulted in the detention of suspects and criminal proceedings;[394] group brutal rape and mistreatment of a 13-year-old girl in the Negotino region;[395] blackmail with explicit videos and rape of a 14-year-old girl by a school employee in Gostivar;[396] rape of a minor in Tetovo;[397] blackmail with explicit videos and rape of a minor in the Kumanovo region;[398] assault and forcing a minor into sexual acts;[399] sexual harassment of a sister by her brother;[400] rape of a minor and transmission of an infectious disease in Karbinci;[401] and an investigation into the continuous rape of a 12-year-old girl in Bitola.[402] All these incidents signal serious lapses in prevention and highlight the necessity of urgently strengthening the protection network for children. Despite

392 Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Сексуална злоупотреба на децата во Република Северна Македонија: Состојба, институционален одговор и предизвици" ("Child Sexual Abuse in the Republic of North Macedonia: Current Situation, Institutional Response and Challenges"), (2026), https://ombudsman.mk/media/documents/Seksualna%20zloupotreba%20na%20decata%20vo%20RSM.pdf.

393 „Очувот сексуално ја злоупотребувал 16-годишната поќерка, таа барала помош од мајка си, која не го пријавила ниту го спречила" ("The stepfather sexually abused his 16-year-old stepdaughter, she sought help from her mother, who neither reported nor prevented it"), Sakam da kazham, 4 November 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ochuvot-seksualno-ja-zloupotrebuval-16-godishnata-pokerka-taa-barala-pomosh-od-majka-si-koja-ne-go-prijavila-nitu-go-sprechila/.

394 „Притвор за петмина мажи што плаќале за секс со 15-годишно девојче, меѓу кои и за нејзиниот дечко кој ја дрогирал и ја проституирал" ("Detention for five men who paid for sex with a 15-year-old girl, including her boyfriend who drugged her and forced her into prostitution"), Sakam da kazham, 24 December 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pritvor-za-petmina-klienti-na-15-godishno-devojche-megu-koi-i-za-nejziniot-dechko-koj-ja-drogiral-i-ja-prostituiral/.

395 „Четири лица брутално силувале 13-годишно девојче во Неготинско – ОЈО Кавадарци поведе истрага и бара притвор" ("Four people brutally raped a 13-year-old girl in the Negotino region – Public Prosecutor's Office Kavadarci initiated an investigation and requested detention"), 360 stepeni, 29 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/chetiri-litsa-brutalno-siluvale-13-godishno-devojche-vo-negotinsko-ojo-kavadartsi-povede-istraga-i-bara-pritvor/.

396 „28-годишник силувал 14-годишно девојче, па објавувал експлицитни видеа, Обвинителството бара притвор" ("A 28-year-old raped a 14-year-old girl and published explicit videos, Prosecutor's Office requests detention"),Sakam da kazham, 26 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor-za-28-godishnik-koj-siluval-14-godishno-devojche-a-potoa-objavuval-eksplitsitni-videa/.

397 „Осумнаесетгодишен скопјанец силувал девојче: Таткото пријавил по пет месеци" ("An eighteen-year-old from Skopje raped a girl: The father reported it after five months"), Sloboden pechat, 10 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/osumnaesetgodishen-spjanec-siluval-devojche-tatkoto-prijavil-po-pet-meseci/.

398 „Обвинителството бара притвор за две лица од Слупчане – силувале малолетничка, па за пари ја уценувале со експлицитни фотографии" ("Prosecution requests detention for two people from Slupchane – raped a minor, then blackmailed her for money with explicit photos"), 360 stepeni, 10 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor-za-dve-litsa-od-slupchane-siluvale-maloletnichka-pa-za-pari-ja-utsenuvale-so-eksplitsitni-fotografii/.

399 „Штипјанец нападнал и принудувал 16-годишно девојче на полови дејства, Обвинителството бара притвор" ("A man from Shtip attacked and forced a 16-year-old girl into sexual acts, Prosecution requests detention"), 360 stepeni, 21 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/shtipjanets-napadnal-i-prinuduval-16-godishno-devojche-na-polovi-dejstvija-obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor/.

400 „Малолетник од Гостивар една година сексуално ја вознемирувал и ја силувал својата помала сестра" ("A minor from Gostivar sexually harassed and raped his younger sister for a year"), Sakam da kazham, 29 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/maloletnik-od-gostivar-edna-godina-seksualno-ja-voznemiruval-i-siluval-svojata-pomala-sestra/.

401 „Приведен 33-годишник од Карбинци – со месеци силувал малолетничка и ѝ пренел заразна болест" ("33-year-old man detained in Karbinci – raped a minor for months and transmitted an infectious disease to her"), 360 stepeni, 10 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/priveden-33-godishnik-od-karbintsi-so-mesetsi-siluval-maloletnichka-i-prenel-zarazna-bolest/.

402 „Силувал 12-годишно девојче, а се допишувале и на социјалните мрежи – ОЈО Битола отвори истрага" ("Raped a 12-year-old girl, and they also communicated on social networks – BPPO Bitola opened an investigation"), 360 stepeni, 13 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/siluval-12-godishno-devojche-a-se-dopishuvale-i-na-sotsijalnite-mrezhi-ojo-bitola-otvori-istraga/.

the adoption and preparation of new strategic documents, the key challenge remains their effective implementation and the provision of an accessible, coordinated child-friendly protection system. Sexual violence and exploitation of children, as well as deficiencies in dealing with children in conflict with the law, remain a particular concern.

Vulnerable groups and the principle of non-discrimination

Regarding the anti-discrimination framework, the implementation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2022–2026 continues to face serious institutional and operational stagnation. This standstill was also noted in the European Commission's Progress Report, which highlighted a lack of visible impact from the strategy itself. In January 2026, after significant delays caused by inter-institutional disagreements, the Action Plan 2025–2026 for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2022–2026 was adopted.[403] The Annual Implementation Report for the 2025–2026 Action Plan, issued by the National Coordinating Body, highlights a substantial implementation gap: out of 69 planned activities for 2025, only 19 were carried out, while 30 activities remained unimplemented. Priority Area 1 (Advancing the Legal Framework) shows an especially concerning dynamic, with 55% of its planned activities left unimplemented. Delays in adopting operational documents, poor inter-institutional coordination, and structural underfunding from the state budget are cited as the main obstacles to progress. Consequently, the entire national system for protection against discrimination remains heavily reliant on international donor project funding.[404]

Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination

During the reporting period, the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD) was marked by handling a significant number of cases and establishing discrimination across various fields, as well as by persistent challenges related to its institutional and financial independence and the selection procedure for its members. In this reporting period, the parliamentary procedure for selecting new members attracted particular public attention and drew reactions from civil society organizations regarding the application of legal criteria, expertise, and the independence of the proposed candidates. At the same time, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), along with accepted recommendations from the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council, highlighted the ongoing lack of financial autonomy facing both the CPPD and the Ombudsperson. This includes their dependence on Ministry of Finance approval to utilize budgeted funds, which directly restricts their financial independence.

403 National Coordinating Body for Monitoring the Situation with Non-Discrimination and the Implementation of Laws, Bylaws, and Strategic Documents in this Field, „ГОДИШЕН ИЗВЕШТАЈ за 2025 година за спроведување на активностите од Акциски план 2025-2026 за спроведување на Националната стратегија за еднаквост и недискриминација 2022-2026" ("ANNUAL REPORT for 2025 on the implementation of activities from the Action Plan 2025-2026 for the implementation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2022-2026"), (Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics and Youth), (2026), https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/ednakvi-moznosti/nediskriminacija.

404 Ibid.

Procedure for selecting members of the CPPD

In November 2025, in accordance with the statutory principle of rotation, the members of the CPPD elected a new President of the Commission.[405] However, significantly greater public attention during the reporting period was drawn to the selection procedure for new members of the CPPD. Following the public call published in December 2025 to select three members,[406] the Network for Protection against Discrimination called on the Assembly to ensure the election of qualified and independent members through a transparent process.[407] After conducting a public hearing with the candidates,[408] the proposed selection of one of the candidates sparked public reaction from the Network,[409] which questioned her knowledge of fundamental international human rights instruments[410] and criticized the manner in which the selection was conducted. Following these critiques, she withdrew her candidacy, while the other two proposed candidates were elected as CPPD members.[411] The procedure to fill the remaining vacant seat continued through two subsequent public calls. The announcement published in March 2026 was cancelled in April,[412] with civil society representatives assessing that qualified female candidates had been unjustifiably eliminated from the selection process.[413] Following a third public call issued in April, the parliamentary committee proposed another candidate for a CPPD member.[414] The Network for Protection against Discrimination strongly contested this nomination, stating that the candidate failed to meet the statutory requirement for relevant professional experience and pointing to his previously published public views targeting LGBTI individuals and feminism.[415] Despite these objections and reactions, he was elected as a member of the CPPD in June 2026.[416]

405 „Душан Томшиќ – нов претседател на КСЗД" ("Dushan Tomshikj – new President of the CPPD"), Official website of the Commission for Protection and Prevention against Discrimination, 10 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4gCh0Zk.

406 „Одлука за објавување јавен оглас за избор на членови на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација" ("Decision on the publication of a public call for the selection of members of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 10 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4gzeN2p.

407 „Мрежата за заштита од дискриминација повика на избор на стручни и независни лица во Комисијата" ("Network for Protection against Discrimination called for the selection of expert and independent persons to the Commission"), Makfax, 26 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4qJhAJt.

408 „Јавна расправа за утврдување предлог-листа за избор на членови на КСЗД" ("Public hearing to establish a proposed list for the election of CPPD members"), MIA, 20 January 2026, https://bit.ly/45VYHcV.

409 Аврамов: Понижувачки избор на составот на Комисијата за антидискриминација" ("Avramov: Humiliating selection of the composition of the Anti-Discrimination Commission"), PRIZMA, 27 January 2026, https://prizma.mk/avramov-ponizhuvachki-izbor-na-sostav-ot-na-komisijata-za-antidiskriminatsija/.

410 „ВИДЕО: Кандидатката за борба против дискриминација ја помеша Истанбулската конвенција со Ататурк" ("VIDEO: The candidate for the fight against discrimination confused the Istanbul Convention with Ataturk"), Libertas, 27 January 2026, https://libertas.mk/video-kandidatkata-za-borba-protiv-diskriminaci-a-a-pomesha-istanbulskata-konvenci-a-so-ataturk/.

411 „Џихан Ахмед се повлече, Амдиу и Бејзароски избрани за членови на КЗСД" ("Dzhihan Ahmed withdrew, Amdiu and Bejzaroski elected as CPPD members"), Telma TV, 28 January 2026, https://telma.com.mk/2026/01/28/dhihan-ahmed-se-povleche-amdiu-i-bejzaroski-izbrani-za-chlenovi-na-kzsd/.

412 „Одлука за објавување јавен оглас за избор на член на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација" ("Decision on the publication of a public call for the selection of a member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 2 March 2026, https://bit.ly/4wSmTrq.

413 „Пропадна и вториот избор за нов член на Антидискриминациска комисија, Собранието ќе бара „подобри" кандидати" ("The second election for a new member of the Anti-Discrimination Commission also failed, the Assembly will seek 'better' candidates"), Trn.mk, 16 April 2026, https://trn.mk/izbor-antidiskriminaciska-komisija-propadna/.

414 „Одлука за објавување јавен оглас за избор на еден член на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација" ("Decision on the publication of a public call for the selection of one member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 24 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4wRM3GH.

415 „Кандидат со анти-ЛГБТ ставови и против феминизмот е предложен за член на Комисијата против дискриминација" ("Candidate with anti-LGBT views and against feminism proposed as member of the Anti-Discrimination Commission"), Sloboden pechat, 8 June 2026, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/kandidat-so-anti-lgbt-stavovi-i-protiv-pravata-na-zhenite-izbran-vo-kszd-mrezhata-za-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-so-ostra-reakcija/.

