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International & European
Criminal Law Observatory

ON CULTURAL ISSUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

MONTHLY WRAP APRIL 2025

ICJ

[World Court begins hearing Sudan's case accusing United Arab Emirates of 'complicity in genocide'](#)

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 10 April began hearing Sudan's case against the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which it accuses of being complicit in acts of genocide against the Masalit community in West Darfur by backing the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The hearings in The Hague, focus on Sudan's request for the court – the UN's principal judicial organ – to impose provisional measures to prevent further alleged grave human rights violations. Sudan's military Government is alleging that the UAE has been directly supporting the RSF and allied militias, which have embroiled in a brutal civil war with the national army since April 2023. The conflict has triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, claiming tens of thousands of lives and displacing over 12.4 million people – more than 3.3 million as refugees in neighbouring countries. Hunger has reached catastrophic levels, with famine declared in several regions, and disease outbreaks and the collapse of essential services have left millions, especially children at extreme risk. The case, formally titled Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in Sudan (Sudan v. United Arab Emirates), was initiated last month, when Sudan filed an application instituting proceedings against the UAE.

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

[Sexual violence systematically used as a weapon of war in the DR Congo](#)

The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continues to have devastating consequences, particularly for women and children, who face an increased risk of conflict-related sexual violence. Senior UN officials warned that all parties involved in the conflict are systematically using sexual violence as a tactic of war against civilians. Escalating attacks by non-State armed groups in eastern DRC have led to a significant surge in sexual violence, predominantly targeting women and children. Rwanda-backed M23 rebels seized control of key eastern cities such as Goma and Bukavu from government forces earlier this year, plunging the already volatile, mineral-rich region deeper into chaos following years of instability and conflict between multiple armed factions. Children are increasingly subjected to grave human rights violations, including recruitment and abduction by armed groups, alongside the threat of sexual violence. Ongoing violence, looting, and restricted humanitarian access have worsened living conditions. Attacks on healthcare facilities and



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severe shortages of medical supplies are placing additional strain on survivors, particularly those requiring life-saving HIV treatment, which is increasingly unavailable.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[A/RES/79/284](#)

On 16 April 2025, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/79/284 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. The resolution recognises the contribution of the Council of Europe to strengthening multilateralism, promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Welcomes the role of the Council of Europe in building a united Europe and its contribution to cohesion, stability and security in Europe.

The resolution underlines the growing cooperation between the two organizations, in particular in response to the challenges arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, highlighting the need to restore peace and security, Ensure respect for human rights and prosecute those responsible for violations of international law. The role of the Council of Europe in establishing the Register of Damage caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its contribution to the establishment of a special court for the crime of aggression is recognized.

The determination to improve states' capacity to address complex global shocks, including pandemics, through multilateral response and cooperation is reaffirmed. The resolution calls for closer cooperation in several areas, including the promotion and protection of human rights, the fight against terrorism and trafficking in human beings, the prevention of torture, the protection of migrants and refugees, Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Cooperation in the fields of bioethics, child protection, combating racism and discrimination, protection of national minorities and promotion of regional or minority languages is also highlighted. Cooperation in the fight against transnational organised crime, cybercrime, corruption and money laundering is encouraged. Finally, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Council of Europe are invited to combine their efforts to address global challenges and strengthen partnership, in particular for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNRWA

[Children in Gaza 'going to bed starving' amid blockade](#)

The biggest UN aid agency in Gaza condemned the two-month Israeli blockade that has left families eating barely enough to survive amid daily bombings – and the sick and injured without lifesaving medical help. Thousands of trucks carrying relief supplies continue to be denied entry to Gaza.



