

Introducing FRA

the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union established the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to provide independent, evidence-based assistance and expertise on fundamental rights to EU institutions and Member States. FRA is an independent EU body, funded by the Union's budget.

What we do

1) Large-scale surveys

- First EU-wide survey of experiences of discrimination and victimisation of immigrants and ethnic minorities (EU- MIDIS): 23,500 people from immigrant and ethnic minority groups. A follow-up survey is currently underway.
- Largest ever survey on gender-based violence against women in all EU Member States: 42,000 women.
- Largest ever EU-wide survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender hate crime and discrimination: 93,000 LGBT people.
- Survey to show the living conditions and situation of discrimination among Roma: 85,000 people.
- Antisemitism survey: 6,000 Jewish people.
- An EU-wide fundamental rights survey among the general population of their views and experiences: in progress

2) Comparative legal or social research

- Victim support services in the EU: an overview and assessment of victims' rights in practice
- Hate crime in the European Union
- Data protection remedies and surveillance by intelligence services
- Severe labour exploitation
- Access to justice
- Children and justice
- Fundamental rights of irregular migrants in the EU
- Fundamental rights of people with disabilities

3) Handbooks for legal practitioners

These handbooks present EU legislation and case law in an accessible way. FRA has covered the following topics:

- asylum, borders and immigration;
- child rights;
- data protection;
- non-discrimination.

FRA also holds annual flagship fundamental rights conferences. These conferences bring together 300–400 key stakeholders, ranging from EU to national and local institutions, civil society organisations and practitioners, to discuss specific issues. For example: fundamental rights and migration to the EU (2014); hate crime (2013); access to justice in times of austerity (2012); fundamental rights of irregular migrants (2011); and rights of the child (2010). In 2016, FRA will bring together people from all walks of life for its innovative, forward-looking Fundamental Rights Forum. The event promises to connect practitioners, grassroots workers, thinkers and high-level decision makers in an inclusive and open platform where where migration, inclusion, security and the digital age and how they interrelate will come under the spotlight.

Who we work with

FRA maintains close links with relevant institutions and organisations at all levels:

- the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and EU agencies;
- national government authorities, particularly through its network of National Liaison Officers, who act as main contact points for FRA in Member States, and through thematic working groups on Roma and hate crime bringing together Member States' representatives to develop good practices for implementation nationally;

- international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
- civil society organisations, academic institutions, equality bodies and national human rights institutions.

FRA organises smaller meetings with governmental experts and other stakeholders to support the follow-up of its research findings. These meetings pool knowledge and highlight promising practices that could help address specific fundamental rights challenges.

FRA engages in structured dialogue with civil society through the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP). The FRP is the agency's channel for cooperation and information exchange with almost 400 civil society organisations, working on numerous fundamental rights issues across the EU. The platform brings together a diverse group of actors on the European, national and local levels. It is a unique forum that allows for a truly European debate on fundamental rights. The platform meets once a year.

What we work on

A five-year Multi-annual Framework defines the nine thematic areas of FRA's work:

- access to justice;
- victims of crime, including compensation to victims;
- information society and, in particular, respect for private life and the protection of personal data;
- Roma integration;
- judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters;
- rights of the child;
- discrimination;
- immigration and integration of migrants, visa and border control, and asylum;
- racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

These areas frame the agency's various projects.

The European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission can request research or an opinion on a specific topic outside the agency's work programme, including in the course of legislative procedures. Member States can request comparative data and information from FRA to inform national policy developments.

How FRA work is valued

EU and national institutions often refer to FRA data, opinions and reports; such as:

- European Parliament Annual Fundamental Rights Report and numerous parliamentary resolutions on different fundamental rights issues;
- EU Council conclusions on combating hate crime and violence against women;
- European Commission's Communication on Roma integration and its anti- trafficking strategy;
- UN General Assembly report on racism;
- Parliamentary discussions in 11 Member States

"The reports that provide comparative and reliable data covering all Member States are very much appreciated by EU institutions. These types of reports compare the factual situation in different Member States and support policy-making on the EU level."

(FRA's independent external evaluation 2012)

Who we are

FRA's Director guides and manages the agency. The Management Board is responsible for defining the agency's work programme, approving its budget and monitoring its work. The Board comprises independent experts, one appointed by each Member State, two European Commission representatives and one independent expert appointed by the Council of Europe. The agency also has a Scientific Committee of external experts, which guarantees the quality of its work.

FRA facts

- **Director:** Michael O'Flaherty
- **Established:** 2007
- **Location:** Vienna, Austria
- **Staff:** 105 plus seconded national experts and interns
- **Budget:** €21.2m
FRA costs each European taxpayer €0.04 each year 73% of budget spent on operational activities