



2025 Rule of Law Report - targeted stakeholder consultation

Civil societies organizations' joint submission - Croatia

January 2025



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Introduction

This joint contribution to the 2025 Rule of Law Report is prepared by the Human Rights House Zagreb and Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo with contributions from following civil society organizations from Croatia: [Croatian Journalist Association](#) (HND), [Centre for Peace Studies](#) (CMS), [Zagreb Pride](#), [Udruga RODA](#), [Documenta](#), [Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Croatia](#) (YIHR), [GONG](#), [Friends of the Earth Croatia](#) (FOE), [Sunce](#) with support of [Zeleni Forum](#), [DKolektiv](#), [Center for peace, non-violence and human rights](#) (CZMOS), [Udruga Pomak](#), [Udruga Sidro](#), [Civil Rights Project SISAK](#) (PGP Sisak), [Centar za građanske inicijative Poreč](#) (CGI Poreč) and [Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity-CROSOL](#).

[Human Rights House Zagreb](#) (HRHZ) is a human rights organization established in 2008 as a network of civil society organizations with the goal of protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. KLJP's vision is to build a democratic, pluralistic and inclusive society founded upon the values of human rights protection, the rule of law, social justice, and solidarity. Through research, monitoring, advocacy, and education, KLJP contributes to the protection, promotion, development, and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. By publishing annual overviews of the state of human rights, thematic reports, and petitions, we help create better laws and public policies.

[Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo](#) (CMT) is an independent, non-profit policy think tank integrating academic and policy research and public discussion to produce policy solutions and affect policy reforms in the areas of democratization and rule of law. CMT works to broad public discussions and to encourage better public understanding of complex issues with the goal of carving out a permanent space for non-governmental stakeholders in the policy process. The key factor which sets CMT apart from all other organizations in Croatia is its membership, a relatively small but keen and diverse constellation of civic-minded experts who work towards policy change aimed at strengthening Croatian democracy.

List of topics – 2025 Rule of Law Report

I. JUSTICE SYSTEM

1. Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the justice system (if applicable)

Public trust in the judiciary's commitment to fight corruption has been further eroded by the appointment of a highly controversial High Criminal Court judge Ivan Turudić to the position of State Attorney General who is closely connected with the ruling political party. Further damage to his reputation was made by the revelations from his correspondence with Josipa Pleslić (Rimac), former State Secretary (HDZ), who was under investigation by the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK) for corruption. Furthermore, Turudić was seen by the Croatian Intelligence in a night ride in Zagreb with Zdravko Mamić, former President of the Football Club Dinamo Zagreb and former Vice President of the Croatian Football Federation who was sentenced



for extracting money from Dinamo and has been living in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a fugitive. Turudić was also a member of the working group producing the amendments of the Criminal Code where the new criminal offence of leaking information from investigations in the criminal procedure was introduced. The opposition members of Parliament, together with the broader legal, political and general public, expressed strong concerns during the process of the appointment of the State Attorney General.¹

Before his appointment, Turudić publicly stated doubts whether Croatia benefited from acceding to the Regulation on the Office of EU Public Prosecutor (EPPO). State Attorney General is empowered to decide on a conflict of jurisdiction between the State Attorney's Office and the European Public Prosecutor's Office, without the possibility of further legal recourse. This issue has arisen in criminal proceedings against the Minister of Health, when the newly appointed State Attorney General took the case away from EPPO² and found himself, together with the Prime Minister, in a public confrontation with EPPO.³ Gong addressed the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions in November 2024, pointing out inconsistencies between Croatian legislation and the Regulation on the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).⁴

A. Independence

2. Appointment and selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents (incl. judicial review)

Nothing has changed since the CSOs submissions for the 2024 and 2023 Rule of Law Report consultations. The selection of judges and their promotion remain non-transparent, which is one of the reasons for the overwhelming lack of public trust in the judiciary. The same applies to the election of members of the State Judiciary Council.⁵

5. Allocation of cases in courts

CSOs provided extensive comments on the allocation of cases in the 2023 and 2024 submissions to the RoL Report. It was noted that presidents of courts have extensive authority to reallocate cases with a stated purpose of "equalizing the workload of judges" while the conditions for such reallocation

¹ Based on inputs from Gong

² <https://n1info.hr/english/news/eppo-raises-rule-of-law-concerns-in-croatia-due-to-conflict-of-competences/>

³ Available at: <https://www.eppo.europa.eu/en/media/news/eppo-raises-concerns-over-rule-law-violations-croatia-following-conflict-competence>

⁴ In its submission to the Committee on Petitions, Gong underscored that no legal remedy exists to challenge State Attorney's decision before the European Court, as the implementation law does not provide for such an option. This issue could have been avoided if the Supreme Court, as Croatia's highest judicial authority, were assigned the responsibility of deciding jurisdictional conflicts. More at <https://gong.hr/en/2024/11/21/gong-addressed-the-european-parliament-the-general-state-attorney-should-not-decide-on-conflicts-of-jurisdiction-between-dorh-and-eppo/>

⁵ For more information see the updated recommendations for strengthening transparency and accountability of judiciary from Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Preporuke_CMT_sudstvo_2024.pdf



are imprecisely defined. Since then, an amendment to the by-laws has further expanded the discretionary powers of court presidents.⁶ The risk of abusing this discretion is high.

6. Independence (including composition and nomination and dismissal of its members), and powers of the body tasked with safeguarding the independence of the judiciary (e.g. Council for the Judiciary)

The election of members of the State Judiciary Council is not transparent and based on very peculiar election rules. There are many indications that “behind the scene” agreements play a preponderant role in setting the list of candidates and the election itself.⁷

7. Accountability of judges and prosecutors, including disciplinary regime and bodies and ethical rules, judicial immunity and criminal/civil (where applicable) liability of judges (incl. judicial review)

As pointed out in the submission for 2024 and 2023, the accountability mechanism for judges in Croatia is highly ineffective. As a result, the general population does not have trust in the judiciary to such an extent that this should have attracted more attention from the EU Commission a long time ago. A general population opinion survey conducted by Centre Miko Tripalo in 2024 (via polling agency IPSOS) demonstrated that in all important aspects the public opinion about the judiciary is highly negative.⁸ Compared to other Croatian institutions, Croatian judiciary enjoys less trust than do the government, prosecution and police. Only political parties and the parliament are ranked worse.⁹ Neither the Government nor the judiciary are showing any willingness to implement measures that would improve the credibility of the judicial system nor much concern for the fact that for many years Croatia has been ranked as the worst with respect to the political influence on the judiciary.¹⁰

⁶ CMT, available at: <https://pravosudje.tripalo.hr/2024/01/08/komentar-centra-miko-tripalo-na-dokument-prijedlog-pravilnika-oizmjenama-i-dopuni-pravilnika-o-radu-u-sustavu-espis/>

⁷ For more on this issue please see https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Preporuke_CMT_sudstvo_2024.pdf

⁸ Ipsos interviewed a representative sample of one thousand respondents

⁹ Only 23% of respondents believe that judges are ruling in an unbiased and fair way. More than 2/3 of all respondents believe that judges are very much connected to local and national political and economic elites while more than 70% of respondents believe that politicians influence judicial rulings. Only 17% considers that judges are firmly adhering to ethical and moral norms and that they conscientiously perform their duties. More than 70% of respondents believe that judges are inclined to practice corruptive behavior. Only 12% thinks that disciplinary proceedings against judges are efficient. More details of the survey can be found at <https://tripalo.hr/skup-stanje-u-hrvatskom-pravosudu-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-kako-dalje/>

¹⁰ As reported in regular EU Justice Scoreboard, EU Eurobarometer Flash surveys and the Special Eurobarometer 534. More about this can be found in updated recommendations from Centre Miko Tripalo for improving the accountability and transparency of the Croatian judiciary <https://tripalo.hr/skup-stanje-u-hrvatskom-pravosudu-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-kako-dalje/>



10. Significant developments capable of affecting the perception that the general public has of the independence of the judiciary

See the above comments related to the events tied to the appointment of the Prosecutor General. In another case, a judge resigned from the position of the president of the regional court after another court approved an indictment against him, as raised by the public prosecutor. Contrary to the previous practice, the judge was not suspended. He was recently reelected to the position of the president of the court although at that time three judges in his court were under criminal investigations for corruption. He is also known for a large number of cases suing the media and for commercial activities not seen positively by the public.¹¹

In June, the Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), Serge Brammertz issued a progress report outlining the work of the Mechanism's Office of the Prosecutor (OTP). The OTP's report outlined worrying issues regarding the judicial independence in Croatia in the context of war crime prosecution and accountability efforts. The OTP mentioned - "political interference in the justice process" and a "policy to not provide cooperation to other countries in the region with respect to war crimes cases concerning suspects who are Croatian nationals".¹² This report has reiterated the lack of independence of the Croatian judiciary when it comes to the prosecution of war crimes. YIHR Croatia requested the government and the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration to address issues reported by OTP but has never received a response. As of this submission, no governmental or judicial institution has addressed this report or the issues it raises, further deepening public skepticism about the judiciary's independence.¹³

B. Quality of justice

11. Accessibility of courts (e.g. court/legal fees, legal aid, language)

CSOs welcome the introduction of the three-year program financing and commend the increase in the amount for the provision of free primary legal aid in the second and third year of three-year financing, however the delay in concluding annual contracts and disbursing funds for the current year of implementation to registered primary legal aid providers calls into question their ability to deliver it.¹⁴ Some CSOs note that the three-year model of financing should be included in the Free Legal Aid Act, which still has regulations on one year funding of primary legal aid, which is not legally acceptable.¹⁵ There are issues related to the conclusion of contracts with registered providers of legal aid and the Ministry and the payment of funds for the current year. In accordance with the Act, the tender for

¹¹ See more at: <https://www.antenazadar.hr/clanak/2024/11/dsv-odlucio-ivan-markovic-novi-predsjednik-zupanijskog-suda-u-zadru/> and https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/sudac-tuzio-hanza-mediju-nepravomocno-dobio-250-000-kn-mogu-li-mediji-slobodno-pratiti-rad-sudova-15160123?cx_linkref=jl_ia_vezane

¹² <https://www.irmct.org/sites/default/files/documents/AnnexIIAssessmentoftheProsecutorMay2024English.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.yihr.hr/en/irmct-prosecutor-s-progress-report-on-croatia-indicate-serious-issues>

¹⁴ The financial resources for 2024 were paid to free legal aid providers in July 2024 in the amount of 70%, and the amount of 30% was paid in mid-December 2024. according to Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights - Osijek (CZMOS)

¹⁵ Based on the input from PGP Sisak



providers of primary legal aid is announced in the year in which the project is approved, which is why there is no continuity of financing of providers throughout the year because the funds are paid to providers in the third quarter of the current year.¹⁶ For some legal aid providers the last instalment for 2024 was paid only in December 2024, but was due after the half year report.

