Slovenia 2026

Information from: Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia

NHRIs' establishment, independence, effectiveness and resilience

International accreditation status and SCA recommendations

The Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia was re-accredited in December 2020, this time with A-status (before holding status B). Among the recommendations, the SCA encouraged the Slovenian NHRI to advocate for the formalisation and application of a selection and appointment process that includes requirements to broadly advertise vacancies, maximise the number of potential candidates from a wide range of societal group and educational qualifications, promote broad consultation and participation, and assess applicants based on predetermined, objective and publicly available criteria.

The SCA encouraged the Slovenian NHRI to advocate for the funding necessary to effectively carry out the full breadth of its mandate. The SCA also encouraged the NHRI to advocate for appropriate modifications to applicable administrative procedures to ensure that its independence and financial autonomy is guaranteed.

Finally, while the SCA acknowledged that the Slovenian NHRI interprets its mandate broadly and carries out activities encouraging the state to ratify or accede to international human rights instruments, it encouraged the Ombudsman to advocate for legislative amendments to make this mandate explicit.

The Slovenian NHRI underwent its periodic reaccreditation review in April 2026, with outcomes expected to be published in early June 2026.

Follow-up to recommendations on NHRIs and relevant developments

The recommendations of the SCA for Slovenia from December 2020 refer to the procedure for selecting and appointing the Ombudsman and deputies, the financial autonomy of the institution, and competence to encourage ratification or accession to human rights treaties.

The need for transparent and merit-based proceedings for the

selection and appointment of a new Ombudsperson

While all international and European standards provide the need for a transparency of merit-based proceedings for selecting a new Ombudsperson, who is also the head of the NHRI, the Ombudsman provides herein some comments on the selection procedure. The selection procedure started within the prescribed public call by the President of the Republic in accordance with the Human Rights Ombudsman Act in August 2024. Yet, the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, which also serves as Slovenia's National Human Rights Institution with A-status under the Paris Principles and as the National Preventive Mechanism, has remained without an appointed head of institution – the Human Rights Ombudsman – from 24 February 2025 until 3 February 2026, when Dr. Simona Drenik Bavdek, former Assistant Head of the Center for Human Rights at the Slovenian Human Rights Ombudsman and ENNHRI Board Member, was appointed for a position of a new Human Rights Ombudswoman, with 62 votes out of 90 in the National Assembly. Election of the Ombudsman by the National Assembly requires a constitutional majority, namely a two-thirds majority of all Members of Parliament. It is of critical importance that the institution was provided with a head vested with full powers, as this is essential for safeguarding and further strengthening its independence, authority and professional credibility.

Notwithstanding this almost a yearlong institutional vacancy, the Ombudsman's Office demonstrated a high degree of institutional resilience during this eleven-month period by continuing to discharge all its core statutory functions, including the examination of individual complaints and engagement in international alternative reporting. Nevertheless, the prolonged failure to appoint the head of the institution was without precedent in Slovenia and reflected an insufficient level of political awareness of the constitutional role and importance of the Ombudsman as a key component of the system of checks and balances and of the protection of human rights. Following an initial unsuccessful public call for applications in August 2024 for the position of Human Rights Ombudsman, which attracted fourteen candidates, and the subsequent failure of the President of the Republic's own nominee to secure the required parliamentary support in June 2025, a second public call was launched in October 2025, to which sixteen candidates applied. After consultations with parliamentary political groups, on 7 January 2026, the President of the Republic proposed to the National Assembly a candidate, proposed by a former President of the Slovenian Constitutional Court and a former Chairman of the International Law Commission, a member of Slovenian Academy of Science and Art and some other eminent experts, who was employed at the Ombudsman's Office and who also serves as a member of the Board of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI).