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Destruction to the southern city of Rafah has left it “obliterated”, UNRWA said. Formerly the largest entry point for aid into the enclave via Egypt, aerial videos purportedly of Rafah show buildings levelled as far as the eye can see. Before the war erupted in October 2023, Gazans relied on 500 trucks a day to deliver the food and other basic goods that they needed. But no humanitarian or commercial supplies have entered since 2 March. This is by far the longest ban on aid moving into the Strip since the start of the war in October 2023, following deadly Hamas-led terror attacks on Israel that killed some 1,250 people and left more than 250 taken hostage. The blockade has emptied warehouses of food, medical supplies, shelter materials and safe water. According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) food prices rose 1,400 per cent in recent weeks compared to the ceasefire period from 19 January to 18 March 2025.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

CASE OF JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THESSALONIKI v. GREECE (Application no. 13959/20) –

In the Chamber judgment¹ in the case of Jewish Community of Thessaloniki v. Greece (application no. 13959/20) the European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case concerned the dismissal in 2019 of the applicant community’s demand to be judicially recognised as the sole owner of a plot of land on the grounds that it had been categorised as “enemy property” after the end of the Second World War – although the ownership of the plot had been transferred to them in 1934. The Court found in particular that the Court of Cassation’s 2019 interpretation of the relevant domestic legislation and its application to this case had not been foreseeable. It was not reasonable to expect the applicant community to have known that the property which had already come under its ownership in 1934 would be affected in 1950 and 1955 by the legislation concerning enemy property. The community could not have anticipated the change in the State’s stance as regard its ownership of the plot, and nor could it have anticipated the interpretation given to the legislation by the domestic courts as late as 2019.

CASE OF RUSS v. GERMANY (Application no. 44241/20) –

In the Chamber’s judgment in Russ v. Germany (Appeal No. 44241/20), the ECHR unanimously held that there had been a violation of Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case concerned the criminal conviction of Mr Russ for having worn a plastic visor during a demonstration against the opening of the new premises of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt am Main, in violation of a general ban on carrying protective weapons at public events in Germany. As the national judges had not explained why the use of an improvised



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visor constituted a threat to public safety, the Court concluded that the reasons justifying the criminal conviction of Mr Russ were not sufficient.

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

[International protection: according to Advocate General Richard de la Tour, a Member State may designate safe countries of origin by a legislative act and must disclose, for the purpose of judicial review, the sources of information upon which that designation is based](#)

Under Directive 2013/32/EU, EU Member States may expedite asylum applications at the border for nationals of countries deemed "safe." In 2024, Italy designated certain third countries as safe through legislative acts. Two Bangladeshi nationals, transferred to a detention facility in Albania under the Italy-Albania Protocol, applied for international protection. Their applications were processed under the accelerated border procedure and rejected, as Bangladesh was considered a safe country of origin. The applicants challenged the decision before the Rome District Court, which referred the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to clarify the application of the safe country of origin concept and the obligations of Member States regarding effective judicial review.

Advocate General Jean Richard de la Tour opined that a Member State may designate a third country as a safe country of origin through legislation. However, the national court reviewing a rejection must have access to the sources of information upon which the designation is based to assess its legality. The mere designation does not shield it from judicial review. Additionally, the Directive does not preclude a Member State from designating a third country as safe while identifying specific categories of persons at risk. This is permissible if the country's general population enjoys protection and the Member State explicitly excludes these categories from the presumption of safety.

The CJEU is expected to issue its judgment by early June 2025.

[The Member State of residence of a requested person cannot refuse to execute a European arrest warrant in order to ensure that person's presence when the criminal proceedings are resumed](#)

In 2022, Spain's National High Court convicted a Spanish national residing in Romania for VAT fraud exceeding €100 million related to hydrocarbon sales. The individual was sentenced to prison and fines. Despite a travel ban, he was found at the Croatian border heading to Romania. Consequently, the court issued a European arrest warrant (EAW) in April 2022. However, in April 2023, a Romanian court refused to execute the EAW, citing the individual's continuous lawful residence in Romania and the statute of limitations under Romanian law. The National High Court disagreed, asserting that the conditions for non-execution were not met and referred the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).



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The CJEU ruled that the Framework Decision on the European Arrest Warrant allows a Member State to refuse execution if the individual resides in the executing state and that state commits to executing the sentence. However, in this case, the EAW aimed to ensure the individual's presence for proceedings in Spain, not to execute a custodial sentence. Regarding the statute of limitations, the Court noted that for such a ground to apply, the acts must fall within the jurisdiction of the executing Member State under its own criminal law, which was not the case here. The fraudulent activities occurred in Spain and affected its economic interests.

