



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Argentina

August 2026

Summary

The enabling environment for civil society in Argentina has continued to deteriorate steadily during the first half of 2026. Developments during this period confirm and reinforce the trend that began in December 2023: the La Libertad Avanza government is continuing a process of institutional dismantling, withdrawal from multilateral bodies and restriction of civic space that is unprecedented in the country's recent democratic history. With the decline in international cooperation, the lack of access to funding is a priority issue for civil society organisations.

The most significant milestones of this period include the formal withdrawal from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in March 2026; the [observations of the CEDAW Committee](#), issued in February 2026, which document systematic setbacks in the rights of women and people with diverse identities; the [introduction of a bill to amend the University Funding Act](#) against a backdrop of judicial non-compliance with current regulations; [provincial measures in Misiones](#) that increased the bureaucratic requirements on CSOs to the point of jeopardising their institutional survival; and [the tabling of a "Law on Transparency and Disclosure of Interests"](#) which risked being used as a tool for selective persecution against civil society, and which was halted by coordinated mobilisation by the sector.

With the mid-term electoral victory in October 2025, the ruling party consolidated its legislative capacity, which suggests a continuation — and possible intensification — of these trends in the second half of its term.

Background

By August 2026, Javier Milei's government had been in office for two and a half years. His victory in the October 2025 legislative elections gave the ruling party a more favourable parliamentary majority, enabling structural reforms that previously required more complex negotiations. Ongoing legislative initiatives include: the labour reform, which curtails labour rights and trade union freedoms; amendments to the University Funding Act, which mandated the adjustment of costs within the higher education system—a requirement the government refuses to comply with; and the new land bill, which permits the sale of land traditionally held by indigenous peoples.

At the international level, the government is deepening its alignment with the Trump administration's foreign policy and its rejection of multilateralism. The formal [withdrawal](#) from the WHO in March 2026 consolidates a pattern of disengagement from global cooperation systems, which directly impacts the funding and legitimacy of CSOs.

Domestically, the deterioration in the material conditions of large sections of the population continues to fuel social unrest, even as some macroeconomic indicators—such as inflation—have stabilised. The repression of protests, restrictions on freedom of expression and the stigmatisation of social actors remain the government's preferred tools for managing conflict.

The period also saw a significant moment of organised civil resistance: the government's proposal for a 'Lobbying Act' sparked a coordinated and successful [response](#) from the sector, which managed to halt its progress through Parliament. The fact that the bill was so regressive that it even threatened private interests facilitated the formation of a cross-sectoral coalition. The case constitutes a positive example of organised civil resistance. However, the government has indicated that it will table a revised version, continuing to pose a risk to civil society engagement.

The upcoming 2027 elections are beginning to influence the political environment with increasing political contestation in which civil society could influence the development of alternative agendas.

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

The first half of 2026 saw a continuation of the pattern of erosion of civil liberties. The [court ruling](#) at first instance in December 2025, which declared the [Protocol for the Maintenance of Public Order](#) null and void, was appealed by the Ministry of Security. In response, the Court of Appeal [overturned](#) the judgment in March 2026, meaning that the measure—also known as the ‘anti-picket protocol’ due to its restrictions on freedom of assembly—remains in force until a final judgement is handed down by the higher courts.

At the same time, the erosion of freedom of expression – about which the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [had warned](#) in December 2025 – has continued, with an escalation of attacks against journalists, including [hostile rhetoric by the President and restrictions on access to institutions](#).

Furthermore, in February 2026, the concluding [observations](#) of the CEDAW Committee highlighted the closure of 81 Access to Justice Centres, their disproportionate impact on rural women and those living in poverty, and attempts to restrict the work of feminist organisations through intimidation and exclusion from consultative forums. More than 10 organisations, including [PAMPA 2030](#), submitted [alternative reports](#) documenting these restrictions on women’s organisations’ freedom of association.

Regulations governing the right to strike in the transport, education and health sectors, [which have been declared unconstitutional by various courts of appeal](#), remain the subject of legal disputes. Whilst a final ruling on the legal issues relating to these regulations is pending, trade unions continue to face restrictions on their freedom of association. Furthermore, the [Labour Reform Act 27.802](#), enacted in May 2026, represents a step backwards for workers and their representative organisations, as it imposes direct restrictions on trade union action, both operational and financial.