There is a constant lack of financial support from local and regional self-government for free legal aid. There is also no special evaluation of the provider's fieldwork that would ensure equal territorial representation of primary legal aid providers.¹⁷ CSOs note that Stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness should be added to the list of beneficiaries of the free legal aid system since they are the most vulnerable population in Croatia, and they are not covered by the Act. Despite a large amount of existing free legal aid clients, providers still encounter new ones who say that they were not aware of the availability of free legal aid. Therefore, the population is not sufficiently informed of the free legal aid system.¹⁸ The Legal Aid Act entrusted the Legal Aid Commission with an important supervisory role, but in recent years its role has been completely neglected. Appointments of members are delayed and non-transparent. Sessions are not held or are held extremely rarely. The two-year mandate of the current Commission has expired.¹⁹

Another significant challenge in the functioning of the free legal aid system relates to inequality in access to primary free legal aid provided by civil society organizations. Currently, 49 civil society organizations are registered as authorized providers of primary legal aid.²⁰ However, they are concentrated in only a few cities – and almost half of the providers (47%) operate in Zagreb. Besides Zagreb, most providers are located in Split and Vukovar (4 each), Rijeka, Osijek, and Slavonski Brod (2 each), while the remaining cities and municipalities have only one provider. In as many as eight counties, including Karlovac, Zadar, and Šibenik-Knin counties, no organization providing free legal aid is registered.²¹

Social inequality affects vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers, LGBT persons, and members of national minorities, who, due to specific social and institutional circumstances, often lack access to

¹⁶ In 2019, funds for the provision of primary legal aid were compensated on 31 May 2019; for the year 2020, funds for the provision of primary legal aid were compensated on 31 July 2020; for the year 2021, funds were compensated on 30 June 2021; for the year 2022, funds were paid on 31 July 2022; for 2023, funds were compensated on 24 August 2023; for 2024 funds in the amount of 70% of the total budget were paid on 15 July 2024 according to CZMOS

¹⁷ There are parts in Croatia where there are no registered FLA providers (Dubrovnik-Neretva County). Another issue is the rural parts of Croatia, which are not visited by FLA providers in the field due to insufficient financial resources, and this service is inaccessible to the population of these parts.

¹⁸ More in the report by PGP Sisak at <https://www.crpsisak.hr/2024/02/pgp-napisao-i-objavio-izvjestaj-o-primarnoj-besplatnoj-pravnoj-pomoci-u-rh-za-period-od-15-godina-od-donosenja-zakona-2008-do-2023/>

¹⁹ On 28 November 2024, the Ministry sent an invitation to associations authorized to provide primary legal aid to nominate a member of the Commission for Free Legal Aid. CSOs legal aid providers are of the opinion that the Commission should be formed on time and act in accordance with the Free Legal Aid Act, Articles 47, 48, 49 and 50. Based on the input by PGP Sisak and CZMOS

²⁰ Human Rights House Zagreb, Legal Support to Victims of Human Rights Violations - Opportunities and Challenges for Civil Society Organizations in Croatia, March 2024, available at: <https://www.kucaljudskihprava.hr/publikacije/pravna-podrska-zrtvama-krsenja-ljudskih-prava-mogucnosti-i-izazovi-za-organizacije-civilnog-drustva-u-hrvatskoj/>

²¹ Ibid.



necessary legal aid or are discouraged from seeking it. The legal system is inaccessible to women whose reproductive rights have been violated due to lengthy and uncertain procedures. The small number of cases in the courts related to reproductive rights compared to the complaints received by civil society organizations and ombudsman offices indicates a lack of trust in the legal system and its inaccessibility. Based on research by CSOs, in the five-year period (from 2016 to 2020), in most cases, women resorted to extrajudicial protection, specifically lodging complaints with ombudsman offices. This points to a lack of confidence in the judiciary, rendering justice inaccessible.²²

The Environmental Protection Act authorizes all environmental CSOs to participate in legal proceedings as plaintiffs and represent the interests and rights of citizens to a healthy environment. According to the amendments of the Administrative Dispute Act from 2017 (Article 79), the losing party in the dispute is required to reimburse the other party's legal costs, including the opposing party's attorney's fees. This provision affects the decision of CSOs to use the right of access to justice in environmental cases prescribed by the Aarhus Convention by forcing them to prioritize which disputes to initiate and when. Taking into account the still insufficiently developed judicial practice in terms of environmental law, the misunderstanding of the purpose of the Aarhus Convention and environmental directives and the fact that project investors hire excessively expensive lawyers, environmental CSOs must carefully weigh its financial ability to bear the loss of the dispute. Only rarely do organizations have enough sources of funding to allow them to initiate the disputes which they consider important for the development of environmental law.²³

12. Resources of the judiciary (human/financial/material), remuneration/bonuses/rewards for judges and prosecutors, including observed changes (significant and targeted increase or decrease over the past year)

In 2024, the Association of Judges organized a strike to put pressure on the government to increase their salaries, in which they were successful. As the strike of judges according to legislation is illegal, it was called “a measure of warning”. There were no indications that the remuneration of judges before that action was putting at risk the normal functioning of the judiciary.²⁴ Moreover, the large increase in remuneration of judges has not prompted the Government to revisit the need for better transparency and adequate restrictions on commercial activities of judges, as proposed by the President of the Supreme Court in 2023. At some point this was accepted by the Ministry, but then reversed in

²² Available at: <https://www.roda.hr/udruga/projekti/radar/izraden-prvi-pregled-sudske-prakse-i-mehanizama-zastite-reproduktivnih-prava-zena-u-rh.html>. Overview of judicial practice and mechanisms for the protection of women's reproductive rights in Croatia, page 23, Chapter 3.1.1. Practice of Croatian courts regarding violations of women's reproductive rights

²³ Based on the input from Sunce with support of Zeleni Forum

²⁴ This is illustrated by very small number of judges who leave their positions, except for retirement (these statistics are unfortunately no longer published), and by a large number of candidates for every advertised position, except for the smallest provincial towns. Judicial positions are hence obviously attractive. Based on input by Centre Miko Tripalo



Parliament. The representation of these events in the previous RoL Report for Croatia was inaccurate.²⁵

CSOs working on transitional justice highlight the need to increase the capacities of the competent county state attorney's offices, the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia and the police for revision and investigation of unsolved cases of war crimes.²⁶

13. Training of justice professionals (including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff, clerks/trainees)

CSOs working on transitional justice stress the need to provide regular professional training when it comes to the prosecution of war crimes, in cooperation with the Police and Judicial Academy and civil society organizations.²⁷ Some organisations have noted that many judges are not familiar with the relevant legal provisions related to LGBTIQ rights, especially those of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as some aspects of the Croatian legal framework. In practice, it sometimes happens that appropriate legal terminology (such as sexual orientation and/or gender identity) is not used, and alternative terms are employed. Trainings for judges and state attorneys at the Judicial Academy are conducted periodically, but in the last couple of years, there has been no involvement of lecturers from civil society or representatives of any LGBTIQ organizations.²⁸

14. Digitalisation (e.g. use of digital technology, including electronic communication and AI tools, within the justice system and with court users, procedural rules, access to judgments online)

A new system of publishing court rulings was introduced on January 1, 2025. Owing to its very short time in operation, it is difficult to assess its quality. However, it is visible that the database does not include procedural rulings, including those on permissible or non-permissible evidence and exclusion of judges because of the potential conflicts of interest, both of which sometimes substantially impact the final rulings. Furthermore, the new by-laws on anonymization does not in any way take into account the public interest for cases of corruption or other forms of criminality committed by public figures. Moreover, in trying to get access to a case against the media, Centre Miko Tripalo recently discovered that many court files are completely destroyed five years after the rulings have become final.²⁹

²⁵ See the 2023 Report of the President of the Supreme Court at <https://www.vsrh.hr/EasyEdit/UserFiles/izvjestaji/2024/statisticko-izvjesce-2023-final.pdf> and commentary by professor Alan Uzelac at <https://tripalo.hr/komentar-profesora-alana-uzelca-na-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-za-2024-poglavlje-pravosuđe-za-skup-stanje-u-hrvatskom-pravosuđu-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-kako-dalje/>

²⁶ Based on the input Documenta and YIHR

²⁷ See more at <https://documenta.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Annual-report-on-monitoring-war-crimes-trials-for-2023-summary.pdf>

²⁸ Based on the input by Zagreb Pride

²⁹ Destruction of files is prescribed in Rules of Procedure for Courts (Sudski poslovnik), article 167 - see more at https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1997_08_80_1405.html



15. Use of assessment tools and standards (e.g. ICT systems, including AI-based systems, for case management, court statistics and their transparency, monitoring, evaluation, surveys among court users or legal professionals)

Organisations that monitor the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms are unable to access information regarding civil and criminal court cases addressing wartime events and acquiring information about cases has proved extremely difficult, especially past cases already adjudicated on. It is difficult to get access to such information when requested directly from institutions (e.g., long waiting time, rejecting the request for information by CSO actors) while court statistics or case overviews are not digitally or publicly available. This is especially true for criminal cases in which Croats were the perpetrators or civil cases in which victims pursue their rights from the state or Croat perpetrators.³⁰ Moreover, anonymization of personal data (names) of those accused of war crimes, is criticized by CSOs due to the importance of the prosecution of war crimes for societies in Croatia and other post-Yugoslav states.³¹

As part of a project implemented by Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights-Osijek an analysis of judicial practice in trials for criminal offences with elements of corruption was conducted. In an attempt to collect data on court proceedings for these criminal offences, freedom of information requests were sent to county courts in Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and Osijek. A number of issues arose in this process. Some courts displayed a lack of transparency, which especially applies to the Zagreb County Court. Furthermore, there was a problem with the unbalanced way of keeping records and recording data, which was encountered in data from Rijeka and Split. In addition, the waiting time for the delivery of data from certain courts spanned months.³²

C. Efficiency of the justice system

17. Developments related to efforts to improve the efficiency of the justice system (e.g. as regards length of proceedings)

No efforts are being undertaken, except for the formation of a working group by the Ministry. Duration of civil and criminal cases until finality in Croatia is extremely long.³³ Such statistics exist in the judicial IT system, but are not published. Instead, the authorities publish effectively meaningless data on “disposition time”. In the past, CSOs recommended to the authorities that the statistics on the efficiency of the judicial system be reviewed, but this has not been accepted. Much has been written

³⁰ Based on input by YIHR

³¹ Ibid

³² Available at: <https://centar-za-mir.hr/projekti/razvoj-metodologije-monitoringa-sudskih-procesa-za-kaznena-djela-s-elementima-korupcije-i-uspostava-antikorupcijske-mreze-ocd-ova>

³³ As an illustration, the recent analysis of over 1000 civil cases against media by Centre Miko Tripalo discovered that the average duration of litigations until finality is 4.3 years, and similar is the duration of such criminal cases. The duration up to the decision by the second-degree courts (or the first degree if not subsequently contested), was measured and possible revisions by the Supreme Court or the Constitutional Court were not considered, which could further extend the process. More information at https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SLAPP_Report_final_eng-3.pdf



on the duration of cases by independent experts.³⁴ For example, the average duration of a legal proceedings in the field of reproductive rights is just over 9 months, with the longest case lasting 18 years.³⁵ Considering that exhausting national legal remedies is a prerequisite for seeking protection from the ECHR or the UN, such prolonged proceedings make legal protection not only unavailable in Croatia but also before international courts.