This judgment clarifies the application of the European Arrest Warrant Framework Decision, particularly concerning the grounds for non-execution related to the statute of limitations and the jurisdictional scope of criminal acts.

[The procedural acts of the European Public Prosecutor's Office \(EPPO\) that are capable of affecting the legal situation of the persons challenging them must be amenable to judicial review](#)

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is an independent EU body responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes affecting the EU's financial interests. It operates at two levels: a central office in Luxembourg and decentralized European Delegated Prosecutors (EDPs) in Member States.

In Spain, the EPPO is conducting a criminal investigation into EU subsidy fraud. Two individuals under investigation challenged a witness summons issued by an EDP, as Spanish law permits judicial review of certain investigative acts but excludes witness summonses. The Spanish court referred the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to determine whether this exclusion aligns with EU law, particularly Article 42 of the EPPO Regulation, which mandates judicial review of EPPO acts producing legal effects on third parties.

Advocate General Anthony Michael Collins opined that if the witness summons affects the legal situation of the individuals under investigation, it should be subject to judicial review. He emphasized that national courts must have the authority to review such acts to ensure compliance with EU law principles, including effective judicial protection and the rights of the defense. The CJEU is expected to deliver its judgment by early June 2025.

EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE (EPPO)

[Italy: EPPO seizes assets in investigation into EU funding fraud involving ceramic production](#)

At the request of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Palermo (Italy), a freezing order of €800 000 was issued against five individuals and one company suspected of EU funding fraud involving ceramic production. The Italian Financial Police (Guardia di Finanza) of Sant'Agata di Militello subsequently seized real estate, bank accounts and cash found in the possession of the



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suspects. According to the evidence obtained, the suspects successfully applied for around €560 000 in EU structural funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) between 2018 and 2021, by falsely declaring the costs of purchasing machinery for ceramic production. They allegedly used a scheme of over-invoicing and fake transactions to misrepresent the costs by inflating them significantly, and to claim tax benefits on transactions that had never been carried out. All persons concerned are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in the competent Italian courts of law.

OLAF

[OLAF and EPPO jointly discover fraud and money laundering worth \\$9.5 million](#)

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) played a key role in investigating a sophisticated fraud and money laundering system involving resources from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), with an estimated financial impact of €9.5 million. The OLAF investigation was launched following a request from the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) concerning suspected cases of fraud against the EU, falsification of documents and money laundering in a computer project in Romania. EU financial support for the development of an innovative IT platform has in fact been exploited by an organised group to fraudulently obtain EU funds and launder criminal proceeds. OLAF's investigative activities, conducted in close cooperation with the EPPO, included several on-the-spot checks in Cyprus and the Czech Republic, as well as operational intelligence analysis of the IT platforms developed under the EU project. As a result of this investigative cooperation, the EPPO has indicted 12 defendants - six individuals and six legal entities - for fraud against the EU and money laundering. The evidence collected points to a sophisticated and structured money laundering system, orchestrated by a network of individuals and companies in Romania, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and the United Arab Emirates. The OLAF investigation helped to establish that the group was operating in a systematic way, with each member playing a specific role in the criminal taking of EU taxpayers' money and money laundering. Funds were diverted through fictitious contracts before being used for personal enrichment. Operational intelligence analysis revealed suspicious banking transactions in several jurisdictions, including Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Monaco, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, UAE and the United States.

EUROPOL

[Leading the way in preventing the abuse of biometric recognition technology](#)

The "[Biometric Vulnerabilities](#)" report published by Europol in 2025 examines emerging threats related to the increasing use of biometrics for authentication (such as fingerprints and facial recognition), now widespread in personal devices and sensitive services. Although these systems are generally secure, they present a key criticality: biometric data, once compromised, cannot be changed,



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unlike passwords. Europol reports that criminals are developing advanced techniques to circumvent biometric systems, including realistic masks, synthetic fingerprints and deepfakes. These threats make a coordinated response urgent. The report calls on law enforcement agencies to collaborate with experts in biometrics, cybersecurity and forensic science to identify vulnerabilities, develop countermeasures and improve investigative capacity. It also recommends more training for operators, the adoption of tools to detect manipulation attempts, and the systematic documentation of biometric attacks to anticipate the evolution of criminal techniques. In summary, the document emphasises that only an integrated and multidisciplinary approach can guarantee the resilience of biometric systems and the security of European citizens.