2. Supportive legal framework for the work of civil society actors

This period has seen developments of particular significance for the regulatory framework governing civil society.

On the one hand, on 6 April 2026 the Government of Misiones issued [Provision No. 137/2026](#), which establishes an exceptional regularisation scheme for civil associations with long-standing non-compliance issues. The order sets out the procedures and deadlines that organisations have to meet in order to comply with the regulations, and failure to meet these deadlines could lead to the permanent closure of the organisations. Although presented as a move towards standardisation, the measure entails increased state control, with the risk that small organisations or those with limited resources will be particularly affected. Despite this provision being issued on provincial level, it reflects a national trend and could be replicated in other jurisdictions.

The most significant development was the consideration by the committees of the National Chamber of Deputies of [the draft 'Law on Transparency and Public Disclosure of Interest Representation'](#). The bill proposes to establish a system of registration, monitoring and sanctions covering all lobbying activities directed at the branches of government, which would effectively function as a tool for the selective persecution of CSOs. [Civil society's response](#) was coordinated and effective: its broad scope — which also included private sector actors — enabled cross-sectoral participation in the debate within the committees, which succeeded in halting the bill's progress through Parliament. The bill has been reopened for negotiations and the Government is expected to present a new version.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

Argentina's formal [withdrawal](#) from the WHO, finalised on 17 March 2026, is the most significant development of the period in terms of access to resources. The withdrawal leaves CSOs without access to international standards, funding frameworks and health cooperation networks. Community, feminist, mental health and human rights networks, which usually fill the gaps left by the state, could, in the medium term, lose tools for monitoring health risks and validating their work with international bodies. This episode is part of a pattern of disengagement from multilateral bodies, which includes the [withdrawal](#) of the candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council and the rejection of UN policies and initiatives. Furthermore, restrictions on international cooperation are intensifying due to alignment with Trump's policy, which eliminated development cooperation programmes.

With regard to university funding, in April 2026 the Federal Administrative Court [ordered](#) the immediate implementation of the University Funding Act. The National Inter-University Council and the trade unions had previously reported the government's alleged non-compliance with the law, and the Executive responded in May 2026 with a [draft bill to amend the law](#). Budgetary uncertainty is affecting research and outreach programmes with social organisations in the fields of social sciences, human rights and community development.

This forms part of a broader trend of underfunding of the science and technology system, such as the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research ([CONICET](#)), the National Institute of Industrial Technology ([INTI](#)), the National Institute of Agricultural Technology ([INTA](#)) and the [National Agency for the Promotion of Research, Technological Development and Innovation](#) — which continues to undermine the capacity to generate evidence that underpins CSOs' advocacy strategies.

Despite deteriorating material conditions for large segments of the population, Argentina continues to be [classified](#) as an upper-middle-income country according to World Bank indicators. Consequently, access to funding from international cooperation is very limited.

4. State openness and responsiveness

The first half of 2026 saw no progress in the state's openness to civil society participation. The withdrawal from the WHO was decided without consultation with organisations in the health sector or academia, and the draft amendment to the University Funding Act was not preceded by any participatory process. The [lack of funding](#) for the Argentine scientific system affected civil society organisations' access to information. Institutional forums for dialogue — [the Economic and Social Council](#), the steering group [for the National Climate Change Adaptation](#)

[Plan](#), and the [National Employment Council](#) — remain inactive or are convened purely for information purposes.

In this context, the [response](#) of the National Congress to [pressure](#) from civil society in the case of the ‘Lobbying Bill’ constitutes a partially positive sign: the coordinated mobilisation of affected organisations and private interests succeeded in preventing the legislature from proceeding with the government’s proposal. This suggests that, when civil society builds broad coalitions and lobbies effectively, there is scope to influence the legislative process even in an adverse context.

The [amendment to the Glaciers Act](#), which threatens to open up areas to mining activity previously protected as sources of drinking water, went ahead despite strong protests and [objections from specialist sectors](#) and [civil society in general](#).

