FRA EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

EMBEDDING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN FORESIGHT

A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

REPORT



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How to use this guide

This guide is intended for foresight practitioners, policymakers, fundamental rights experts, public authorities, civil-society organisations and others involved in forward-looking policy development, at the EU level and in the EU Member States. It is important to ensure, when foresight informs policy decisions, that applicable fundamental rights and corresponding obligations are taken into account and form part of the baseline for the exploration of future scenarios. Integrating fundamental rights considerations from the outset helps identify how choices made today and future developments may affect the exercise, protection and enforcement of rights.

The guide can be consulted when designing, commissioning, conducting or reviewing a foresight exercise. It can be used at the start of an exercise to identify relevant rights and groups affected, during the exercise to inform participation and analysis, and at the end to review findings, policy options and communication.

The guide is organised into three sections: a section on why fundamental rights matter in foresight, a section laying down principles for embedding fundamental rights in foresight and a section on the implementation of these principles. These sections are followed by a glossary of selected terms and a list of useful resources.

Readers who need a quick entry point can begin with the section 'How to get started' and the section on the 'Implementation guide'. Readers who want to find out about the underlying rationale and principles on which the guide is based can first consult the following sections; 'Why fundamental rights matter in foresight', and 'Principles for embedding fundamental rights in foresight principles'.

1. Why fundamental rights matter in foresight

Strategic foresight systematically explores how alternative futures could unfold and uses the resulting insights to inform decisions made today.

Fundamental rights matter in foresight because, as binding legal standards for public authorities, they must guide policymakers when they are assessing future policy options. They also matter because technological, environmental, economic, political and societal changes affect how people exercise their rights in practice, whether safeguards remain effective over time and whether new inequalities or accountability gaps emerge.

Applicable obligations under international human rights law, the EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and relevant EU law provide the legal baseline for policy decisions, including those informed by foresight. Better regulation principles provide a related policy framework, but do not have the same legal status as binding fundamental rights obligations.

The terms ‘human rights’ and ‘fundamental rights’ mean largely the same thing, in substance, but they refer to different levels of regulation. Traditionally, the term ‘fundamental rights’ is used when the rights arise in a constitutional context, whereas ‘human rights’ is used when the rights are enshrined in international law. In an EU law context, the term ‘fundamental rights’ is used for all internal EU matters, whereas ‘human rights’ is used in the context of EU external relations. The distinction between the two terms is not always relevant, and therefore the terms may be used interchangeably or to refer to more than one level at the same time.

This guide relates to the obligations of EU institutions and bodies and Member States under the EU treaties, EU secondary law and Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It therefore largely uses the term ‘fundamental rights’.

Embedding fundamental rights in foresight means systematically considering these rights and corresponding obligations in the design, conduct and use of foresight exercises. This helps identify which rights may be affected, how effects may differ between population groups, who is accountable and what the corresponding obligations require or what safeguards or remedies may be needed under different future conditions. It also encourages the inclusion in foresight exercises of perspectives and experiences that might otherwise be overlooked, including those of people at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or discrimination, as well as future generations.

Making rights implications, unequal effects and existing or possible future legal obligations more visible can improve the relevance and robustness of future-oriented analysis. It can also help ensure that resulting policy responses comply with applicable fundamental rights obligations.

2. Principles for embedding fundamental rights in foresight

This section introduces six related principles for designing, conducting and using foresight exercises in a way that systematically integrates fundamental rights: legality, relevance, participation, equality and non-discrimination, reliability, and transparency and accountability.

The principles draw on the human rights-based approach, which is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed towards promoting and protecting human rights. They also reflect established foresight and better regulation practices (see 'Useful resources'). Their particular purpose here is to show how, in foresight processes, fundamental rights should inform the questions asked, the perspectives and evidence considered, the analysis of possible futures, and the interpretation and use of findings.

Taken together, the principles address both the quality of the foresight process and the distinct contribution that fundamental rights can make to the process. Applying these principles helps make visible the rights involved, the differences in how people may be affected, the substantive obligations of relevant actors, and the safeguards, oversight and remedies that may be required. The principles relate to rights and obligations, as well as to processes that are participatory, accessible, methodologically sound, transparent and open to scrutiny.

2.1. Legality

Use human rights law as the binding baseline while enabling futures thinking

Embedding fundamental rights in foresight makes it possible to explore futures in which legislation, policies and social conditions evolve in unfamiliar ways while testing those changed circumstances against existing human rights obligations. This provides the basis for future-oriented policymaking that remains compliant with the relevant applicable legal obligations.