[Seven arrests in hit against Egyptian criminal network smuggling irregular migrants across the Mediterranean](#)

On 8 April 2025, a coordinated action by Europol led to the arrest of seven key members of an international criminal network dedicated to smuggling migrants, largely composed of Egyptian suspects. The arrests took place in Italy, Germany, Albania, Turkey and Oman, with the support of INTERPOL and the Greek and German police. The network transported irregular migrants by sea from Turkey to Italy and Greece, with payments of up to EUR 10,000 per person. It is estimated to have smuggled more than 3,000 migrants, generating tens of millions of euros in profits. The investigation began in 2022 after the interception of a boat with 87 migrants on board, coming from Turkey and driven by Egyptian captains. The network, active in Turkey, Egypt, Greece and Italy, operated via social media and messaging apps, offering accommodation, transport and handling payments. Europol, within the Operational Task Force with Italy and Greece, provided analytical support, operational coordination and data exchange between partners, also facilitating cooperation with non-EU countries. Eurojust ensured judicial cooperation, while INTERPOL facilitated international arrests. This operation represents a concrete result of the [European Commission's 10-point plan for Lampedusa](#), aimed at fighting irregular migration in the Mediterranean.

[Encrypted app intelligence exposes sprawling criminal networks across Europe](#)

On 15 April 2025, authorities from Europe and Turkey, with the support of Europol, dismantled four large-scale criminal networks responsible for drug trafficking and money laundering, thanks to intelligence extracted from encrypted platforms such as Sky ECC and ANOM. The operation, named BULUT (“cloud” in Turkish), led to the arrest of 232 suspects in several countries, including high-value targets. Assets worth over EUR 300 million (including 681 properties and 127 vehicles) were seized, and at least 21 tonnes of drugs, including 3.3 million MDMA tablets, were intercepted. The networks, operating in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Turkey, used advanced smuggling routes and sophisticated logistical facilities. The decrypted communications enabled the



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tracing of the organisations' leadership and their links to other crimes: money laundering, organised violence and transnational crime. Europol coordinated investigations, facilitated the exchange of intelligence and led strategic meetings between Member States, while also providing field support and surveillance through databases and passenger records. The contribution of the Turkish police, integrated into Europol headquarters, facilitated effective bilateral action. This operation shows how the strategic use of encrypted data, even years after the platforms were shut down, can still have a crucial impact in dismantling global criminal networks.

INTERPOL

[Human trafficking-fueled fraud ring dismantled in joint Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana operation](#)

In a joint operation between Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and INTERPOL, two human traffickers were arrested and 33 victims (from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Togo) were rescued from a criminal network that exploited them through pyramid schemes. The network lured young people with false job offers abroad, demanding high payments (up to USD 9,000) to obtain visas and travel. Instead of reaching Canada, the victims were detained in Abidjan, subjected to physical and psychological coercion and threats, and forced to recruit others via multi-level marketing platforms. The operation started from a parent's complaint and developed thanks to the cooperation between local police and INTERPOL, which coordinated the raids and the transfer of the main suspect to the Ghanaian authorities. The freed victims were handed over to local NGOs for care and support. INTERPOL warns of an increase in scams related to job or study offers in West and Central Africa, raising alarm bells such as:

- requests for money in advance,
- pressure to make a quick decision,
- poorly detailed or overly advantageous offers,
- suspiciously professional online company profiles.

OSCE

[OSCE and EU support Central Asian states to safeguard non-profit organizations from abuse by terrorists](#)

From 28 to 30 April 2025, the OSCE and the EU Global Facility on AML/CFT hosted a regional workshop in Vienna to support Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—in preventing the misuse of non-profit organizations (NPOs) by terrorists. The event focused on the practical and balanced implementation of the revised FATF Recommendation 8, which calls for nuanced risk assessments while safeguarding legitimate civil



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society activities. Participants, including government officials and NPO representatives, explored strategies such as outreach, self-regulation, and financial access to ensure both security and protection of fundamental freedoms. The workshop fostered technical expertise, shared best practices, and promoted collaboration between authorities and civil society.