416 „КОД: Анонимно писмо го предвиде изборот на Синани во антидискриминација" ("KOD: Anonymous letter predicted the election of Sinani to the Anti-Discrimination Commission"), Telma TV, 14 June 2026, https://telma.com.mk/2026/06/14/kod-anonimno-pismo-go-predvide-izborot-na-sinani-vo-antidiskriminaczija/.

Structural independence

Given that limited human resources and a high percentage of vacant positions directly diminish the capacity to fulfill obligations in a timely manner,[417] strengthening the professional and expert staff by securing financial independence from the Ministry of Finance, particularly regarding the approval of new hires, remains crucial. This financial autonomy aligns with international recommendations and is essential for the Commission to achieve a higher level of efficiency, quality, and complete independence in its operations.[418] As part of harmonizing Macedonian legislation with EU law under the new EU directives on standards for equality bodies,[419] [420] it is important to enable the CPPD to offer alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation. These directives require the process to be impartial, adequately resourced, and structured to preserve victims' access to judicial protection. To achieve full alignment within the domestic legal system, amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination must be enacted to formally define the CPPD's mandate and resources for conducting mediation.

Scope and structure of work

According to the 2025 Annual Report,[421] the CPPD handled a total of 559 discrimination protection cases, of which 448 were new cases opened in 2025 and 111 were carried over from 2024. A total of 359 decisions were adopted on discrimination protection cases, of which 151 (42%) were opinions issued following a procedure to determine discrimination. Among these 151 opinions, discrimination was established in 56 cases (37%), while no discrimination was found in 95 cases (63%). The largest number of complaints were filed seeking protection from discrimination based on national or ethnic affiliation (22%), followed by other grounds, political belief (18%), personal status and social status (17%), education (11%), sex (10%), gender (8%), health status (8%), disability (5%), and age (5%). In terms of functional areas, the highest number of complaints were submitted regarding discrimination in work and labor relations (52%), education, science, and sports (11%), access to goods and services (10%), public information and media (10%), social security, including social protection, pension and disability insurance, health insurance, and healthcare (6%), judiciary and administration (6%), other areas (5%), membership and action in trade unions, political parties, associations, and foundations or other membership-based organizations (4%), housing (2%), and culture (2%). During the period from January to June 2026,[422] a total of 210 complaints were submitted to the CPPD, and 4 ex-officio cases

417 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Годишен извештај за работата на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација за 2025 година" ("Annual Report on the Work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2025"), (2026), https://bit.ly/4hr3Te1.

418 "Contribution within the framework of the discussion on the Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period October 2025 – June 2026)", European Policy Institute (EPI), 17 September 2026.

419 Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in access to and supply of goods and services, Official Journal of the European Union (2024), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024L1499.

420 Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, Official Journal of the European Union (2024), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202401500.

421 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Годишен извештај за работата на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација за 2025 година" ("Annual Report on the Work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2025"), (2026), https://bit.ly/4hr3Te1.

422 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, "Response to a request for free access to public information".

were opened. A total of 187 decisions were rendered on complaints and discrimination protection cases. Of these, 33 opinions established discrimination, while 61 opinions concluded that no discrimination occurred. The specific areas where discrimination was established included work and labor relations (13 cases), public information and media (9 cases), education, science, and sports (3 cases), housing (2 cases), judiciary and administration (2 cases), and access to goods and services (2 cases).

During the reporting period, several cases of discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity in employment relations stand out, where the CPPD established discrimination in multiple cases of termination of employment associated with pregnancy, including a female worker in a private company after taking sick leave due to a high-risk pregnancy,[423] a psychologist at the hospital in Struga,[424] an employee at a private university,[425] and a saleswoman who was deregistered from employment due to pregnancy.[426] Other cases where the CPPD established direct or indirect discrimination relate to discrimination against 12,000 pensioners living abroad who were excluded from the second linear pension increase,[427] intersectional harassment of a school cleaner by a supervisor,[428] harassment and racist insults toward a principal and Roma students by a parent,[429] discrimination based on origin against a physical education teacher,[430] and discrimination in employment against a female conductor.[431]

423 „Магационерка во приватна фирма е избркана од работа веднаш штом покажала документ за едномесечно боледување поради патолошка бременост, утврдена е дискриминација" ("A female warehouse worker in a private company was fired from work as soon as she showed a document for a one-month sick leave due to a high-risk pregnancy, discrimination established"), Sakam da kazham, 13 October 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/magatsionerka-vo-privatna-firma-e-izbrkana-od-rabota-vednash-shtom-pokazhala-dokument-za-ednomesechno-boleduvane-poradi-patoloshka-bremenost-utvrdena-e-diskriminatsija/.

424 „Магистерка психолог во болницата во Струга, избркана од работа кога кажала дека е бремена, од силен стрес во 27. гестациска недела го изгубила бебето" ("Female psychologist with a master's degree at the hospital in Struga, fired from work when she said she was pregnant, lost her baby due to severe stress in the 27th gestational week"), Sakam da kazham, 24 November 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/magisterka-psiholog-vo-bolnitsata-vo-struga-izbrkana-od-rabota-koga-kazhala-deka-e-bremena-od-silen-stres-vo-27-ta-gestatsiska-nedela-go-izgubila-bebeto/.

425 „Трудница отпуштена од работа на приватен универзитет, ректорот рекол дека законите се тоалет хартија во Македонија, утврдена дискриминација" ("Pregnant woman dismissed from work at a private university, the rector said that laws are toilet paper in Macedonia, discrimination established"), Sakam da kazham, 8 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/trudnitsa-otpushtena-od-rabota-na-privaten-univerzitet-rektorot-rekol-deka-zakonite-se-toalet-hartija-vo-makedonija-utvrdena-diskriminatsija/.

426 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Мислење за утврдена директна интерсекциска дискриминација 08-247/9" ("Opinion on established direct intersectional discrimination 08-247/9"), 24 June 2026, https://bit.ly/3UkwREI.

427 „Утврдена дискриминација врз 12.000 пензионери кои не го добија второто покачување од 2.500 денари, ускратувањето им го направиле недела дена пред да се донесат законските измени" ("Discrimination established against 12,000 pensioners who did not receive the second increase of 2,500 denars, the denial was made a week before the legislative changes were enacted"), Sakam da kazham, 18 November 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/utvrdena-diskriminatsija-vrz-12-000-penzioneri-koi-ne-go-dobija-vtoroto-pokachuvane-od-2-500-denari-uskratuvaneto-im-go-napravile-nedela-dena-pred-da-se-donesat-zakonskite-izmeni/.

428 „Шеф вознемирувал хигиеничарка во училиште: Ја нарекувал „нусе", „лична" и „уба"" ("Boss harassed a school cleaner: Called her 'nuse', 'pretty', and 'beautiful'"), Sloboden pechat, 24 December 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/shef-voznemiruval-higienicharka-vo-uchilishte-ja-narekuval-nuse-lichna-i-uba/.

429 „„Јас во Америка не сакав да ми учат децата со црнчишта, не па овде со ѓупчишта", родител вознемирувал директорка на училиште која го пријавила во Антидискриминациската комисија" ("'In America I didn't want my children studying with black people, let alone here with Gypsies,' a parent harassed a school principal who reported him to the Anti-Discrimination Commission"), Sakam da kazham, 1 February 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/jas-vo-amerika-ne-sakav-da-mi-uchat-detsata-so-tsrnchishta-ne-pa-ovde-so-gupchishta-roditel-voznemiruval-direktorka-na-uchilishte-koja-go-prijavila-vo-antidiskriminatsiskata-komisija/.

430 „„Нека си оди во село, часовите ќе ги дадеме на наше градско дете", рекол заменик-директор на школо за наставничка по физичко, утврдена дискриминација според потекло" ("'Let her go back to the village, we will give the classes to our city child,' said a deputy school director regarding a physical education teacher, discrimination based on origin established"), Sakam da kazham, 28 March 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/neka-si-odi-vo-selo-chasovite-ke-gi-dademe-na-nashe-gradsko-dete-rekol-zamenik-direktor-na-shkolo-za-nastavnichka-po-fizichko-utvrdena-diskriminatsija-spored-poteklo/.

431 „Диригентката Дијана Имери-Илкоска била дискриминирана од поранешниот в. д. директор на Филхармонијата Александар Котевски, утврди Комисијата за заштита" ("Conductor Dijana Imeri-Ilkoska was discriminated against by the former acting director of the Philharmonic, Aleksandar Kotevski, established the Protection Commission"), Sakam da kazham, 1 October 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/dirigentkata-dijana-imeri-ilkoska-bila-diskriminirana-od-poraneshniot-v-d-direktor-na-filharmonijata-aleksandar-kotevski-utvrdi-komisijata-za-zashtita/.

Proactive and systemic action

During the reporting period, the CPPD and civil society strengthened their focus on a proactive and systemic approach to addressing discrimination. One of the most significant outcomes of this approach was achieved in May 2026, when the Basic Civil Court rendered a judgment establishing the existence of indirect, prolonged, and intersectional discrimination against individual female farmers. The ruling confirmed unequal treatment in the exercise of health insurance rights, specifically regarding compensation during pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity leave, as well as sick leave allowance. The proceedings were initiated through a lawsuit for protection from discrimination in the public interest (actio popularis), filed by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the CPPD, with the court upholding the CPPD's opinion that the existing legal framework systemically neglects female farmers compared to other insured persons.[432] Among the ex-officio proceedings conducted in 2026 was also the case against the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, regarding the establishment of direct discrimination against a group of residents in the state-owned Pensioners' Home "Aerodrom," based on mental and physical disability and health status.[433]

In addition, in the area of regulatory initiatives, in January 2026 the CPPD submitted an initiative to the Assembly to amend the Law on Higher Education. This initiative addresses the inequality faced by doctors of medicine employed in private healthcare institutions who are prevented from entering into dual employment, unlike doctors of medicine employed in public healthcare institutions.[434]

In April 2026, the CPPD issued a General Recommendation advising public and private sector employers to ensure consistent application of legal protections for female workers during pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity, and to refrain from practices leading to their unequal or less favorable treatment during pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity in the exercise of employment rights.[435]

Additionally, the CPPD's thematic report on multiple and intersectional discrimination against Roma women in the field of work and labor relations[436] highlights their severe exclusion from the labor market, with only 8% of Roma women being employed, and a significant portion working in the informal sector without adequate social and health protection. The report also points to a lack of gender- and ethnically-disaggregated data within institutions, which complicates the identification

432 „Пресуда за системска дискриминација: индивидуалните земјоделки без еднаков пристап до здравствено осигурување, потребни се итни законски измени!" ("Judgment on systemic discrimination: individual female farmers without equal access to health insurance, urgent legislative amendments needed!"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 8 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4xygpgg.

433 „Постапка по службена должност против Фондот за пензиско и инвалидско осигурување" ("Ex-officio proceeding against the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 27 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4i0KqmC.

434 „Иницијатива за изменување и дополнување на Законот за високо образование" ("Initiative for Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Higher Education"), Official website of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 15 January 2026, https://bit.ly/4gHm6nq.

435 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „ОПШТА ПРЕПОРАКА за заштита од дискриминација на жените поради бременост, раѓање и мајчинство во работните односи" ("GENERAL RECOMMENDATION for protection against discrimination of women due to pregnancy, childbirth and maternity in labor relations"), 23 April 2026, https://bit.ly/45TB7xy.