Exploratory scenarios can also examine situations that fall outside the scope of existing legislation. To help develop legal solutions and policy options that would be consistent and compliant with EU and international human rights law, fundamental rights should be properly considered. When they are, such scenarios can help reveal risks to rights, probe the consequences of weakened safeguards and examine the conditions under which rights violations might arise.

Applying the principle of legality also enables foresight processes to explore how legislation and jurisprudence might evolve in the future. This can bring emerging rights questions to light and help identify situations in which existing legal safeguards might prove insufficient. Grounding

foresight processes in fundamental rights law can therefore help identify where changing conditions would require legal or institutional adaptation.

2.2. Relevance

Focus on the rights, freedoms and principles most likely to be affected

Lawmaking and policymaking in the EU and its Member States must comply with all applicable fundamental rights obligations. To remain proportionate, foresight exercises need to identify the rights, freedoms and principles that are most directly affected by the issue under exploration. This provides a basis from which to examine the possible impacts on, opportunities for and risks to legal safeguards.

Foresight tools and frameworks (see 'Glossary of selected terms' for a definition of 'foresight' and explanations of some common foresight tools) can support this process by highlighting how future developments may affect rights and by providing structured ways to assess impacts on people. Ensuring relevance requires identifying key implications for rights early and then integrating them into and considering them systematically in the analysis of factors, scenarios and future policy options.

2.3. Participation

Ensure meaningful, inclusive and transparent participation

Participation is a core feature of foresight practice, which benefits from bringing together different perspectives to explore uncertainty, challenge assumptions and imagine alternative futures. Considering fundamental rights systematically in foresight entails paying closer attention to who is included, whose perspectives may be missing, how participation can be made meaningful, inclusive and transparent, and whether participants have a genuine opportunity to influence the foresight exercise.

Particular attention should be paid to people and groups at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or discrimination, whose rights and experiences may otherwise be overlooked, even though they may be especially affected by future developments and related policy choices.

Including relevant professional expertise and lived experience can broaden the evidence and perspectives considered. Meaningful participation requires accessible opportunities to contribute, transparency about how participants are selected and an explanation of how participants' input

has influenced the analysis and conclusions.

2.4. Equality and non-discrimination

Examine unequal effects, structural disadvantage and discrimination

Future developments and policy responses rarely affect everyone in the same way. Foresight processes should also examine if particular groups face disproportionate burdens, reduced access to rights or services, discriminatory outcomes or barriers to remedy. This entails considering how existing structural inequalities and intersecting forms of disadvantage may shape people's exposure to change, their capacity to adapt and their ability to benefit from future developments.

Equality and non-discrimination should be considered throughout the foresight process, including in scoping, horizon scanning, scenario development, stress testing, policy analysis and review. This requires methods that make different impacts visible, challenge bias in evidence and assumptions, and test whether policy options could reproduce or deepen disadvantage or contribute to fairer and more inclusive outcomes. It also requires attention to whether legal obligations, essential services and remedies would be accessible to the same extent under different future conditions.

2.5. Reliability

Balance creativity with sound evidence and methods

Reliability requires balancing creativity with methodological rigour and a sound evidence base. While strategic foresight engages with uncertainty and unknown futures, it is strengthened by a robust understanding of past and current conditions and the factors shaping them. Reliable foresight draws on validated data (including human rights indicators) and appropriate methods to identify plausible and policy-relevant outcomes.

This implies the need to pay attention to gaps and biases in the available evidence, particularly where the experiences of some groups are under-recorded. A lack of data should not automatically be interpreted as showing that no fundamental rights impact exists. Assumptions, disagreements and levels of uncertainty concerning rights implications should be made visible rather than obscured by premature consensus.

2.6. Transparency and accountability

Make the process open, accessible and subject to scrutiny and follow-up

Transparency helps stakeholders understand, engage with and use foresight processes and outcomes. It requires clarity about how the exercise was designed, which methods and sources were used, what assumptions shaped the analysis and where uncertainties or limitations remain. This enables participants and users to assess the robustness, relevance and appropriate use of foresight outcomes.

Communication puts transparency into practice. Clear, timely and accessible information helps participants follow the process, understand how their input was used and see how conclusions were reached. It also supports the informed use of foresight insights and strengthens trust in policymaking informed by foresight.