[OSCE supports Ukraine in fighting illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives](#)

On 25 April 2025, the OSCE and Ukraine's Ministry of Interior held an expert roundtable in Kyiv to address the prevention and combat of illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition, and explosives (WAE). The event gathered over 50 participants from Ukrainian law enforcement, parliament, and international partners. Discussions focused on Ukraine's national firearm control system, legislative improvements, inter-agency coordination, public awareness campaigns, and law enforcement capacity-building. Participants emphasized the need for community engagement and highlighted the new voluntary declaration mechanism for unregistered weapons as a key step toward reducing gun violence. International support, including OSCE training, equipment, and coordination, was recognized as essential to meeting Ukraine's security needs. The event was part of an OSCE project funded by the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Slovakia, and Poland.

[OSCE enhances private sector and labour inspectors' skills to detect hidden forms of trafficking](#)

From 23 to 25 April 2025, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, in partnership with Tajikistan's Inter-ministerial Commission on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, held a training for 12 representatives from the private sector and labour inspection authorities. The course aimed to improve identification of hidden forms of human trafficking in high-risk sectors like hospitality, tourism, and recruitment. Participants learned best practices for victim referral and gained skills to detect less visible trafficking cases, enhancing early response and protection mechanisms.

[OSCE leaders and anti-trafficking experts commit to tripling down on efforts to end child trafficking](#)

At the 25th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons in Vienna, held on 2 April 2025, OSCE leaders and anti-trafficking experts urged the 57 OSCE participating States to translate their commitments into concrete actions and intensify efforts to combat child trafficking. Despite significant progress over the past 20 years, the number of child trafficking cases in the OSCE region remains high, with online child sexual exploitation increasing rapidly. Leena Meri, Finland's Justice Minister, emphasized that victims of child trafficking are often only identified as adults, with abuse potentially continuing for years. Discussions at the conference focused on child trafficking trends, risks, and solutions, stressing the need for a comprehensive approach involving national authorities, civil society, and the private sector. Kari Johnstone, OSCE Special Representative for Combating Human Trafficking, called for a significant increase in resources, actions, and accountability to



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eradicate child trafficking. Nearly 800 participants attended the conference, reflecting the importance of OSCE's anti-trafficking initiatives. The conference also marked 20 years since the OSCE's Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

[Joint Expert Group on organised crime relating to drug trafficking \(OC-DT\)](#)

The MEDICRIME Convention and recent reports on illicit diversion and falsification of medicines were discussed at the Joint Expert Group on Organized Crime related to Drug Trafficking (OC-DT) meeting, held on 28-29 April 2025 under the Pompidou Group. The meeting aimed to contribute to a preliminary draft Background Study, which will help create Policy Guidelines for combating organized crime linked to drug trafficking, based on European Court of Human Rights case law. The guidelines will serve as the foundation for a future Committee of Ministers' Recommendation for Council of Europe member states. Drug trafficking and falsified medical product trafficking are increasingly interconnected, with criminal networks exploiting shared supply chains, dark web markets, and regulatory gaps. Organized crime groups are expanding into fake medicines and controlled substances, driven by high demand, lower penalties, and overlapping smuggling methods. These illicit activities contribute to public health crises, including opioid overdoses and treatment failures from counterfeit drugs. Strengthening cross-border cooperation among justice, law enforcement, health authorities, and the private sector is essential to address these emerging threats.

