

**SECRETARIAT GENERAL**

SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS  
SECRETARIAT DU COMITE DES MINISTRES

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Réunion : GR-EXT – 25 novembre 2014

Référence du point : 1. Coopération entre le Conseil de l'Europe et l'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne

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## **Overview of the cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe**

*(1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014)*

### **Part I. Objectives, methods and review of cooperation**

#### **1. Introduction**

The cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (the Agency or FRA) and the Council of Europe (CoE) is based on the FRA Founding Regulation<sup>1</sup> and on the Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe, which was adopted in 2008.<sup>2</sup> This Agreement established a general cooperation framework with the aim of avoiding duplication and ensuring complementarity and added value to the work of the Agency and the CoE. Pursuant to Article 23 of the Agreement, based on a positive evaluation of the cooperation, the Council of Europe and the European Union decided not to revise the Agreement for the time-being as it provides for an appropriate and flexible instrument for cooperation.

The cooperation between the Agency and the CoE has been evolving continuously in recent years towards an improved coordination of activities and synergies between both organisations. This document presents key objectives and methods of this cooperation and provides concrete examples of cooperation activities in relevant fields from the period 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014.

#### **2. Key objectives – What do we want to achieve together and in which areas?**

The key objectives and strategic priorities of the cooperation relate to the promotion and protection of human rights, as identified through a thorough exchange of views between the Agency and the CoE. The cooperation between the two organisations mainly focuses on:

- Developing joint projects in areas of mutual concern;
- Engaging in dialogue with stakeholders in order to improve the situation of fundamental rights in Europe;
- Coordinating communication activities to increase awareness regarding fundamental rights;
- Informing each other on the results of activities of each organisation;
- Exchanging data and consulting each other at operational level.

The cooperation takes place within specific thematic areas of the Agency's Multi-Annual Framework (2013 – 2017), which has been agreed upon by the Council of the European Union and adopted on 11 March 2013<sup>3</sup>:

- a) Access to justice;
- b) Victims of crime, including compensation to victims of crime;
- c) Information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data;
- d) Roma integration;
- e) Judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters;
- f) Rights of the child;

<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, OJ L 53, 22.2.2007, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe, OJ L 186, 15.7.2008, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Council decision No 252/2013/EU of 11 March 2013 establishing a Multiannual Framework for 2013-2017 for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, OJ L 79, 21.03.2013, p.1

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- g) Discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- h) Immigration and integration of migrants, visa and border control and asylum;
- i) Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

### **3. Methods and review of cooperation**

#### **3.1. Permanent mechanisms of cooperation**

Different mechanisms laid down in the Agency's Founding Regulation and in the FRA-CoE Agreement ensure complementarity in the relationship between the Agency and the CoE. For instance, the CoE has appointed an independent member to the Management and Executive Boards of the FRA, while representatives of the CoE Secretariat are present as observers at FRA Management Board meetings. Moreover, once a year, a senior representative of the CoE is invited to address the FRA Management Board. This gives the opportunity for an exchange of views between the CoE and the FRA and keeps the FRA Management Board fully informed regarding key activities planned by the CoE. Annual exchanges of views between the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT), the independent person appointed by the CoE, the Chair of the FRA Management Board and the FRA Director contribute further towards an efficient cooperation between the two organisations.

Moreover, the CoE is associated with the FRA's work with civil society organisations, mainly through the FRA's Fundamental Rights Platform. In 2014, the CoE, together with the Conference of INGOs, hosted a "The floor is yours" session entitled "From information to participation: increasing the contribution of civil society to the political decision-making process" at the 7th annual Fundamental Rights Platform meeting on 10 – 11 April in Vienna (see: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/event/2014/7th-fundamental-rights-platform-meeting>).

The Founding Regulation prescribes consultations between the FRA and the CoE during the preparation of the Agency's Annual Work Programmes and the Agency's Annual Report on fundamental rights issues (Article 9 of the FRA Founding Regulation). This ensures that CoE priorities, activities and findings are properly taken into account in key FRA documents in general, and in the FRA Annual Report in particular. In addition, Article 3 of the Agreement between the EU and the CoE on cooperation between the FRA and the CoE establishes that the Agency and the CoE shall each appoint a contact person to deal specifically with matters relating to their cooperation.