On financial autonomy

Regarding the SCA recommendation on financial independence of the Slovenian NHRI, the recommendation on ensuring requisite safeguards for budgetary autonomy of the independent bodies was formally implemented through the adoption of the Amendments to Public Finance Act in late June 2023 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 67/2023), also based on the Constitutional Court Decision (decision No. U-I-474/18 of 10 December 2020, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 195/2020) and has been respected in the process of the adoption of the budget of the Ombudsman for 2025. No other legislative changes in response to the SCA recommendations have been adopted to date. However, the Ministry of Justice has initiated procedures to prepare the necessary legislative amendments.

With regard to financial resources, the budget allocated to the Ombudsman is generally in line with the institution's expressed needs. However, the Ombudsman has underlined that, should additional statutory mandates be entrusted to the institution – including the functions of Ombudsperson for Children, independent monitoring under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the role of Independent National Rapporteur on combating trafficking in human beings, and independent monitoring of the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum – this must be accompanied by corresponding increases in budgetary allocations and staffing levels. For a number of years, the Ombudsman has consistently advocated for the establishment and/or strengthening of these oversight and monitoring mechanisms in Slovenia in accordance with applicable international standards and treaty obligations.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman encountered no obstacles in accessing information required for the performance of its mandate. Such access is expressly guaranteed under Article 6 of the Human Rights Ombudsman Act.

Failure to address the recommendation on the competence to encourage ratification or accession to human rights treaties

It is worrying that the above-mentioned legislative proposal has failed to address the SCA recommendation on the lack of specific legal grounds on the competence to encourage ratification or accession to human rights treaties. The Ombudsman supports this recommendation and proposed in its contribution during public consultations to adequately implement such recommendation. In practice, the Ombudsman regularly (more or less successfully) calls for ratification or accession to human rights treaties, i.e. for many years the Ombudsman has pleaded for ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OPICESCR), which Slovenia has not yet ratified and the responsible Ministries make several unsubstantiated arguments and excuses – while Slovenia ratified all other individual complaint mechanisms under other human rights treaties.

The Ombudsman also called in November 2025 that the Government lifts the reservations to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Regulatory framework and mandates

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia carries out the mandates of NHRI, Ombuds institution, and National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

The Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Slovenia of the European Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report draws attention to the proposed legislative amendments, which aimed to extend the competence of the Human Rights Ombudsperson. No further developments have occurred in this field, however the Ombudsman expects to continue the proceedings later in 2026, in particular regarding additional competences in the field of public services, further improvements on the selection procedures (i.e. one prolonged mandate in line with Venice Principles, the continuation of a mandate of the Ombudsperson until a new head of institution is elected and takes office, higher transparency of proceedings) and new mandates (CRPD, anti-trafficking, migration monitoring, Ombudsperson for Children, EU Funds). With such amendments, a system of checks and balances would further be strengthened, providing specific mandates to monitor human rights compliance with constitutional, European, and international standards.

NHRI structural challenges, threats and resilience

Lack of adequate follow up to NHRI recommendations

In presenting an Annual Report (available in full Slovene version and in English Summary) to the National Assembly, the Human Rights Ombudsman assessed that more than 100 previously issued recommendations remain unimplemented yet still relevant, having not been acted upon by the National Assembly, the Government, or other public authorities. Some of these recommendations have been reiterated for several years, which is particularly concerning. The Ombudsman expressed special concern regarding a number of recommendations that have been rejected by the Government, most of which relate to the rights of various vulnerable groups.

In 2025, the Ombudsman handled more than 6,500 cases, representing a 3.64 per cent increase compared to 2024, including 3,681 individual complaints. Among 207 substantiated complaints, the Ombudsman identified 238 violations of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and other irregularities. In addition, there were 147 cases in the field of child advocacy, in which no violations are formally determined but which are nevertheless treated as substantiated complaints.

Verbal attacks against the NHRI

In early 2025, a *citizens' legislative proposal* was launched arguing that the Human Rights Ombudsman was ineffective and an unnecessary public expense — even suggesting its *abolition*. The proposal claimed that repeated warnings and calls for systemic reform by the Ombudsman were like *"Sisyphean work"* and therefore the institution was redundant. However, the Ministry of Justice responded in March 2025 that the Ombudsman's existence is mandated by the Slovenian Constitution (Article 159), making abolition inappropriate.