[Saving migrants' lives at sea and protecting their human rights](#)

On 9 April, the Committee on Migration, Refugees, and Displaced Persons called on member states to comply fully with international humanitarian law, maritime law, and protections for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The committee emphasized the obligation to protect the right to life, as outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights, urging member states to prevent migrant deaths at sea and to share responsibility for search and rescue operations in European waters, particularly aiding coastal states. The committee recommended strengthening the financial and material capabilities of coast guard authorities, especially in Greece's Aegean, Spain's Canary Islands, and Italy's Sicily. It also called for reevaluating cooperation with Libyan and Tunisian coast guards, citing concerns about non-compliance with human rights standards. The draft resolution, adopted unanimously, suggested re-establishing large-scale European search and rescue operations and designating European waters as humanitarian maritime spaces. The committee also urged member states to prohibit pushbacks, collective expulsions, and to independently monitor human rights violations at sea, including pushback allegations. Furthermore, the committee stressed the need to allow humanitarian civil society organizations to operate alongside public authorities without legal



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or administrative barriers. Finally, the resolution emphasized the importance of creating safe legal pathways for migrants needing international protection.

[GRECO publishes two reports assessing Spain's progress in implementing its anti-corruption recommendations](#)

The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has released two follow-up reports on Spain's compliance with anti-corruption recommendations for the central government's top executive functions, law enforcement, parliamentarians, judges, and prosecutors. In the first report, GRECO concluded that Spain had not fully implemented any of the recommendations made in 2019 to improve integrity in the central government and law enforcement (Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil). Of the remaining 19 recommendations, 13 were partly implemented, and 6 were not implemented. Due to poor implementation, Spain was placed under the 5th evaluation round non-compliance procedure and was asked to report on progress by 31 December 2024. GRECO will review Spain's progress at its 100th plenary session in June 2025. The second report reviewed recommendations made in 2013 regarding parliamentarians, judges, and prosecutors. It showed no progress since the previous report in 2022. Spain has fully implemented seven recommendations, partly implemented three, and has not implemented one regarding the General Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ). This report ends the 4th round of compliance procedures for Spain concerning parliamentarians, judges, and prosecutors. The reports were published at Spain's request under GRECO's rules of procedure.

[Denmark: GRECO high-level delegation urges swift action to strengthen corruption prevention and integrity frameworks in parliament, central government and the police](#)

During meetings in Copenhagen on 7 April, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) urged Denmark to fully implement its recommendations to prevent corruption and strengthen integrity in Parliament, the central government, and the police force. This visit followed GRECO's December 2023 findings that Denmark had not made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from its Fifth Evaluation Round, resulting in GRECO applying its non-compliance procedure. The GRECO delegation met with several senior officials, including the Minister of Justice and heads of key departments, to discuss the legislative and policy changes needed. While GRECO welcomed Denmark's commitment to implementing recommendations for top executive functions and law enforcement, it regretted that no additional measures were planned to address recommendations regarding Parliament members. As of the visit, only two out of fourteen recommendations from the Fifth Evaluation Round and two out of six from the Fourth Evaluation Round had been fully implemented, raising concerns about Denmark's ability to effectively prevent



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corruption. GRECO urged Denmark to take swift and effective action to address these outstanding issues. GRECO will review Denmark's progress in June 2025 and 2026.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

[Human rights violations in Cameroon, Iran and Belarus](#)

The European Parliament has adopted human rights resolutions on Cameroon, Iran and Belarus. Parliament condemns the systematic violations of the human rights of journalists by the Cameroonian authorities and calls on them to guarantee freedom of the press in view of the presidential elections in 2025. The MEPs call for the immediate and unconditional release of Amadou Vamouké, Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka, Mancho Bibixy, Thomas Awah Junior and Tsi Conrad. They stress that their rights and access to medical care must be guaranteed. Parliament calls on the EU and its Member States to raise these cases with the Cameroonian authorities, as well as to exert diplomatic pressure and economic to improve respect for human rights in the country. In addition, MEPs call for an end to military trials of civilians and the abuse of terrorism charges and "fake news" against journalists. Call on the EU to support a UN fact-finding mission and ask for humanitarian visas to be offered to journalists at risk of persecution.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

[Commission presents European internal security strategy](#)