#### **3.2. Forms of cooperation at operational level**

The operational cooperation between the FRA and the CoE is an ongoing day-to-day process. This cooperation takes various forms, such as: consultations on specific projects and activities; regular exchange of data and information; participation in inception meetings of projects; joint projects and activities; participation in respective civil society structures; granting of observer status in several CoE human rights monitoring and intergovernmental committees; and complementarily through mutual references to each other's work. The contact persons appointed by the CoE and the Agency are informed about these activities on a regular basis so that they can facilitate the whole process and ensure its continuity and consistency.

In this respect, the Agency cooperates at an operational level with a number of relevant bodies and services of the CoE, including the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) as well as other human rights monitoring committees; the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ); the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights; the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues; the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; the Conference of INGOs; as well as the Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law and the Directorate General of Democracy.

The FRA relies in its work on the standards set by the CoE and takes due account of the judgments of the ECtHR and the way they are being implemented, the decisions and conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights, reports and activities of other CoE human rights monitoring bodies and intergovernmental committees, and reports of the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights. For instance, throughout the FRA

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Annual Report, standards and findings of the CoE are consistently and extensively referred to (see especially Chapter 10: EU Member States and International Obligations, [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/annual-report-2013-chapter-10\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/annual-report-2013-chapter-10_en.pdf)). The CoE is also regularly invited to comment on FRA draft reports to ensure, amongst other things, that European human rights standards are properly reflected.

In turn, the work of the CoE is facilitated by the data and findings of the FRA. For example, the ECRI's fifth monitoring reports on Belgium and Germany and the fourth monitoring reports on Finland, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania refer and use data and information of FRA research as evidence, in particular the EU-MIDIS survey and the survey of Jewish people's experiences and perceptions of hate crime, discrimination and anti-Semitism in EU Member States.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) makes reference to FRA reports and surveys (e.g. EU-MIDIS Roma survey, FRA thematic reports on education, housing and gender) in its thematic reports.<sup>5</sup>

Such cross-references contribute to disseminate on a reciprocal basis the results of the respective activities of the CoE and the FRA. Reciprocal consultation and feedback, as well as participation at meetings and events, have become integral parts of the working methods of both organisations.

### **3.3. Review of cooperation**

Cooperation reviews are regularly undertaken. The Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT) and the FRA Management Board regularly review and assess progress in the cooperation during exchanges of views with the independent person appointed by the CoE, the Chair of the FRA Management Board and the FRA Director. In addition, the services of both organisations carry out regular reviews at different stages of activities and projects, while the regular exchange of information between the respective contact persons, as well as inter-institutional meetings contribute further towards an enhanced collaboration.

## **Part II. Projects and activities undertaken (1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014)**

### **1. Examples of inter-institutional and regulatory cooperation**

The independent person appointed by the CoE participated in the FRA Executive Board meetings (27 September and 12 December 2013, 21 February and 22 May 2014) and the FRA Management Board meetings (12 – 13 December 2013, 22 – 23 May 2014). The CoE Secretariat representative participated in all FRA Management Board meetings as observer, and the Director of Human Rights in the Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law had an exchange of views with the FRA Management Board on 12 December 2013.

On 26 November 2013, a member of the FRA Executive Board and Management Board and the FRA Director visited the CoE. They addressed the Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT) of the Committee of Ministers and also met the CoE's Deputy Secretary General, the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE), the Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights and high-level staff members in the CoE Secretariat. During these meetings, the FRA delegation discussed the cooperation between FRA and the CoE in wide-ranging areas.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Belgium/BEL-CbC-V-2014-001-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Finland/FIN-CbC-IV-2013-019-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Germany/DEU-CbC-V-2014-002-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Malta/MLT-CbC-IV-2013-037-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Netherlands/NLD-CbC-IV-2013-039-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Portugal/PRT-CbC-IV-2013-020-ENG.pdf>;  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Romania/ROM-CbC-IV-2014-019-ENG.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://hub.coe.int/cahrom1>.

