

Poland's rule of law dispute with the EU

The European Union could trigger a new tool against Poland – the “conditionality mechanism” – to withhold budget payments to member states that fail to adhere to the bloc's democratic standards



■ **2015:** Poland's **Law and Justice (PiS)** party takes power, begins overhaul of justice system that gives party new powers over courts and appointment of judges – drawing strong criticism from EU



■ **Oct 7:** Poland's Prime Minister **Mateusz Morawiecki** welcomes Polish court ruling that claims some parts of EU treaties are incompatible with Polish constitution

■ **Feb 2020:** Rift over legitimacy of EU law first emerges when Poland passes measures to prevent judges from referring certain legal cases to **European Court of Justice (ECJ)**

■ **Jan 2021:** EU's conditionality mechanism comes into force, making access to funds conditional on respecting rule of law

■ **Jul:** ECJ orders Poland to suspend its “disciplinary chamber” – offshoot of Supreme Court that critics say is used by PiS to put political pressure on judges

■ **Oct 11-12:** Poland and Hungary challenge conditionality mechanism in ECJ

■ **Oct 19:** Morawiecki to speak to members of European Parliament, together with EU Commission President **Ursula von der Leyen**

At stake is almost 60 billion euros – Warsaw's post-pandemic recovery funding, which could be suspended by Brussels