436 Zekir Abdulov and Sevgi Idriz Muratoglu, „Тематски извештај: Повеќекратна и интерсекциска дискриминација во областа работа и работни односи кон Ромките" ("Thematic Report: Multiple and Intersectional Discrimination in the Field of Work and Labor Relations Against Romani Women), (2025), https://bit.ly/3UZDpbU.

and proof of discrimination, as well as the insufficient recognition of the gender and ethnic dimensions of discrimination in judicial practice.

The reporting period demonstrates the active execution of the CPPD's various competencies - handling complaints and ex-officio proceedings, issuing general recommendations, initiating legislative amendments, and participating in court proceedings for protection against discrimination. However, the concentration of complaints in the field of work and labor relations, the recurring cases related to pregnancy and maternity, and the findings on multiple and intersectional discrimination point to systemic issues that extend beyond individual cases and require a broader institutional and legislative response. At the same time, the CPPD's lack of financial autonomy and the problems observed in the selection process of its members remain significant challenges to guaranteeing its independence and effective functioning.

Rights of persons with disabilities

In the context of the local elections in October 2025, although the lack of conditions for accessible voting was noted back in 2024, no significant progress was achieved, leaving voters with disabilities to once again face physical and procedural barriers.[437] Analysis regarding the participation of blind persons further documented obstacles concerning voting secrecy and problematic formulations of disability.[438] As a positive accessibility step, the Assembly integrated a digital assistant on its official website.[439]

In terms of legislation, with the amendments to the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons in September 2025, persons on the autism spectrum were included for the first time,[440] allowing employers to employ them under this framework and apply for state support for workplace adaptation.[441] In the first half of 2026, institutional activities continued through the adoption and entry into force of the amendments and supplements to the Law on the System for Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in January 2026.[442] These amendments allow insured persons to personally handle social security registrations and deregistrations, while regulating the institutional updating of data and guaranteeing

437 „Локалните избори тест за државата: Ќе даде ли право на „глас" на граѓаните со попреченост?" ("Local elections a test for the state: Will it give a 'voice' to citizens with disabilities?"), Radio Free Europe, 13 October 2025, https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/izbori-poprecenost-glasanje-/33558233.html.

438 International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), „Глас без бариери: Анализа за учеството на слепите лица во изборите" ("Voice Without Barriers: Analysis of the Participation of Blind Persons in Elections"), (2025), https://bit.ly/3UeHDwe.

439 "Asistent digjital në ueb-faqen e Kuvendit të RMV-së për personat me aftësi të kufizuar" ("Digital assistant on the website of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia for persons with disabilities"), Portalb, 20 December 2025, https://portalb.mk/asistent-digjital-ne-ueb-faqen-e-kuvendit-te-rmv-se-per-personat-me-aftesi-te-kufizuar/.

440 Закон за изменување на Законот за вработување на инвалидни лица ("Law on Amending the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 192/2025" https://slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/a6c7aff5638b-40baa548ad9646084651.pdf.

441 „Лицата со аутистичен спектар на нарушување влегоа во закон, фирмите ќе можат да ги користат нивните дарби и способности, за посебен простор и опрема ќе им помага државата" ("Persons on the autism spectrum entered the law, companies will be able to use their talents and abilities, the state will assist them with special space and equipment"), Sakam da kazham, 12 October 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/litsata-so-autistichen-spektar-na-narushuvane-vlegoa-vo-zakon-firmite-ke-mozhat-da-gi-koristat-nivnite-darbi-i-sposobnosti-za-poseben-prostor-i-oprema-ke-im-pomaga-drzhavata/.

442 Указ за прогласување на Законот за изменување и дополнување на Законот за системот за проценка на лица со попреченост, ("Decree for the Promulgation of the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on the System for Assessment of Persons with Disabilities"), Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 13/2026"). https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/zakoni-mstp-file-jq34.pdf.

the right of insured persons to be notified and to correct errors. Furthermore, deadlines for technical changes are precisely defined, and inspection oversight by the State Labour Inspectorate and the State Administrative Inspectorate is strengthened.[443] This process was welcomed by UNICEF as a step forward toward advancing rights and the functional assessment of children.[444] Additionally, in March 2026, the Health Insurance Fund (HIF), in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics, and Youth (MSPDY), established a temporary mechanism exempting persons with disabilities from co-payments directly through the "Moe Osiguruvanje" (My Insurance) system.[445]

However, in reality, concerning examples of systemic discrimination and bureaucratic irrationabilities persist. In the field of education and the exercise of the right to work, discrimination was determined in May 2026 after young people with developmental disabilities were rejected when applying for an internship measure, as their completed education in a specialized secondary school was formally treated as "incomplete secondary education."[446] Additionally, a case of discrimination and harassment was registered against a 21-year-old person with Down syndrome employed by the City of Skopje,[447] which prompted protests by parents.[448] This inclusion issue is further confirmed by an opinion from the CPPD establishing indirect discrimination and a failure to provide reasonable accommodation for an autistic child who was left without an educational assistant for more than a year and a half.[449] The problem is equally pronounced in daily life, where the CPPD determined discrimination based on disability through the denial of access to infrastructure, goods, and serves, as well as the refusal to provide reasonable accommodation in housing.[450] This institutional pressure is complemented by a financial-administrative aspect under which the state loses over two million

443 „Со законски измени – до посилен систем, поефикасни права и услуги за сите" ("Through legal amendments – toward a stronger system, more efficient rights and services for all"), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics and Youth, 27 January 2026, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/so-zakonski-izmeni-do-posilen-sistem-poefikasni-prava-i-uslugi-za-site.

444 „Нови измени на Законот за системот за проценка на лица со попреченост овозможуваат унапредување на правата на децата" ("New amendments to the Law on the System for Assessment of Persons with Disabilities enable the advancement of children's rights"), UNICEF North Macedonia, 2 February 2026, https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/mk/soopstenija/novi-izmeni-na-zakonot-za-sistemot-za-procenka-na-lica-so-poprechenost-ja-zajaknuvaat.

445 „ФЗО: Лицата со попреченост ќе го остваруваат правото на ослободување од партиципација преку системот „Мое осигурување"" ("HIF: Persons with disabilities will exercise their right to exemption from co-payment through the 'Moe Osiguruvanje' system"), 360 stepeni, 13 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/fzo-litsata-so-poprechenost-ke-go-ostvaruvaat-pravoto-na-osloboduvane-od-partitsipatsija-preku-sistemot-moe-osiguruvane/.

446 „Млади со попреченост одбиени за помош за практикантство оти државата не им ги признава државните дипломи за завршено средно образование, утврдена дискриминација" ("Youths with disabilities rejected for internship support because the state does not recognize their state diplomas for completed secondary education, discrimination established"), Sakam da kazham, 29 May 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/mladintsi-so-poprechenost-odbieni-za-pomosh-za-praktikantstvo-oti-drzhavata-ne-im-gi-priznava-drzhavnite-diplomi-za-zavrsheno-sredno-obrazovanie-utvrdena-diskriminatsija/.

447 „21-годишниот Никола Стојановски, со Даунов синдром, бил бутнат и малтретиран од колега во Град Скопје, институциите еден месец молчат" ("21-year-old Nikola Stojanovski, with Down syndrome, was pushed and harassed by a colleague at the City of Skopje, institutions remain silent for a month"), Sakam da kazham, 28 October 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/21-godishniot-nikola-stojanovski-so-daunov-sindrom-bil-butnat-i-maltretiran-od-kolega-vo-grad-skopje-institutsiite-eden-mesets-molchat/.

448 „„Стоп за дискриминација и насилство поради попреченост или хендикеп" – протест на родители во паркот „Жена борец"" ("'Stop discrimination and violence due to disability or handicap' – parents' protest in 'Zhena Borec' park"), Radio MOF, 27 October 2025, https://www.radiomof.mk/stop-za-diskriminacija-i-nasilstvo-poradi-poprechenost-ili-hendikep-protest-na-roditeli-vo-parkot-zhena-borec/.

449 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Мислење за утврдување индиректна дискриминација, како и необезбедување на соодветно прилагодување 08-150/5" ("Opinion establishing indirect discrimination, as well as failure to provide reasonable accommodation 08-150/5"), 3 April 2026, https://bit.ly/4ycBfnW.

450 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Мислење за утврдување индиректна дискриминација, како и необезбедување на соодветно прилагодување 08-382/5" ("Opinion establishing indirect discrimination, as well as failure to provide reasonable accommodation 08-382/5"), 2 June 2026, https://bit.ly/4gyuOnJ.

euros annually on commission fees, because persons with permanent and irreversible disabilities are unnecessarily required to undergo re-evaluations every six months.[451] Further concern was raised by delays in the mobility allowance,[452] criminal charges in Tetovo for fee abuses and falsified documentation,[453] as well as announcements of budget cuts for rare diseases for 2026,[454] which triggered reactions from patient organizations[455] and the "Menuvame" and NARBM coalitions.[456]

The reporting period demonstrates certain normative and administrative improvements in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly regarding the expansion of employment opportunities, the assessment system, and the easing of access to certain healthcare rights. However, cases of discrimination in employment and access to internship measures, issues with the payment and administration of allowances, the re-evaluation of persons with permanent disabilities,

and persistent accessibility obstacles indicate that normative changes have not yet been followed by the consistent removal of practical and institutional barriers. The findings in the reporting period therefore re-open the question regarding the gap between formally recognized rights and their effective realization in practice.

451 „Државата губи над 2 милиона евра годишно за хонорари на комисиите кои пациентите со траен инвалидитет непотребно ги враќаат за оценување секои 6 месеци" ("The state loses over 2 million euros annually on commission fees for patients with permanent disabilities who are unnecessarily returned for evaluation every 6 months"), Sakam da kazham, 11 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/drzhavata-gubi-nad-2-miliona-evra-godishno-za-honorari-na-komisiiite-koi-patsientite-so-traen-invaliditet-nepotrebno-gi-vrakaat-za-otsenuvane-sekoi-6-mesetsi/.

452 „Зошто заглави исплатата на додатокот за мобилност?" ("Why has the payment of the mobility allowance stalled?"), Sloboden pechat, 10 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/zoshto-zaglavi-isplatata-na-dodatokot-za-mobilnost/.

453 "Kallëzim penal ndaj ish-drejtoreshës së Qendrës Sociale Tetovë dhe pesë personave për keqpërdorim të kompensimit për aftësi të kufizuar" ("Criminal charges filed against former director of the Tetovo Social Center and five persons for misuse of disability compensation"), Portalb, 18 December 2025, https://portalb.mk/kallezim-penal-ndaj-ish-drejtoreshes-se-qendres-sociale-tetove-dhe-pese-personave-per-keqperdorim-te-kompensimit-per-aftesi-te-kufizuar/.

454 „Намалување на буџетот: За ретките болести се планираат 17,5 милиони евра, а потребни се повеќе" ("Budget Reduction: 17.5 million euros planned for rare diseases, but more are needed"), Frontline.Mk, 11 November 2025, https://frontline.mk/2025/11/11/namaluva-e-na-bu-etot-za-retkite-bolesti-se-planiraat-17-5-milioni-evra-a-potrebni-se-pove-e/.

455 „Весна Алексовска: Драстичното кратење на буџетот за ретки болести е директен напад врз нашето право на живот" ("Vesna Aleksovska: The drastic cut to the budget for rare diseases is a direct attack on our right to life"), Radio MOF, 14 December 2025, https://www.radiomof.mk/vesna-aleksovska-drastichnoto-kratenje-na-budzhetot-za-retki-bolesti-e-direkten-napad-vrz-nasheto-pravo-na-zhivot/#prettyPhoto.

456 „НАРБМ: Кратењето на буџетот за ретки болести може да има огромни последици" ("NARBM: Cutting the rare disease budget could have massive consequences"), Radio MOF, 24 December 2025, https://www.radiomof.mk/narbm-kratenjeto-na-budzhetot-za-retki-bolesti-mozhe-da-ima-ogromni-posledici/.