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The CoE Secretariat representative participates as observer in the regular meetings of the Management Board's Annual Report Editorial Committee (AREdit). The AREdit Committee was created to assist in the preparation of the Annual Report's adoption by the FRA Management Board. It considers the first draft of the text and provides comments and recommendations on the operational services.

## **2. Other contacts and coordination activities at inter-institutional level**

On 31 January 2014, the Management Board Chairperson and a FRA staff member participated in the ECtHR's opening of the judicial year and the annual high-level seminar.

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On 3 March 2014, in Paris, the FRA Director addressed the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. The hearing concerned the preparation of a PACE report on European institutions and human rights.

The PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination visited FRA on 4 March 2014 and engaged in a discussion with the Director and FRA staff on the respective work in the area of non-discrimination and equality.

The FRA Director met with the PACE President at the Agency's premises in Vienna on 17 March 2014. FRA and the PACE President discussed areas of current and future cooperation, including enhanced contacts between the two organisations in order to facilitate exchanges of data, as well as awareness-raising both among PACE members and national parliamentarians more generally.

The Chairperson of the FRA Management Board participated in a panel debate on human rights at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Strasbourg on 25 March 2014.

On 5 May 2014, the FRA Director welcomed the Permanent Representatives to the CoE. The aim of the meeting was to exchange views on FRA activities and cooperation with the CoE. More than 15 Ambassadors to the Council of Europe met the Director and senior FRA staff to discuss recent FRA activities, achievements and cooperation activities with the CoE.

The FRA Director participated in the 124th Session of the CoE Committee of Ministers on 6 May 2014 in Vienna as part of the EU Delegation.

The FRA Director addressed the first meeting of the CoE European Committee for Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality (CDDECS), which took place in Strasbourg on 3 – 5 June 2014. He spoke at the roundtable on guaranteeing equality and equal dignity for all, focusing on access to justice in the context of equality.

The FRA Director addressed the CoE Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) on fundamental rights challenges in Europe and the work of FRA on 26 June 2014 in Strasbourg. The Director also met with the new Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues on 8 July 2014.

### **3. Examples of joint projects and other types of operational cooperation in different thematic areas**

#### **3.1. FRA-CoE Joint Projects**

*Launch, updates and translations of the Handbook on European data protection law:*

On 28 January 2014 (Data Protection Day), FRA and the CoE, together with the Registry of the ECtHR, launched a practical guide to European data protection law in English. The handbook is the first comprehensive guide to Council of Europe and European Union law on data protection, taking into account the case law of the ECtHR and the Court of Justice of the European Union. It explains how data protection is regulated under EU law as well as the CoE Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, and other CoE instruments.

On 5 June 2014, at the European Conference of Data Protection Authorities in Strasbourg, an updated edition of the handbook on European data protection law was launched and also made available in four additional languages: French, German, Greek and Italian. The handbook will be published in 21 official languages of the EU.

*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/handbook-european-data-protection-law>

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& <http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=echrpublications/other>.



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#### *Update of the Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration and launch of additional language versions:*

On 27 June 2014, the ECtHR and FRA launched an update of their guide to European law on asylum, borders and immigration. As well as updating the material contained in the handbook published last year in English, French, German and Italian, translations in Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek and Hungarian were launched. Additional language versions are in preparation.

#### *For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/handbook-european-law-relating-asylum-borders-and-immigration> & <http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=echrpublications/other>.

#### *Preparation of upcoming handbooks:*

On 12 May 2014, FRA held an inception meeting for drafting the handbook of European law on the rights of the child with the FRA contractor, the Registry of the ECtHR and the CoE's Children's Rights Division. The meeting covered the content and organisational aspects of the handbook's drafting during 2014.

During its plenary meeting on 5 – 6 December 2013, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) formally agreed to cooperation with FRA on a handbook on access to justice in Europe. A follow-up discussion on the choice of specific CEPEJ experts to be involved in the project took place during the meeting of the CEPEJ's Working Group on quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL) on 3 – 4 April 2014.