Transparency also supports accountability. This entails clarity about who is responsible for the foresight process and for taking decisions informed by it; it also requires appropriate arrangements for scrutiny and follow-up. Furthermore, it means distinguishing exploratory findings from legal assessment and expert judgement, and documenting how fundamental rights considerations influenced scenarios, conclusions or policy options and how any concerns identified were addressed.

Promising practices related to the principles on embedding fundamental rights in foresight are below.

Future inclusion for everyone: how to organise more accessible foresight workshops

The Deaconess Foundation's project 'Power to define futures: Centering human dignity', funded by the Finnish Innovation Fund (Sitra), explores how 'people living in vulnerable situations and those [in] need of special care' – including migrants, people with disabilities and substance abuse service users – can shape futures. The foundation developed a methodology on inclusive workshops, highlighting how expanding the power to imagine futures strengthens democratic foresight. The practical guidance offers advice on methods of preparing and running inclusive and accessible futures workshops that can be adapted to the diverse needs of the participants. It also includes practical examples.

Young people shaping futures

The Conifer project ('Co-imagining needs-based mobility visions for the proximity city') highlights how participatory foresight can help children and young people contribute to discussions about future policies and communities. It provides practical methods, case studies and facilitation guidance showing how young people can take part in activities such as scenario building, storytelling, simulations and visioning exercises.

Practical examples emphasise that meaningful youth participation requires accessible methods, age-appropriate language, safe and inclusive environments and clear feedback on how participants' contributions are used. The project shows how involving young people can broaden perspectives, strengthen futures literacy and support more inclusive and forward-looking decision-making.

More information is available at 'Conifer – Shaping the future of 15-min cities through youth participation'.

Feminist futures and participatory foresight

Feminist Futures uses participatory foresight to help diverse communities imagine and co-create more equal and inclusive futures. In safe and creative spaces, it combines futures methods, storytelling, art and collective reflection to explore alternative futures and expand what people believe is possible.

Its approach emphasises imagination, participation and creativity as tools for social change. By enabling people to share their experiences, aspirations and visions of the future, it seeks to amplify under-represented perspectives, strengthen collective agency and inspire more inclusive and transformative decision-making.

More information is available at Feminist Futures.

3. Fundamental rights in foresight: implementation

While foresight processes vary in purpose, scope, methods and outputs, the principles outlined above offer a consistent framework for embedding fundamental rights in foresight activities. The implementation guide presented here translates these principles into practical actions that can be carried out when designing, delivering, communicating about and documenting foresight activities.

3.1. How to get started

- **Identify the relevant rights and obligations first.** Determine which fundamental rights are relevant, who may be affected, which public authorities or other actors have corresponding obligations or responsibilities, and what these entail. Use this as the starting point for determining the rights to be focused on in the exercise, while remaining open to additional rights implications as the work develops.
- **Examine rights implications across the full scope of the exercise.** Consider how social, technological, economic, environmental, political, values-related and legal developments may interact and shape the exercise of rights, using the STEEPVL framework where helpful (see the glossary of selected terms).
- **Involve fundamental rights experts early.** Engage with relevant experts from the scoping and horizon-scanning stages onwards, to help navigate human rights issues and anticipate how future developments and policy choices may affect people and their communities.
- **Use fundamental-rights-based foresight tools to test ideas.** Apply scenarios and, when time is limited, use wildcards to stress-test policy options and identify potential risks to fundamental rights, safeguards and access to remedy.
- **Choose inclusive participation formats and locations in consultation with participants.** Take into account accessibility, safety, confidentiality, digital access and other practical barriers. Where appropriate, hold activities in settings that are familiar to and convenient for the communities consulted.
- **Prioritise well-prepared, accessible and well-facilitated engagement, with clear follow-up.** Quality and impact matter far more than quantity: the number of activities matters less than whether participants can contribute meaningfully and understand how their input has been used.
- **Provide short, targeted fundamental rights training sessions.** Training should be given to foresight practitioners to support confident engagement with human-rights-related content.

3.2. Fundamental rights in the foresight process

Fundamental rights should inform each stage of the foresight process (see Table 1). While the relevance of any given principle will vary by activity, all six principles should inform the foresight process as a whole.