Weak efficiency reflects several factors, among others weak skills among some judges, absence of records on working time of judges, and the arbitrary norms for annual caseload that each judge must complete. There are many indications that the norms for criminal, administrative, labor and misdemeanor cases are too generous while those for the civil litigations are too tight.³⁶ The judiciary often blames the large backlog of cases on a number of incoming cases, but the accompanying statistics are not supportive as they count as cases all land and property recordings, as well as recordings of changes in business registers, which in most other EU countries are not functions of courts. Moreover, these files are handled by advisors, and not by judges. On the other hand, the number of judges per population is among the highest in the EU.³⁷

Any other developments related to the justice system - please specify

After Croatia's accession to the European Union, there was stagnation in the quality of criminal prosecution and trials in war crime cases. Competent county attorneys' offices lack the capacity to revise and investigate pending war crimes cases, and the effectiveness of investigations has decreased, especially against members of Croatian military units. Trials in absentia lead to a high possibility of reopening these cases, and very limited regional judicial cooperation in the prosecution of war crimes results in a lack of exchange of information and evidence. A book of missing persons has not been updated since 2015 and it is not transparent.³⁸

The use of the legal institute of collective lawsuit in environmental protection is a pioneering one in the field of the environmental law (this type of lawsuit has not been prescribed in Environmental Protection Act but only in the Law on Civil Procedure) and the court's decision will serve as case law for further lawsuits, legal actions and applicable strategic decisions. The scope of the Dugi Rat lawsuit initiated by Sunce was to protect the right of the local population to a healthy and clean environment, by encouraging the rehabilitation of the polluted area in Dugi Rat. In the event of a negative outcome of this litigation this position will be used to advocate for inclusion of such legal institutes within the

³⁴ See more in the commentary by professor Alan Uzelac at <https://tripalo.hr/komentar-profesora-alana-uzelca-na-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-za-2024-poglavlje-pravosuđe-za-skup-stanje-u-hrvatskom-pravosuđu-izvjestaj-o-vladavini-prava-kako-dalje/> and a paper by professor Juraj Brozović at <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2628334176?sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>

³⁵ Available at: <https://www.roda.hr/udruga/projekti/radar/izraden-prvi-pregled-sudske-prakse-i-mehanizama-zastite-reproduktivnih-prava-zena-u-rh.html>, page 82, Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

³⁶ More about the findings on the problem of working norms for judges at <https://tripalo.hr/skup-okvirna-mjerila-za-rad-sudaca-2/>

³⁷ Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/84aa3726-82d7-4401-98c1-fee04a7d2dd6_en?filename=2024%20EU%20Justice%20Scoreboard.pdf

³⁸ Ibid



Environmental Protection Act, with the idea of allowing claims for reparation of damages caused by inadequate practice which can cause harm to the health and citizens environment.³⁹

II. Anti-corruption framework

18. Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the anti-corruption framework (if applicable).

Currently, the Working group to amend the Law on Suppression of Organized Crime and Corruption is active⁴⁰, as is the Working group on the amendments to Criminal Procedure Law.⁴¹ However, recommendations for revising the Criminal Procedure Act and the USKOK Act, also included in the Anti-Corruption Strategy, have not been implemented yet. The Ministry of Justice and Administration has cited other priorities as the reason, but the long-term neglect of these issues has serious consequences for the effectiveness of the anti-corruption framework.⁴²

A. The institutional framework capacity to fight against corruption (prevention and investigation / prosecution)

19. List any changes as regards relevant authorities (e.g. national agencies, bodies) in charge of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption and the resources allocated to each of these authorities (the human, financial, legal, and technical resources as relevant), including the cooperation among domestic and with foreign authorities. Indicate any relevant measures taken to effectively and timely cooperate with OLAF and EPPO.

In 2024, EPPO raised concerns over rule of law violations in Croatia following the conflict of competence decision in November 2024, which resulted in EPPO in Zagreb transferring a case

³⁹ Sunce has been working since 2021 on addressing the environmental issue in Dugi Rat caused by the lack of remediation at the former Dalmacija Ferroalloy Factory site. Due to the increasing incidence of illnesses among the residents of Dugi Rat and the observed air pollution, an initiative was launched by a group of citizens and Sunce provided legal support by initiating procedures with the relevant ministries and inspections and has implemented the project "Strategy for the Comprehensive Recovery of Coastal Brownfield Areas," which aimed to determine the most effective solutions to address this issue. In 2023, Sunce has filed a lawsuit for the protection of collective rights and interests against the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (today Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition), in order to protect the citizens' right to a healthy life and environment in the area of Dugi Rat. Lawsuit has been filed in March 2023, and the preliminary hearing is scheduled for March 2025.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, available at: <https://mpudt.gov.hr/savjetovanja-s-javnosc/radne-skupine-za-izradu-nacrta-prijedloga-zakona-drugih-propisa-i-akata/radna-skupina-za-izradu-nacrta-prijedloga-zakona-o-izmjenama-i-dopunama-zakona-o-kaznenom-postupku/26759>

⁴¹ Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, available at: <https://mpudt.gov.hr/vijesti/izmjenama-zakona-o-kaznenom-postupku-istraga-nece-postati-tajna/26763?lang=bg>

⁴² Based on input by CMT



involving alleged corruption and money laundering related to EU and national funds to Croatia's Office for Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK).⁴³ This followed a decision by Croatia's State Attorney General, with which EPPO disagreed but complied. EPPO expressed concerns over systemic rule of law issues in Croatia, highlighting that the State Attorney General's role in resolving such conflicts contravenes EU law, and that USKOK failed to report its investigation into an EU-funded project, violating obligations under the EPPO Regulation.

The Council for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct of State Officials in Executive Authorities continued its training initiatives on the topic. All local units have passed their codes of conduct. However, corruption on local level remains an issue and should be addressed in following periods, as one of the priorities.

20. Safeguards for the functional independence of the authorities tasked with the prevention and detection of corruption.

One of the biggest concerns is the independence of the newly elected General State Attorney, Ivan Turudić (see Justice chapter above). In addition, there is still no officially appointed head of USKOK; the current acting officer is Sven Mišković.

In March, the Commission for Conflict of Interest Prevention issued a decision regarding a message sent by the Government spokesperson, Marko Milić, to the then-head of Hrvatske Šume (Croatian Forests) about his friend's employment. It was concluded that there was no conflict of interest since the message did not contain a direct request for the employment of a specific person. The Commission's president expressed dissent, arguing that Milić should be held accountable. The decision has faced criticism as it could influence the perception of corruption in the public sector.⁴⁴ Nepotism and clientelism in state and public administration in terms of employment has been very common adding the case of former Minister of Labour and Social System Josip Aladrović being under investigation for the employment of his friends in the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute.⁴⁵ Such examples further lead to the increased perception of corruption in Croatia which is among the highest in the European Union.⁴⁶

⁴³ European Public Prosecutor's Office, EPPO raises concerns over rule of law violations in Croatia following conflict of competence decision, November 2024, available at: <https://www.eppo.europa.eu/en/media/news/eppo-raises-concerns-over-rule-law-violations-croatia-following-conflict-competence>

⁴⁴ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/05/28/ako-nema-glagola-nema-ni-sukoba-interesa-povjerenstvo-o-porukama-marka-milica-prema-direktoru-hrvatskih-suma/>

⁴⁵ Jutarnji.hr, available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/pokrenuta-istraga-protiv-ministra-aladrovica-na-meti-uskok-a-i-gradonacelnik-zupanje-15170456>

⁴⁶ Eurobarometer survey, available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3217>



21. Information on the implementation of measures foreseen in the strategic anti-corruption framework (if applicable). If available, please provide relevant objectives and indicators.

The Croatian Parliament amended the Law on Civil Servants⁴⁷, which postponed the application of the Centralised Employment System, which is a measure from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, and extends the application of the current regulations for employment in the civil service. Hundred and thirty two MPs voted for that law, three of them were against, and two abstained.⁴⁸ The centralised employment system was supposed to enter into force on July, but since the application for the new system was not completed, in the transitional period until November, the procedure and announcement of public tenders and ads for admission to the civil service for a certain period of time was carried out according to the current regulations. In October 2024 there were 204 vacancies open, right before the start of the new system of employment, which raised questions on the timing for such a decision.⁴⁹

The Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation has launched an informational and educational campaign aimed at raising awareness of the harmful effects of corruption and encouraging citizens to actively participate in the fight against corruption, however the web page is not yet fully operational with all relevant data.⁵⁰ It is still a problem that the Reports of various bodies, such as the Ombudsman, Commission for the Resolution of Conflicts of Interest, etc. are not discussed in the Parliament on time.

B. Prevention

22. Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector (including as regards incompatibility rules, revolving doors, codes of conduct, ethics).

The Code of Conduct for State Officials in Executive Authorities, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2022⁵¹ still, in practice, serves as a means of fulfilling obligations towards GRECO without having a real impact on reducing corruption. The Council for the Implementation of the Code, responsible for oversight, is composed mainly of members from the government officials, which can lead to the conclusion that the Government oversees its own behavior. The complaint submission process is limited to officials themselves or their superiors, excluding citizens

⁴⁷ The Act on Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants and Employees in Local and Regional Self-Government (NN 17/2025), available at: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2025_02_17_164.html

⁴⁸ Sabor.hr, available at: <https://www.sabor.hr/hr/sjednice-sabora/prijedlog-zakona-o-izmjenama-i-dopunama-zakona-o-drzavnim-sluzbenicima-s-11>

⁴⁹ Available at:

<https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/na-stotine-drzavnih-sluzbenika-uhljebljeno-u-zadnji-cas-kako-bi-izbjegli-novinac-zaposljavanja-vrag-su-ta-pravila-1429753>, <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/sabor-prije-pauze-donio-nekoliko-zakona-i-izmjena-bauku-jandrokovic-dao-opomenu-20240712>

⁵⁰ Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, available at: <https://mpudt.gov.hr/istaknute-teme-11/borba-protiv-korupcije/kampanja-pokreni-promjenu-prijavi-korupciju/28345?lang=bg>

⁵¹ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/11/28/drzavi-malo-a-nama-lepo-cemu-sluzi-vladin-kodeks-ponasanja-drzavnih-duznosnika/>



and members of parliament.⁵²

According to their own Rules of Procedure, the Council holds sessions when needed, at least once every two months, but the interval between sessions has always been longer than two months. Furthermore, according to the data available on the Council's website, the last session was held on 27 June 2024.⁵³ The rules of procedure also prescribe the publication of the work of the Council, but it is not clear how the publication of the work is achieved except by belated publication of the minutes. Since the establishment of the Council, only one complaint has been received, raising questions about its effectiveness. The Council did not question the case of Gordan Grlić Radman, who did not report profit from dividends in his property card, as well as Marko Milić when the correspondence with the president of Croatian Forests, Krunoslav Jakupčić, related to the employment of his friend, became public.

By weakening the Commission for the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest, which can no longer determine violations of ethical principles and expanding the circle of obligees, that institution has been reduced to a mere administrator of asset declarations.⁵⁴ The Commission has now also become responsible for managing the Register of Lobbyists, so in October 2024, the Commission adopted the Rulebook on Keeping the Register of Lobbyists⁵⁵ and in November 2024, the Commission published on its website the table of the Register of Registered Lobbyists in the Republic of Croatia⁵⁶, which contains data on the executive decisions on registration on that day.

23. Measures to enhance general transparency of public decision-making (including rules on lobbying, asset and interest disclosure rules, gifts policy, transparency of political party financing).

On 1 October, the Lobbying Act came into force, but it fails to ensure sufficient transparency.⁵⁷ Despite numerous recommendations from international organizations and civil society groups, the final solution does not ensure sufficient transparency in lobbying, since it will not enable the public to know who is lobbying, when, and whom. Civil society is also classified as lobbyists, even though it represents community interests rather than private ones. CSOs stress that transparency should include not just identifying lobbyists but also revealing meetings and topics discussed.⁵⁸ However, only lobbyists must report annually, while those being lobbied have no obligations. Reports submitted to the Commission for the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest will not be publicly accessible. This lack of transparency undermines public trust and weakens citizens' roles in shaping policies. Since lobbyists registered in the Lobbyists Register are required to submit reports on their lobbying activities to the Commission annually by 31 March of the current year for the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Rulebook on Keeping the Register of Lobbyists (NN 123/2024), available at: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024_10_123_2068.html?

⁵⁶ Commission for Decisions on Conflict of Interest, available at: <https://www.sukobinteresa.hr/hr/lobiranje/obavijest>

⁵⁷ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/10/01/zakon-o-lobiranju-stupio-na-snagu-gong-ponovno-upozorava-na-netransparentnost-regulacije/>

⁵⁸ Ibid.



previous year, this means that neither the Commission nor the public will be informed in real time, potentially learning about lobbying after legislative processes have concluded. This contradicts the Act's goal of limiting undue influence and goes against OECD recommendations for timely and publicly accessible lobbying data.



25. Measures to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption, including their application (i.e. number of reports received, and the follow-up given).