An update of the FRA/ECtHR non-discrimination handbook is planned for 2016.

### **3.2 Operational cooperation in different thematic areas**

#### *Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance*

The FRA Director took part in a panel on European legal standards on hate speech at a conference entitled 'The hate factor in political speech' on 18 September 2013 in Warsaw. The conference was organised by the Polish Ministry of Administration and Digitalisation and the Council of Europe in partnership with the EEA and Norway Grants.

On 21 – 22 October 2013, FRA took part in the High-Level Conference on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Europe held in Yerevan. The conference was organised in the framework of the Armenian chairmanship of the CoE's Committee of Ministers. It addressed issues related to racism and xenophobia in political discourse, as well as topics related to combating hate speech and racial stereotypes in social networks and media. It also looked at the role of human rights institutions in combating racial and ethnic discrimination in Europe. The two-day conference was attended by high-level state representatives, international and independent experts, and representatives of international organisations.

On 11 November 2013, FRA hosted a stakeholder meeting in Vilnius to discuss ways forward in combating anti-Semitism in the EU. The meeting was attended by the Executive Secretary to CoE's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

On 12 – 13 November 2013, the Fundamental Rights Conference, co-organised by FRA and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, took place in Vilnius. The subject was "Combating hate crime in the EU: Giving victims a face and a voice". The Director General of Democracy at the CoE as well as the Director of Human Rights in the CoE's Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law addressed the event. The Executive Secretary to ECRI attended. The "No Hate Speech Movement" campaign was presented at a workshop of the conference.

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*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/event/2013/fundamental-rights-conference-2013>.

On 25 November 2013, FRA took part in the multi-stakeholder conference organised by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection for National Minorities (FCNM), participating in the panel addressing minority protection and the FCNM in the work of partner international organisations.

*For more information:*

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/6\\_Resources/PDF\\_FCNM\\_15th\\_Anniv\\_Programme\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/6_Resources/PDF_FCNM_15th_Anniv_Programme_en.pdf)

On 12 March 2014, FRA organised a stakeholder/expert meeting on the FRA EU-MIDIS II survey in Vienna. ECRI was one of the stakeholders attending.

On 21 March 2014 (International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), ECRI, FRA and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) issued a joint statement on the central role that political leaders have to play in countering racism and hate crime.

On 28 - 29 April 2014, FRA and the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union organised a seminar in Thessaloniki on how to combat hate crime in the EU. The Executive Secretary to the ECRI participated in the seminar, with the member of ECRI in respect of the United Kingdom also giving a presentation. The seminar was further attended by the General Rapporteur on Combating Racism and Intolerance of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and a representative of the Office of the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights.

On 22 – 23 May 2014, FRA took part in a seminar on the role of national specialised bodies in supporting local authorities in the fight against racism and intolerance, organised by ECRI. During the event FRA presented its modes of cooperation with local and regional actors and explained how it contributed positively to the development of its online toolkit for public officials "Joining up fundamental rights".

#### ➤ **Co-operation related to Roma**

On 4, 14 and 15 October and on 5 November 2013, FRA participated in a series of launch events organised by the CoE to introduce the ROMACT and ROMED II projects in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia respectively. In the framework of the ROMERO partnership, the CoE projects were also presented in cooperation with the Open Society Foundation's Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion project and the FRA's project on Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI). FRA participation in the ROMERO launch events was the beginning of an on-going cooperation with the CoE that carried into the first half of 2014 to look for synergies and complementarities between the ROMED II/ROMACT projects and the LERI project.

On 24 October 2013, FRA hosted a meeting of the Coalition of International Organisations on Roma Inclusion, which includes FRA, the European Commission, CoE, the CoE Development Bank, the World Bank, the Norway Grants, Open Society Foundations and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The meeting discussed the Coalition's objectives, opportunities, and its role in the context of recent developments concerning Roma inclusion at the local level. The potential for synergies and coordination was also explored.