Gender

Gender-based violence and femicides

Eurostat data indicates that North Macedonia ranks third in Europe in the rate of femicides committed by intimate partners.[457] During the reporting period, a series of severe cases of gender-based violence and femicides were recorded, including the discovery of the first case of a serial killer in the Kumanovo Region, charged with four completed murders with elements of femicide,[458] for which the BPPO Kumanovo filed an indictment.[459] Other cases include brutal murders of women in Shtip,[460] the Gostivar region,[461] Bitola,[462] and Zelenikovo.[463] Due to this rise, the civil society sector launched the femicide monitoring platform "Femicide Watch."[464]

In parallel with femicides, a high volume of domestic[465] [466] and intimate partner violence[467] was recorded, encompassing physical assaults,[468] [469] threats with weapons,[470] stalking,[471] unlawful deprivation

457 „Бројки што не смеат да се игнорираат – Македонија е трета во Европа по број на убиства на жени од своите партнери" ("Numbers that must not be ignored – Macedonia ranks third in Europe in the number of murders of women by their partners"), Sloboden pechat, 22 December 2026, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/brojki-shto-ne-smeat-da-se-ignoriraat-makedonija-e-treta-vo-evropa-po-broj-na-ubistva-na-zheni-od-nivnite-partneri/.

458 „Прв случај на сериски убиец со елементи на фемицид во Македонија – овчарот од Старо Нагоричане ќе се товари вкупно за шест убиства" ("First case of a serial killer with elements of femicide in Macedonia – shepherd from Staro Nagorichane to be charged with a total of six murders"), 360 stepeni, 14 May 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/prv-sluchaj-na-seriski-ubiets-so-elementi-na-femitsid-vo-makedonija-ovcharot-od-staro-nagorichane-ke-se-tovari-vkupno-za-shest-ubistva/.

459 „Обвинение против серискиот убиец од Кумановско – му се заканува доживотен затвор" ("Indictment filed against serial killer from Kumanovo region – faces life imprisonment"), 360 stepeni, 19 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/obvinenie-protiv-seriskiot-ubiets-od-kumanovsko-mu-se-zakanuva-dozhivoten-zatvor/.

460 „Расчистено свирепо убиство во Штип, со нож усмртил жена и телото го закопал во дворот" ("Brutal murder solved in Shtip, killed a woman with a knife and buried the body in the yard"), Meta.mk, 16 November 2025, https://meta.mk/raschisteno-svirepo-ubistvo-vo-shtip-so-nozh-usmrtil-zhena-od-shtip-i-teloto-go-zakopal-vo-dvorot/.

461 „Ја убиле со пиштол, ја закопале во дупка, а телото го запалиле – откриено како е убиена жената од Гостиварско" ("Shot with a gun, buried in a hole, and her body burned – revealed how the woman from the Gostivar region was killed"), Sloboden pechat, 17 December 2026, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/ja-ubile-so-pushka-ja-zakopale-vo-dupka-a-teloto-go-zapalile-otkrieno-kako-bila-ubiena-zhenata-od-gostivarsko/.

462 „„Македонија е опасно место за живеење за жените", алармира Мрежата за заштита од дискриминација" ("'Macedonia is a dangerous place to live for women', alarms the Network for Protection against Discrimination"), Sloboden pechat, 14 May 2026, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/makedonija-e-opasno-mesto-za-zhiveenje-za-zhenite-alarmira-mrezhata-za-zashtita-od-diskriminacija/.

463 „Пронајдена мртва 48-годишна жена од Зелениково, уапсен е поранешниот сопруг" ("48-year-old woman found dead in Zelenikovo, ex-husband arrested"), Sakam da kazham, 28 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pronajdena-mrtva-48-godishna-zhena-od-zelenikovo-uapsen-e-poraneshniot-soprug/.

464 „Промовирана платформата за следење на Фемициди" ("Femicide monitoring platform promoted"), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 25 November 2026, https://mhc.org.mk/news/promovirana-platformata-za-sledenje-na-femicidi/.

465 „Скопјанец ја претепал поранешната партнерка, претходно ги тепал мајка му и снаата, обвинителството бара притвор" ("Skopje man beat up his ex-partner, previously beat his mother and sister-in-law, prosecutor's office requests detention"), Sakam da kazham, 16 May 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/skopjanets-ja-pretepal-poraneshnata-partnerka-prethodno-gi-tepal-majka-mu-i-snaata-obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor/.

466 „Насилник дивеел во Горче, им извадил нож на жената и децата" ("Abuser went on a rampage in Gjorche, pulled a knife on his wife and children"), Sloboden pechat, 6 October 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/nasilnik-diveel-vo-gjorche-im-izvadil-nozh-na-zhenata-i-decata/.

467 „Скопјанец ја претепал и ѝ се заканувал со нож на својата партнерка, обвинителството бара притвор" ("Skopje man beat and threatened his partner with a knife, prosecution requests detention"), 360 stepeni, 16 January 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/skopjanets-ja-pretepal-i-se-zakanuval-so-nozh-na-svojata-partnerka-obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor/.

468 „Пијана хрватска државјанка го избодела сопругот со нож во Кавадарци, осомничена е за семејно насилство" ("Drunk Croatian citizen stabbed her husband with a knife in Kavadarci, suspected of domestic violence"), Sakam da kazham, 26 January 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pijana-hrvatska-drzhavjanka-go-izbodela-soprugot-so-nozh-vo-kavadartsi-osomnichena-e-za-semejno-nasilstvo/.

469 „Две жени биле нападнати од сопрузите: Едната во Куманово, другата во Липково" ("Two women were attacked by their husbands: One in Kumanovo, the other in Lipkovo"), Sloboden pechat, 15 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/dve-zheni-bile-napadnati-od-sopruzite-ednata-vo-kumanovo-drugata-vo-lipkovo/.

470 „Притвор за 55-годишник, кој со пиштол пукал и ѝ се заканувал на сопругата пред нивните деца" ("Detention for 55-year-old man who fired a gun and threatened his wife in front of their children"), Sakam da kazham, 7 March 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pritvor-za-55-godishnik-koj-so-pishtol-pukal-i-se-zakanuval-na-soprugata-pred-nivnite-detsa/ .

471 „Обвинителството бара притвор за обвинетиот кој 2 години ја демнел бившата сопруга во Крушево" ("Prosecution requests detention for accused who stalked his ex-wife for 2 years in Krushevo"), Sakam da kazham, 3 October 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor-za-obvinetiot-koj-2-godini-ja-demnel-bivshata-sopruga-vo-krushevo/.

of liberty and violence against pregnant women[472] [473] and children.[474] These cases highlight the urgent need for timely risk assessment, coordinated institutional response, and effective protective measures for victims. Severe questions regarding the institutional response were raised by a March 2026 case in which a woman and her six-year-old daughter died following a fall from a residential building after previously recorded reports of domestic violence,[475] calls for help,[476] and threats of being reported for false reporting.[477] The case led to an investigation into the conduct of the responsible social services,[478] while criminal proceedings were initiated against the husband, resulting in May 2026 in a first-instance conviction for violence and inducement to suicide.[479] In this context, public reaction was also sparked by the detention of a member of the Prime Minister's security detail for beating his wife;[480] following relativizing statements from the government[481] and reactions from civil society organizations,[482] the perpetrator received a suspended prison sentence based on a guilty plea.[483]

Institutional response and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)

472 „Скопјанец ја тепал и давел бремената девојка, го убедила да одат на лекар и избегала од колата на семафор" ("Skopje man beat and choked his pregnant girlfriend, she convinced him to go to the doctor and escaped from the car at a traffic light"), Sakam da kazham, 14 February 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/skopjanets-ja-tepal-i-davel-bremenata-devojka-go-ubedila-da-odat-na-lekar-i-izbegala-od-kolata-na-semafor/.

473 „ОЈО поднесе обвинение за 21-годишник од Свети Николе кој ја претепал и 15 часа ја држел заклучена својата бремена девојка" ("BPPO filed an indictment against a 21-year-old from Sveti Nikole who beat his pregnant girlfriend and kept her locked up for 15 hours"), 360 stepeni, 21 February 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-podnese-obvinenie-za-21-godishnik-od-sveti-nikole-koj-ja-pretepal-i-15-chasa-ja-drzhel-zakluchena-svojata-bremena-devojka/.

474 „15-годишно девојче пробало да се самоубие оти татко ѝ со години ги малтретирал неа, сестра ѝ и мајка им" ("15-year-old girl attempted suicide because her father abused her, her sister, and their mother for years"), Sakam da kazham, 21 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/15-godishno-devojche-probalo-da-se-samoubie-oti-tatko-so-godini-gi-maltretiral-nejze-sestra-i-majka-im/.

475 „Социјалните служби првпат ги евидентирале починатата жена и нејзиниот сопруг во октомври лани по поднесена тужба за развод" ("Social services first registered the deceased woman and her husband in October last year following a divorce lawsuit"), 360 stepeni, 3 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/sotsijalnite-sluzhbi-prvpat-gi-evidentirale-pochinatata-zhena-i-nejziniot-soprug-vo-oktomvri-lani-po-podnesena-tuzhba-za-razvod/.

476 „„Ќе ја убие мајка ми", плаче 6-годишната Катја додека баба ѝ го пријавува во полиција сина си Стојанче за обид за убиство, се слушна на аудиоснимките од 112" ("'He will kill my mother', cries 6-year-old Katja while her grandmother reports her son Stojanche to the police for attempted murder, heard on the 112 audio recordings"), Sakam da kazham, 8 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ke-ja-ubie-majka-mi-plache-6-godishnata-katja-dodeka-baba-go-prijavuva-vo-politsija-sina-si-stojanche-za-obid-za-ubistvo-dodeka-toj-ja-tepa-soprugata-se-slushna-na-audiosnimkite-od-112/.

477 „Ако пријавиш уште еднаш, ќе одговараш кривично за лажно пријавување закани и насилство, ѝ се заканиле полицајците на Ивана Стојаноска неколку часа пред да се самоубие" ("'If you report one more time, you will face criminal charges for false reporting of threats and violence', police officers threatened Ivana Stojanoska a few hours before she committed suicide"), Sakam da kazham, 1 April 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ako-prijavish-ushte-ednash-ke-odgovarash-krivichno-za-lazhno-prijavuvane-zakani-i-nasilstvo-se-zakanile-politsajtsite-na-ivana-stojanoska-nekolku-chasa-pred-da-se-samoubie/.

478 „ОЈО Скопје ќе истражува дали во Центарот за социјални работи некој сторил кривично дело во случајот со жената во Карпош" ("BPPO Skopje will investigate whether someone in the Center for Social Work committed a criminal offense in the case of the woman in Karposh"), 360 stepeni, 3 June 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/ojo-skopje-ke-istrazhuva-dali-vo-tsentarot-za-sotsijalni-raboti-nekoj-storil-krivichno-delo-vo-sluchajot-so-zhenata-vo-karposh/.

479 „Пресуда: Стојанче Јовановски осуден на 12 години затвор" ("Verdict: Stojanche Jovanovski sentenced to 12 years in prison"), Deutsche Welle, 7 May 2026, https://www.dw.com/mk/presuda-12-godini-zatvor-za-stojance-jovanovski-za-nasilstvo-i-naveduvane-na-samoubistvo/a-77076320.

480 „Член на обезбедувањето на Мицкоски во притвор: Ја претепал сопругата" ("Member of Mickoski's security detail in detention: Beat up his wife"), 24 Vesti, 4 May 2026, https://24.mk/details/chlen-na-obezbeduvanjeto-mickoski-vo-pritvor-ja-pretepal-soprugata.