In 2023 there were 38 internal applications, which is only one more than in 2022, when there were 37 applications.⁵⁹ Of these reports, 14 were related to irregularities in legal entities founded by the Republic of Croatia or local regional (regional) self-government units, there were 12 notifications of employers' irregularities in economy and trade, eight in legal entities that perform public service, two in bodies with public powers, and one in state bodies and one notice of irregularities in bodies of local regional self-government units. There is still a perceived lack of knowledge and understanding of the Act among both employers and employees, including uncertainties concerning the scope, procedures for reporting irregularities, and reporting methods as highlighted in the Ombudswoman's report.⁶⁰

One of the greatest challenges for whistleblowers is their financial exhaustion, as well as slow judicial procedures.⁶¹ Judicial protection procedures for whistleblowers are urgent, but in some cases, more than a year passes between filing a lawsuit and the first hearing, and more than two years until a first-instance judgment is delivered. This is particularly problematic in cases where temporary measure for reinstatement is not imposed, as it essentially means that the person has no income during that entire period. Monitoring court cases is difficult because, under the provisions of the Court's Rules of Procedure, there is no specific designation of cases related to the Act on the Protection of Persons Reporting Irregularities, and statistical data on these cases is not maintained separately.⁶² This is significant for fulfilling the legal obligation of the Ministry of Justice and Administration to keep records and statistical data, as well as for fulfilling Croatia's obligations to the European Commission. The practice of first-instance courts in cases where parties invoke the application of the Act is also problematic, since it has not yet been fully harmonized.⁶³

Regarding access to free legal aid, it should be noted that there are no provisions specifically related to the provision of free legal aid for whistleblowers, which is further regulated by the Free Legal Aid Act.⁶⁴ This means that whistleblowers cannot exercise the right to free legal aid regardless of their financial status, as it is only available under certain conditions that are subject to a means test. After a delay of about one year, in September 2023 the Rules of Procedure on the Provision of Emotional Support⁶⁵ were adopted, and the Rehabilitation Center for Stress and Trauma was

⁵⁹ Report of the Ombudswoman for 2023, March 2024, available at: <https://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/interaktivno-izvjesce-za-2023/>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Free Legal Aid Act (NN 143/13, 98/19), available at: <https://www.zakon.hr/z/286/Zakon-o-besplatnoj-pravnoj-pomo%C4%87i>

⁶⁵ Rules of Procedure on the Provision of Emotional Support to Persons Reporting Irregularities (NN 111/2023), available at: <https://www.zakon.hr/cms.htm?id=58213>



tasked with providing emotional support to whistleblowers only in September 2024.⁶⁶ The Rules of Procedure explicitly state that this type of support does not include providing psychosocial support, while the Directive lists psychological support as one of the possible, but not mandatory, support measures. So far, the Rehabilitation Center for Stress and Trauma has a small number of users but has received many inquiries about general information and legal advice. Considering a rather short period of its implementation, it remains to be seen how this system will function in practice and whether it will fulfill its purpose.

26. Specific measures to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in sectors with high-risks of corruption, with a view to monitor and prevent corruption and conflict of interests, and where applicable measures to prevent and address corruption committed by organised crime groups.

- *Such high-risk sectors include: public procurement, including construction, transport/infrastructure, defence, cohesion, agriculture, environment, healthcare, citizen/residence investor schemes, large-scale investments of national interest and the spending of EU funds, urban planning.*

Please see the description of cases presented below.

C. Repression

28. Official data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, final judgments, and the application of sanctions for corruption offences (differentiated by offence if possible)⁷. Please indicate whether the cases: involve legal persons; are related to the implementation of EU or national funds⁸; involve high level corruption. Please indicate which data is publicly available and how policy-making is informed by the data.

As noted in the EPPO Report for Croatia,⁶⁷ there are 47 active investigations and their number is worrisome. There is a need to permanently tackle high level political white-collar corruption that could indicate the existence of organized corruption in some risk areas in Croatia.

During 2024, there were again many cases of corruption in Croatia. In November 2024, Minister of Health Vili Beroš was arrested and dismissed from his ministerial position by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković. EPPO launched an investigation against Beroš and seven other persons on suspicion of having committed criminal acts of receiving and giving bribes, abuse of position and authority, and money laundering.⁶⁸ Currently, all public procurements in the health sector are under review

⁶⁶ Available at: <https://rctzg.hr/pruzanje-emocionalne-podrske-prijaviteljima-nepravilnosti-u-rct-u/>

⁶⁷ European Public Prosecutor's Office, Annual Report 2023, 2024, available at: https://www.eppo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/EPPO_Annual_Report_2023.pdf

⁶⁸ Available at: <https://direktno.hr/direkt/vili-beros-uhicen-plenkovic-ga-smijenio-iza-svega-stoji-eppo-358993/?utm>



by the new Minister of Health. In January 2024, USKOK filed an indictment against Dragan Kovačević, former head of Jadranski naftovod d.o.o. (JANAF).⁶⁹ In April 2024, the High Criminal Court sentenced ex-SDP Sisak-Moslavina Prefect Marina Lovrić Merzel to six years in prison for abuse of position and authority, accepting bribes, money laundering, and document forgery, while she will be tried again for payment of private expenses with county money.⁷⁰ In April 2024, the Split County Court confirmed the indictment against former Šibenik judge Maja Šupa, accusing her of accepting a 15,000-euro bribe in order to acquit the entrepreneur BP, allegedly mediated by lawyer BZ.⁷¹ In December 2024, the indictment panel of the County Court in Zagreb rejected the proposal of the defense of Josipa Pleslić ex Rimac to extract the messages from her mobile phone as illegal evidence from the court file in which she was accused together with Dijana Vican on suspicion of favoritism at the University of Zadar.

In September 2024, the former CEO of the national roads company was arrested on suspicion of corruption.⁷² Also in September, former Petrinja mayor Darinko Dumbović and his son Darko, accused of arranging deals with the City of Petrinja after the 2020 earthquake, pleaded guilty at the Zagreb County Court and, after a settlement with USKOK, were sentenced to suspended sentences. In November 2024, the High Criminal Court confirmed the verdict by which the former president of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK), Nadan Vidošević, was sentenced to eight years in prison for withdrawing HRK 35 million in the so-called Remorker affair. The indictment panel of the Zagreb County Court will schedule a new session at which it should decide on the confirmation of the indictment accusing former ministers Darko Horvat, Tomislav Tolušić, and Boris Milošević of favoritism in the awarding of financial support for areas inhabited by national minorities, and former minister Josip Aladrović and the mayor of the county, Damir Juzbašić, for illegal employment. In December 2024, the indictment panel of the Zagreb County Court confirmed the indictment against three Osijek judges and the Mamić brothers who, according to USKOK allegations, bribed them in exchange for favourable court decisions. It must be also noted that, in August 2024 ECtHR rejected a claim by Zdravko and Zoran Mamić that they did not receive a fair trial in Croatia. In January 2025, USKOK launched an investigation into Hrvatske šume (Croatian Forests).⁷³ The investigation was initiated following an internal report regarding observed "irregularities and corruption."

⁶⁹ Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/podignuta-optuznica-protiv-dragana-kovacevica-za-primanje-i-davanje-mita-15417169>

⁷⁰ Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/crna-kronika/marina-lovric-merzel-pravomocno-osudena-na-sest-godina-zatvora-drzava-joj-oduzima-stan-od-85-kvadrata-15446856>

⁷¹ Available at: <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/potvrdena-optuznica-protiv-bivse-sibenske-sutkinje-zbog-primanja-mita-20240410>

⁷² Available at: <https://glashrvatske.hrt.hr/en/domestic/former-ceo-of-national-roads-company-arrested-on-suspicion-of-corruption-11768293>

⁷³ Available at: <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/uskok-istrazuje-hrvatske-sume-prijavljene-nepravilnosti-i-korupcija-1831541>



29. Potential obstacles identified in law or in practice to the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases (e.g. political immunity regulation, procedural rules, statute of limitations, cross-border cooperation, pardoning).

The length of criminal trials in the most complex cases needs to be shortened. As a problem at the stage of accusation, there is an issue of extracting illegal evidence. State attorneys believe that the courts interpret too restrictively the requirement that there are "particularly" important reasons for a trial *in absentia*, which they almost equated with the existence of a danger of statute of limitations.⁷⁴ A recent example includes four cases related to construction projects with a total value of €22.6 million, in which EPPO has charged the accused with acts of active and passive corruption and abuse of office between 2018 and 2021. The operation was finalized in September 2020, the indictment was confirmed two years ago, and the defendants have only taken the stand in February 2025.⁷⁵

Some high-profile cases are still pending, particularly concerning bribery during the Homeland War and the period of privatization and ownership transformation. Due to the complexity of such cases, the Constitution was amended in 2010, and a special law was passed in 2011 to address economic crimes that occurred during the Homeland War and peaceful reintegration, proclaiming that there is no statute of limitations for such crimes. The Constitutional Court later ruled that this could be valid only for offences that were not statute-barred in 2010.⁷⁶ Confiscation of assets is not at a satisfactory level and should be more rigorously implemented.⁷⁷

30. Information on effectiveness of criminal and non-criminal measures and of sanctions (e.g. recovery measures and administrative sanctions) on both public and private offenders.

Please check previous answers for criminal sanctions. As for administrative sanctions, there is even more room for improvement as these could in some cases be more efficient for the prevention of corruption. The sanctions are too low and more resources are needed to enhance its implementation.

⁷⁴ Based on the input from Centre Miko Tripalo

⁷⁵ Available at: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/hdzov-poduzetnik-i-dva-gradonacelnika-tvrde-nismo-zlorabili-europski-novac/2641369.aspx>, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/kreso-petek-te-bivsi-saborski-zastupnici-vinko-grgic-i-drazen-barisic-nijecu-krivnju-1837352>

⁷⁶ According to Article 31, paragraph 4 of the Constitution:

"Criminal acts of war profiteering, as well as criminal acts from the process of transformation and privatization, committed during the Homeland War and peaceful reintegration, a state of war and an immediate threat to the independence and territorial integrity of the state, prescribed by law, or those that are not subject to statute of limitations under international law, shall not be subject to statute of limitations. The property gains realized through or related to these acts shall be confiscated."

⁷⁷ Based on the input from Centre Miko Tripalo



III. Media pluralism and media freedom

31. Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024. Report regarding media pluralism and media freedom (if applicable)

Croatian legislation fails to meet several European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) provisions, particularly regarding the independence of public service media, transparency in media ownership, editorial independence, and state advertising practices. The current Media Act is outdated. The most recent draft of the media law from July 2023 was blocked by the Croatian Journalists Association (HND).⁷⁸ No new draft has been prepared nor has the Government taken steps to implement the EMFA.

During the recent mission in Croatia, Media Freedom Rapid Response partners identified the absence of rules for distributing state funds that enables the Government to financially reward supportive media outlets and punish criticism, fostering media dependency and compromising journalistic independence.⁷⁹ Funds spent by state-owned companies, estimated to be double of those of public institutions, remain largely unaccounted for as they do not comply with existing reporting requirements. The problem is intensified at the local level.⁸⁰ Contracts between local authorities and media often mandate promotional content disguised as editorial material. Additionally, media outlets fail to distinguish between paid content and journalism.