On 19 – 20 February 2014, FRA hosted the 4th meeting of the FRA-Member States Ad-hoc Working Party on Roma Integration. It brought together National Roma Contact Points as well as representatives from the European Commission, FRA Scientific Committee, Eurostat, Eurofund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the CoE (the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues and his support team), the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants. The focus of the meeting was on the development of an indicator framework on Roma integration in the framework of the Charter of

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Fundamental Rights of the EU and in line with the Europe 2020 strategy. The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences and discuss existing approaches to monitor progress in Roma integration.

On 12 March 2014, the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues participated in a FRA consultation meeting on the EU-MIDIS2 survey.

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On 14 – 16 May 2014, FRA took part in the 7th meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee of Experts for Roma Issues (CAHROM) organised by the CoE. FRA provided an update on the FRA Member States Ad-hoc Working Party on Roma Integration and the development of indicators to monitor the progress and implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies (the template of the Structure-Process-Outcome (S-P-O) framework of indicators on Roma inclusion), its LERI project, the upcoming reports on employment, education and gender, and the online data visualisation. FRA also had meetings with the CoE and the European Commission on further develop coordination and cooperation on our respective projects (LERI, ROMED II/ROMACT). The focus of the meeting was on the situation of Roma in Europe and recent policy developments at the national level concerning housing, Roma women including early marriages and Roma children.

#### *Equality and non-discrimination*

##### ➤ **FRA projects related to discrimination on grounds of disability**

On 21 – 22 November 2013, FRA presented some preliminary findings of the project “Children with disabilities: targeted violence and hostility” during the conference “Full inclusion of children and young people with disabilities into society”, organised by the CoE and the Belgian Government.

On 11 February 2014, the CoE participated in an informal peer review meeting to discuss FRA’s draft report presenting human rights indicators on the political participation of persons with disabilities across the EU.

On 5 March, FRA attended the meeting of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Austrian parliament, with particular reference to a proposed report on Equality and including for people with Disabilities.

On 11 April 2014, FRA spoke at an international symposium on human rights and disability, organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the CoE. The symposium looked at political perspectives and existing international legal human rights instruments, and their importance for people with disabilities.

*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2013/political-participation-persons-disabilities?tab=publications>.

In June 2014, FRA provided comments – via the EU delegation to the CoE – in response to a call for comments from CDDH members on a draft Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention) concerning the protection of the human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorder with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment. The comments were prepared in the context of FRA’s status as an observer to the CDDH.

##### ➤ **FRA project: Gender-based violence against women survey**

On 4 March 2014, FRA presented a preview of the results from its study on violence against women to a hearing in the Austrian Parliament in Vienna. The hearing 'Focusing on the victims' needs' was jointly organised by the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence.

On 3 April 2014, FRA gave a presentation in Strasbourg to the CoE’s Gender Equality Commission. FRA was invited to present the results and conclusions of its EU-wide survey on violence against women. The discussions at the Gender Equality Commission were structured around the five strategic objectives of the CoE Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017.

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<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-main-results>.

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FRA took part in the CoE seminar on 'Tackling the gaps in research and the lack of data disaggregated by sex concerning women's equal access to justice', organised by the CoE's Gender Equality Commission (Paris, 26 – 27 June 2014). The seminar aimed to address equal access of women to justice, as part of the CoE Gender Equality Strategy. FRA gave a presentation on the obstacles that victims face in accessing remedies and reporting incidents, and the needs of the victims, drawing on the results from the agency's survey on violence against women.

*For more information:*

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/05conferences/2014ParisSeminarAccessJustice/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/05conferences/2014ParisSeminarAccessJustice/default_en.asp).

On 17 February 2014, the FRA Director took part in the conference 'Not for Sale – Joining Forces against Trafficking in Human Beings' in Vienna. The conference was organised by the Austrian Federal Ministries for European and International Affairs and of the Interior, the CoE, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

On 30 June 2014, FRA took part in a seminar on "Human rights for older persons in Europe: Who cares?" in Brussels. The event was organised jointly by the CoE, the European Commission's DG Employment and AGE Platform Europe.