481 „И за мал престап системот функционира, рече Мицкоски откако член на неговото обезбедување доби притвор оти ја претепал сопругата" ("'Even for a minor offense, the system works', said Mickoski after a member of his security detail was detained for beating his wife"), Sakam da kazham, 5 May 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/i-za-mal-prestap-sistemot-funktsionira-reche-mitskoski-otkako-chlen-na-negovoto-obezbeduvane-dobi-pritvor-oti-ja-pretepal-soprugata/.

482 „Реакција: За кого се сите овие измени на закони и постапувања, ако премиерот тврди дека семејното насилство е „помал престап"?" ("Reaction: Who are all these law amendments and procedures for, if the Prime Minister claims that domestic violence is a 'minor offense'?"), Platform for Gender Equality, 6 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4gAfqr4.

483 „Условна казна затвор за обезбедувачот на Мицкоски кој ја тепаше сопругата" ("Suspended prison sentence for Mickoski's security detail member who beat his wife"), Fokus, 1 June 2026, https://fokus.mk/uslovna-kazna-zatvor-za-obezbeduvachot-na-mitskoski-koj-ja-tepashe-soprugata/.

Systemic weaknesses behind numerous femicides and cases of gender-based and domestic violence were confirmed in the report by the State Audit Office (SAO) regarding the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.[484] The audit revealed that out of 52 planned activities, 20 were not implemented at all, and 10 were only partially implemented. Additionally, the audit points to insufficient availability and effectiveness of specialized services, inadequate funding and staffing, deficiencies in the reintegration of victims, and the need for further alignment of institutional and legal practices with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. Research confirms the deep economic vulnerability of victims, noting that victims receive only a one-off financial aid of 15,000 denars without systemic support for reintegration.[485] The absence of long-term reintegration support forces over 90% of women victims of domestic violence to take out loans and debts to survive the first few months.[486] In response to the frequent cases, institutions took several urgent, yet still partial, steps:

- **The Assembly adopted amendments to the Criminal Code making all physical injuries resulting from domestic violence subject to mandatory ex officio prosecution.[487] At the local level, the City of Skopje allocated a municipally owned apartment to open a new shelter center for victims.[488]**
- **In February 2026, public debates began on the Draft National Strategy for Protection from Gender-Based Violence 2026–2033.[489] Additionally, following one of the tragic events in March 2026, the National Coordinating Body for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention established an inter-ministerial working group for urgent amendments to the set of laws in the fields of security, justice, and social protection,490 holding its first meeting on March 13, 2026.[491]**

484 „За 5 години има 33 убиства во семејно насилство, нема доволно засолништа за жртвите, буџетот не дава пари за заштита, насилниците не се гонат по службена должност, откри ревизорскиот извештај" ("In 5 years there were 33 domestic violence murders, insufficient victim shelters, budget provides no funds for protection, abusers not prosecuted ex officio, audit report reveals"), Sakam da kazham, 2 December 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/za-5-godini-ima-33-ubistva-vo-semejno-nasilstvo-nema-dovolno-zasolnishta-za-zhrtvite-budhetot-ne-dava-pari-za-zashtita-nasilnitsite-ne-se-gonat-po-sluzhbena-dolzhnost-otkri-revizorskiot-izveshtaj/.

485 „Жртвите на семејно насилство добиваат само 250 евра еднократна помош, државата не одвојува пари за трајна поддршка" ("Domestic violence victims receive only 250 euros in one-off aid, the state allocates no funds for permanent support"), Sakam da kazham, 4 December 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/zhrtvite-na-semejno-nasilstvo-dobivaat-samo-250-evra-ednokratna-pomosh-drzhavata-ne-odvojuva-pari-za-trajna-poddrshka/.

486 „Над 90 отсто од жените кои претрпеле семејно насилство земаат кредити или позајмици за да преживеат во првите месеци, вели здружението ЕСЕ" ("Over 90 percent of women who have suffered domestic violence take out loans or borrowings to survive in the first few months, says ESE Association"), Sakam da kazham, 25 November 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/nad-90-otsto-od-zhenite-koi-pretrpele-semejno-nasilstvo-zemaat-krediti-ili-pozajmitsi-za-da-prezhiveat-vo-prvite-mesetsi-veli-zdruzhenieto-ese/.

487 „СЕМЕЈНОТО НАСИЛСТВО СО ТЕЛЕСНА ПОВРЕДА ЌЕ СЕ ГОНИ ПО СЛУЖБЕНА ДОЛЖНОСТ. Нема да се чека на пријава од жртвата, обвинител веднаш ќе постапува" ("Domestic violence with bodily injury will be prosecuted ex officio. No waiting for a report from the victim, prosecutor will act immediately"), Plusinfo, 18 December 2025, https://plusinfo.mk/seme-noto-nasilstvo-so-telesna-povreda-e-se-goni-posluzhbena-dolzhnost-nema-da-se-cheka-na-pri-ava-od-zhrtvata-obvinitel-vednash-e-postapuva/.

488 „Стан во сопственост на Град Скопје од денеска е шелтер-центар за жртви на семејно насилство" ("Apartment owned by the City of Skopje becomes a shelter center for victims of domestic violence as of today"), 360 stepeni, 19 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/stan-vo-sopstvenost-na-grad-skopje-od-deneska-e-shelter-tsentar-za-zhrtvi-na-semejno-nasilstvo/.

489 „Во тек се јавни дебати за Нацрт-верзијата на Националната стратегија за превенција и заштита од родово базирано насилство врз жени и семејно насилство 2026-2033 со Акциски план 2026-2029" ("Public debates are underway regarding the Draft version of the National Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2026–2033 with an Action Plan 2026–2029"), Official Website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, 27 February 2026, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/vo-tek-se-javni-debati-za-nacrt-verzijata-na-nacionalnata-strategija-za-prevencija-i-zashta-od-rodovo-bazirano-nasilstvo-vrz-zeni-i-semejno-nasilstvo-2026-2033-so-akciski-plan-2026-2029.

490 „Итна седница на Националното координативно тело - ќе се формира работна група за измени и дополнувања на неколку закони" ("Urgent meeting of the National Coordinating Body - a working group will be formed for amendments to several laws"), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, 10 March 2026, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/itna-sednica-na-nacionalnoto-koordinativno-telo-kje-se-formira-rabotna-grupa-za-izmeni-i-dopolnuvanja-na-nekolku-zakoni.

491 „Одржан првиот состанок на работната група за итни законски измени за посилна заштита на жените жртви на насилство" ("First meeting held of the working group for urgent legal amendments for stronger protection of female victims of violence"), Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, 13 March 2026, https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/mk-MK/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/odrzan-prviot-sostanok-na-rabotnata-grupa-za-itni-zakonski-izmeni-za-posilna-zastita-na-zenite-zrtvi-na-nasilstvo.

- **However, despite these initiatives, the Assembly did not support the Draft Law Amending the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to introduce electronic monitoring of domestic violence perpetrators as an additional protective measure for victims.[492]**

Socio-economic, health, and political rights of women

In healthcare, the maternal health case exposed systemic and judicial delays in medical malpractice cases, which following numerous adjournments[493] and requests for judicial recusal,[494] the proceedings concluded with a first-instance conviction of the gynecologist.[495] Regarding menstrual poverty, it remains an alarming challenge for women and girls in North Macedonia. Research confirms that women and girls increasingly miss work and school due to deprivation from hygiene products, a trend particularly pronounced among high school girls from socially vulnerable families.[496] [497] However, local authorities displayed indifference toward this issue, as both the Council of the Municipality of Kisela Voda[498] and the Council of the Municipality of Bitola[499] rejected initiatives to provide free menstrual products in schools.

Political representation was further confirmed by the electoral outcomes of the October 2025 local elections, where only four women were elected as mayors out of 32 female candidates,[500] amidst

492 „Нема потреба од електронска алка за сторители на семејно насилство – смета мнозинството во Собранието" ("'No need for an electronic ankle monitor for domestic violence perpetrators', considers the majority in Parliament"), 360 stepeni, 18 March 2026, https://360stepeni.mk/nema-potreba-od-elektronska-alka-za-storiteli-na-semejno-nasilstvo-smeta-mnozinstvoto-vo-sobranieto/.

493 „Истоштена сум и психички страдам: На Јалдз Веапоска пак ѝ го одложија судењето за извадените органи" ("'I am exhausted and suffering mentally': Yaldz Veaposka's trial for removed organs adjourned again"), Sloboden pechat, 10 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/istoshtena-sum-i-psihichki-stradam-na-jaldz-veaposka-pak-%d1%9d-go-odlozhija-sudenjeto-za-izvadenite-organi/.

494 „Третиот судија што одлучува за Јалдз Веапоска останува во процесот – одбиено барањето на гинекологот Мухамед Асани за негово изземање" ("The third judge deciding on Yaldz Veaposka remains in the process – gynecologist Muhamed Asani's request for recusal rejected"), Sloboden pechat, 10 October 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/tretiot-sudija-shto-odluchuva-za-jaldz-veaposka-ostanuva-vo-procesot-odbieno-baranjeto-na-ginekologot-za-negovo-izzemanje/.

495 „Три години затвор и пет години забрана за вршење дејност за гинекологот Асани за случајот со родилката од Дебар" ("Three years in prison and a five-year ban on practicing for gynecologist Asani in the case of the mother from Debar"), Brif.mk, 21 November 2025, https://www.brif.mk/tri-godini-zatvor-i-pet-godini-zabrana-za-vrshenje-dejnost-za-ginekologot-asani-za-sluchajot-so-rodilkata-od-debar/.

496 „Над 100 ученички од сиромашни семејства во Битола немаат пари за влошки – активистите бараат помош од општината" ("Over 100 schoolgirls from poor families in Bitola cannot afford sanitary pads – activists seek help from the municipality"), Sloboden pechat, 29 October 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/nad-100-uchenichki-od-siromashni-semejstva-vo-bitola-nemaat-pari-za-vloshki-aktivistite-baraat-pomosh-od-opshtinata/.

497 „Жените и девојките сè почесто отсуствуваат од работа и школо зашто немаат пари за менструални производи, вели ново истражување" ("Women and girls increasingly absent from work and school because they cannot afford menstrual products, new research says"), Sakam da kazham, 1 June 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/zhenite-i-devojkite-s-pochesto-otsustvuvaat-od-rabota-i-shkolo-zashto-nemaat-pari-za-menstrualni-proizvodi-veli-novo-istrazhuvane/.

498 „Советот на Кисела Вода одби иницијатива на Левица за бесплатни менструални производи во училиштата" ("The Council of Kisela Voda rejected Levica's initiative for free menstrual products in schools"), Antropol, 24 December 2025, https://antropol.mk/2025/12/24/sov-nak-voda-odbi-inic-na-lev-za-besp-ment-proiz-vo-ucil/.

499 „Мнозинството во битолскиот Совет не прифати општината да одвои пари за бесплатни влошки за средношколките" ("The majority in the Bitola Council did not accept the municipality allocating money for free sanitary pads for high school girls"), Sakam da kazham, 30 December 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrezha/bitolskiot-sovet-ne-prifati-opshtinata-da-odvoi-pari-za-besplatni-vloshki-za-srednoshkolkite/.