Table 1: Fundamental rights considerations in the foresight process

Stage of the process	Fundamental rights considerations
Scoping	Identify potentially affected rights, rights holders, responsible public authorities and other relevant actors, and applicable legal obligations.
Horizon scanning	Look for signals that the protection, exercise or enforcement of rights may strengthen or weaken, such as litigation, emerging inequalities and accountability gaps.
Evidence gathering and participant selection	Ensure meaningful participation and identify missing perspectives, evidence gaps and groups that may experience future effects differently.
Scenario development	Explore how rights could be exercised, restricted, protected and enforced under each future scenario, including possible changes to their legal protection, and look at whether safeguards and remedies would remain effective.
Visioning	Describe desirable futures in terms of people's practical and effective enjoyment of rights, not just preferred policy outcomes.
Identifying policy pathways	Check compliance with applicable obligations and identify existing and potential future obligations, safeguards, accessibility requirements, unequal effects and avenues for oversight and remedy.
Stress testing	Test options against applicable legal requirements, discriminatory effects, institutional weakness, emergencies, technological failure and cumulative pressures.
Validation and communication	Check legal and factual accuracy, disclose assumptions and limitations, and explain who participated and how their input was used and how fundamental rights considerations influenced the results.

Source: FRA, 2026.

3.3. Implementation guide: checklists

This section presents an implementation guide in the form of checklists with actions to consider for each of the six principles. These checklists can be used when designing, conducting, reviewing or communicating about a foresight exercise.

3.3.1. Legality checklist

Use human rights law as the binding baseline for policy assessment and interpretation.

Actions to consider:

- Ensure that the project team has access to an overview of the most relevant fundamental rights and legal considerations on the topic under the applicable EU, international or national framework (e.g. in the form of a short brief or expert input).
- Distinguish between exploratory futures thinking and the assessment and use of findings for policy purposes, where applicable human rights obligations provide the legal baseline.
- Make clear that scenarios may explore futures involving rights violations or weakened safeguards without presenting those futures as legally permissible policy options.
- Document any key tensions or constraints identified in this exploration.
- For policy options, use a proportionate set of questions that ask, for example, which rights are involved, what obligations and responsibilities arise, could an option interfere with a right, and what safeguards, oversight, review and remedies may be required.
- Where different rights or legitimate public interests may need to be reconciled, identify the applicable legal requirements and the need for specialist legal assessment.
- In visioning or megatrend work, consider including prompts on how rights protection and legal frameworks might evolve.
- Document how fundamental rights and related obligations informed the analysis and resulting policy options, including identified trade-offs, limitations or uncertainties.
- Where appropriate, involve independent fundamental rights experts in review or validation (e.g. national human rights institutions, equality bodies or the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights).

3.3.2. Relevance checklist

Focus on the fundamental rights that are most relevant in the context of the foresight process.

Actions to consider:

- As part of scoping, identify potentially relevant rights by considering the exercise's subject, purpose and intended use; the people who may be affected; the nature, likelihood and seriousness of possible impacts; and whether existing legal safeguards or remedies could

be weakened.

- Select the rights that require particular attention, and briefly explain why each has been selected, while also outlining the main potential opportunities and risks associated with them. Make clear that this analytical focus does not limit the applicable legal obligations.
- Review the initial selection as the exercise develops, adding rights that are identified as relevant through evidence gathering, scenario development or policy analysis.
- When scanning trends and signals, where feasible, note possible links to the most relevant rights and identify who would be affected.
- During scenario work, include prompts that suggest exploring how different futures could strengthen or weaken the most relevant rights and related safeguards and access to remedy.
- When discussing policy options, consider using scenarios or other futures materials with rights-based elements to explore trade-offs, unintended impacts and possible safeguards.

3.3.3. Participation checklist

Make participation meaningful, diverse and inclusive.

Actions to consider:

- Capitalise on the participatory nature of foresight by considering from the outset whose perspectives are needed, whose voices may be missing and which stakeholders should be involved.
- Where appropriate, involve the people affected in framing the questions to be explored, rather than only inviting them to respond to questions or scenarios created by others.
- Those who could be involved include the people and communities affected, organisations representing them, rights holders, groups at risk of marginalisation or discrimination, public authorities, duty bearers and others such as civil-society organisations or service providers.
- Do not assume that an individual participant or organisation can represent the full range of experiences within a population group.
- Where participant selection is constrained, make the selection approach transparent (e.g. set out the selection criteria and rationale) and note any representation gaps and how they were addressed.
- When planning participation, consider practical accessibility needs (e.g. timing, location, digital access, language support, content formats, disability accessibility) and build in options to reduce barriers to participation.
- Give a short briefing before participatory activities begin (i.e. purpose, agenda, key terms) and offer more than one way to contribute (e.g. in-person discussion, written input, asynchronous feedback) to ensure meaningful engagement.