Prolonged vacancy in institutional leadership

For a long period, the institution operated without a head with a full mandate because the Slovenian National Assembly failed to elect the new Ombudsman after the previous mandate ended. This created *institutional uncertainty* and weakened the institution's authority and operational effectiveness. Political divisions — especially lack of sufficient parliamentary support across parties — delayed the appointment process. Vocal criticism emerged from the President of the Republic, emphasising that *not appointing a permanent Ombudsman* in a timely manner could *damage Slovenia's international reputation* and potentially affect its accreditation status with global human rights networks (such as the Paris Principles "A" status accreditation).

Independent analyses and contributions from human rights networks have noted that extended leadership gaps and insufficient political backing have diminished the Ombudsman's ability to effectively monitor and address systemic human rights issues. Months without a head of office reduce independence in practice and diminish strategic influence in public debates on rights and rule of law.

Overall distrust in independent institutions

While not always directed exclusively at the Ombudsman, there has been a broader context of political polarisation and distrust toward independent oversight bodies in Slovenia. Institutions such as human rights defenders, judges, or the press have faced politically charged rhetoric that can indirectly affect public perceptions of the Ombudsman's role. Global reporting on attacks on independent institutions and political pressures in Slovenia provides context here, though not exclusively focused on the Ombudsman. Further, during the 2026 pre-general election period, the need for Anti-Corruption Commission, Equality Body and other independent oversight institutions has been expressed, also referring on the need to review the mandates of the Ombudsman in this context.

In summary, over the past year, the Ombudsman has faced a range of institutional threats and political headwinds: a push to abolish the institution altogether on grounds of perceived inefficiency, despite constitutional

protections, long delays and political resistance in appointing a fully mandated Ombudsman, weakening the institution's effectiveness and credibility, warnings from state leadership about reputational harm and risks to international accreditation due to governance gaps, reduced influence and capacity from operating under prolonged leadership uncertainty; a difficult political environment that can undermine independent oversight and respect for the rule of law more widely.

NHRI's recommendations to national authorities and regional authorities

The Human Rights Ombudsman recommends to:

1. Ensure timely, transparent and depoliticised appointment procedures, in line with the Constitution, the Paris and the Venice Principles.
2. Strengthen institutional resilience through adequate financial, human and technical resources, constructive cooperation and safeguards, including against political pressure.
3. Public authorities should engage in structured and constructive follow-up to the Ombudsman's recommendations, including at regional and local levels, thereby enhancing the practical impact of its work and strengthening the overall human rights protection system.

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Human rights defenders and civil society space

Challenges for HRDs and restrictions to civic space

Overall, the enabling environment for civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRDs) in Slovenia can be assessed as **open, with recurring pressure points**, rather than systematically restricted. Over the last year, the institution has observed a **more polarised public debate** and a **rise in hostile rhetoric and online harassment** directed at HRDs and CSOs, which can contribute to a chilling effect on participation. While civic space remains broadly functional, these developments are early warning signs of **narrowing space in practice**, particularly for defenders working on sensitive issues and those visible in public debate. The monitoring of Ombudsman indicates that pressure is most often expressed through **verbal attacks, online harassment, intimidation linked to protests, and legal pressure**

(including SLAPP-type dynamics) rather than through systematic bans or closure of civic space. This pattern is consistent with broader European concerns about growing intimidation and legal harassment affecting HRDs and watchdog actors.

Structural challenges for CSOs and HRDs

CSOs and HRDs report foreign or international sources. These barriers can reduce sustainability and independence, particularly for smaller organisations and for advocacy-focused work. Stakeholders also frequently highlight timely, meaningful, and inclusive consultation, including short deadlines, limited feedback loops, and insufficient justification when input is not incorporated. This weakens trust and reduces effective participation.

The Ombudsman notes recurring concerns that the **application of rules governing public assembly and protest** may, in certain contexts, have a discouraging effect (e.g., perceived intimidation, overly restrictive practice, or disproportionate responses).