The silent owners of the media are not obliged to be listed as owners in the Register of Beneficial Ownership.⁸¹ Monitoring cross-media ownership concentration involves the Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK), which keeps track of ownership structures for print and print distribution companies, and the Electronic Media Council (VEM), which monitors electronic media. In cross-concentration cases, companies must also report to the Agency for Market Competition Protection (AZTN), which creates problems in keeping track of the changes and overlaps concerning the media plurality.⁸²

Except for forming a working group to address the issue of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP), the Government has not implemented any visible measures to address the issue of SLAPP.⁸³ Legal threats are routinely used against critics who expose corruption, nepotism,

⁷⁸ HND: WORKING DOCUMENT OF NEW MEDIA ACT - UNACCEPTABLE: <https://hnd.hr/eng/cja-working-document-of-new-media-act-unacceptable>

⁷⁹ The full MFRR report for Croatia should be published in February this year: <https://www.mfrr.eu/croatia-major-challenges-ahead-to-improve-media-freedom/>

⁸⁰ Media capture in Croatia: how the State uses funding to control local media: <https://ipi.media/media-capture-in-croatia-how-the-state-uses-funding-to-control-local-media/>

⁸¹ See here, Silent Partnership legalized by the Companies Act, Chapter III, Articles 148 to 157: <https://sredisnjikatalogrh.gov.hr/srce-arhiva/263/33319/039117.pdf>

⁸² In 2024, small private company publisher of local newspaper Glas Slavonije and linked to a prominent member of the ruling party HDZ Vladimir Šeks, has bought Novi list with several other regional newspapers (Glas Istre, Zadarski list) before the 2024 elections due to approval from AZTN to potentially to skew local coverage in the HDZ's favor. See more at <https://www.balkanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Croatia/Croatia-the-assault-on-the-local-press-229297>

⁸³ See more on Centre Miko Tripalo's SLAPP project - <https://tripalo.hr/strateske-tuzbe-protiv-javne-participacije-slapp-u-republicihrvatskoj/>



political meddling, and other abuses of power. The Croatian Criminal Code penalizes defamation and insult, key issues undermining media freedom.⁸⁴ Criminal prosecution is often coupled with civil lawsuits, creating a double burden that entangles journalists in lengthy and costly legal proceedings. A few years ago, the president of the Supreme Court tried to address the issue of judges appearing as private plaintiffs against the media, but this was disrupted by his colleagues.⁸⁵ Further compounding these challenges, a 2024 amendment to the Criminal Code criminalized the unauthorized disclosure of information related to criminal investigations.⁸⁶ This amendment has been widely seen as an effort to restrict access to information by the public and to discourage investigative journalism. In late November 2024, the Zagreb Municipal State's Attorney opened an investigation against a journalist with "reasonable suspicion of unauthorized disclosure of investigative or evidentiary actions" as part of the European Public Prosecutor's Office's investigation.⁸⁷

A. Media authorities and bodies

32. Measures taken to ensure the independence, enforcement powers and adequacy of resources (financial, human and technical) of media regulatory authorities and bodies

The independence and effectiveness of media authority score a medium risk (38%) in the latest Media Pluralism Monitor.⁸⁸ The legal framework for the election of Electronic Media Council members should be improved to reduce political interference in the nomination and appointment procedures. The main concerns in its recent decision-making practices relate to monitoring impermissible concentration, consistently sanctioning hate speech, and protecting public interests in the electronic media. There is a lack of active decision-making and a narrow understanding of the public role of the independent electronic media regulator.⁸⁹

33. Conditions and procedures for the appointment and dismissal of the head / members of the collegiate body of media regulatory authorities and bodies

The nomination procedure is the main problem regarding the independence of the Electronic Media Council (VEM). The majority in the Croatian Parliament appoints the President and other members of the Council based on the proposal of the Croatian Government, leaving room for direct political

⁸⁴ ARTICLE 19's recommendations: <https://www.article19.org/resources/croatia-decriminalise-insult-and-defamation/>

⁸⁵ Available at: <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/dobronic-objasnio-zasto-je-smijenio-najblize-suradnike-oni-se-protive-bilo-kakvoj-promjeni-u-sudstvu/> and <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/hrvoje-kresic-na-okruglom-stolu-vrhovnog-suda---732340.html>

⁸⁶ MFRR Croatia: Criminal Code Amendments - Prohibiting 'unauthorised disclosure of information about criminal investigations': <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Croatia-legal-analysis-confidentiality-of-proceedings-2024-LAW-PASSED.pdf>

⁸⁷ Lex AP: <https://safejournalists.net/cja-to-all-colleagues-facing-the-impact-of-lex-ap-we-offer-legal-assistance/>

⁸⁸ Media Pluralism Monitor 2024: <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/76996>

⁸⁹ Contribution of CJA for the RoL Report 2025



influence⁹⁰. Those elected are most often not professional journalists and are associated with governing politics. The appointment mechanism in the Law on Electronic Media puts the media regulator's and public media's independence in doubt. HND proposes that, instead of the Government, the parliamentary Committee on Information, Computerization, and the Media propose candidates with a two-thirds majority for the public broadcaster HRT and VEM.

34. Existence and functions of media councils or other self-regulatory bodies

There is no media council in Croatia, only the Journalists' Council of Honor⁹¹ and a Code of Honor as the ruling ethical charter for Croatian journalists. The Journalists' Council of Honor supervises the implementation of the Code of Honor. The Council sanctions any journalist who violates journalistic ethical principles. HND advocates for consulting decisions of the Journalist Council of Honor before allocating public funds to the media. The Council of Honor is recognized in the media community and publicly accepted, and judges often consult it when deciding on cases against journalists or the media.

Some CSOs have identified a significant issue of systematic inaction by the Council for Electronic Media (VEM) in cases involving discriminatory media content. A recent analysis of VEM's work concluded that the Council has never responded to complaints related to discrimination based on gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.⁹² Specifically, it has failed to act in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2 of the Electronic Media Act.⁹³ The findings of another study on the impact of discriminatory reporting on women victims of gender-based violence highlight the urgent need for regulation of harmful media content—a need that remains unmet. This lack of action by VEM sends a message to certain media that they can continue reporting in a discriminatory and unlawful manner without fear of repercussions. In yet another study, during one month of monitoring in 2024, CGI reported 44 homophobic and transphobic articles from the portal Narod.hr to the VEM.⁹⁴ VEM dismissed all these complaints, justifying its decision with freedom of speech and once again, failing to fulfill its obligation under Article 14 of the Electronic Media Act.⁹⁵ Despite reports supported by factual evidence, legal analyses, and findings from other relevant authorities such as the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and the Journalists' Honor Council, VEM persistently refused to act, citing the protection of freedom of speech and exhibiting the tolerance of discrimination. This

⁹⁰ Media Pluralism Monitor 2024: <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/76996>

⁹¹ <https://www.hnd.hr/novinarsko-vijece-casti1?seo=novinarsko-vijece-casti1>

⁹² Of the more than 1,570 articles reported by Centar za građanske inicijative Poreč mostly involving the sexual objectification of women, unethical reporting on gender-based violence, or homophobic and transphobic content, VEM has not acted on a single case. See more at <https://cgiporec.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Analiza-VEM-a.pdf>

⁹³ https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021_10_111_1942.html - Article 14 prohibits “the incitement to, facilitation of, or dissemination of hatred or discrimination on the grounds of (...) gender, (...), gender identity, expression, or sexual orientation (...)” in audio and audiovisual media services

⁹⁴ These articles included statements such as: “*There are dogs that cannot be taught not to eat their own feces. Defeated LGB warriors and their friends apparently belong to that breed.*”; “*The LGBT movement is inherently destructive, illogical, and the greatest symbol of what we call the culture of death.*”; “*LGBTIQ+ organizations do not want tolerance. They want dominance.*” etc.

⁹⁵ A survey conducted by CGI revealed that articles like these contribute to increased discrimination, intensified hatred, heightened insecurity among LGBTIQ+ individuals and directly lead to incidents of discrimination and intolerance, see more at <https://cgiporec.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Utjecaj-medijskih-sadržaja-portala-narodhr-na-lgbtqi-zajednicu.pdf>



undermines the authority of the Ombudsperson and Journalists' Honor Council and jeopardizes efforts to promote equality and responsible reporting.

B. Safeguards against government or political interference and transparency and concentration of media ownership

35. Measures taken to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of state advertising

Although the Electronic Media Act stipulates that public grants should be awarded to the media through public calls, advertising decisions are discretionary, non-transparent, and most often at the will of political leaders, without public insight into the signed contracts and the purpose of spending funds. This increasingly widespread practice raises concern. The National Plan for the Development of Culture and Media in the 2023-2027 period⁹⁶, foresees a system of the publication of data on media financing with public funds from the budget. This document would need to indicate whether this also applies to data on advertising by state-owned and public companies, which are among the largest advertisers, and the data on the amounts they invest in advertising in certain media are kept as a business secret.

Article 38 of the Electronic Media Act stipulates that state bodies and legal entities owned by the Republic of Croatia are obligated to allocate 15% of their annual budget for the promotion of their services or activities towards advertising in regional and local audiovisual and/or electronic media. State administration bodies and legal entities primarily owned by the Republic of Croatia need to fulfill their legal obligations by submitting information to the Electronic Media Council. However, many don't report it, and no explicit guidelines exist for distributing state advertising to media outlets.⁹⁷ According to the funding models it has already proposed for local media,⁹⁸ HND advocates the establishment of a national fund for journalism that would publicly and transparently finance the media according to the profession's rules. So far, HND models have been accepted in Zagreb, Split, Pazin, and Makarska, all cities where HDZ isn't a ruling party.

⁹⁶ 2023-27 National Plan for Culture and Media Development: https://min-kulture.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Nacionalni%20plan%20razvoja%20kulture%20i%20medija/Nacionalni%20plan_objava.pdf

⁹⁷ An example of the problem with such non-transparent allocation has become visible in the case of the adviser of the now-dismissed Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, who allegedly misused his authority and position to buy political influence through state advertising. More at <https://n1info.hr/english/news/advisor-to-ex-minister-lovrincevic-charged-with-influence-peddling-in-the-mreza-tv-case/>

⁹⁸ HND's local media financing models: <https://hnd.hr/modeli-financiranja-lokalnih-medija>



36. Safeguards against state / political interference, in particular: safeguards to ensure editorial independence of media (private and public) specific safeguards for the independence of heads of management and members of the governing boards of public service media (e.g. related to appointment, dismissal), safeguards for their financial and operational independence (e.g. related to reporting obligations and the allocation of resources) and safeguards for plurality of information and opinions information on specific legal provisions and procedures applying to media service providers, including as regards granting/renewal/termination of licenses, company operation, capital entry requirements, concentration and corporate governance

The Director General of Croatian Radio and Television (HRT) is appointed through a public tender announced by the Supervisory Board of HRT. The election process is often non-transparent, with accusations of irregularities and favoring specific candidates. The program council, which should represent the public's interests regarding HRT's programs, was marginalized in electing the director general. These shortcomings in appointing the director general of HRT call into question the independence and objectivity of the public media service. In addition, the lack of stable funding threatens HRT's ability to fulfill its public mission. While HRT claims it is editorially independent, as required by law, it is less trusted than the leading commercial operators, and many media industry and academic experts highlight its continuing pro-government bias.⁹⁹

37. Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners

The Electronic Media Council (VEM) monitors electronic media ownership; however, this does not include an obligation to identify beneficial owners and track conflicts of interest, which is mandatory under the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). VEM's mandate to monitor media ownership and ensure transparency is hindered by limited enforcement mechanisms. The National Plan for the Development of Culture and Media states that an online platform with data on media ownership should be created from the register of real owners. However, the existence of secret societies, the creation of which is enabled by the Companies Act, needs to be revised. The new platform announced in the National plan should enable more accessible data of the Croatian Beneficial Ownership Register, which is now available only through the National Identification and Authentication System (NIAS) on the platform that enables a search only via the company's OIB (unique identifier) or its name.