*Rights of the Child*

➤ **FRA project: Children and Justice**

On 26 September 2013, FRA took part in the 6th steering group meeting of the European Commission's study to collect data on children in judicial proceedings. During the meeting, steering group members shared information about current work of the Commission, CoE, and FRA, including how the work is interlinked. They also discussed further cooperation on child-friendly versions of the CoE guidelines on access to justice for children.

FRA presented the preliminary findings of its children and justice project at a high-level conference in Dubrovnik that took place from 26 to 28 March 2014. The CoE event was entitled "Growing with children's rights: Progress of Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on Children Rights 2012-2015".

On 19 May 2014, FRA took part in a one-day working meeting in Strasbourg, organised by the Children's Rights Division of the CoE. The goal of the meeting was to explore the possibilities of developing a child-friendly version of the CoE guidelines on child-friendly justice.

On 11 June 2014, FRA took part in a one-day strategic planning meeting in Paris on how to implement the CoE's child-friendly justice guidelines and best assist national actors in the justice system.

*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/children-and-justice>.

*Asylum, immigration and integration of migrants; visa and border control*

On 21 – 22 November 2013, FRA took part in the conference on "Immigration detention in Europe: Establishing common concerns and developing minimum standards" in Strasbourg. The conference was organised jointly by the CoE and the UK National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). The event underlined the need for developing immigration detention standards and identified the major elements of such standards.

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Within the reporting period, the CoE actively participated in the “Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights”, which is co-chaired by FRA and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

During autumn 2013, it commented on the draft FRA report on criminalisation of irregular migrants and persons who engage with them.

During autumn 2013, FRA also engaged with ECRI in support of its work to develop a general policy recommendation on irregular migrants. FRA was drawing upon the findings of its report on fundamental rights of irregular migrants and relevant follow-up work, such as fundamental rights guidance on practices to apprehend irregular migrants and the paper on criminalisation of irregular migrants and persons who engage with them.

#### *Access to efficient and independent justice*

On 1 October 2013, the Vice-President of the CoE's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice visited the FRA. The Vice-President met with the Director as well as FRA staff working on justice-related issues to discuss areas of cooperation, including data collection and indicators.

On 3 – 4 April 2014, FRA participated in an academic conference on “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Europe” in Innsbruck, organised under the Austrian Chairmanship of the CoE's Committee of Ministers. FRA's presentation focused on 'The rule of law and the role of fundamental rights indicators'.

On 7 – 8 October 2013, the conference 'Strengthening fundamental rights protection together in a changing human rights landscape' was organised jointly by FRA, the CoE, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet) and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI). The CoE Commissioner for Human Rights and the FRA Director addressed the conference. Representatives from various human rights bodies across the EU discussed how to work together to enhance human rights protection at the national, European and international level. It was the first time that National Human Rights Institutions, Equality Bodies and Ombudsperson Institutions across Europe had come together in one place with the CoE, FRA, the UN and ODIHR.

#### ➤ **FRA project: 'Joining up Fundamental Rights' toolkit**

On 15 November 2013, FRA presented its joined-up fundamental rights toolkit to the CoE's European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy in Strasbourg. FRA discussed the use and further development of the toolkit with representatives of local and regional authorities of CoE member states.

*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2011/joined-governance-connecting-fundamental-rights>.

On 27 – 28 March 2014, FRA presented its 'Joining up fundamental rights' toolkit during a workshop on developing and implementing national action plans for human rights in Strasbourg. The event was organised by the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of current initiatives and encourage the development of new action plans. FRA's toolkit is an online collection of tools on how to implement fundamental rights across all levels and sectors of government.

*For more information:*

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/systematic-human-rights-work>

#### *Information Society, Privacy and Data Protection*

On 24 – 25 September 2013, FRA took part in the “Transparency to protect internet freedom: a shared commitment” multi-stakeholder dialogue meeting on enhanced cooperation for informed decision making in Strasbourg, organised by the CoE.