500 „Само четири жени се избрани за градоначалнички" ("Only four women elected as mayors"), Sloboden pechat, 3 November 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/samo-chetiri-zheni-se-izbrani-za-gradonachalnichki-na-lokalnite-izbori/.

an intensified traditional discourse surrounding motherhood.[501] Regarding labor rights, a proposal amending the Law on Labor Relations was introduced to prevent terminations of employment during pregnancy.[502] However, this proposal was subsequently rejected in the Assembly.[503]

Access to anti-discrimination protection mechanisms

In the area of seeking legal protection, official reports demonstrate clear disparities in the grounds upon which citizens request institutional recourse. Women report discrimination based on sex, gender, age, education, and family or marital status far more frequently than men, whereas men predominantly file complaints on the grounds of ethnicity, political affiliation, social standing, and property status.[504] Furthermore, the monitoring report "Equality Now – Empowering Marginalized Communities for Social Inclusion and Non-Discrimination" revealed severe institutional invisibility affecting women from marginalized communities: only 2% of total complaints submitted to the CPPD originated from this demographic (submitted exclusively by rural women). In addition, discrimination was formally established in barely 3.8% of all complaints filed by women overall, while not a single case of discrimination was established among complaints filed by women from marginalized communities. This outcome highlights the system's limited capacity to recognize and establish complex and intersectional forms of gender discrimination.[505]

The reporting period reveals a significant gap between the existing legal framework and the effective prevention of and protection against gender-based and domestic violence. The high number of serious cases, shortcomings identified in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, and cases in which previous institutional responses failed to provide timely protection indicate that the main challenge remains practical implementation, coordination and the availability of specialised services. The launch of preparations for a new national strategy and legislative initiatives represent relevant steps, but their impact will depend on their adoption, adequate funding and consistent implementation. At the same time, women's low political representation, economic vulnerability and the limited access of women from marginalised communities to protection mechanisms show that gender equality challenges extend beyond the area of violence against women.

501 „Флечер, Дукоска и Скот од Мајките на светот: Сите сме од различни земји, но имаме иста грижа - децата да ни бидат безбедни и со добро образование" ("Flecher, Dukoska and Scot from Mothers of the World: We are all from different countries, but we share the same concern - for our children to be safe and well-educated"), MIA, 1 October 2025, https://bit.ly/4y24fhU.

502 „Да нема отказ при бременост! Левица поднесе предлог-измени за заштита на трудовиот статус на бремени работнички објави" ("No termination during pregnancy! Levica submitted proposed amendments to protect the labor status of pregnant workers"), Skopje1.mk, 29 December 2025, https://skopje1.mk/da-nema-otkaz-pri-bremenost-levica-podnese-predlog-izmeni-za-zastita-na-trudoviot-status-na-bremeni-rabotnicki.

503 „ДПМНЕ го одби предлогот на Левица за заштита од отказ на бремените работнички" ("DPMNE rejected Levica's proposal for protecting pregnant workers from termination"), Antropol, 12 February 2026, https://antropol.mk/2026/02/12/dpmne-go-odbi-predl-na-lev-za-zast-od-otkaz-na-brem-rab/.

504 Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, „Годишен извештај за работата на Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација за 2025 година" ("Annual Report on the Work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2025"), (2026), https://bit.ly/4hr3Te1.

505 Aleksandra Trajanovska, „Еднаквост Сега: Мониторинг-извештај за пристапот на жени од маргинализирани заедници до механизмите за заштита од дискриминација" ("Equality Now: Monitoring Report on the Access of Women from Marginalized Communities to Protection Mechanisms against Discrimination") (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 2026), https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/izveshtaj-za-pristapot-na-zheni-od-marginalizirani-zaednici-do-mehanizmite-za-zashtita-od-diskriminacija.pdf.

Hate speech

During the 2025 Local Elections, widespread instances of hate speech were systematically recorded, reflecting a direct connection between political competition and the deepening of societal divides. Across the first and second rounds in October 2025, 107 incidents of hate speech were registered, 35% grounded in ethnicity, 24.5% in national identity, and 20.3% in political affiliation.[506] This points to the link between electoral competition and deepening social divisions, particularly along ethnic lines.[507] In response to the increased number of incidents, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights issued a statement regarding hate speech during the election campaign, calling on political actors to refrain from provocative rhetoric and noting that female candidates are particularly exposed to sexist attacks.[508] During the elections, Roma civil society organisations condemned a racist statement made by a municipal councillor in Negotino hate speech towards Roma that degrades the Roma community, pointing to the ongoing marginalisation of Roma communities and the lack of accountability for racist speech by public officials.[509] The post-election period in November 2025 saw a sustained level of hostility, with 90 additional hate speech incidents documented, 53% based on ethnicity, 31% on national orientation, 13% on sexual orientation, and 13% on political affiliation.[510] This period was characterized by intense delegitimization, blame-shifting, and coordinated targeting directed at political opponents, journalists, activists, and marginalized social groups.

Other cases of hate speech during the reporting period that provoked reactions from prosecutorial authorities include incitement to hatred, discord, and intolerance following Nazi salutes, insults, and threats directed at the director of the Holocaust Fund;[511] the dissemination of racist and xenophobic material through social media;[512] and a hate crime involving damage to another's property,[513] specifically part of the Embassy of Bulgaria in Skopje, which prompted a sharp reaction from the Bulgarian

506 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, „Извештај за говорот на омраза за време на локалните избори - октомври 2025" (Report on Hate Speech During the Local Elections - October 2025), March 2026, https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/izveshtaj-za-govorot-na-omraza-za-vreme-na-lokalnite-izbori-oktomvri-2025.pdf.pdf.

507 Natasha Petkovska, „Мониторинг-извештај за говорот на омраза - гаранција за демократски избори" (Monitoring Report on Hate Speech - Guarantee for Democratic Elections), (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 2026), https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/monitoring-izveshtaj.pdf.

508 „Хелсиншкиот комитет остро реагира против говорот на омраза во изборниот процес" (The Helsinki Committee Reacts Strongly against hate speech in the electoral process), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 13 October 2025, https://mhc.org.mk/news/helsinshki-ot-komitet-ostro-reagira-protiv-govorot-na-omraza-vo-izborniot-proces/.

509 „Расистичка изјава на советник во Општина Неготино" (Racist statement by a councilor in the Municipality of Negotino), Romalitico, 24 October 2025, https://romalitico.org/24/10/2025/vesti/rasistichka-izjava-na-sovetnik-vo-opshtina-negotino/.

510 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, „Извештај за говорот на омраза во постизборниот период - ноември 2025 година" (Report on Hate Speech in the Post-Election Period - November 2025), April 2026, https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/izveshtaj-post-izboren-period.pdf.

511 „Извикувал нацистички поздрави и го пцуел на германски јазик директорот на Фондот на холокаустот- ОЈО Скопје покрена обвинение против 59-годишен маж" (Shouted Nazi salutes and cursed in German at the director of the Holocaust Fund - BPPO Skopje filed charges against a 59-year-old man), Telma TV, 9 October 2025, https://telma.com.mk/2025/10/09/izvikuval-naczistichki-pozdravi-i-go-pczuel-na-germanski-jazik-direktorot-na-fondot-na-holokaustot-ojo-skopje-pokrena-obvinenie/.

512 „ОХРИѓАНЕЦ ОБЈАВУВАЛ РАСИСТИЧКИ СОДРЖИНИ Доби пријава за говор на омраза" (Ohrid resident published racist content – received a hate speech report), Plusinfo, 20 November 2025, https://plusinfo.mk/ohri-anec-ob-avuval-rasistichki-sodrzhini-dobi-pri-ava-za-govor-na-omraza/.

513 „Обвинителството поведе постапка за дело од омраза против лицето што скрши стакло на влезот на Бугарската амбасада" (Prosecution initiated proceedings for a hate crime against the person who broke glass at the entrance of the Bulgarian Embassy), Sakam da kazham, 13 January 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinitelstvoto-povede-postapka-za-delo-od-omraza-protiv-litseto-koe-skrshi-staklo-na-vlezot-na-bugarskata-ambasada/.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[514] while the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attack as an isolated incident.

The data shows that hate speech is not limited to isolated incidents, but rather intensifies during politically sensitive periods and most frequently triggers existing ethnic, national, and political divides. Particularly significant is that the ethnic basis increases from 35% during the elections to 53% in the post-election period. At the same time, the noticeable action taken by the prosecution in individual cases represents a positive signal, but the question remains whether the institutional response is sufficiently systematic and preventive relative to the scale and repetitive nature of the phenomenon.

Roma

The October 2025 local elections highlighted risks to the physical safety of and racist rhetoric toward Roma, threatening their political participation and rights. At the beginning of October 2025, a Roma candidate for municipal councilor in Vinica was physically assaulted,[515] an incident strongly condemned by the Ombudsperson[516] and Roma civil society organizations[517] as a threat to Roma political participation. Although a positive electoral outcome saw Roma councilors elected in multiple municipalities for the first time,[518] cases of hate speech towards Roma were registered. Roma civil society organizations condemned a racist statement by a municipal councilor in Negotino,[519] leading the BPPO Kavadarci to submit a proposal for charges related to spreading racism and advocating for a ban on Roma voting.[520] However, physical attacks were not isolated solely to the election period. In October 2025, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) reported a case where an 8-year-old Roma child was tortured and forced at knifepoint to kiss the shoes of racist perpetrators,[521] while in June 2026, a brutal physical assault on a young man in Kumanovo sparked strong demands for non-selective justice.[522]

514 „Бугарското МНР вели дека била нападната нивната амбасада во Скопје, бара истрага од македонските власти" (Bulgarian MFA says its embassy in Skopje was attacked, demands investigation from Macedonian authorities), Sakam da kazham, 11 January 2026, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/bugarskoto-mnr-veli-deka-bila-napadnata-nivnata-ambasada-vo-skopje-bara-istraga-od-makedonskite-vlasti/.

515 „Кандидатот за советник претепан во Виница сè уште е во кома, МВР се огласи за инцидентот" (The candidate for councilor beaten in Vinica is still in a coma, MoI issued a statement regarding the incident), Sloboden pechat, 3 October 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/kandidatot-za-sovetnik-pretepan-vo-vinica-se-ushte-e-vo-koma-mvr-se-oglasi-za-incidentot/.

516 „Реакција на Народниот правобранител" ("Reaction of the Ombudsman"), Official website of the Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia, 3 October 2025, https://ombudsman.mk/single/announcement/reakcija-np.

517 „Јавна осуда за нападот врз кандидат за советник во Виница" (Public condemnation for the attack on a candidate for councilor in Vinica), Romalitico, 3 October 2025, https://romalitico.org/03/10/2025/vesti/javna-osuda-za-napadot-vrz-kandidatot-za-sovetnik-vo-vinicza/.

518 „Избрани советници Роми - локални избори 2025" (Elected Roma councilors - local elections 2025), Romalitico, 20 October 2025, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1229306405889372&set=a.547435844076435.

519 „Расистичка изјава на советник во Општина Неготино" (Racist statement by a councilor in the Municipality of Negotino), Romalitico, 24 October 2025, https://romalitico.org/24/10/2025/vesti/rasistichka-izjava-na-sovetnik-vo-opshtina-negotino/.

520 „Неготинец обвинет за расизам, на социјални мрежи повикувал на Ромите да им се забрани гласање на избори" (Negotino resident accused of racism, on social networks called for Roma to be banned from voting in elections), Sakam da kazham, 15 November 2025, https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/negotinets-obvinet-za-rasizam-na-sotsijalni-mrezhi-povikuval-na-romite-da-im-se-zabrani-glasane-na-izbori/.

521 Bernard Rork, "North Macedonia: Terrified Eight-Year-Old Romani Boy Forced at Knifepoint to Kiss the Shoes of His Racist Tormentors," European Roma Rights Centre, 24 November 2025, https://bit.ly/4xvgMe2.

522 „Јавна реакција: За нападот врз младиот Алиџан Мемети од Куманово" (Public reaction: On the attack against the young Alican Memeti from Kumanovo), Romalitico, 26 June 2026, https://romalitico.org/26/06/2026/vesti/javna-reakczija-za-napadot-vrz-mladiot-alidhan-memeti-od-kumanovo/.

