



European Network of Councils  
for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils  
de la Justice (RECJ)

### **Statement by the Executive Board of the ENCJ On Pressure and Intimidation of Judges through Media**

The Rule of Law requires independent state powers that respect each other's roles and keep each other in balance. An essential cornerstone of the Rule of Law is an independent and impartial judiciary, where judges free of improper influence apply laws and regulations made by parliament and government.

Democratic states and societies require continuous maintenance. As noted in the declaration "*Confronting Threats to the Rule of Law*" in June 2025, constant vigilance to identify threats to judicial independence and the Rule of Law is essential<sup>1</sup>.

Recent developments and ongoing events observed in some ENCJ member and observer states once again call for action<sup>2</sup>. ENCJ notes with concern negative trends, such as pressure on judges and even intimidation, including regular hostile media campaigns by political actors in several ENCJ members and observers. Such campaigns, to a varying degree of intensity were recently witnessed in France, Hungary, Moldova and Romania.

While in the majority of instances these activities were related to decisions in high profile cases, in some they were aimed at putting pressure on the judiciary as a whole. Judges should and do accept legitimate criticism. However, negative and hostile comments have wider implications for the judiciary as they often are aimed at putting pressure on the judiciary. These targeted actions reflect a growing trend that threatens judicial independence and weakens the separation of powers. They have a long-lasting impact on the image of the judiciary, undermining the trust of society in the judiciary and contributing to the erosion of the Rule of Law. Such actions also affect individual judges, as they may even encourage physical attacks on them.

The ENCJ Executive Board considers these actions to constitute an attack on the legitimacy of another state power. They are aimed expressly at the weakening of the judiciary and the pursuit of influence and control over the judiciary through undue public criticism of judges.

For these reasons, the ENCJ Executive Board considers it necessary to recall the fundamental principles of a democratic state. We wish to emphasise that respect for the Rule of Law requires that the executive and legislative branches of state power refrain from attempting to gain inappropriate power over the judiciary through ill-founded or baseless public criticism. The executive and legislative branches are under a duty to provide all necessary and adequate protection where the functions of the courts are endangered by attacks or intimidation<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [ENCJ Riga Declaration 2025](#).

<sup>2</sup> [ENCJ Survey among judges about their independence 2025](#), Figure 44 Respect for judicial independence by government Note: Average survey 2022: 25% Average survey 2025: 27%.

<sup>3</sup> CCJE Opinion no. 18 (2015) "[The position of the judiciary and its relation with the other powers of state in a modern democracy](#)".

In light of the above, the ENCJ calls upon all relevant actors, including all branches of state powers, to refrain from facilitating, causing or permitting attacks on the judiciary or the intimidation of judges.

**The ENCJ Executive Board**  
**Brussels, 17 December 2025**