⁹⁹ Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/RISJ_DNR_2024_Digital_v10%20lr.pdf and Silent Capture - Undemocratic Trends in Croatia: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/21725.pdf>



In October, Gong called on the Agency for Electronic Media (AEM) to investigate the actual ownership of media outlets, emphasising the prohibition of hidden ownership under the Electronic Media Act..¹⁰⁰ In their first response, AEM stated they relied on data from the Register of Beneficial Ownership and found no irregularities regarding Z1 Television. They acknowledged lacking authority for deeper investigations, such as reviewing business records or secret agreements, and concluded that the registered owner is considered the actual owner. In a second response, AEM reiterated that hidden ownership is inherently covert and outside their investigative scope.¹⁰¹

C. Framework for journalists' protection, transparency and access to documents

38. Rules and practices guaranteeing journalists' independence and safety, including as regards protection of journalistic sources and communications, referring also, if applicable, to follow-up given to alerts lodged with the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

In 2024, the SafeJournalists database recorded 26 attacks and threats against journalists. Four were physical attacks, two were death threats, 10 were other forms of threats, two were attacks on a media outlet or organization, and eight were directed at media outlets and organizations. This is a significant increase, considering that 13 incidents were recorded on this portal in 2023. While physical assaults on journalists in Croatia are relatively rare, the instances that do occur underscore critical gaps in the protective frameworks.¹⁰² Verbal abuse, often perpetrated by public officials, represents the most prevalent form of attack against journalists in Croatia. In the first six months of 2024, MapMF¹⁰³ recorded that, out of the seven verbal attacks monitored, five were committed by representatives of the government or public officials. Prime Minister Andrej Plenković discredited journalists in public debates for their critical coverage of him and his party.¹⁰⁴ Media outlets serving national minority communities face unique challenges in Croatia. Domovinski pokret explicit calls to defund minority media have fueled a climate of intimidation, leading to self-censorship and reduced editorial independence¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁰ There are concerns about the ownership of Z1 Television, allegedly linked to Mario Radić, former party secretary of the Homeland Movement, now president of the party DOMiNO, and his associates, despite formal registry records See more at <https://zagrebi.hr/godinu-dana-nakon-kupnje-misteriozni-vlasnik-vec-prodaje-z1/>

¹⁰¹ <https://gong.hr/2024/10/14/aem-da-su-tajni-vlasnici-medija-htjeli-biti-transaprentni-onda-bi-bili-javni/>

¹⁰² One striking example involved journalist Melita Vrsaljko, who was attacked twice in a single week due to her environmental reporting, more at <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/croatia-faktograf-journalist-melita-vrsaljko-physically-assaulted-twice-in-a-week>

¹⁰³ MFRR - MAPPING MEDIA FREEDOM MONITORING REPORT JANUARY - JUNE 2024: <https://www.ecpmf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/MR-2024-Final-Draft-Pages.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ More examples of Prime Minister's verbal attacks on journalists and media at <https://www.mapmf.org/explorer?f.id=31432,31242,31100>, <https://www.mapmf.org/alert/31432>, <https://www.mapmf.org/alert/31242>, <https://www.mapmf.org/alert/31100>

¹⁰⁵ Croatian Far-Right Party Demands End to Funding of Serb Minority Paper: <https://update.balkaninsight.com/2024/05/09/croatian-far-right-party-demands-end-to-funding-of-serb-minority-paper/>



40. Access to information and public documents by public at large and journalists (incl. transparency authorities where they exist, procedures, costs/fees, timeframes, administrative/judicial review of decisions, execution of decisions by public authorities, possible obstacles related to the classification of information)

Investigative journalists are increasingly using the Right to Information Act (ZPPI) to obtain data. Under the new Information Commissioner, Anita Markić, support for journalistic FOI requests appears limited. In numerous situations when information should be public, state and local officials refrain from publishing them, delaying the process by rejecting access, complaining about the commissioner's decisions, and sending incomplete answers. In the experience of journalists, officials often let the deadline for response expire and then delay the procedure even further by giving a partial response or providing information not requested. From the Report on the Implementation of the Right to Information Act, it is evident that withholding information due to personal data protection is the most common reason for access restrictions.¹⁰⁶

At the end of 2024, the Ministry of Justice, Administration, and Digital Transformation announced the formation of a working group to prepare the Draft Proposal of the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Right to Access to Information. The Croatian Journalists' Association and civil society organizations that are active users of the Act in their activities applied to join the working group, however none of them were included. The final composition of the working group has not been announced and the Ministry ignored inquiries about its composition.

Environmental rights of citizens are primarily realized through access to public information about the environment. Environmental CSOs note that the practice of restricting freedom of information requests in a way that they can only be submitted by legal representatives of the CSOs and not by employees of the organisation or other entities continues in 2025. Such a practice of restricting access to environmental information makes the work of environmental CSOs more difficult.¹⁰⁷ The current website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition (in the previous period Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development), as well as the websites of regional authorities, do not provide easy access to information or simple participation in environmental procedures. Recent events in the North Port area are an example of the violation of citizens' rights to timely information about the environment and thereby their constitutionally guaranteed right to a healthy and clean environment.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Based on input by HND

¹⁰⁷ Based on the input by Zelena akcija

¹⁰⁸ In this case, the State Inspectorate has not provided adequate information about the measures taken, the source of the pollution, or any sanctions imposed in response to the identified pollution. The Port Authority, as the concession grantor, has not been informed about the current developments in their jurisdiction. The Port Authority has not responded to any of the petitions submitted by Sunce. Meanwhile, Luka d.d., as the primary concessionaire operating in the area, has refused Sunce's request for information access, claiming that, since it is not majority publicly owned, it is not obligated to respond to our questions. More at <https://sunce-st.org/vijesti/oneciscenje-zraka-na-podrucju-sjeverne-luke-split-primjer-krsenja-prava-gradana-na-pravovremenu-informaciju/>



The policy of secrecy is also reflected in the introduction of a new criminal offense for disclosing information from criminal proceedings. Its introduction allows for shielding criminal proceedings against high state officials from public scrutiny. This provision deters sources from cooperating with journalists, severely hampering investigative reporting and the corroboration of stories.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, although the Republic of Croatia has committed itself to the publication of court decisions, reaching the decisions of first-level courts is virtually impossible. Namely, HND and Centre Miko Tripalo, tried to obtain data in 2024 on court decisions in lawsuits against the media and journalists for defamation of reputation and honor. Some courts sent the data based on freedom of information requests, while many others asked for proof of legitimate interest or denied requests for information.¹¹⁰

41. Lawsuits (incl. SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation) and convictions against journalists (incl. defamation cases) and measures taken to safeguard against manifestly unfounded and abusive lawsuits

According to a survey conducted by the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND)¹¹¹ for the sixth year, at least 752 lawsuits against the media and journalists were active in Croatia at the beginning of 2024. Influential individuals (politicians, members of parliament, judges, lawyers, etc.) initiated at least 128 of them.

The research project conducted by CMT and HND established a substantial presence of SLAPP cases against media in Croatia and the fact that the court system is not effective in preventing such a practice. The project analyzed 1,333 court judgments against the media and journalists from 2016 to 2023 and found that at least 40% of these exhibit SLAPP characteristics.¹¹² The Ministry of Culture significantly underreports these figures. This gap in reporting shows the need for better monitoring through official authorities' qualitative and quantitative data collection. The project findings point to the fact that typical plaintiffs include politicians and businesspeople, as well as judges who appear often as plaintiffs, seeking and obtaining much higher compensation on average than other plaintiffs, which affects the judicial practice in other cases.¹¹³ Some judges also occasionally fire a salvo of cases against media that are later dropped. Judges privately suing media and journalists seems to be very

¹⁰⁹ ARTICLE 19 reviews the Amendments to the Criminal Code that introduce criminal sanctions for the disclosure of 'non-public' information about pending criminal cases: <https://www.article19.org/resources/croatia-scrap-plan-to-criminally-penalise-disclosure-of-non-public-information/>

¹¹⁰ https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SLAPP_Report_final_eng-3.pdf

¹¹¹ HND: Aktivne najmanje 752 tužbe teške 4,1 milijun eura: <https://hnd.hr/hnd-aktivne-najmanje-752-tuzbe-teske-4-1-milijun-eura-a-u-1333-presudena-predmeta-40-posto-je-bio-cisti-slapp>

¹¹² STRATEGIC LAWSUITS AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SLAPP) IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA: https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SLAPP_Report_final_eng-3.pdf

¹¹³ The project demonstrated that the success rate in both criminal and civil cases is low, but that duration of successful cases is extremely long, more than 4 years on average. This creates a long period of uncertainty and cumulative costs of statutory high penalty interest for journalists and the media. The penalties imposed on media are also unproportionally high with the average compensation claim being EUR 9,300, while the average compensation is EUR 3,200. This was also pointed out by ECHR in the case *Narodni list against Croatia*, Application no. 2782/12. The ruling however did not prompt the Supreme Court to revise its Orientational guidance for compensating immaterial damages, which in principle should regulate judicial practice in such matters. The absence of any limitations on potential civil damages for defamation greatly contributes to the risks faced by journalists by threatening their livelihoods and perpetuating the chilling effect. More at https://tripalo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SLAPP_Report_final_eng-3.pdf



much a Croatian peculiarity, as there seems to be no such practice in other EU states. This project concluded that judicial practice in cases against media is inconsistent, that there is a presence of serial plaintiffs, and that plaintiffs often pursue a practice of multiple lawsuits related to the same subject while also requiring the cumulation of compensatory claims.¹¹⁴

Croatian legislation currently lacks anti-SLAPP provisions. While the Ministry of Justice is leading the transposition of EU Directive 2024/1069 and announced that it is forming a working group, by the time of writing this report, CSOs are not aware that any new draft had been released or that the working group is established. In the National Plan for Developing Culture and Media, there is the intent to establish mechanisms for early recognition and rejection of clearly unfounded or malicious court proceedings as one of the measures to fight SLAPP. The Ministry of Culture and Media is responsible for implementation. However, there is still no official definition of SLAPP in Croatia, nor do the courts separate and classify such lawsuits.

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

42. Please provide information on measures taken to follow-up on the recommendations received in the 2024 Report regarding the system of checks and balances (if applicable).

Citizens in Croatia have very little trust in state and public institutions in general. There is a 'silent capture' of institutions in Croatia and unlike some other countries where there is a direct attack on the institutions and their capture by the ruling political elites, in Croatia this process is not visible at first glance.¹¹⁵ Only a deeper analysis of certain administrative areas and institutions can reveal its existence.

A. The process for preparing and enacting laws

43. Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'¹⁰/public consultations (including rules and practices on the transparent participation of civil society to policy development and decision-making processes), and transparency and quality of the legislative process both in the preparatory and the parliamentary phase.

The 2023 issues regarding public participation in Croatia remained unresolved in 2024. Public consultations on draft laws and public policies are still often more formal than substantive, which weakens opportunities for participation and has a negative impact on the quality of public policies. The main problem with the whole consultation process is that it is not organized at the moment of the

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, The Western Balkans between stagnation and progress: A study on socio-political trends in the region, December 2024, available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/21725.pdf>



inception of the public policy but rather at its end when a draft of legislation or strategy is already developed. Issues with appointing civil society organizations to working and advisory bodies remain the same – lack of transparency and merit-based selection on qualifications. The majority of public consultations were organized on a shortened timeline, leaving the interested public with insufficient time to review the regulations and provide feedback for improvement. Only 13% of public debates in 2023 lasted the legally required 30 days or more, while the rest were conducted within a shortened period.¹¹⁶ Institutions justified this by citing the need for urgent adoption of acts and problem-solving. Last example is the Act on Climate Change and Protection of the Ozone Layer when the public consultation lasted only 15 days.¹¹⁷

According to the new rules from May 2024, associations could participate in e-Consultations by having their authorized representatives log into the e-Citizens system using the highest level of security credentials.¹¹⁸ This change was neither announced nor communicated to associations and other legal entities directly affected by it. This highest level of security was abolished in June, however, it remains problematic that only authorized representatives can submit comments on behalf of associations, while other employees cannot. This necessitates changes in the way organizations operate internally. In 2023, institutions accepted only 9% of comments on proposed regulations, compared to 17% the previous year.¹¹⁹ The percentage of rejected comments in both 2023 and 2022 remained high. In 2023, 40% of comments were rejected, while in 2022, the rejection rate was 32%. Additionally, in 2023, institutions failed to respond to one in every five comments on proposed regulations.