Threats to CSOs and HRDs

The Ombudsman has identified **verbal attacks** and **online harassment** directed at CSOs and HRDs, including smear-type rhetoric and coordinated hostile commentary, largely originating from **non-state actors**, though sometimes amplified in broader political/polarised debates, also by representatives of political parties. Some of the cases are for example well documented also at CoE's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists. In addition, HRDs report **intimidation or harassment linked to protests**, including before/during/after assemblies, which may deter participation (the Ombudsman most thoroughly reported on this on pp. 310-317 of the Annual Report for 2022).

The Ombudsman also observes **legal pressure and SLAPP-type patterns**, particularly affecting journalists and watchdog actors. A recent publicly documented example includes multiple civil lawsuits against a media outlet in Slovenia that international organisations characterised as SLAPP lawsuits. The Anti-SLAPP Act entered into force on 25 February 2026, which provides safeguards as well as the establishment of a focal point within the Ministry of Justice.

Groups at heightened risk of threats

Groups at heightened risk include defenders working on anti-corruption, accountability, migration, minority rights, including Roma, environmental issues, gender equality, and those with high public visibility (including local-level activists).

Threats against CSOs and HRDs working on gender equality and reproductive rights

In recent years, public debate surrounding civic activism has also been shaped by the experience of high-profile civil society actors, including the Institute 8 March and its director, Nika Kovač. The "My Voice, My Choice" civic campaign at the global and in particular the EU level, which addressed reproductive rights and mobilised broad public participation, has been accompanied by strong polarised reactions in public discourse. While Slovenia maintains an overall open civic space, prominent activists associated with this and similar campaigns have been exposed to intense online harassment, hostile rhetoric, and coordinated smear-type narratives, primarily by non-state actors, but also some politicians, in digital spaces. Such patterns illustrate how highly visible human rights advocacy — particularly on issues related to gender equality and reproductive rights — may attract disproportionate levels of online abuse and personal attacks. A cumulative effect of sustained online harassment and reputational attacks may create a chilling effect, discourage participation, and disproportionately affect women human rights defenders.

Threats against CSOs working on the protection of Roma rights

Other CSOs, who have actively engaged in advocacy related to the protection of Roma rights, including access to housing, water, non-discrimination, and equal treatment before public authorities have also faced on-line harassment. In certain instances, such advocacy has triggered strong public and political reactions, including verbal attacks and online hostility directed at organisations and individual representatives. Advocacy on Roma rights tends to generate strongly polarised responses and may expose defenders to reputational pressure and hostile narratives. While these reactions have not generally taken the form of systematic physical violence, the intensity of rhetoric and online harassment illustrates how organisations working on minority rights may face heightened risks in public discourse.

Moreover, the Ombudsman and the Ombudswoman in person has also been subject to criticism in connection with the filing of a request for constitutional review of the Act on emergency measures to ensure public security (ZNUZJV), commonly referred to in public debate as the "Šutar law", Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 93/25), an omnibus law, which presents a legislative amendments to several laws, as of 13 February 2026. The National Assembly adopted in November 2025 the ZNUZJV, which was introduced and fast-tracked in the wake of the death of Aleš Šutar in Novo mesto (in South –East Slovenia), an incident widely reported as involving a member of the Roma community and followed by heightened public tension. The Ombudsman exercised its constitutional competence to initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court, where concerns were identified regarding compatibility with constitutional guarantees and human rights

standards. Following the submission of the constitutional review request, the institution and its leadership were exposed to public criticism and accusations questioning the necessity and motives of such action. While institutional criticism is a legitimate part of democratic debate, the framing of oversight actions as politically motivated may contribute to reputational pressure on independent institutions and may indirectly affect public perceptions of their role. This example illustrates the broader importance of safeguarding the functional independence of ombuds and national human rights institutions when they exercise their constitutional mandate, including the power to initiate constitutional review of legislation.