On 1 April 2025, the Commission presented ProtectEU, the new European internal security strategy aimed at supporting EU countries in ensuring citizens' safety. It sets out a work plan based on a stronger legal framework, more effective information sharing and closer cooperation. To respond to the rise of hybrid threats and security, such as terrorism, organised crime, cybercrime and attacks on critical infrastructures, Europe must review its approach to internal security. The aim of the strategy is to adopt a society-wide approach involving citizens, businesses, researchers and civil society, which can contribute to greater safety for all. The objectives set are: new European governance in internal security; ability to anticipate security threats through new ways of sharing intelligence; More effective law enforcement tools and stronger justice and home affairs bodies; development of resilience to hybrid threats and fight against organised crime and serious crime. Actions are supported by evidence from the EU's assessment of the threat posed by organised crime and serious crime (EU-SOCTA). The new strategy complements the Union's preparedness strategy and the White Paper on European defence, forming, together with the future European Shield for Democracy, a general framework for a safe, secure and resilient EU.



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ON CULTURAL ISSUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

[New Project for Sustainable Finance](#)

UNDP and Ireland have launched a new Project Office for Sustainable Finance in Dublin, backed by a 7.5 million Euros fund by the Irish Government. The Office will be a global platform for innovation and aligning finance with climate, nature, and sustainable development goals. It addresses the evolving financial landscape where impactful finance is crucial. This Project Office is also UNDP's first formal presence in Ireland. The UNDP aims to use finance as tool to address and prevent climate change: UNDP will is to create a platform for connecting financial centres, regulators and markets with the need of people and the planet.

[Statement on South Sudan](#)

UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner, has released a new statement on the situation in South Sudan, stressing its people resilience but also urging all the international community to prioritise dialogue, unity and peace, over conflict. South Sudan future, the Administrator said, relies on a united leadership and an unwavering commitment to peace and security, which must be backed by the UN and all States.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

[UNEP and European Commission to boost cooperation on environment and climate](#)

European Commissioner for the Environment, Jessika Roswall, met with UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen in Brussels to boost global environmental cooperation. Their discussions focused on competitive circular economy, water resilience, digital solutions, and climate and environmental security. This collaboration between UNEP and the European Commission is vital for tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Multilateral forums are key in creating global consensus, as demonstrated by the recent success of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP16 session in Rome.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

[IOM Chief Urges Greater Global Support to Haiti Amid Growing Crisis](#)

IOM Director General Amy Pope called for urgent need to intervene in support of Haiti population, which is falling into a deepening humanitarian crisis. During her visit in Aprile, she has noted that over 1 million people are forced to move to gang violence or political instability. DG highlighted the importance of humanitarian aid supporting these peoples, which face scarcity of local resources, migration governance, sanitation and shelters.



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Without the fair support, inaction could amplify the outbreak of a broader regional and global instability, far than a humanitarian disaster. IOM's commitment is now focused on restoring safety, human dignity to the Haitian population.

Crimes Associated with Critical Minerals in Southeast Asia: Trends, Challenges and Solutions

UNICRI's April report highlights how the rising global demand for critical minerals—such as nickel, tin, rare earth elements, and cobalt—is fueling criminal activity in Southeast Asia. These minerals, that seem to be vital for the future green transition are increasingly linked to environmental crimes, corruption, and illicit financial flows.

From illegal or unregulated mining operations to corruption, illicit trade and money laundering, the culprits often elude investigations and processes due to the limited capacity to insufficient law enforcement training and coordination.

UNICRI proposes alternative solutions, such as adopting traceability technologies, specialized training for local authorities, better inter-agency coordination, support legal and economic investigation methods.

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGION

European Committee of the Regions calls for immediate release of Turkish mayors

2/04/2025

The European Committee of the Regions has urgently adopted a resolution condemning the arrest of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and over a hundred Turkish local officials since 19 March. Approved by the 329-member assembly during the 2-3 April plenary, the resolution denounces the systematic targeting of opposition politicians and the weakening of local democracy in Türkiye, urging immediate action from Turkish authorities and the EU to defend democratic values and the rule of law.

Key points include:

- Strong condemnation of the arrests of opposition leaders, notably Mayor İmamoğlu, as serious violations of democratic standards and the electorate's will.
- Urgent call for the release of all opposition politicians detained for political reasons and for an end to politically driven prosecutions and pressure on local authorities.
- Solidarity with local leaders facing persecution, recognising their role in representing voters and stressing the importance of protecting their independence.
- Support for Turkish citizens demonstrating for democracy and a call to safeguard freedom of assembly and expression, urging an end to repression of protestors and journalists.



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- Highlighting the negative effects of arrests and central government actions on local governance, transparency, and citizens' daily lives.
- Welcoming the European Parliament's resolution, including calls for restrictive measures against officials involved in mayoral dismissals under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.
- Urging the EU Commission and Council to reconsider Türkiye's accession path, stressing that backsliding on rights must impact Türkiye's participation in EU programs.
- Announcing a visit to Türkiye by a Committee delegation to show support for İmamoğlu and other imprisoned local officials.
- Reaffirming its commitment to defending local democracy in Türkiye and pledging continued cooperation with democratically elected local leaders through its Türkiye working group.

EU enlargement faces challenges in local governance and local democracy

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has urged the EU to tackle the issue of "local state capture" in countries seeking accession, and in a resolution on Türkiye, it "strongly condemned the arrests and detentions of local opposition leaders, including Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu." These calls were made during the 2-3 April plenary session of the EU's local and regional assembly, following a debate on enlargement with European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos. The resolution warns that "systematic targeting of opposition politicians threatens the foundations of democratic societies," and urges the High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission to consider restrictive measures under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. It also asserts that ongoing backsliding on fundamental rights should trigger a review of Türkiye's participation in EU programs. The CoR has been warning since 2016 about the damage to local democracy caused by the replacement of elected mayors with government-appointed trustees. The CoR also expresses strong criticism of Serbia's response to mass protests after the collapse of a railway station roof in Novi Sad. In its opinion on enlargement in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, the CoR raises "serious concerns" about the detention and deportation of civil society activists, including EU citizens, noting that such actions "risk undermining fundamental freedoms." In its 2024 review of EU enlargement progress, the CoR emphasises that alignment with the EU's foreign and security policy is "of paramount importance" for candidate countries, and it highlights the critical role of civil society in supporting the enlargement process. The CoR's analysis focuses mainly on local and regional governance, viewing strong local democracy and self-governance as essential checks and balances. It notes that Ukraine has made progress in decentralisation despite the ongoing war, while in the Western Balkans, it flags cases of "local state capture", where powerful actors usurp local governance systems. The CoR also points out the soft power benefits of EU backing for local and regional authorities (LRAs), praising their key role in reconciliation, confronting historical legacies, and



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promoting cross-border cooperation. These benefits were highlighted by the invitation of the mayors of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy) — joint European Capitals of Culture 2025 — to the plenary. Since Slovenia joined the EU in 2004, the two formerly divided cities have united through shared infrastructure and public spaces. Commissioner Kos noted that Nova Gorica and Gorizia "make the vision of European peace real every day." Mayors Samo Turel and Rodolfo Ziberna affirmed that coexistence is possible despite past divisions.

AD HOC TRIBUNALS

SPO COMPLETES PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE IN THACI ET AL. TRIAL

The Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO) has completed presenting its evidence in the trial of former Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi and three others, which began on April 3, 2023. The SPO presented testimony from 125 witnesses, submitted around 3,000 exhibits, and made 1,430 filings. The accused face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, illegal detention, and torture of civilians and non-combatants between March 1998 and September 1999. Over 150 victims are participating in the trial. The SPO emphasized the importance of witness testimony and the need to uphold justice and the rule of law in Kosovo.

SPECIALIST CHAMBER OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT DECIDES ON REFERRAL BY SALIH MUSTAFA

On April 17, 2025, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court rejected all claims made by Salih Mustafa, finding no violations of the Kosovo Constitution or the European Convention on Human Rights. Mustafa had alleged breaches of his fair trial rights in his war crimes case, but the court found no legal or factual errors in the trial or appeals process and noted he had received a fair, adversarial hearing. His complaint about the application of sentencing laws was also dismissed, with the court confirming that only the Specialist Chambers' law is binding in such cases. Finally, his claim regarding victims' participation in proceedings was found inadmissible, as he hadn't raised the issue properly beforehand.



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