- Where possible, include representatives of the target audience in preparing materials and selecting participation formats.
- Use facilitation formats that ensure that everyone can contribute (e.g. small groups, structured rounds, anonymous inputs, group facilitation methodologies) and are appropriate to the group and topic.
- Choose participation and facilitation formats that reduce dominance effects (e.g. timeboxing, silent reflection) and support contributions from quieter participants.
- Share a summary of how the participants' input was used and invite corrections or additions, where appropriate.
- Where direct participation is not possible, explain what alternative evidence, consultation or representation was used and what limitations remain.

3.3.4. Equality and non-discrimination checklist

Identify unequal effects, structural disadvantage and discriminatory outcomes.

Actions to consider:

- Use simple prompts to consider how impacts may fall differently on different groups, for example 'Who benefits?', 'Who might be burdened?' and 'Who may face greater difficulty exercising their rights or obtaining a remedy?'
- In planning and scoping, consider which groups may be disproportionately affected by the issue explored and what evidence or expertise on equality is needed.
- In evidence gathering and horizon scanning, look for signals of emerging inequalities, as well as risks and opportunities for different population groups.
- During scenario development and stress testing, use methods that help challenge default narratives (e.g. counter-perspectives, alternative framings, distributional prompts or 'radical break' variants).
- Examine whether apparently neutral developments or policy options could place particular groups at a disadvantage or reproduce existing structural inequalities.
- Consider cumulative and intersecting effects, including where several developments or aspects of people's circumstances combine to increase exposure or reduce their capacity to adapt.
- At key points, pause to identify assumptions, missing evidence, default perspectives and possible bias in the data, facilitation or analysis, and adjust the process where necessary.
- Test whether safeguards, services, participation opportunities and remedies would be accessible to the same extent under the different futures examined.
- When reviewing outputs and policy options, check the extent to which equality implications, effects on safeguards and potential unintended discriminatory effects have been made

visible.

- Consider people who are not represented directly in the exercise and, where relevant, the implications for future generations.

3.3.5. Reliability checklist

Ground futures work in sound data, rigorous methods and effective cooperation.

Actions to consider:

- Consider preparing a shared evidence baseline, covering key facts, uncertainties and any relevant fundamental rights evidence, to support a common starting point for the foresight exercise.
- Where claims are important for conclusions, triangulate them across more than one source and indicate confidence (high/medium/low), wherever possible.
- Consider whether available evidence adequately covers groups at risk of marginalisation or discrimination. Record important data gaps rather than treating an absence of evidence as evidence that no impact exists.
- Make assumptions visible (e.g. by keeping a simple log of assumptions and open questions) and revisit them at key moments in the process.
- Use expert input in a way that makes the reasoning underlying decisions and the limitations of the foresight exercise explicit.
- Consider including challenge sessions or peer-review elements to test plausibility and rights implications.
- Record significant disagreements or uncertainty about fundamental rights implications, rather than forcing consensus.
- Where the work runs across different stages, consider how to maintain continuity while creating space for fresh perspectives, to avoid early convergence.

3.3.6. Transparency and accountability checklist

Make the process open, accessible and accountable.

Actions to consider:

- Explain the purpose, scope and intended use of the foresight exercise at the outset, including who the outputs are for and how they may inform policy or planning.
- Provide clear and accessible information on the process, methods, data sources, participant selection, assumptions and key analytical steps, in a manner proportionate to the exercise.

- Make clear how participants' and stakeholders' inputs were considered, including where they influenced the analysis, scenarios or conclusions.
- Explain how fundamental rights considerations affected the design of the exercise and whether they led to changes in scenarios, conclusions or policy options.
- Communicate limitations and uncertainties transparently, including what the foresight exercise can and cannot support.
- Ensure that there is a clear distinction between exploratory findings, expert judgement and legal assessment.
- Provide accessible versions of key messages, using plain language, clear definitions and, where relevant, formats that respond to different accessibility needs.
- Document the main choices made during the process, including methodological choices, exclusions, trade-offs and open questions, to support scrutiny and learning.
- Identify who is responsible for taking decisions based on, or informed by, the foresight exercise.
- Share outputs in a timely and understandable way with relevant participants, policymakers and other users, and create space for feedback or correction where appropriate.