5. Political Culture and Public Discourses on Civil Society

Narratives of denigration and stigmatisation promoted by the Executive – targeting social organisations, trade unions, feminist movements, indigenous and rural communities, migrants and LGBTIQ+ groups – remain central to political communication, amplified by media outlets aligned with the government. In particular, during the period under review, there has been a significant spread of hostile rhetoric against journalists. President Milei [stated](#) that ‘95 per cent of journalists are criminals’, whilst the acronym ‘NOL\$ALP’ (‘we do not hate journalists enough’) was [widely circulated](#).

[CEDAW’s observations](#) provided international confirmation of what organisations have been documenting: the weakening of institutions combating hate speech and gender-based violence, the abolition of the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, the ban on inclusive language, and cuts to services for women and people of diverse identities. The observations were based on contributions from 60 civil society organisations, including a [report from December 2025](#) by Agencia Presentes, which found that hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ people rose by 70 per cent in 2025. This trend has continued into 2026, with women and LGBTIQ+ people facing persistent barriers to their full participation in civic life.

The [centralisation and hollowing out of Radio Nacional](#) continue to have an impact on media pluralism and the ability of regional organisations to establish a public presence. The dispute over university funding adds a cultural dimension: it undermines the production of critical knowledge and the links between universities and social organisations.

6. Access to a Safe Digital Environment

The digital landscape remains vast but uneven and increasingly risky for civil society actors. During the first quarter of 2026, internet access via fixed connections [rose](#) to 11,596,020, representing an increase of 8.6 per cent compared with the first quarter of 2025. However, the concentration of providers and regional disparities perpetuate structural inequalities in actual access and the production of content.

The [reforms](#) authorising the Argentine Federal Police (PFA) to carry out cyber-patrolling on social media and public websites represent the most concrete threat to a safe digital environment. These powers, which include the ability to detain individuals without a prior court

order, have a chilling effect on digital freedom of expression, particularly for organisations working in the fields of human rights, investigative journalism and political activism.

The use of official accounts to disseminate stigmatising narratives – such as the streaming channel ‘[Carajo](#)’ – and to amplify hate speech remains a systematic tool. No new regulatory developments in the digital sphere were recorded during the period, although trends suggest that this space will continue to be subject to increasing surveillance.

Challenges and Opportunities

The first half of 2026 presents a picture of sustained deterioration, with few signs of reversal. However, the period also saw a successful response to the ‘Lobbying Act’, which illustrates the potential scope for influence when civil society builds broad-based responses using systematised information.

In line with the description provided regarding the difficulties civil society organisations face in accessing funding, the following general recommendations are addressed to actors in international cooperation, whether they be states, organisations, companies, foundations or civil society platforms: Argentine civil society requires access to funding to generate and sustain inclusive and democratising initiatives in the face of a shrinking enabling environment, to ensure the sector’s survival and, consequently, to enable it to continue contributing to local development, the defence of communities’ rights and democracy.

For donors

The case of the Lobbying Act demonstrates that systematised information and ongoing coordination — facilitated by the EU SEE system — are key factors in enabling civil society to respond swiftly to regulatory threats. It is recommended that support for these monitoring mechanisms be consolidated and expanded. In view of the foreseeable reformulation of this law and the progress of labour reform, it is suggested that specific funds be set up to provide legal assistance to affected organisations and to support strategic litigation.

For civil society

The widespread opposition that halted the Lobbying Act is a reaction that civil society must capitalise on and transform into concrete proposals. This could take the form of public statements and even legislative proposals that incorporate the needs and demands of CSOs.

Furthermore, with the 2027 elections on the horizon, it is necessary to start now to build influence on party agendas, articulating diverse demands within a democratic narrative capable of engaging the public.

For the international community

The CEDAW observations constitute an explicit statement on human rights violations in Argentina. It is recommended that international agencies and missions use them as a frame of reference in their dialogue with the Argentine State.

Outlook for the coming period

It is anticipated that the government will present an amended version of the Lobbying Act. Labour reform and the dispute over university funding — with its legal dimension pending before the Supreme Court — will continue to be areas of significant conflict between the Executive and broad sections of society. These issues will significantly shape the enabling environment in the coming months.

This publication was funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



EU SEE

SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



Funded by
the European Union

