

Statement by the Committee on the Constitution

2020/21:KU14

2020 Rule of Law Report

In spring 2019, the Committee welcomed the Commission's initiative for a discussion on how to improve the instruments available to the EU institutions for protection of the Union's fundamental values, including respect for the rule of law. The European Rule of Law Mechanism is a new tool supplementing other EU instruments. The annual scrutiny model aims to promote protection of the rule of law and prevent problems relating to the rule of law from arising or worsening.

In its first annual Rule of Law Report, the Commission provides examples not only of positive trends in the area of the rule of law in the EU, but also of serious challenges. The Committee wishes once more to underline the importance of respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law, which are fundamental in a democracy and of central importance for cooperation in the EU. The Committee therefore welcomes the report and their assessment is that an annual scrutiny and ongoing discussion nationally and in the EU can help to increase respect for the rule of law.

The COVID-19 pandemic entails great challenges for society. Decisions have been made that have meant restrictions of rights and freedoms, for example the freedom of movement and freedom of assembly, and that have affected constitutional checks and balances. The Committee wishes to emphasise how important it is that the measures undertaken during the pandemic continue to be followed up and evaluated.

Like the Government, the Committee welcomes the new regulation that protects the EU budget in the case of violations of the principles of the rule of law.

The examined document

Communication from the Commission: 2020 Rule of Law Report – the rule of law situation in the European Union (COM(2020) 580).