The Argentine presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of 2015 brought an unexpected change of government, with the Peronists, who had ruled for almost thirty years without interruption, being voted out of office. Especially under former President Cristina Fernández Kirchner, both the rule of law and economic stability had been weakened. The new President Mauricio Macri is now trying to reverse the trend. With quite some success. Long regarded as a defective democracy by the BTI Transformation Index, the country is now one of the advanced democracies thanks to significant improvements in the separation of powers and the prosecution of office abuse. The market economy framework was also strengthened by correcting market-distorting regulations in areas such as foreign trade, currency and exchange rate controls. Even though the economic revisions were associated with high social costs and the approval figures for Macri had fallen sharply in the meantime, his centre-right alliance also won the parliamentary mid-term elections in October 2017.

### Elections

Elections are free and fair with few restrictions. 72% of Argentineans believe that elections improve things, with voter turnout in some cases above 80%. The national electoral authority is part of the Ministry of Justice, but nominally independent. All candidates have largely equal access to the media.

- **Freedom of expression**

### Freedom of speech

Freedom of expression is guaranteed, but the composition of the strongly polarized media landscape is controversial. One third of broadcasting licences must go to non-commercial providers in order to preserve media diversity. Macri wants to overturn this regulation, but is encountering resistance from the population and the judiciary.

### Civil rights protection

Civil rights are protected, but with serious restrictions. These include excessive police violence, overcrowded prisons and public security deficits, exacerbated by increasing drug trafficking and gang crime. The police and judiciary are considered politicized, corrupt, underpaid and inefficient.

### Social inclusion

Around one third of the population is excluded from social participation due to poverty, and social inequality is high. The Macri government's first economic reforms have also affected low-income workers and small businesses and increased social tensions.

### Corruption prevention

Corruption is widespread. Mostly it is not legal loopholes that prevent an effective prosecution of corruption, but established informal practices, a culture of bribery. A reliable and independent supervision of state expenditures and the regulation of party financing are lacking.