During the reporting period, certain legal achievements were also attained before domestic courts and international human rights mechanisms. At the national level, on 20 November 2025, a final judgment by the Appellate Court Skopje confirmed that the state, through the non-implementation of the Law on Unregistered Persons, commits systemic discrimination, consequently, Roma individuals who are issued documents through a special civil registry book to continue to face barriers that block their access to fundamental civil rights.[523] On the other hand, in February, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD) issued a decision in the case of Salim and Others v. North Macedonia,[524] establishing that the state violated the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination through the practice of confiscating passports and restricting freedom of movement for individuals returned from EU countries.[525] In this regard, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe notes that although there is partial progress regarding the status of the majority of undocumented persons, the recommendation is assessed as partially implemented because approximately 160 Roma still have not resolved their personal documentation status.[526]

In addition to legal progress, there were also certain legislative and policy initiatives during the reporting period. Namely, a positive step in educational policies was the December 2025 decision by the Ministry of Education and Science to introduce Roma educational mediators in secondary education.[527] Furthermore, in December 2025, the Draft Law on Social Housing was publicly presented[528] and later published on ENER in February 2026. Following the submission of the Draft Law for opinions to all competent line ministries, and after receiving feedback and comments from the line ministries, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics, and Youth resubmitted the draft Law into further government procedures for inter-institutional alignment.[529] In May 2026, consultative meetings supported by the OSCE commenced to develop the National Action Plan for Roma Women and Girls (2026–2028), aimed at fulfilling international recommendations to strengthen economic independence, prevent early marriages, and reduce school dropout rates.[530]

523 „Конечната судска пресуда ја потврдува одговорноста на државата за системски пропусти што ги остават Ромите без пристап до лични документи во Северна Македонија" (Final court judgment confirms the state's responsibility for systemic shortcomings leaving Roma without access to personal documents in North Macedonia), Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, 23 December 2025, https://myla.org.mk/51753/.

524 Decision adopted by the Committee under article 14 of the Convention, regarding communication No.71/2020, CERD/C/116/D/71/2020, (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2026), https://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/5775_file1_cerd-c-116-d-71-2020_uv.pdf.

525 "Roma win UN case over confiscation of passports and travel bans in North Macedonia", European Roma Rights Centre, 11 March 2026, https://www.errc.org/press-releases/roma-win-un-case-over-confiscation-of-passports-and-travel-bans-in-north-macedonia.

526 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of North Macedonia Subject to Interim Follow-Up.

527 „МОН воведе ромски образовни медијатори и во средното образование" (MoES introduced Roma educational mediators in secondary education as well), Sloboden pechat, 24 December 2025, https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/mon-vovede-romski-obrazovni-medijatori-i-vo-srednoto-obrazovanie/.

528 „Јавна презентација на Предлог-законот за социјално домување во Северна Македонија" (Public presentation of the Draft Law on Social Housing in North Macedonia), Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje, 15 December 2025, https://bit.ly/4zJoXEP.

529 Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics and Youth, "Response to a request for free access to public information", 20 August 2026.

530 „Развој на Националниот акциски план за жените и девојчињата Ромки (2026 – 2028)" (Development of the National Action Plan for Roma Women and Girls (2026–2028)), OSCE Mission to Skopje, 4 May 2026, https://bit.ly/4gCq5Se.

The reporting period shows certain positive progress in political representation, education, and legislative initiatives, as well as significant domestic and international decisions on protection against discrimination. However, racist violence and hate speech, the unresolved consequences of personal documentation issues, administrative barriers, and structural inequalities in housing, education, and economic participation indicate that Roma continue to face multifaceted discrimination and limited access to the effective protection of their rights.

Strengthen the child protection system, particularly prevention, detection, and coordinated action in cases of violence, sexual abuse, exploitation, and child trafficking.

Provide specially equipped and adapted child-friendly interview rooms in all police stations across the country, in accordance with international child-friendly justice standards.

Eliminate discriminatory barriers to exercising the right to education, educational assistance, and employment (including access to internship measures) for youth with disabilities and autism spectrum conditions.

Abolish the administrative requirement for repeated re-assessment every six months for persons with permanent and irreversible disabilities, thereby preventing bureaucratic exhaustion of beneficiaries and the irrational expenditure of public funds.

Ensure effective prevention and protection from gender-based and domestic violence through timely risk assessment and institutional response, improved inter-institutional coordination, and sustainably funded services for victims, with a particular focus on preventing femicides and implementing the Istanbul Convention.

Strengthen the institutional response to hate speech and hate crimes and accelerate the inclusion of Roma through effective investigation and prosecution of hate speech and hate crimes, specifically anti-Roma racism, and the removal of structural discrimination in access to personal documents, education, housing, employment, healthcare, and political participation.

Secure adequate funds and sustainability for the systemic implementation of the Draft Law on Social Housing and the National Action Plan for Roma Women and Girls 2026–2028.

TABLE: Key institutional indicators (Fundamental rights)

Institution / Area	Indicator	Period	Description/Value
European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)	Total applications decided by ECtHR	2025	205 applications against North Macedonia
	Rejected / inadmissible applications	2025	194 rejected / inadmissible applications
	Judgments finding violations	2025	7 judgments delivered in 11 cases; judgments finding a violation of Article 6 of the ECHR
	Applications decided	Jan–Jul 2026	145 applications against North Macedonia
	Rejected / inadmissible applications	Jan–Jul 2026	140 rejected / inadmissible applications
	Judgments finding violations	Jan–Jul 2026	5 judgments
Ombudsperson	Total complaints processed	2025	2,921 complaints (2,400 newly received and registered; 521 carried over from 2024)
	Highest number of violations – judiciary	2025	307 cases (12.79%)
	Violations – consumer rights	2025	264 cases (11%)
	Violations – labour relations	2025	219 cases (9,13%)
	Complaints concerning torture / inhuman treatment	2025	34 cases, compared 25 in 2024
	Complaints regarding rights/conditions in prisons	2025	187 complaints
	Most complaints by area		
National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)	Staffing capacity	2026	Only 3 employees; serious staffing deficit, with additional constraints on hiring external experts
	Budget	2026	Budget of 955,000 denars, increased compared to 2025
MoI - Internal Control	Reports concerning the use of physical force	2025	57 submissions regarding the use of physical force by police officers against citizens; 4 complaints established for the criminal act of "Ill-treatment in the performance of duty".
Prisons and Detention Facilities	Overcrowding	2025/2026	104 prisoners per 100 available places; 146 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants
	Average prison sentence length	2025/2026	118 months, compared to the European average of 8.8 months
Personal Data Protection Agency (PDPA)	Staffing and occupancy	2025	17 employees (30% occupancy rate of systematized positions)
	Complaints	2025	147 complaints; additionally 229 complaints and reports related to social networks, of which 8 were for violation of children's personal data protection rights.
	Regulatory framework	2026	Draft amendments to the Law on Personal Data Protection entered government procedure, aiming for greater autonomy and independence of PDPA and alignment with GDPR.

Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD)	Total cases	2025	559 cases: 448 new and 111 carried over from 2024
	Most common grounds of discrimination	2025	National/ethnic origin 22%; political belief 18%; personal characteristics and social status 17%; education 11%; sex 10%; gender 8%
	Decisions	2025	359 decisions, of which 56 opinions with established discrimination and 95 without established discrimination
	Complaints	Jan–Jul 2026	210 complaints and 4 ex officio cases;
	Decisions	Jan–Jul 2026	187 decisions, of which 33 opinions with established discrimination and 61 without established discrimination
	Staffing and independence	2025/2026	The selection of new members was accompanied by public reactions; challenges remain regarding financial autonomy and institutional independence
National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination	Implementation of the Action Plan 2025–2026	2025	Of 69 planned activities for 2025, 19 were implemented and 30 were not implemented; 55% of activities in the priority area for advancing the legal framework were not implemented
SSO – Children in Conflict with the Law	Children reported for criminal offenses	2025	505 children (3.9% increase compared to 2024)
	Convicted children	2025	196 children (34.7% fewer convicted compared to 2024)

TABLE: Thematic indicators

Theme/Group	Indicator	Period	Description
Torture and ill-treatment	Complaints to the Ombudsperson	2025	34 cases of torture, inhumane, and degrading treatment, compared to 25 in 2024.
	Submissions to MoI for use of physical force	2025	57 submissions; 4 complaints established for the criminal offense of "Ill-treatment in the performance of duty."
	Case before ECtHR	2026	In the case Musliu v. North Macedonia, the Government acknowledged a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR regarding physical abuse of a convicted person and the absence of an effective investigation.
Prisons and detention facilities	Complaints concerning prison rights/conditions	2025	187 complaints; overcrowding, poor hygiene and deficiencies in healthcare were noted.
	Overcrowding rate	2025/26	104 prisoners per 100 available places.
	Healthcare	2025/26	Continuous shortage of medical staff and basic medications; a telemedicine pilot project was initiated.
Children - rights and justice	Child victims of sexual abuse	2024	The analysis for 2020–2024 recorded 508 cases, involving 455 girls and 52 boys.
	Child victims of sexual abuse	2025	98 child victims
	Children in conflict with the law	2025	Deficiencies in handling cases of children in conflict with the law; institutions lack child-friendly interview rooms.
	Environmental risk exposure	2026	99.9% of children in North Macedonia are exposed to harmful air pollution, droughts, and extreme heatwaves.
PDPA – Personal Data Protection	Complaints and reports related to social networks	2025	229 complaints and reports; 8 related to violations of the right to personal data protection of children.
	Total complaints	2025	147 complaints submitted to PDPA.
	Regulatory changes	2026	Draft amendments to the Law on Personal Data Protection entered government procedures.
Media and freedom of expression	Reporters Without Borders Index ranking	2026	A drop from 42nd to 45th place.
Hate speech	Hate speech during the local elections	October 2025	107 cases: 35% based on ethnicity, 24.5% on nationality and 20.3% on political affiliation.
	Post-election hate speech	November 2025	90 cases: 53% based on ethnicity, 31% on national origin, 13% on sexual orientation and 13% on political affiliation.
	CPPD – discrimination against Roma women	2025/26	The CPPD report indicates that only 8% of Roma women are employed and that a significant proportion work in the informal sector without adequate social and health protection.

Gender	Implementation of the Istanbul Convention	2025	Of 52 planned activities, 20 were not implemented and 10 were only partially implemented; deficiencies were identified in services, funding and staffing.
	Political representation	2025 local elections	Only 4 women were elected mayors out of 32 female candidates.
	Access to protection against discrimination	2025/26	Only 2% of complaints submitted to the CPPD originate from women from marginalised communities; discrimination was established in 3.8% of complaints submitted by women overall.