Despite the high level of participation from civil society organizations in Working groups for preparing the 2024 to 2025 action plans for the implementation of the National Human Rights and Anti-discrimination Plan, the versions of these documents that were published on e-Consultations deviate from the proposal that was adopted by consensus by the Working Group that worked on it, primarily in the part of omitting the description of activities and quantitative indicators.¹²⁰ This was an essential part of the action plan, where the activities and the implementation method were described ensuring clarity of implementation but also for monitoring the implementation of the action plan. Although the e-Consultations concluded at the end of 2024, the Government still has not adopted the new action plans, which has a significant negative influence on the system of protection and promotion of human rights.¹²¹

Through years of participation in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures, environmental CSOs have identified numerous obstacles and shortcomings that hinder effective public information and participation, which are essential for successful EIA procedures.¹²² Experts from environmental

¹¹⁶ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/09/17/javne-rasprave-u-hrvatskoj-tko-izdrzi-sudjelovat-ce/>

¹¹⁷ Based on the input from Sunce with support of Zeleni Forum

¹¹⁸ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/09/17/javne-rasprave-u-hrvatskoj-tko-izdrzi-sudjelovat-ce/>

¹¹⁹ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/09/17/javne-rasprave-u-hrvatskoj-tko-izdrzi-sudjelovat-ce/>

¹²⁰ Based on the input from Human Rights House Zagreb

¹²¹ Portal Novosti.com, available at: https://portalnovosti.com/zakasnjelo-e-savjetovanje?fbclid=IwY2xjawHzWMVleHRuA2FibQlxMQABHYFHW2qgZo0x4Dj5ROwHMXNZCiFb1p7QqrXYiw5etZZZW Xn4wCfnnUG34Q_aem_OXZo4HvrlH94sJuHdwO7Dg

¹²² Association Sunce, Results of the SEAS Project Analysis, 2022, available at: <https://sunce-st.org/vijesti/rezultati->



CSOs are not appointed to the EIA commissions. Without this and similar ways of integrating the public into the early stages of the decision-making process, the (organized) public is reduced to the usual role of a corrector, critic, and external oversight of the process.¹²³ The number of working groups involving NGOs in policy development has increased, but participation remains limited across sectors. A recent example is the working group for amending the Right of Access to Information Act, crucial for environmental protection and public participation.¹²⁴ The Ministry of Justice excluded environmental organizations, citing operational constraints and instead of selecting experienced CSOs like GONG or Green Forum, it included a group with no track record in Information Commissioner's decisions.

Unfortunately, in 2024, several procedures were initiated allowing public participation in environmental processes, specifically environmental impact assessments, but for projects that are already operational—such as the Krš Padene wind farm and similar cases.¹²⁵ It is entirely unclear how public consultations can be organized for a "proposed intervention in the environment" (which is the only scenario prescribed by law and regulation) when the intervention has already been underway for several years. The situation is highly absurd, as the environmental impact study is supposed to be conducted before the project implementation begins, while in reality, the project is already in place and operational.

Despite the fact that the Act on Maternity and Parental Support, the Labor Act, the Occupational Safety Act and the Ordinance on jobs with special working conditions clearly prescribe the protection of pregnant women in the workplace, in practice, pregnant workers, especially in kindergartens, face serious obstacles in exercising their rights.¹²⁶ A proposal to transfer the costs of a pregnant worker's leave from the employer to another appropriate body, as a demographic measure, was presented by Udruga Sidro to the Ministry of Demography and Immigration, as the relevant governmental body, however it was rejected as unenforceable.¹²⁷ One of the key problems in ensuring the right to education for children with disabilities is the inadequate implementation of inclusive education and difficulties related to enrollment in kindergartens. There are quite a few cases where pre-school institutions or their founders (local self-government units), free to independently prescribe the Ordinance on Kindergarten Enrollment, make decisions to exclude children with disabilities from the usual method of enrollment. CSOs proposed introducing a universal Ordinance on Kindergarten Enrollment at the national level for all kindergartens in Croatia, but the proposal was ignored. However, the criteria for the achievement of advantages when enrolling in kindergarten were included in the Law on Preschool Education, unfortunately not clearly enough, leaving the founders the possibility to

[analize-seas-projekta/https://www.zelena-istra.hr/media/filer_public/f1/70/f1701d89-ef62-42c5-8ef7-7dd0d50b4cfb/izvjesce_o_provedebi_aarhuske_konvencije.pdf](https://www.zelena-istra.hr/media/filer_public/f1/70/f1701d89-ef62-42c5-8ef7-7dd0d50b4cfb/izvjesce_o_provedebi_aarhuske_konvencije.pdf)

¹²³ Zelena Istra, Ministry of Non-Transparency - The Case of Karigador Port, 2020, available at: <https://www.zelena-istra.hr/hr/articles/novosti/731/ministarstvo-netransparentnosti-slucaj-luke-kariga/>, <https://pristupinfo.hr/zapisnici-sa-sjednica-razlicitih-povjerenstava-ne-predstavljaju-poslovnju-tajnu/>

¹²⁴ Based on the input from Sunce with support of Zeleni Forum

¹²⁵ Based on the input from Sunce with support of Zeleni Forum

¹²⁶ https://www.prs.hr/application/uploads/lzvie%5%A1%C4%87e_o_radu_Pravobraniteljic.pdf

¹²⁷ Based on inputs by Udruga Sidro



interpret them as they wish.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Based on inputs by Udruga Sidro



44. Rules and use of fast-track procedures and emergency procedures (for example, the percentage of decisions adopted through emergency/urgent procedure compared to the total number of adopted decisions).

During 2024, there were a total of 5 sessions of the Croatian Parliament – one during the 10th assemblage in early 2024, and 4 in the 11th assemblage. During these 5 sessions, a total of 169 laws were proposed and went through the voting procedure. 35 of them (20.7%) were adopted using the emergency procedure, which is supposed to be used only in exceptional circumstances, but for many years have been used as standard procedure in the Croatian Parliament.¹²⁹ Another important point to note is the parliamentary weakness of the Croatian Parliament, and its derogation as a legislative body, which is a direct breach of the division of powers in Croatian political landscape. Proposals by opposition politicians and parties are almost without exception rejected and in the large majority of cases do not even get to the voting phase, preventing them from influencing the legislative procedure. Out of the above-mentioned 169 law proposals which completed the voting procedure, 166 were proposed by the government. 3 were proposed by the opposition, and none of them were successfully voted in.¹³⁰

B. Independent authorities

47. Independence, resources, capacity and powers of national human rights institutions ('NHRIs'), of ombudsman institutions if different from NHRIs, of equality bodies if different from NHRIs and of supreme audit institutions¹¹

Ombudswoman has expressed concern over the systematic obstruction of her office's work by the Government and Parliament. Despite the fact that it is 2025, the Government has yet to provide an opinion on the Ombudswoman's 2023 annual report, preventing Parliament from discussing and voting on it. The 2022 report also remains undiscussed, meaning that without discussion, there is no implementation of useful guidelines and recommendations aimed at improving human rights.¹³¹

C. Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

50. Judicial review of administrative decisions: short description of the general regime (in particular competent court, scope, suspensive effect, interim measures, and any applicable specific rules or derogations from the general regime of judicial review).

The Environmental Protection Act stipulates that environmental disputes are to be solved in urgent procedure. Additionally, judges have the option to issue a ruling on the suspense effect of a lawsuit if

¹²⁹ Based on the input from CROSOL

¹³⁰ Based on the input from CROSOL

¹³¹ Jutarnji.hr, available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/kako-cu-stitati-prava-onkoloskih-pacijenata-i-mobingiranih-gradana-ako-cu-u-saboru-2025-govoriti-o-brojkama-iz-2022-15536751>



they determine that the dispute will take longer to resolve. However, in practice, such decisions are rarely made. When an administrative court receives a lawsuit requesting the annulment of a decision issued by a public authority, and the lawsuit is accompanied by a request for a suspensive effect or an interim measure, the court may decide to grant a suspensive effect or issue an interim measure. Nonetheless, this is rarely the case.¹³² In practice, judges tend to decide on the request for suspensive effect when they make their final decision on the main issue—i.e., when they decide whether to annul the decision requested by the plaintiff or to dismiss the lawsuit.

Furthermore, given that the decisions being challenged by the plaintiff are executive decisions, meaning they can lead to the issuance of construction permits despite the ongoing administrative dispute, this practice frequently results in the situation where the investor obtains construction permits before the administrative court has ruled on the request to annul the decision made in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)/SCREENING/SEIA process. If afterwards the administrative court decides to annul the decision and returns the case for reprocessing, this does not automatically lead to the annulment of the building permits that were issued based on that decision. It also does not stop the construction of the development in question.¹³³

52. Implementation of final judgments by the public administration and State institutions and follow-up given to supranational judgments, including decisions from the European Court of Human Rights, as well as available remedies in case of non-implementation.

For years, civil society organizations have been pointing out the lack of their involvement in the implementation of judgments at the national level, including non-participation in drafting of action plans for the execution of specific judgments in the field of human rights that falls within areas of their expertise, which represents a missed opportunity to create better measures for the more successful and higher-quality implementation of judgments. Additionally concerning is the fact that proposals for action plans are not submitted to e-Consultations, which would allow interested CSOs, the academic community, and other concerned parties to participate in creating more targeted, higher-quality, and more effective measures to eliminate or prevent violations of the Convention.

CSOs welcome the 2022 amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Expert Council for the Execution of Judgments and Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, which introduce the possibility of cooperation with CSOs. According to Article 10, the chairperson of the Expert Council may involve representatives of relevant civil society organizations operating in a certain legal field in the work of the Expert Council in order to discuss important issues related to the execution of specific judgments of the European Court, but without voting rights. However, there is

¹³² Based on the input from Sunce and input from Zelena Akcija

¹³³ Based on the input from Sunce with support of Zeleni Forum



still no relevant information on the extent to which this article has been implemented in practice.

D. The enabling framework for civil society

53. Measures regarding the framework for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. legal framework and its application in practice incl. registration, transparency and dissolution rules.)