Attacks against the LGBTQ+ defenders

The Ombudsman further observes that the online harassment may present gendered characteristics (sexualised abuse, threats, and targeting based on gender expression), which can disproportionately affect women HRDs and LGBTQ+ defenders, even when physical attacks are not prevalent. In Maribor, there has occurred an incident of the bookstore, from which rainbow flag was stolen, however in January 2026 the criminal proceedings against the culprit has been stopped, due to a decriminalisation of act of petty theft and its reclassification as a minor offence in ZNUZJV.

Online harassment due to religious beliefs

The online harassment also affect persons with religious beliefs (Catholics, Muslims, and Jews etc.) or those of other political views, while desecration of religious places has been occurring sporadically and the occurrences of anti-Semitism following the Israeli attack on Gaza in August 2025 had also been reported.

National frameworks to support and protect HRDs and CSOs

The most important gaps in the protection of HRDs nationally

The mentioned developments underline the need of effective responses to online harassment and threats, gender-sensitive analysis of risks faced by female HRDs, public recognition by authorities of the legitimacy of human rights advocacy, and safeguards against the misuse of legal or reputational pressure to silence civic engagement.

Activities of NHRIs to support civil society space and human rights defenders (HRDs)

The Human Rights Ombudsman has taken several initiatives to **promote** civil society space and HRDs, such as joint meetings and/or roundtables, training for

national authorities or capacity building for HRDs. An example of this was the occasion in January 2025 on which the Human Rights Centre at the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia organised an event with experts from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where key standards and good practices for establishing independent monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were discussed. In 2025, the Ombudsman institution also issued a handbook on civil society participation in the Universal Periodic Review.

The most important needs for the Human Rights Ombudsman to advance the protection of HRDs nationally

To advance the protection of human rights defenders (HRDs) nationally, the Ombudsman identifies the following key needs:

While general legal safeguards exist, there is no structured, practical protection pathway for HRDs facing harassment or intimidation. A coordinated referral mechanism – including rapid response, risk assessment, and cooperation between relevant authorities – would significantly enhance preventive protection.

The growing use of legal pressure (including SLAPP-type practices) and online harassment requires specialised expertise and institutional capacity. This includes legal analysis, monitoring of patterns of abusive litigation, engagement with judicial actors, and stronger responses to digital threats and gender-based online abuse.

To effectively protect HRDs, the NHRI must operate in a stable environment with full respect for its constitutional mandate. Timely and systematic follow-up by authorities to NHRI recommendations is essential to ensure that civic space concerns are addressed at a structural level.

NHRI’s recommendations to national and regional authorities

The Human Rights Ombudsman recommends:

1. Establishing effective safeguards against harassment and abusive litigation: National authorities should ensure the effective implementation of emerging European anti-SLAPP standards and provide clear procedural safeguards against abusive legal actions that may silence public participation. Judicial actors should receive guidance and training to identify and dismiss manifestly unfounded or strategic lawsuits at an early stage. At European level, consistent monitoring and harmonised implementation of anti-SLAPP frameworks across Member

States remain essential.
2. Strengthening enabling conditions for meaningful civic participation: National authorities should guarantee transparent, inclusive, and timely public consultation processes at all levels of governance. Public authorities should actively recognise the legitimacy of human rights advocacy and refrain from rhetoric that may delegitimise civil society actors, NHRIs and HRDs. European actors should continue promoting minimum standards for civic participation and support Member States in aligning domestic practice with international human rights obligations.
3. Developing gender-sensitive and risk-based protection approaches: Both national and European actors should acknowledge the specific risks faced by women HRDs, LGBTQ+ defenders, minority rights advocates, and those working on politically sensitive issues. Protection responses should integrate gender-sensitive analysis, digital safety support, and access to remedies. At European level, continued cooperation between NHRIs, EU institutions, the Council of Europe, and civil society networks is crucial to address cross-border trends affecting civic space and to reinforce a common standard of protection.

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Democracy - checks and balances, disinformation, and law-making processes

Disinformation

Based on the human rights monitoring and reporting, the Human Rights Ombudsman has warned that the spread of disinformation can significantly impact human rights, including the right to hold opinions without interference, freedom of expression, and to privacy, especially in relation to elections.

Law-making processes

Based on the monitoring of legislative developments in 2025 and early 2026, several structural and practical challenges continue to affect the quality, inclusiveness and human-rights compliance of the law-making process in Slovenia.

Wide use of fast-track and emergency procedures

The year 2025 was marked by the adoption of several politically and socially sensitive laws under urgent or accelerated procedures. In particular, following the tragic events in Novo mesto, the ZNUZJV was adopted in few days with expanded police powers and amendments across several areas of criminal, judicial and social legislation (Slovenija leta 2025: od plačne in pokojninske reforme do novomeške tragedije - RTV SLO). The public debate surrounding this legislation reflected a broader pattern: in situations of heightened public pressure, there is a tendency to prioritise rapid legislative response with securitisation effect. While urgent procedures are foreseen in the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, their broader or politically driven use can limit thorough deliberation, expert input, and meaningful public participation. The President of the National Assembly herself acknowledged the high number of extraordinary sessions of the National Assembly over the entire mandate (during 2022-2026, there were 127 extraordinary session and 38 regular ones, while during the former mandate, which included covid-19 crises there had been 99 extraordinary sessions of the National Assembly) and discussed the frequent use of urgent procedures, noting that decisions on urgency are political in nature, and may be initiated by the Government or by the opposition - when a proper request is submitted and all formal conditions were met, both the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure stipulate that an extraordinary session must be convened within 15 days. (See: Interview with Urška Klakočar Zupančič, Dnevnik – Objektiv, 31. 12. 2025). From a human rights perspective, extensive reliance on fast-track procedures increases the risk that constitutional or rights-related concerns are insufficiently examined before adoption.

Limited time for consultations and meaningful participation

Monitoring of legislative processes indicates that consultation periods are often short, particularly for urgent or politically sensitive laws. Although formal consultation mechanisms exist, the practical timeframe frequently limits meaningful engagement by civil society, independent institutions and affected communities. This was particularly visible in legislation linked to security, social policy, and health system reforms during 2025. Rapid legislative cycles reduce opportunities for structured dialogue and evidence-based contributions. Such constraints may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, like in a case of the ZNUZJV, including Roma communities (in the context of security-related debates in South-East Slovenia), as well as groups directly affected by social and health legislation.

Lack of structured mechanisms for targeted participation

Although Slovenia provides general public consultation mechanisms, there is no sufficiently institutionalised system to ensure **systematic, targeted participation** of vulnerable groups in law-making. Participation often depends on ad hoc initiatives rather than clearly structured inclusion frameworks. In

contexts where legislation directly affects minorities (e.g., Roma communities in connection with security debates following the Novo mesto tragedy, the public discourse has been highly polarised. In such circumstances, vulnerable groups may face barriers to meaningful participation due to fear of stigmatisation or hostile public narratives. Similarly, debates on health system reform and “end-of-life” legislation (referendum) have demonstrated how socially sensitive issues can polarise public discourse, potentially discouraging affected groups.

Political polarisation affecting deliberative quality

A highly polarised parliamentary and political environment may weaken substantive deliberation and shift focus toward political confrontation rather than rights-based analysis and constitutional democracy. This context may indirectly affect the quality of human rights scrutiny during the legislative process, particularly where legislation concerns sensitive areas such as minority rights, criminal justice, social protection, or healthcare.

NHRI’s recommendations to national and regional authorities

The Human Rights Ombudsman recommends:

1. To national authorities since 2025 that the Government and its ministries, as the competent authorities for drafting legislation and regulations, should act transparently and in accordance with the principles of good governance during the drafting process. This includes reasonably involving individuals and entities to whom the regulation or draft recommendation directly applies, prior to the public consultation phase, and adhering to international and national standards governing public participation in the legislative process.
2. The human rights impact assessment should be obligatory and systematically integrated into the legislative process.
3. National authorities should limit the use of urgent legislative procedures to strictly justified cases, ensure adequate time for public consultation, including targeted engagement with vulnerable groups.

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Other challenges to the rule of law and human

rights

Delay in court and enforcement proceedings

The Ombudsman continues to receive a significant number of complaints concerning the excessive length of court and enforcement proceedings. Although certain improvements have been noted in statistical terms, individual cases still reveal prolonged proceedings that undermine the right to a trial within a reasonable time, and legal certainty. Delays are particularly problematic in enforcement procedures, where successful litigants may face long waiting periods before final execution of judgments. The Ombudsman addressed individual complaints, issued recommendations to courts and the Ministry of Justice, and reiterated the need for systemic measures to improve efficiency, including better case management and adequate staffing.

In several cases, the Ombudsman again identified delays or shortcomings in the implementation of Constitutional Court decisions or other binding judgments. Such delays may weaken legal certainty and public trust in the rule of law. The Ombudsman called upon competent authorities to ensure timely and full implementation of judicial decisions and monitored follow-up actions.

Access to justice for socially vulnerable individuals

Challenges remain also regarding effective access to justice, particularly for socially vulnerable individuals. Issues include the complexity of procedures, difficulties in accessing free legal aid, and the financial burden of court costs. The Ombudsman also noted concerns regarding the predictability and clarity of certain procedural rules. The Ombudsman intervened in individual cases, issued recommendations aimed at improving clarity and proportionality in procedural rules, and emphasised the need to strengthen access to free legal aid mechanisms.

The above mentioned ZNUZJV introduced a series of security-oriented measures, including, the possibility to enforce certain outstanding obligations also against monetary social assistance. Article 8 temporarily derogates from the general rule that cash social assistance is exempt from tax enforcement, allowing enforcement against (i.e., the garnishment/seizure of) cash social assistance for the purpose of collecting specific categories of unpaid obligations. Concretely, Article 8 provides that—for the collection of “other monetary non-tax obligations” that the tax authority collects under misdemeanour-enforcement rules—cash social assistance is not exempt from enforcement where the individual has overdue unpaid obligations and at least three enforcement proposals were submitted within the two years prior to the issuance of the enforcement decision. The Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia began issuing enforcement decisions under ZNUZJV in

January 2026. In its 22 January 2026 notice, the Government reported that between 8 January 2026 and 22 January 2026, 1,674 enforcement decisions were issued “with the possibility of garnishment of cash social assistance,” covering a total claimed amount (including enforcement costs) of EUR 495,967.87. A later Government update stated that more than 8,500 persons were recorded as having at least two unpaid misdemeanour-related obligations and would become eligible for enforcement against social assistance if a third enforcement trigger occurred within the relevant two-year period, illustrating the breadth of the pool potentially exposed to Article 8.

On 13 February 2026, the Ombudsman lodged a request before the Constitutional Court seeking constitutional review and temporary suspension of Article 8 of the Act, which enables enforcement against monetary social assistance. The Ombudsman expressed serious concern regarding enforcement against subsistence-level and noted the absence of empirical evidence demonstrating that such measures effectively enhance public safety. The Ombudsman further underlined that no prior human rights impact assessment of the adopted legislation had been conducted.

Moreover, in January 2026 the Roma settlement Brezje-Žabjak and a particular part of Ljubljana (so-called Metelkova area) were formally designated as “security-risk area”, thereby institutionalising a territorial dimension of securitisation. The law includes several other provisions where a question of constitutionality and compliance with human rights standards may occur.

NHRI’s recommendations to national and regional authorities

The Human Rights Ombudsman recommends that:

1. National authorities should adopt structural measures to reduce the length of judicial and enforcement proceedings as well as ensure adequate human and financial resources for courts and enforcement bodies.
2. Authorities should ensure timely execution of Constitutional Court decisions and other binding judgments, establish clear monitoring mechanisms for implementation and avoid legislative or administrative actions that may undermine the authority of judicial decisions. Full respect for final court rulings is essential to maintaining legal certainty and trust in democratic institutions.

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