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24 Vesti. „79-годишен велешанец, прв Македонец што ќе носи алка наместо да лежи во затвор". ("79-year-old Veles resident, first Macedonian to wear an ankle bracelet instead of serving time in prison"). 2 October 2025. https://24.mk/details/79-godishen-veleshanec-prv-makedonec-koj-kje-nosi-alka-namesto-da-lezhi-vo-zatvor

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Sakam da kazham. „28-годишник силувал 14-годишно девојче, па објавувал експлицитни видеа, Обвинителството бара притвор". ("A 28-year-old raped a 14-year-old girl and published explicit videos, Prosecutor's Office requests detention"). 26 April 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/obvinitelstvoto-bara-pritvor-za-28-godishnik-koj-siluval-14-godishno-devojche-a-potoa-objavuval-eksplitsitni-videa/

Sakam da kazham. „48-годишна жена од Зелениково пронајдена мртва, уапсен е поранешниот сопруг". ("48-year-old woman found dead in Zelenikovo, ex-husband arrested"). 28 June 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/pronajdena-mrtva-48-godishna-zhena-od-zelenikovo-uapsen-e-poraneshniot-soprug/

Sakam da kazham. „Ако пријавиш уште еднаш, ќе одговараш кривично за лажно пријавување закани и насилство, ѝ се заканиле полицајците на Ивана Стојаноска неколку часа пред да се самоубие". ("'If you report one more time, you will face criminal charges for false reporting of threats and violence', police officers threatened Ivana Stojanoska a few hours before she committed suicide"). 1 April 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ako-prijavish-ushte-ednash-ke-odgovarash-krivichno-za-lazhno-prijavuvane-zakani-i-nasilstvo-se-zakanile-politsajtsite-na-ivana-stojanoska-nekolku-chasa-pred-da-se-samoubie/

Sakam da kazham. „Дали не ви треба народен правобранител, ја прашуваат власта вработените во институцијата, која од први јануари ќе згасне, оти Собранието 5 месеци не избра омбудсман". ("'Do you not need an Ombudsman?' staff ask the authorities regarding the institution, which will cease operation on 1 January because the Assembly failed to elect an Ombudsman for 5 months"). 24 December 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/dali-ne-vi-treba-naroden-pravobranitel-ja-prashuvaat-vlasta-vrabotenite-vo-institutsijata-koja-od-prvi-januari-ke-zgasne-oti-sobranieto-5-mesetsi-ne-izbra-ombudsman/

Sakam da kazham. „Децата во Македонија се изложени на загаден воздух и суша, вели нов извештај на УНИЦЕФ". ("Children in Macedonia exposed to polluted air and drought, says new UNICEF report"). 16 June 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/detsata-vo-makedonija-se-izlozheni-na-zagaden-vozduh-i-susha-veli-nov-izveshtaj-na-unitsef/

Sakam da kazham. „Диригентката Дијана Имери-Илкоска била дискриминирана од поранешниот в. д. директор на Филхармонијата Александар Котевски, утврди Комисијата за заштита". ("Conductor Dijana Imeri-Ilkoska was discriminated against by the former acting director of the Philharmonic, Aleksandar Kotevski, established the Protection Commission"). 1 October 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/dirigentkata-dijana-imeri-ilkoska-bila-diskriminirana-od-poraneshniot-v-d-direktor-na-filharmonijata-aleksandar-kotevski-utvrdi-komisijata-za-zashtita/

Sakam da kazham. „Државата губи над 2 милиона евра годишно за хонорари на комисиите кои пациентите со траен инвалидитет непотребно ги враќаат за оценување секои 6 месеци". ("The state loses over 2 million euros annually on commission fees for patients with permanent disabilities who are unnecessarily returned for evaluation every 6 months"). 11 June 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/drzhavata-gubi-nad-2-miliona-evra-godishno-za-honorari-na-komisiiite-koi-patsientite-so-traen-invaliditet-nepotrebno-gi-vrakaat-za-otsenuvane-sekoi-6-mesetsi/

Sakam da kazham. „Жените и девојките сè почесто отсуствуваат од работа и школо зашто немаат пари за менструални производи, вели ново истражување". ("Women and girls increasingly absent from work and school because they cannot afford menstrual products, new research says"). 1 June 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/zhenite-i-devojkite-s-pochesto-otsustvuvaat-od-rabota-i-shkolo-zashto-nemaat-pari-za-menstrualni-proizvodi-veli-novo-istrazhuvane/

Sakam da kazham. „Жртвите на семејно насилство добиваат само 250 евра еднократна помош, државата не одвојува пари за трајна поддршка". ("Domestic violence victims receive only 250 euros in one-off aid, the state allocates no funds for permanent support"). 4 December 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/zhrtvite-na-semejno-nasilstvo-dobivaat-samo-250-evra-ednokratna-pomosh-drzhavata-ne-odvojuva-pari-za-trajna-poddrshka/

Sakam da kazham. „За 5 години има 33 убиства во семејно насилство, нема доволно засолништа за жртвите, буџетот не дава пари за заштита, насилниците не се гонат по службена должност, откри ревизорскиот извештај". ("In 5 years there were 33 domestic violence murders, insufficient victim shelters, budget provides no funds for protection, abusers not prosecuted ex officio, audit report reveals"). 2 December 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/za-5-godini-ima-33-ubistva-vo-semejno-nasilstvo-nema-dovolno-zasolnishta-za-zhrtvite-budhetot-ne-dava-pari-za-zashtita-nasilnitsite-ne-se-gonat-po-sluzhbena-dolzhnost-otkri-revizorskiot-izveshtaj/

Sakam da kazham. „И за мал престап системот функционира, рече Мицкоски откако член на неговото обезбедување доби притвор оти ја претепал сопругата". ("'Even for a minor offense, the system works', said Mickoski after a member of his security detail was detained for beating his wife"). 5 May 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/i-za-mal-prestap-sistemot-funktsionira-reche-mitskoski-otkako-chlen-na-negovoto-obezbeduvane-dobi-pritvor-oti-ja-pretepal-soprugata/

Sakam da kazham. „„Јас во Америка не сакав да ми учат децата со црнчишта, не па овде со ѓупчишта", родител вознемирувал директорка на училиште која го пријавила во Антидискриминациската комисија". ("'In America I didn't want my children studying with black people, let alone here with Gypsies,' a parent harassed a school principal who reported him to the Anti-Discrimination Commission"). 1 February 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/jas-vo-amerika-ne-sakav-da-mi-uchat-detsata-so-tsrnchishta-ne-pa-ovde-so-gupchishta-roditel-voznemiruval-direktorka-na-uchilishte-koja-go-prijavila-vo-antidiskriminatsiskata-komisija/

Sakam da kazham. „Кривична пријава за петмина, од кои тројца затвореници во Идризово, за формирање терористичка организација што го велича ИСИС на интернет". ("Criminal charges against five people, three of whom prisoners in Idrizovo, for forming a terrorist organization glorifying ISIS online"). 17 June 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/krivichna-prijava-za-petmina-od-koi-trojtsa-zatvorenitsi-vo-idrizovo-za-formirane-teroristichka-organizatsija-shto-go-velicha-isis-na-internet/

Sakam da kazham. „Лицата со аутистичен спектар на нарушување влегоа во закон, фирмите ќе можат да ги користат нивните дарби и способности, за посебен простор и опрема ќе им помага државата". ("Persons on the autism spectrum entered the law, companies will be able to use their talents and abilities, the state will assist them with special space and equipment"). 12 October 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/litsata-so-autistichen-spektar-na-narushuvane-vlegoa-vo-zakon-firmite-ke-mozhat-da-gi-koristat-nivnite-darbi-i-sposobnosti-za-poseben-prostor-i-oprema-ke-im-pomaga-drzhavata/

Sakam da kazham. „Магационерка во приватна фирма е избркана од работа веднаш штом покажала документ за едномесечно боледување поради патолошка бременост, утврдена е дискриминација". ("A female warehouse worker in a private company was fired from work as soon as she showed a document for a one-month sick leave due to a high-risk pregnancy, discrimination established"). 13 October 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/magatsionerka-vo-privatna-firma-e-izbrkana-od-rabota-vednash-shtom-pokazhala-dokument-za-ednomesechno-boleduvane-poradi-patoloshka-bremenost-utvrdena-e-diskriminatsija/

Sakam da kazham. „Магистерка психолог во болниците во Струга, избркана од работа кога кажала дека е бремена, од силен стрес во 27. гестациска недела го изгубила бебето". ("Female psychologist with a master's degree at the hospital in Struga, fired from work when she said she was pregnant, lost her baby due to severe stress in the 27th gestational week"). 24 November 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/magisterka-psiholog-vo-bolnitsata-vo-struga-izbrkana-od-rabota-koga-kazhala-deka-e-bremena-od-silen-stres-vo-27-ta-gestatsiska-nedela-go-izgubila-bebeto/

Sakam da kazham. „Македонија падна за 3 места во Индексот за слобода на медиумите на Репортери без граници, сега е во групата со „проблематична" состојба, а за првпат пола свет е во „тешка" или „многу сериозна" состојба". ("Macedonia dropped 3 places in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, now in the group with a 'problematic' status, while for the first time half the world is in a 'difficult' or 'very serious' situation"). 30 April 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/makedonija-padna-za-3-mesta-vo-indeksot-za-sloboda-na-mediumite-na-reporteri-bez-granitsi-sega-e-vo-grupata-so-problematichna-sostojba-a-za-prvpat-pola-svet-e-vo-teshka-ili-mnogu-seriozna-sostojba/

Sakam da kazham. „Малолетник од Гостивар една година сексуално ја вознемирувал и ја силувал својата помала сестра". ("A minor from Gostivar sexually harassed and raped his younger sister for a year"). 29 April 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/maloletnik-od-gostivar-edna-godina-seksualno-ja-voznemiruval-i-siluval-svojata-pomala-sestra/

Sakam da kazham. „Млади со попреченост одбиени за помош за практикантство оти државата не им ги признава државните дипломи за завршено средно образование, утврдена дискриминација". ("Youths with disabilities rejected for internship support because the state does not recognize their state diplomas for completed secondary education, discrimination established"). 29 May 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/mladintsi-so-poprechenost-odbieni-za-pomosh-za-praktikantstvo-oti-drzhavata-ne-im-gi-priznava-drzhavnite-diplomi-za-zavrsheno-sredno-obrazovanie-utvrdena-diskriminatsija/

Sakam da kazham. „Мнозинството во битолскиот Совет не прифати општината да одвои пари за бесплатни влошки за средношколките". ("The majority in the Bitola Council did not accept the municipality allocating money for free sanitary pads for high school girls"). 30 December 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrezha/bitolskiot-sovet-ne-prifati-opshtinata-da-odvoi-pari-za-besplatni-vloshki-za-srednoshkolkite/

Sakam da kazham. „Над 90 отсто од жените кои претрпеле семејно насилство земаат кредити или позајмици за да преживеат во првите месеци, вели здружението ЕСЕ". ("Over 90 percent of women who have suffered domestic violence take out loans or borrowings to survive in the first few months, says ESE Association"). 25 November 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/nad-90-otsto-od-zhenite-koi-pretrpele-semejno-nasilstvo-zemaat-krediti-ili-pozajmitsi-za-da-prezhiveat-vo-prvite-mesetsi-veli-zdruzhenieto-ese/

Sakam da kazham. „Нападнати новинарите на 'Инфомакс', напаѓачот ја искршил вратата и насилно влегол за време на емисија во живо". ("Infomax journalists attacked, attacker broke the door and forcibly entered during a live broadcast"). 11 December 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/napadnati-novinarite-na-infomaks-napagachot-ja-iskrshil-vratata-i-nasilno-vlegol-za-vreme-na-emisija-vo-zhivo/

Sakam da kazham. „Неготинец обвинет за расизам, на социјални мрежи повикувал на Ромите да им се забрани гласање на избори". ("Negotino resident accused of racism, on social networks called for Roma to be banned from voting in elections"). 15 November 2025. https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/negotinets-obvinet-za-rasizam-na-sotsijalni-mrezhi-povikuval-na-romite-da-im-se-zabrani-glasane-na-izbori/

Sakam da kazham. „„Нека си оди во село, часовите ќе ги дадеме на наше градско дете", рекол заменик-директор на школо за наставничка по физичко, утврдена дискриминација според потекло". ("'Let her go back to the village, we will give the classes to our city child,' said a deputy school director regarding a physical education teacher, discrimination based on origin established"). 28 March 2026. https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/neka-si-odi-vo-selo-chasovite-ke-gi-dademe-na-nashe-gradsko-dete-rekol-zamenik-direktor-na-shkolo-za-nastavnichka-po-fizichko-utvrdena-diskriminatsija-spored-poteklo/

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