Glossary of selected terms

- **Backcasting.** A method that starts from a desired future and works backwards to identify the steps, decisions and conditions needed to reach it.
- **Distributional prompt.** A facilitation question that is used to make visible how future developments, scenarios or policy options may affect different groups differently. These questions help participants consider who may benefit, who may be burdened, whose experience may be missing and which groups may be disproportionately affected.
- **Driver.** A factor that shapes or influences change. Drivers may be social, technological, economic, environmental, political, values related or legal.
- **Duty bearer.** A state or other actor with an obligation to respect, protect or fulfil rights. The nature and extent of the obligation depend on the applicable legal framework and the right in question.
- **Exploratory futures thinking.** The systematic exploration of multiple plausible futures to understand how different drivers, uncertainties and decisions could shape future developments.
- **Factor projection.** A structured description of how a specific driver or factor might evolve in the future. It is used in scenario development to explore different plausible pathways for key influences on the issue under examination.
- **Foresight.** A systematic, participatory process for gathering futures intelligence, exploring plausible long-term developments and using these insights to inform present-day decisions and collective action.
- **Fundamental rights impact assessment.** A structured process for identifying and assessing how a proposed law, policy, programme, project or other measure may affect fundamental rights.
- **Horizon scanning.** The systematic exploration of emerging issues, trends, risks, opportunities and weak signals that may shape future developments.
- **Human rights-based approach.** A methodological framework that is normatively based on human rights standards and principles and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.
- **Human rights indicators.** Qualitative or quantitative information linked to human rights standards and principles, used to assess and monitor states' commitments and efforts to implement human rights, and the extent to which people enjoy those rights in practice.
- **Megatrend.** A long-term driving force of change that is already observable and likely to have significant, broad and sustained influence on future developments. Megatrends are used in foresight to frame horizon scanning, analyse interactions between different areas of change and support future-oriented policy reflection.

- **Mini-scenario.** A short, focused narrative or snapshot of a plausible future situation. It is often used as a prompt in workshops to stimulate discussion, imagination and early exploration before developing fuller scenarios.
- **Radical break.** A scenario development prompt or factor projection that asks how a driver of change might evolve in a surprising or fundamentally different way. It helps challenge current assumptions, dominant narratives or bias and invites less settled thinking about possible futures.
- **Rights holder.** A person or group entitled to rights under the applicable legal framework.
- **Scenario.** A structured and plausible description of how the future might develop. Scenarios are not predictions but tools for exploring uncertainty, testing assumptions and examining implications.
- **Signal.** An observable sign of change that may point to an emerging issue, development or future transformation.
- **STEEPVL.** A common foresight framework used to analyse change across seven dimensions: social, technological, economic, environmental, political, values related and legal.
- **Strategic foresight.** The institutionalised use of foresight to support policymaking and preparedness. It helps public institutions to anticipate future developments, risks and opportunities and to integrate insights into the future into decision-making.
- **Stress testing / wind-tunnelling.** The process of testing a policy option, strategy or system against different future conditions, scenarios or disruptions to assess its resilience, identify vulnerabilities and explore how it performs across multiple plausible futures.
- **Timeboxing.** A facilitation technique that allocates a fixed amount of time to a discussion, reflection or task. In foresight workshops, timeboxing helps keep participatory processes focused, reduces dominance effects and supports contributions from quieter participants when combined with structured rounds or silent reflection.
- **Trend.** A discernible direction of change that develops over time and may have significant implications for policy and society.
- **Visioning.** A participatory foresight method used to imagine desirable futures and identify pathways towards them.
- **Visioning workshop.** A participatory foresight exercise in which participants imagine desirable future states and reflect on the pathways, conditions or changes needed to reach them.
- **Weak signal.** An early and often ambiguous indication of a potentially important future change. Weak signals may appear marginal at first but can gain significance over time.
- **Wildcard.** A low-probability but high-impact event or disruption that can significantly alter future developments and challenge current assumptions.

Useful resources

- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- Communication from the Commission – Revised operational guidance on taking account of fundamental rights in European Commission impact assessments, 2005.
- European Commission, *Better Regulation Toolbox*[NB1], Chapter 3 'Identifying impacts in evaluations, fitness checks and impact assessments', Tool #29 'Fundamental rights, including the promotion of equality', 2025.
- European Commission, 'Strategic foresight', 2026.
- European Institute for Gender Equality, Fostering a gender and intersectional perspective in EU foresight, 2024.
- Explanations relating to the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- FRA, 'EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Charter resources', 2026.
- FRA, Fundamental rights in an uncertain future – Strategic foresight for Europe 2040, 2026.

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