



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is an advisory body of the European Union. It was set up in March 2007 and is based in Vienna, Austria. The FRA helps to ensure that the fundamental rights of people living in the EU are protected. It does this by collecting evidence about the situation of fundamental rights across the European Union and providing advice, based on the evidence, about how to improve the situation. The FRA also informs people about their fundamental rights. In doing so, it helps to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone in the European Union.

What are fundamental rights?

Fundamental rights, or human rights, express values that receive the highest level of legal protection and guarantee a certain level of freedom and treatment for everyone. When the European Union passes legislation or issues decisions, it must ensure that it does not contradict these standards. The **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** is the European Union's commitment to the basic rights and freedoms of all people living in the European Union.

What does the FRA do?

Information and data collection and analysis:

- Collects, analyses and disseminates objective, reliable and comparable information on the respect for fundamental rights in the European Union;
- Develops methods and standards to improve the quality and comparability of data at European Union level.

Evidence-based advice to European Union institutions and Member States:

Based on the findings of its data collection and analysis, the FRA:

- Publishes an annual report on fundamental rights in the European Union. It also publishes reports based on the themes of its research and surveys, which include examples of good practice in fundamental rights protection;
- Delivers advice and opinions about respecting fundamental rights when implementing European Union law. This is done at the request of a European Union institution or on the FRA's own initiative.

Co-operation with civil society and awareness-raising:

- Works with organisations from across the European Union that are active in the field of fundamental rights, benefiting from their experience on the ground. Together, these groups form the Fundamental Rights Platform (**contact frp@fra.europa.eu for more information**);
- Informs targeted audiences about fundamental rights;

Which areas can the FRA cover in its research?

The FRA can carry out work in relation to a large range of fundamental rights protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The FRA looks at fundamental rights-related areas covered by European Union law (for example, equal opportunities in the labour market) in the European Union Member States, as well as at the activities of the Union itself.





The FRA has a fixed list of issues that it should address, which is updated every five years. This list is created by the national governments acting together through the Council of the European Union (the main decision-making body of the European Union).

Current focus areas include:

- **racism, xenophobia** and related intolerance
- **multiple discrimination** (including discrimination based on more than one ground e.g. sex and ethnic origin)
- **compensation of victims**
- the rights of the **child**
- **asylum, immigration** and the **integration of migrants**
- visa and border control
- **participation** of citizens in the European Union's **democratic functioning**
- **data protection** and the right to **privacy**
- access to efficient and independent **justice**

What is the FRA's geographical scope?

The FRA only deals with the 27 Member States of the European Union. Currently, it cannot look at the human rights situation in any other country.

How is the FRA organised?

The FRA comprises a:

- **Management Board:** one independent person with knowledge of fundamental rights and management experience from each European Union Member State, one independent person appointed by the Council of Europe and two representatives of the European Commission;
- **Executive Board:** the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Management Board, two other members of the Management Board and one of the representatives of the European Commission. The Executive Board prepares the decisions of the Management Board;
- **Scientific Committee:** 11 highly qualified independent people who guarantee the scientific quality of the FRA's work; and
- **Director:** executes the FRA's tasks and appoints its staff.

Can I complain to the FRA that my rights have been violated?

The FRA is not a court and does not have the power to take decisions about individual cases. However, it can provide information on mechanisms that might be able to help someone whose rights have been violated, such as national human rights institutions or regional bodies like the European Court of Human Rights.

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