



UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL OCTOBER 21, 2026 9AM EDT

Bulgaria Ranks 63 out of 143 in the WJP Rule of Law Index

- 2026 WJP Rule of Law Index® finds authoritarian practices have become entrenched
- Rising government interference and rollbacks in freedom of speech and participation demand urgent attention
- Bulgaria's score decreased, ranks 30 out of 31 regionally

WASHINGTON (October 21, 2026) – The **global rule of law recession persists**, according to the new [*WJP Rule of Law Index® 2026*](#), released today by the World Justice Project (WJP). While fewer countries declined this year compared to last, the global balance remains deeply uneven—with a 62% decline continuing to outnumber improvements—including Bulgaria.

Bulgaria's overall rule of law score decreased 1.2% in this year's Index. It ranks 63rd out of 143 countries worldwide.

Regionally, Bulgaria ranks 30th out of 31 countries in the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North America.* The region's top performer is Denmark (ranked 1st out of 143 globally), followed by Norway and Finland. The three countries with the lowest scores in the region are Greece, Bulgaria, and Hungary (78th globally).

In the last year, 17 out of 31 countries declined in the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North America. Of those 17 countries, 15 had also declined in the previous year.

Canada, the UK, and most of the EU have remained largely stable, neither meaningfully improving nor declining.

While it is too early to tell for Hungary, Poland leads global recovery: Poland recorded the world's largest three-year improvement, rising 4.22% since 2023 as democratic checks and institutional safeguards began to recover.

Among high income countries, Bulgaria ranks 46th out of 51.**



Bulgaria and Global trends

Authoritarianism is no longer an emerging trend—it has become entrenched: over 86% of countries have suffered a sustained five-year decline in at least one safeguard against authoritarian rule: **constraints on government powers, open government, or fundamental rights**. This includes Bulgaria.

Freedoms essential to civic space, public debate and government oversight are shrinking across most countries:

- **“Freedom of opinion and expression”** declined in **64%** of countries, but not in Bulgaria.
- **“Freedom of assembly and association”** declined in **67%** of countries, but not in Bulgaria.
- **“Civic participation”** declined in **65%** of countries, but not in Bulgaria.

Across criminal and civil systems alike, **undue executive pressure and interference** have become the leading drivers of institutional decay. **Civil justice** weakened in **64%** of countries and **criminal justice** in **58%**, with **improper government influence** emerging as a central factor in both areas. Judiciaries are also losing ground to executive overreach more broadly: **government powers limited by the judiciary** fell in **63%** of countries. This includes Bulgaria.

However, **civil justice is becoming more accessible, affordable, and equal:**

- **“Access and afford civil justice** improved in **54%**” of countries, including Bulgaria.
- **“Civil justice is free of discrimination”** improved in **52%** of countries, including Bulgaria.

Index data shows that **economic prosperity, price stability, and low credit risk cluster** in countries with robust rule of law:

- **GDP per capita:** Countries with a GDP per capita above the world's average (\$14,406) score 0.68 or higher in the *WJP Rule of Law Index*.
- **Inflation:** Countries with inflation rates lower than the median (3.23%) have an Index score of 0.60 or above.
- **Sovereign credit ratings:** Countries with an investment-grade sovereign credit rating (AAA to BBB) maintain Index scores of 0.66 or higher.

In 2026, Bulgaria's overall score is 0.55.



Global rankings

Globally, the top-ranked country in the 2026 *WJP Rule of Law Index* is Denmark, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Luxembourg. The country with the lowest score is Venezuela, followed by Afghanistan, Haiti, Cambodia, and Nicaragua.

Bulgaria's WJP Rule of Law Index rankings

Overall score global rank: 63/143

Overall score regional rank: 30/31

Factor score rankings:

FACTOR	GLOBAL RANK	REGIONAL RANK*	INCOME RANK**
Constraints on Government Powers	85/143	30/31	49/51
Absence of Corruption	77/143	31/31	49/51
Open Government	42/143	30/31	39/51
Fundamental Rights	58/143	30/31	43/51
Order and Security	52/143	28/31	39/51
Regulatory Enforcement	62/143	30/31	45/51
Civil Justice	68/143	30/31	47/51
Criminal Justice	75/143	30/31	46/51

(1 is best in WJP Rule of Law Index rankings)

To see Bulgaria's performance across all 44 sub-factors the Index measures, visit:

www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2026/Bulgaria

Explore the full rankings and findings of the 2026 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index at: www.worldjusticeproject.org/index/.

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- Find graphics (regional rankings, global rankings, and comparative maps) [here](#).
- Find 143 country press releases organized by region [here](#).



About the WJP Rule of Law Index:

The *World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index*[®] is the world's leading source for original, independent rule of law data. Its rigorous methodology draws on expert and household surveys to measure the rule of law in 143 countries and jurisdictions, covering 95% of the world's population.

The Index relies on more than 215,000 household surveys and 3,400 practitioner and expert surveys to measure how the rule of law is experienced and perceived worldwide. Published annually since 2009, the Index is used by governments, multilateral organizations, businesses, academia, media, and civil society organizations.

About the World Justice Project:

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, nonpartisan, multidisciplinary organization working to create knowledge, build awareness, and stimulate action to advance the rule of law worldwide.

*Countries and jurisdictions measured in the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North America region: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States

**High income countries and jurisdictions: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay