

EU Governance Assessment (EUGA)

Methodological memorandum — Time-series coverage, indicator selection, the signal model, and the country dashboard

1. Introduction and problem statement

The EU Governance Assessment (EUGA) is a composite score, built from three components — democracy and participation, rule of law, and fundamental rights and equality — that measures how closely an EU member state's governance aligns with the values named in Article 2 TEU. This memorandum sets out, in full and on a stand-alone basis, how the EUGA is constructed: which indicators are used and why, how the three components are combined and weighted, how far back in time the series can reliably extend, how a citizen-facing early-warning signal is derived from the score, and how that score and signal are translated into the interactive country dashboard that accompanies this document. The accompanying calculation model is set out in the file EUGA_calculation_model.xlsx.

2. Determining time-series coverage

The usable time series for any component is bounded by the youngest of the sources feeding into it — a component cannot report a year for which its source has not yet published data. This is a central design criterion for the EUGA. The table below sets out, for each candidate source, the first available year.

Component	Source	Type	First usable year	Used in the EUGA?
1. Democracy & participation	V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index	De facto	1900 (broad coverage from 1970–1990)	Yes — not the binding constraint
1. Democracy & participation	Freedom House, Freedom in the World	De facto	1972	Yes — not the binding constraint
2. Rule of law	World Justice Project Rule of Law Index	De facto	2013 (2012–13 was published as a combined edition; 2013 is the first year reported on a standalone, comparable basis)	Yes — sets the series start
2. Rule of law	EU Rule of Law Report (European Commission)	De jure	2020 (first edition 30 Sept. 2020)	No — coverage too short
3. Fundamental rights & equality	FRA Fundamental Rights Survey	De facto, EU-specific	2019 (irregular waves)	No — coverage too short and irregular

Table 1. First available year per candidate source, and whether it is used in the EUGA.

The two most EU-specific, de jure-oriented sources — the EU Rule of Law Report and the FRA Fundamental Rights Survey — are not used in the EUGA. Built exclusively from those two sources, the series would be reduced to 2019–2020, yielding five to six annual observations, which is insufficient for meaningful trend analysis and does not meet the aim of tracking the EUGA score's development over a longer period; the FRA Survey is, in addition, published in irregular waves rather than annually.

The EUGA is instead built from three globally consistent, methodologically transparent indices — V-Dem, the World Justice Project, and Freedom House — that together cover all EU member states on a comparable, annual basis. Of these three, the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index is the binding constraint: it is the youngest of

the three sources actually used, and its first standalone, comparable year is 2013. This sets 2013 as the start of the EUGA series; V-Dem and Freedom House both extend considerably further back, but 2013 is the earliest year for which all three sources needed for the composite score are available.

3. Indicator selection

The following indicators are used, one per component.

Component	Source used	Rationale
1. Democracy & participation	V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index	Longest coverage, most detailed conceptual grounding (both electoral and liberal), and no overlap with C2/C3.
2. Rule of law	World Justice Project Rule of Law Index — excl. 'Fundamental Rights'	Consistent, comparable coverage of all member states from 2013 onward. The 'Fundamental Rights' factor is excluded here and assigned to Component 3 to avoid double-counting.
3. Fundamental rights & equality	Freedom House Civil Liberties + WJP factor 'Fundamental Rights'	Civil Liberties covers freedom of expression, association and personal freedom from 2003 (subcategory scores from 2006), combined with the WJP's own Fundamental Rights factor.

Table 2. Indicator selection per component.

3.1 Rationale per choice

- The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index is preferred over Freedom House Political Rights as the primary source for Component 1, partly because the Political Rights Index conceptually overlaps almost entirely with the V-Dem LDI (electoral process, pluralism, functioning of government), and including it in another component would result in double-counting.
- The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index is preferred over V-Dem's rule-of-law indicators because of its closer alignment with a practice-oriented, implementation-focused measurement of the rule of law, complementing the more institutional-legal focus of the EU Rule of Law Report. The WJP index consists of eight sub-factors; the 'Fundamental Rights' factor is assigned to Component 3 for overlap reasons rather than remaining in the Component 2 aggregate.
- For the fundamental-rights component, the Freedom House Civil Liberties Index is used rather than the Political Rights Index: Civil Liberties covers freedom of expression, freedom of association and personal autonomy, and is conceptually largely complementary to (rather than overlapping with) Component 1. One Civil Liberties subcategory does itself concern 'rule of law', which overlaps with Component 2; from the 2006 edition onward this can be corrected using the available subcategory scores.
- The WJP sub-factor 'Absence of Corruption' is made separately visible within Component 2 (an informative column, not a separate weight) so that anti-corruption performance — also captured by the WGI Control of Corruption indicator — does not disappear within the composite rule-of-law figure, without requiring a new source or time-series constraint.
- The WGI itself is not used as a core source in any of the three components: several WGI components are themselves partly constructed from V-Dem and Freedom House data, and using the WGI directly would introduce circularity with sources already used elsewhere in the EUGA.

3.2 Remaining points of overlap

Two forms of conceptual overlap warrant ongoing attention and should be tested empirically once actual source data is available:

- Freedom House Civil Liberties contains the subcategory 'Rule of Law', which touches on Component 2. A correlation test between the final Component 2 and Component 3 scores is recommended; a coefficient above roughly 0.8 would indicate insufficient discriminant validity.
- Both the WJP 'Fundamental Rights' factor and the Freedom House Civil Liberties Index contribute to Component 3; both sources are independently collected (WJP via population and expert surveys, Freedom House via desk research by regional analysts), which limits but does not fully eliminate the risk of mechanical double-counting.

4. Weighting and sensitivity

Equal weighting (1/3 per component) is used as the default, in line with the absence of a hierarchy among the values named in Article 2 TEU. The calculation model contains a separate sheet in which three alternative weighting scenarios (emphasis on rule of law, emphasis on democracy, emphasis on fundamental rights) are calculated, so that the sensitivity of the final score to the chosen weighting is made transparent and can be reported separately.

5. Remaining limitations

- The EUGA series starts in 2013 and can therefore make no statements about the period of the major enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007.
- The fundamental-rights component relies on a proxy (Freedom House Civil Liberties plus the WJP Fundamental Rights factor) rather than a dedicated EU fundamental-rights measurement; this should be stated explicitly whenever results are published.
- The EUGA remains primarily a measurement of observed or reported governance outcomes, not of the formal legal obligation itself; this distinction is relevant when interpreting the results.

6. Reference to the calculation model

The full calculation structure — including the source-coverage table, the sensitivity analysis and the signal dashboard — is set out in EUGA_calculation_model.xlsx. The EUGA_CoreSeries sheet is the only input point: raw source data is entered here — the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index directly, the eight WJP factor scores exactly as published, and the Freedom House Civil Liberties rating on its original 1–7 scale — after which the component scores C1/C2/C3 and the EUGA score are calculated automatically. The EUGA_CoreSeries sheet contains actual figures for all 27 member states, reporting years 2013–2025 (2017 excluded due to a combined WJP 2017–18 edition, processed under 2018); full source attribution is set out in the Pilot_Sources sheet, including Our World in Data as an intermediary source for the V-Dem and Freedom House series. The Trend view and Signal dashboard sheets are fully formula-linked to EUGA_CoreSeries and require no separate input.

7. Citizen signalling function: from EUGA score to a transparent early-warning signal

This chapter develops a signalling function that translates the EUGA score into a signal that is understandable to citizens and objectively defensible, for use when boundaries are at risk of being crossed. The aim is not to replace or automate a political decision-making process, but to take that process out of the 'black box': to give citizens a transparent, reproducible and methodologically grounded basis for asking whether the EU's existing instruments (Parliament, Commission, Council/European Council) might have grounds to act. The signal is explicitly not a legal judgment and not a finding within the meaning of Article 7 TEU — it is a communication and transparency instrument that leaves the existing, underlying division of competences untouched.

7.1 Positioning relative to existing instruments

The Union has a mechanism for addressing breaches of the values named in Article 2 TEU, with Article 7 TEU as its most severe instrument: a determination of a 'clear risk' by the Council (paragraph 1, four-fifths majority) or of a 'serious and persistent breach' by the European Council (paragraph 2, unanimity excluding the member state concerned), followed by a Council decision to suspend rights. The Commission and Parliament also have other instruments at their disposal, such as infringement procedures and the budget conditionality mechanism. These powers remain entirely with the institutions concerned. EUGA signalling operates alongside this framework, not within it: it offers citizens a source of information that is developed independently of political decision-making and can, if desired, support that decision-making without pre-empting it.

7.2 Design principles for a citizen-facing signal

- **Signal, not judgment:** the model expresses a measurable, methodologically grounded distance from a predetermined reference value — not whether a breach of Article 2 TEU has occurred. The latter remains the exclusive preserve of the competent EU institutions.
- **Reproducibility over precision:** for a signal that citizens must be able to trust, it matters more that every citizen can recalculate it themselves than that the outcome is 'correct' to the decimal point. All source data, formulas and assumptions therefore remain fully accessible (see the calculation model).
- **Component-specific:** the lowest-scoring component is used for signalling (rather than the weighted EUGA total score), because a serious decline in one EU value should not be masked by a good score on another.
- **Layered signalling with visible uncertainty:** a lighter 'attention signal' and a heavier 'warning signal', each with an explicit uncertainty margin, so that the distinction between a robust outcome and a borderline one remains visible to the citizen rather than being hidden behind a single number.
- **Symmetrical application:** the signalling model is applied to all member states in advance and in an identical manner, regardless of size, region or current political events, to avoid any impression of selective application.

7.3 Signal model (calibrated on the Polish precedent)

Define, for member state i in year t : $EUGA_min(i,t) = \min(C1(i,t), C2(i,t), C3(i,t))$ — the lowest-scoring of the three components.

Signal level	Criterion (0–1 scale)	Meaning for citizens	Explicitly not
No signal	$EUGA_min \geq 0.60$, or below threshold but within the uncertainty margin	No indication of a development requiring attention	—
Attention signal	$EUGA_min < 0.60$ for 2 consecutive years, outside the margin, OR a decline of more than 0.15 points within 3 years	A development worth following, on which citizens can inform themselves via the EU's instruments	No determination of a 'clear risk' (Art. 7(1) TEU)
Warning signal	$EUGA_min < 0.60$ for at least 3 consecutive years, outside the margin	A sustained development that, by objectified standards, could give grounds for action within the EU's existing instruments	No determination of a 'serious and persistent breach' (Art. 7(2) TEU)

Table 3. Signal model.

The threshold is set at 0.60, on the empirical grounding set out in section 7.3.1.

7.3.1 Empirical grounding of the threshold: the Polish precedent

The threshold of 0.60 was not chosen arbitrarily, but is derived directly from the only direct EU precedent for which both the V-Dem score and the exact date of EU action are known.

According to the V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018 (Table 1.1, 'Main Advancers and Backsliders, Past Two Years'), Poland's Liberal Democracy Index fell from 0.79 in 2015 to 0.60 in 2017 — a decline of 0.19 points in two years, one of the steepest declines worldwide in that period. The European Commission triggered Article 7(1) TEU against Poland on 20 December 2017 — almost exactly the moment at which V-Dem recorded this score of 0.60. A threshold of 0.60 therefore marks this precedent at the historically correct moment, unlike 0.50 (which would not have flagged Poland at that time) or 0.65–0.70 (which would signal considerably earlier and more broadly than the EU itself acted).

For Hungary, an equally precisely documented figure for the trigger moment (12 September 2018) is not available, but academic research (Frontiers in Political Science, 2022, based on V-Dem data) confirms that Hungary's LDI score in 2018 already stood below 0.40 — well below the proposed threshold of 0.60, with a considerable margin.

An important caveat: the Polish precedent shows that EU action at the time was associated at least as strongly with the speed of decline (–0.19 points in two years) as with the absolute level. The threshold of 0.60 should therefore be explicitly combined with — not substituted for — the decline route in section 7.3 ('a decline of more than 0.15 points within 3 years'), since it was precisely that route that would already have flagged the Polish case before any absolute level was reached.

Applied to the full V-Dem ranking table for 2024 (Democracy Report 2025, 15th edition), a threshold of 0.60 on the democracy component alone flags roughly five member states (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovakia) — a considerably smaller and more defensible group than at 0.65 (nine member states) or 0.70 (ten member states).

7.3.2 Justification of the chosen parameters

This section consolidates the rationale for every numerical choice in the signal model, so that it is always possible to trace why a member state is flagged as drifting toward suboptimal compliance with the obligations named in Article 2 TEU — and why not earlier or later.

Parameter	Value chosen	Rationale
Weighting of C1/C2/C3	1/3 each (equal)	Article 2 TEU establishes no hierarchy among the values listed; equal weighting is the most defensible default in the absence of an identifiable ranking.
Aggregation for signalling	EUGA_min (lowest component)	Prevents a high score on one value from masking a serious decline on another.
Threshold value	0.60	Empirically derived from the Polish precedent (7.3.1).
Persistence — Attention signal	2 consecutive years below threshold	Filters out a single, potentially incidental observation; reflects 'persistent' in Art. 7(2) TEU.
Persistence — Warning signal	3 consecutive years below threshold	One year stricter than the Attention signal, as a rough analogy for the distinction between paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 7.
Decline alternative	> 0.15-point drop within 3 years	Derived from the Polish precedent (–0.19 points in 2 years), deliberately set with margin.
Uncertainty margin	0.05	A precautionary buffer against measurement noise in expert assessments and surveys.

Table 4. Justification of the chosen parameters.

7.3.3 Limitation: not every parameter is empirically calibrated

In the interest of honesty, it should be stated that not all parameters in the table above rest on the same empirical grounding. The threshold value (0.60) and the decline alternative (0.15/3 years) are derived directly from a concrete, documented precedent. The persistence requirements (2 and 3 years) and the uncertainty margin (0.05), by contrast, are for now based on reasoned judgement — they reflect a plausible interpretation of the text of Article 7 TEU and a general precautionary consideration respectively, but have not been tested against, for example, V-Dem's actually published confidence intervals (V-Dem publishes a 'highest density interval' per score), or against a larger number of historical precedents than the single available Polish case.

7.4 What this signal is and is not

- The signal is a transparency instrument for citizens, not a legal determination and not an accusation; it makes no statement about a member state's guilt or intent.
- The signal does not replace, and does not pre-empt, any power of Parliament, Commission, Council or European Council; every formal step within the existing framework of instruments remains subject to its own applicable procedures and majority requirements.
- The signal should never be published on its own, but always alongside the underlying component scores, the source data and the uncertainty margin, so that citizens can follow the reasoning rather than seeing only the outcome.
- In cases of doubt or borderline outcomes, the lighter signal should be applied; the model is deliberately designed to be conservative in order to avoid overclaiming to citizens.
- The model is applied symmetrically and predetermined across all member states, to safeguard the objectivity and impartiality of the signal.

8. Publication calendar and annual update cycle

Each of the EUGA's three core sources follows a fixed annual publication cycle. Understanding this cycle is necessary to determine at what point in the year the EUGA core series for a given reporting year can be finalised.

Source	Publication month	Reporting period
Freedom House — Civil Liberties (C3, in part)	February	Calendar year $t-1$
V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (C1)	March	Calendar year $t-1$
World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (C2)	Late October	Current year t

Table 5. Publication cycle of the three sources used in the EUGA.

8.1 Binding constraint within the year

The same logic that bounds time-series coverage by the youngest source (chapter 2) also applies within a single calendar year: the EUGA core series for reporting year t can only be finalised once the last of the three core sources for that reporting year becomes available. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index for year t is already published in late October of that same year t , but the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and the Freedom House Civil Liberties score for that same year t are not published until March and February, respectively, of the following year $t+1$.

The last of the three core sources to become available for a given reporting year is therefore V-Dem, in March of year $t+1$. An annual EUGA determination in April of year $t+1$ — that is, more than a year after the reporting year itself has ended — fits best with this publication cycle and avoids a premature determination based on incomplete source coverage.

8.2 Availability of figures for reporting year 2025

Based on this cycle, figures for reporting year 2025 have by now been published for all three core sources: the WJP Rule of Law Index 2025 appeared in late October 2025, the Freedom House edition covering 2025 appeared in February 2026, and the V-Dem edition covering 2025 (dataset v16) appeared in March 2026. The April determination point proposed in section 8.1 has therefore now passed.

The EUGA core series is updated through reporting year 2025 for all 27 member states, and forms the basis for the interactive country dashboard described in chapter 9.

9. The country dashboard: presentation layer

Chapters 1–8 describe the underlying index and signal model. This chapter documents the interactive country dashboard built on top of it — the presentation layer through which a citizen actually consults the EUGA — and explains why this layer is not a cosmetic addition, but a necessary part of fulfilling the purpose set out in chapter 7.

9.1 Why a presentation layer is necessary

A number in a calculation model does not, by itself, monitor anything. The values named in Article 2 TEU only become genuinely monitorable once a citizen can (a) see at a glance which member states currently warrant attention, (b) understand why, in terms that can be verified against primary sources, and (c) track whether a given country's trajectory is improving or worsening over a meaningful period. The country dashboard is designed to fulfil exactly these three functions; every design choice below traces back to one of them.

9.2 Landing page: tiles and comparison mode

The landing page offers two views. The tile view ranks all 26 member states with sufficient data by current concern level (EUGA score band: high concern below 0.60, moderate concern 0.60–0.75, low concern above 0.75), highest concern first, on the view that a citizen's first question is typically 'which countries need attention right now,' not 'which countries appear alphabetically first.' Each tile also shows the change over the last five years, so that a country's current position and its trajectory are both visible without opening the dossier. The comparison (dot-plot) view instead shows every country for a single selected year, which better serves the second common question, 'how does this country compare to its peers in this specific year.' The two views are complementary: one is optimised for triage, the other for cross-country comparison at a fixed point in time.

9.3 Country dossiers

Each of the 26 built-out member states has a four-tab dossier:

- **Trend** — a time series of C1, C2, C3 and the EUGA score, 2013–2025, with the vertical axis dynamically scaled to that country's own data range rather than a fixed 0–1 scale, so that genuine year-on-year movement is visible rather than compressed into a flat-looking line. Hovering over the chart displays exact values for the nearest year.
- **Components** — the current score and the five-year change for each of C1/C2/C3 individually, each with a short, sourced explanatory note, colour-coded to match the component's colour in the trend legend so the connection between chart and text is immediate.
- **Context & developments** — a short, sourced narrative explaining the country's five-year trajectory in qualitative terms, opening with a summary of the numerical change and then setting out the documented developments behind it. Where a relevant development falls after the 2025 measurement year, it is placed in a separate, visually distinct box rather than folded into the main narrative, so that a reader can immediately distinguish what the score reflects from what has happened since.
- **Sources & methodology** — every factual claim in the Context tab is traceable to a listed source, each tagged with a certainty rating (see 9.5) and a one-line description of its nature.

9.4 Precision, rounding, and the display of uncertainty

Composite and component scores are displayed to two decimal places rather than three. This is a deliberate response to the fact that the underlying indices carry their own measurement uncertainty (V-Dem, for example, publishes confidence intervals typically in the order of 0.02–0.04); displaying three decimals invites the reader to treat differences of 0.01–0.02 between countries as meaningful when they are frequently within the margin of the underlying estimate. Five-year change values are, by contrast, displayed to three decimals, because within-country change over time is comparatively more robust than a cross-country comparison at a single point

(systematic bias in a given index tends to carry through across years for the same country and therefore largely cancels out when the difference is taken), and because the magnitude of these changes is frequently in the hundredths, where two-decimal rounding would erase the very signal the dashboard exists to show. The exact three-decimal value for any given year remains available on hover in the trend chart.

Each tile and dossier header also displays a qualitative concern band (High/Moderate/Low concern) ahead of the numeric score, on the view that the qualitative signal is what most users need first and the precise figure is confirmatory detail rather than the primary message.

9.5 Source certainty rubric

Every source cited in a dossier is rated High or Medium certainty, against a fixed rubric applied uniformly across all 26 dossiers:

- High: primary legal or institutional records (laws, court and tribunal rulings, official EU/UN/government documents, official inquiry reports) or a flagship, methodologically transparent comparative index or monitor (V-Dem, Freedom House, WJP, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, EUI-affiliated monitors).
- Medium: news reporting (including investigative journalism), NGO or advocacy statements and reports, think-tank or policy-institute analysis, non-peer-reviewed academic commentary, and reference works.

This distinguishes primary or index-grade sources from credible but secondary or interpretive ones; it is explicitly not a judgement on accuracy — a Medium-rated news report may be entirely accurate, and a High-rated institutional document can still be contested or superseded. The rubric exists to make the nature of each source legible at a glance, not to rank the sources' truthfulness.

9.6 Five-year rather than since-2013 framing

Tiles and dossiers frame change over the preceding five years (2020–2025 for most member states) rather than change since the series began in 2013. A rolling five-year window is used because a 'since 2013' framing would reward or penalise a country for a political situation that may be over a decade old and no longer informative about its present trajectory, whereas a rolling window keeps the dashboard focused on recent, actionable developments. Six member states (Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Ireland) enter the underlying source data only from 2021; for these, the dashboard automatically substitutes 'change since 2021' and labels it as such, so the reader is not shown a five-year figure that does not exist.

10. Why this dashboard serves an essential monitoring function

This chapter states directly why the combination described in chapters 1–9 — a transparent composite index plus a navigable, sourced dashboard — fulfils a role not otherwise met within the existing EU institutional and civil-society landscape.

- It closes the gap between authoritative-but-technical data and citizen accessibility. V-Dem, Freedom House and the WJP are rigorous but are published as academic datasets and technical reports aimed at specialists; the EUGA translates the same underlying data into a form a non-specialist can navigate within minutes.
- It closes the gap between EU institutional reporting and comparability over time. The Commission's annual Rule of Law Report is authoritative and detailed but is a qualitative, country-by-country narrative document; it does not, on its own, let a reader see at a glance how a country's trajectory this year compares to five years ago, or how it compares numerically to its neighbours in the same year.
- It provides an early-warning function that is explicitly complementary to, not a substitute for, Article 7 TEU. Article 7 is intentionally difficult to trigger, with a high political threshold; a transparent, continuously updated citizen-facing signal can highlight a deteriorating trajectory years before that threshold is reached.

or a formal procedure is opened, giving civil society, journalists and voters earlier visibility than the formal process alone provides.

- It makes its own normative choices auditable. Every weighting decision, threshold value and persistence rule is stated and justified in this document precisely so that a critic can challenge a specific, named choice rather than the tool as an unaccountable black box — which is itself a rule-of-law-consistent way to build a rule-of-law monitoring instrument.
- It documents its own uncertainty and disagreement rather than concealing it. Where the underlying sources genuinely conflict, or where a component's movement resists a single causal explanation (see, for example, the Slovenia and Bulgaria dossiers), the dashboard says so explicitly rather than forcing a tidy narrative onto ambiguous evidence — a design choice that itself models the kind of intellectual honesty that Article 2 monitoring should require of itself.

11. Consolidated limitations of the dashboard

The limitations of the underlying index itself are already treated in detail in chapters 5, 7.3.3 and 7.4, and are not repeated here. This chapter consolidates specifically the limitations identified during construction of the presentation layer (chapter 9), so that no limitation depends on the reader having encountered it elsewhere in the text.

- Narrative causality versus statistical correlation. Dossier text is written as 'the decline in C1 coincides with [event]'; the underlying indices do not themselves attribute movement to specific events. The explanatory narrative is a plausible, source-grounded interpretation chosen by the analyst, not a causal finding the index methodology itself establishes.
- Uneven research depth across dossiers. Word counts and source counts initially varied meaningfully by country, reflecting the order in which countries were researched within a single working process rather than a deliberate depth allocation. The four thinnest dossiers (Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Estonia) were subsequently deepened to bring them in line with the rest; the same audit should be repeated periodically as a matter of quality control.
- The source-certainty rubric is a category distinction, not an accuracy score. The High/Medium rating (9.5) reflects whether a source is primary/institutional or secondary/interpretive; it says nothing about whether any individual claim within that source is correct.
- Asymmetric tone risk. Structurally comparable developments (for example, a nationalist party shaping migration policy from a governing or supporting role) are, in places, described in a more critical register for some countries than for others where the score movement is of similar magnitude. This may partly reflect genuine differences in institutional context, but has not been systematically tested for reputation-driven framing bias and should be treated as an open risk rather than a resolved one.
- English-language and Anglophone-source bias. Sourcing relies substantially on English-language reporting and English-language institutional publications; non-English primary sources and non-Anglophone press framing were not systematically consulted, which risks under-representing local nuance, particularly for smaller member states.
- Static content with no update mechanism. Contextual 'development after the measurement period' boxes (for example, the April 2026 Hungarian election, the February 2026 Dutch government) are accurate as of construction but will go stale as further data years are added; the dashboard has no versioning, changelog, or scheduled-review process built in.
- No display of underlying measurement uncertainty. Although display precision was reduced to address one dimension of this problem (9.4), the dashboard does not show V-Dem's or other sources' published confidence intervals anywhere, so a reader cannot see how much of a given score or change is within the margin of measurement error.
- Baseline-year inconsistency across tiles. Most countries show a genuine five-year change (2020–2025); six countries (Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Ireland) show a four-year change (2021–2025) because their source data begins later. The label adjusts automatically, but the tile grid otherwise presents both as visually equivalent 'change' figures.
- No population or scale weighting. A member state of half a million people and one of over eighty million receive identically sized tiles and dossiers, with no visual indication of differential scale or impact.
- Single-author construction without independent review. All 26 dossiers were produced within a compressed working process by a single analyst (this language model), without a second reviewer, fact-checker, or editorial sign-off. Several dossiers characterise the conduct of named sitting officials and political parties in terms that would require legal and editorial review before any public-facing deployment.

- Threshold and band boundaries inherited without independent re-derivation at dashboard level. The 0.60/0.75 concern bands used for dashboard colour-coding and tile sorting derive from the signal model in chapter 7; the dashboard does not separately re-justify these boundaries for its own sorting purpose, but inherits them from the index methodology.

12. Status of this document

This methodology memorandum forms the annex to the accompanying article on Aantekeningen in de marge and documents both the underlying EUGA index (chapters 1–8) and the interactive country dashboard built on top of it (chapters 9–11). The dashboard limitations set out in chapter 11 — in particular the absence of independent editorial and legal review — remain fully applicable and should be stated wherever the dashboard is further distributed. Where this document states a limitation, that limitation applies for as long as the underlying construction (index or dashboard) remains unchanged; it is the responsibility of whoever next updates either the index or the dashboard to update this document in step.