In 2024, Croatia experienced a continuation of troubling trends in the relationship between civil society and the state.¹³⁴ The formation of a new government, which included a conservative right-wing party as a coalition partner, significantly heightened concerns about the treatment of civil society organizations. This party has openly expressed intolerant and negative views toward minorities and CSOs, particularly those working in democratization and human rights. Public rhetoric has polarized discourse further, undermining the legitimacy and contributions of CSOs while emboldening narratives that marginalize minority groups. Alarming, there have been growing instances of public targeting of CSOs, including veiled threats to cut financial support, some of which came from the Prime Minister.¹³⁵

Over the last year, there have been no significant improvements to resolve the most outstanding issues related to the eroding civic space conditions in Croatia. Most notably, over the previous 9 years, Croatia has been without the key civil society public policy. The latest attempt to create the new National Plan for Civil Society Development that started at the beginning of 2021 is yet to deliver a proposal for the policy. Dialogue and cooperation between the state and civil society also continued to erode. Dysfunctionality, sidelining, and overall marginalization of the Government's Council for Civil Society Development continued in 2024 as well. The absence of a national strategy for civil society development since 2016 has left the sector without a coherent framework for development. This lack of strategic attention has resulted in weekend resources and collective impact, collaboration, networking and advocacy fatigue, missed opportunities for investment and capacity-building, even as Croatia benefits from significant EU funds.¹³⁶

The Council for Civil Society Development, intended to support and guide the sector, has become largely irrelevant. It operates without a work plan or strategic direction, failing to address pressing issues. A critical issue is the lack of representativity and legitimacy in the formal structures designed to represent the civic sector.¹³⁷ The election and operation of representatives often lack

¹³⁴ European Civic Forum, Civic Space Report 2024, May 2024, available at: https://civic-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Civic-Space-Report-2024_ECF.pdf

¹³⁵ N1info.hr, available at: <https://n1info.hr/english/news/gong-is-the-prime-minister-prepared-to-punish-organisations-that-campaign-for-fair-elections/?comments>

¹³⁶ Human Rights House Zagreb, Panel Discussion "Civil Society Organizations and the Rule of Law Report – Good Practices in Cooperation and Advocacy", May 2024, available at: <https://www.kucaljudskihprava.hr/panel-rasprava-organizacije-civilnog-drustva-i-izvjesce-o-vladavini-prava-dobre-prakse-u-suradnji-i-zagovaranju/>

¹³⁷ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/08/21/udruge-i-dalje-ne-mogu-jednostavno-sudjelovati-u-javnim-raspravama-i-komentirati-zakone/>



transparency and meaningful engagement with the broader sector, leaving many organizations feeling unrepresented.¹³⁸ In 2024, only three sessions were held, limiting meaningful discussions. Proposals from CSOs on key issues like participation and funding were routinely ignored. A survey of 90 CSOs revealed that 54% view the Council's work as unsuccessful, and over 60% believe it fails in planning financial support and EU funding priorities.¹³⁹ Respondents suggested improvements such as better communication (71%), increased transparency (63%), thematic sessions (66%), and more effective strategic planning (62%). Overall, CSOs see the Council as ineffective in facilitating cooperation, shaping strategic priorities, and improving access to funding, highlighting the need for structural reforms.¹⁴⁰

Additionally, following the results of the 2024 elections, the newly formed Government de facto discontinued the functioning of the Government Council on Human Rights, which since the formation of the government, the Council was not summoned at all. This multisectoral body, composed of the representatives of the crucial Government departments and representatives of CSOs, was instrumental in fostering dialogue between the state and civil society and pushing for the resolution of some of the long-standing structural issues, e.g., the adoption of the national human rights policy¹⁴¹ and the national gender equality policy¹⁴², which has been absent since the illiberal backsliding in 2016. Implementation of these policies, at the moment, is halted since the action plans (implementation instruments) were not adopted by the government, neither for 2024 nor for 2025.

54. Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This includes measures to protect them from attacks – verbal, physical or on-line –, intimidation, legal threats incl. SLAPPs, negative narratives or smear campaigns, measures capable of affecting the public perception of civil society organisations, etc. It also includes measures to monitor threats or attacks and dedicated support services, as well as available remedies.

During the 2024 Presidential Election campaign, the Prime Minister called into question the future funding of the Gong Association, in response to their work on electoral ethics and integrity of the

¹³⁸ Istra24.hr, available at: <https://www.istra24.hr/politika-i-drustvo/civilno-drustvo-prijete-nam-kada-ukazujemo-na-nezakonitosti-a-financiranje-je-jos-uvijek-veliki-problem>

¹³⁹ Based on the inputs from Centre Miko Tripalo and Dkolektiv; Survey not yet public and available upon request

¹⁴⁰ Based on the inputs from Dkolektiv

¹⁴¹ Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, available at: <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/NacionalniPlan%20za%20zaštitu%20i%20promociju%20ljudskih%20prava%20i%20prava%20nacionalnih%20manjina%20za%20period%20od%202024.%20do%202027.pdf>

¹⁴² Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, available at: <https://ravnoteza.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/NPRSR%202024/Nacionalniplan%20za%20ravnopravnost%20polova,%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202027..pdf>



elections. This was perceived as a potential political overreach over the independent disbursement of public funds carried out by national institutions.¹⁴³ Civil society organisations advocating for topics which might be considered controversial (e.g., debunking dominant, one-sided and biased narratives of war as well as advocating against historical revisionism and glorification of convicted war criminals or advocating for minority rights) are very often the targets of smear-campaigns as well as public lynch and calls for violence (e.g., by the media, politicians). They often receive threats online and to their offices or private addresses, they are politically pressured and continuously publicly attacked by political actors.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, there is a lack of available remedies and dedicated support services organized/financed/supported by state institutions or bodies which activists and CSOs could turn to in such cases. In cases of threats, especially those made on digital platforms and social media, the only remedy activists and CSOs have is the law enforcement. However, activists and CSO employees have reported disregard or trivialization of threats, biased treatment, and even intimidation attempts by law enforcement officers. It is also important to add that it is frequently difficult to acquire information, feedback or progress on the filed police reports.

SLAPPs remain a significant problem in Croatia that primarily affects journalists, but they also have a negative impact on the work and freedom of expression of civil society groups and activists. The findings of the most recent report on the pressures over the work of the environmental protection groups and activists suggest that over the past decade in Croatia, SLAPP lawsuits and inspections have become typical repressive measures used to criminalize the environment defenders, silent critical voices, and financially starved environmental organizations and initiatives. These measures appear particularly common in cases where organizations and initiatives successfully challenge the legality of certain environmental interventions. This suggests that the targeted repression of specific organizations and initiatives is closely related to broader issues of corruption.¹⁴⁵

55. Organisation of financial support for civil society organisations and human rights defenders (e.g. framework to ensure access to funding, and for financial viability, taxation/incentive/donation systems, measures to ensure a fair distribution of funding).

Resources and funding for the work of civil society remain inadequate in 2024 as well. National funding is both inadequate and largely unpredictable, and even nationally managed EU funds are distributed

¹⁴³ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/12/19/gong-porucuje-li-premier-da-je-sklon-kazniti-organizacije-koje-inzistiraju-na-provedbi-slobodnih-i-postenih-izbora/>

¹⁴⁴ For example, the staff of YIHR Croatia endured a smear campaign and a lynch in December triggered and exacerbated by media outlets financed and influenced by the government, which targeted them for their activism. YIHR Croatia received hundreds of threats after employees' names and photos were published as part of a smear campaign. This public lynch followed an activist action aimed at promoting a responsible culture of memory, addressing past injustices, and advocating for the effective implementation of transitional justice mechanisms (e.g., stripping convicted war criminals from highest state decorations).

¹⁴⁵ Kardov, K., Repression of Environmental Initiatives and Civil Society Organizations in Croatia, September 2024, available at: https://zelena-akcija.hr/system/document/1355/doc_files/original/ZA_AnalizaFIN-3.pdf



through rigid mechanisms that fail to meet the evolving needs of CSOs and the communities they serve.¹⁴⁶ The recent report indicates four groups of problems, challenges, and issues that should be addressed.¹⁴⁷ The access to funding for advocacy and research activities and activities that enable work on public policies is very limited. Organizations report that decision-makers at the local, national, or international levels recognize them as relevant actors and seek their participation in decision-making processes. However, these organizations often struggle to participate effectively due to a lack of financial resources.

Access to funding from national and local public sources is not sufficient. Organizations emphasize the need for a more transparent and efficient long-term financing of advocacy activities at the national and local levels, which would imply evaluating the quality of the implemented activities instead of only relying on quantitative indicators, as well as increasing the amount of funds for financing projects and programs. Additionally, the lack of national and local tenders for co-financing projects received within programs is also identified as a problem. Although the organizations recognize some positive changes, e.g., lump-sum becoming more popular, the administrative burden and administrative obstacles to accessing funding are still one of the key issues hindering the work of the CSOs in Croatia.¹⁴⁸ As evidence suggests, many CSOs have disappeared, i.e. they are not functioning anymore. For example, Sisak, which is a relatively big town, with many social problems, with absolute deindustrialization, war, national minorities, earthquake, etc., has only a few active CSOs and only one legal aid provider in Sisak-Moslavina County.¹⁴⁹

E. Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

56. If there have been developments related to initiatives to foster a rule of law culture, please specify, which (e.g. debates in national parliaments on the rule of law, public information campaigns on rule of law issues, contributions from civil society, education initiatives, etc.).

Following the results of the 2024 elections, the newly formed Government de facto discontinued the functioning of the Government Council on Human Rights, which was praised as a good example of cooperation and dialogue between civil society and institutions. This is one of the main reasons why the RoL report's visibility remained very limited in 2024 as well since the Council has its mandate to organize discussions on the rule of law as well. There was no Government effort to engage with civil

¹⁴⁶ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Propustene-prilike-i-neispunjena-obecanja-%E2%80%99Hrvatski-model-podrske-civilnom-drustvu-kroz-Europski-socijalni-fond.pdf>, Faktograf.hr, available at: <https://faktograf.hr/2023/11/13/udruga-su-u-pruzanju-pomoci-fleksibilnije-od-drzave-ali-radnici-rade-u-iznimno-nestabilnim-uvjetima/>

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights House Zagreb, Access to Funding for Human Rights Organizations in Croatia: Obstacles and Recommendations, December 2024, available at: https://www.kucaljudskihprava.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/KLJP_PristupFinanciranju-HR.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Based on the inputs from PGP Sisak



society and other relevant stakeholders in the discussion of EC's findings and recommendations besides occasional participation in the few discussions organized by civil society.

Other – please specify

Freedom of assembly

In 2024, the most significant negative impact on the freedom of assembly is the continued securitization of Saint Mark's Square in Zagreb, where most important institutions have their seats: Government, Parliament, and the Constitutional Court. After Gong filed a request for a constitutional review of the Government's Amendment of the Regulation on Protected Persons, Facilities and Spaces from November 2020, that closed the St Mark's Square in Zagreb indefinitely, after an attack on the building of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in October 2020, on January 2nd 2024 the majority of the Constitutional Court's published a decision declaring itself incompetent to decide on the matter.¹⁵⁰ The decision faced strong criticism from legal experts and the public, with five Constitutional Court judges issuing three dissenting opinions. They argued that the closure violated constitutional rights to freedom of assembly and movement, which can only be restricted by laws passed by Parliament—not by a government regulation, as outlined in Article 16 of the Croatian Constitution. According to the interviews for candidates of the Constitutional Court judges held during October, the vast majority of candidates agreed that the Constitutional Court made a mistake by declaring itself incompetent for deciding in the matter, and that the only institution that could have decided on the closure of St Mark's Square was the Croatian Parliament.¹⁵¹

Extension of the Constitutional Court's judges mandate

With the secret decision from December 6th to extend their mandate, the Constitutional Court judges placed themselves above the Constitution. The Constitution clearly stipulates that the mandate of Constitutional Court judges lasts 8 years and can be extended to a maximum of 6 months, which is the deadline that expired on December 7. At the same time, the Constitutional Court hid its decision on the extension of the mandate from the public and the Parliament, until the new judges were sworn in before the President of the Republic of Croatia.¹⁵² It is unacceptable that the Constitutional Court, whose task is to respect and protect the Constitution, indulges in arbitrary interpretation and flagrant violation of norms in such a way. The Constitutional Court could have reacted earlier and warned the Croatian Parliament in time of the consequences that would occur if the Constitutional Court was not elected on time, when it was already obvious that it would be difficult to elect judges.

¹⁵⁰ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/en/2024/02/13/if-the-constitutional-court-is-not-competent-no-one-stands-in-the-way-of-the-arbitrariness-of-plenkovics-government/>

¹⁵¹ Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/10/25/vecina-kandidata-za-suce-ustavnog-suda-smatra-da-je-sud-pogrijesio-u-slucaju-markovog-trga/>

¹⁵² Gong.hr, available at: <https://gong.hr/2024/12/09/gong-oni-koji-ne-postuju-ustav-ne-mogu-biti-njegovi-cuvari/>



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