On 7 – 8 November 2013, FRA participated in the “Conference on freedom of expression and democracy in the digital age – opportunities, rights, responsibilities” in Belgrade. The ministerial conference addressed issues related to access to the internet and fundamental rights, threats to journalism, media pluralism,



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diversity and hate speech online. The conference adopted a political declaration that will guide the future work of the CoE in the coming years.

FRA staff participated in a conference for legal experts entitled “Working together for Europe. Interrelations between the Council of Europe, European Union and Member States,” organised under the Austrian Chairmanship of the CoE’s Committee of Ministers on 15 November 2013 in Vienna. The conference addressed issues of cooperation and coordination between the EU and the CoE in specific fields such as data protection, online media, cybercrime and non-discrimination.

On 3 – 6 December 2013, FRA staff participated in the 5th meeting of the CoE's Steering Committee on Media and the Information Society (CDMSI). The discussion focused, among others things, on the draft Guide on human rights for Internet users.

On 16 January 2014, a stakeholder meeting was organised at the FRA premises in Vienna to discuss FRA’s involvement in the area of information society and to elaborate concrete suggestions for future projects. The CoE was represented by the following persons: the CoE’s Coordinator for Information Society and Internet Governance, a Bureau member of the CoE's Steering Committee on Media and the Information Society (CDMSI) and member of the CoE's expert group on rights of internet users (MSI-DUI), the representative of Germany in the CDMSI and Chair of the CoE’s Committee of experts on cross-border flow of Internet traffic and Internet freedom (MSI-INT), and the representative of Austria in the CDMSI.

#### ➤ **FRA project: Access to Data Protection Remedies in EU Member States**

On 13 – 14 March 2014, FRA presented the results of the FRA report on access to data protection remedies in EU Member States at a conference in Graz on ‘Shaping the Digital Environment – Ensuring our Rights on the Internet’. The conference was organised by the government of Austria in cooperation with the CoE. The event assessed the challenges faced by internet users to protect their human rights and suggested area of activities that the next internet governance strategy of the CoE (2016 – 2019) should focus on.

*For more information:*

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/access-data-protection-remedies-eu-member-states>.

On 12 – 13 June 2014, FRA took part in the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG 2014) event in Berlin. This year's theme was ‘Digital society at stake – Europe and the future of the Internet’. During the workshop ‘Hate speech and its consequences for human rights online’, FRA presented relevant findings from its latest surveys: the EU LGBT survey, its survey of Jewish people’s experiences and perceptions of discrimination and hate crime in European Union Member States, and its survey on gender-based violence against women.

#### CoE-FRA-Equinet-ENNHRI cooperation

On 7 - 8 October 2013, the CoE, FRA, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet) and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) organised a meeting on “Strengthening fundamental rights protection together in a changing human rights landscape” in Vienna. The joint meeting focused on how the current economic situation has an impact on fundamental rights protection and on national institutions with a human rights remit. One hundred participants from thirty-six European countries representing national human rights institutions, equality bodies and ombudsmen, as well as the UN and ODIHR took part in this meeting.

The meeting set the scene for closer cooperation among national bodies and between national and international bodies. It was agreed to establish platforms for collaboration on pressing topics, such as asylum and migration, Roma integration, combating hate crime, and advancing social and economic rights and socio-economic equality. This idea was further elaborated on in a meeting organised by the CoE in Brussels

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on 20 January, where it was agreed that the FRA would coordinate the platforms on hate crime and asylum/migration, and the CoE would coordinate the ones on Roma integration and social and economic rights.

On 14 May 2014, FRA, ENNHRI and Equinet, with a contribution from ECRI, invited communication officers from the respective institutions and network-members to explore ways of developing cooperation in communication in Vienna. The aims of the meeting were to enhance the existing communication channels and to find new ways of cooperation and mutual support in communicating fundamental rights at the national and European levels. The meeting was also an opportunity to learn and exchange good practices, and to get concrete ideas to set up the four thematic platforms (Migration and Asylum, hate crime, Roma integration, and social rights).