

MINUTES 45th MB MEETING

Event:	45th Management Board Meeting
Date:	23-24 May 2024
Place:	FRA, Schwarzenbergplatz 11, 1040 Vienna
Status:	Final
Participants:	
Members:	Jim Clarken (IE, Chairperson), Els Keytsman (BE), Irena Ilieva (BG), Veronika Bilkova (CZ), Christoffer Badse (DK, alternate), Anne Peters (DE), Paloma Kröödt Tupay (EE, alternate), Miltiadis Sarigiannidis (EL), Yolanda Gamarra (ES), Florence Merloz (FR, alternate), Snježana Bagić (HR), Maria Stylianou-Lottides (CY), Dace Šulmane (LV, alternate), Lyra Jakulevičienė (LT), Balázs Gerencsér (HU, alternate), Giannino Caruana Demajo (MT), Rick Lawson (NL), Ines Ferreira Leite (PT, alternate), Csaba Ferenc Asztalos (RO), Katarina Vatovec (SI, alternate), Katarína Batková (SK), Tuomas Ojanen (FI), Per Bergling (SE), Philippe Boillat (CoE)
Representatives COM:	Ingrid Bellander Todino (DG JUST)
Director	Sirpa Rautio
Operational services:	Andreas Accardo (Head of Institutional Cooperation and Networks Unit), Siobhan McInerney-Lankford (Head of Equality, Roma & Social Rights Unit), Constantinos Manolopoulos (Head of Corporate Services Unit), Nicole Romain (Head of Communication and Events Unit), Adriano Silvestri (Deputising for Head of Justice, Digital and Migration Unit), Andreas Miltos (Accountant), Adrianna Bochenek (Director's Office), Francesco Saverio Liguori (Corporate Services Unit), Elena Balzarini (MB Secretariat), Vittoria Gattini (Trainee in Director's Office)
Excused:	Italy, Poland, Austria, Luxembourg
Alternates (<i>when Members are present</i>)/Observers/Guests/:	Katerina Kallitsioni (CY alternate), Michal Davala (SK alternate) Paul Hafellner (DG JUST alternate); Evis Alimehmeti (OBS AL); Gentian Zyberi (OBS SC); Maria Ruotanen (CoE, Day 2), Gisella Gory (CoE), Daniele-Nicola Cangemi (CoE, Day 2), Dennis Van Der Veur (OBS EIGE Day 1); Maruša Gortnar (OBS EIGE Day 2)

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1 Opening remarks and approval of the draft agenda, possible conflicts of interest

Main Conclusions:	
1.1	The Chairperson opened the 45 th MB meeting and welcomed all participants.
1.2	The Chairperson reminded the MB about the annual declaration of conflict of interest and asked if any conflict of interest needed to be reported on items of the agenda. No conflict of interest was reported.
1.3	The Chairperson asked if there was any comment on the draft agenda of the meeting. As no comments were raised, the draft agenda of the 45 th MB meeting was approved.
Decision:	A. The agenda of the 45 th Management Board meeting was approved.

2 Welcome of the new Director and exchange of views

Main Conclusions:	
2.1	The Chairperson welcomed the Director Sirpa Rautio to her first MB meeting.
2.2	The Director provided a summary of her three months at FRA since her appointment stressing the importance of the personnel and the staff wellbeing; the internal management and processes; the quality control, workflows, and staff wellbeing. She informed about the mandatory introductory trainings she received .
2.3	The Director also updated the MB on internal activities, namely meetings with the FRA Scientific Committee and the FRA National Liaison Officers at the very start of her appointment. She also informed of several external meetings, including meeting with different services of the European Commission and with the European Court of Auditors.

3 Approval of the draft minutes of the 44th MB meeting

Main Conclusions:	
3.1	The draft minutes of the 44 th Management Board meeting and of the Extraordinary MB meeting of 28 February 2024 were presented to the MB to be approved.
3.2	As no comments on the minutes were received, the Board approved the minutes of the 44 th MB meeting and the minutes of the extraordinary MB meeting of 28 February 2024.
Decision:	B. The minutes of the 44 th Management Board meeting and the extraordinary meeting of 28 February 2024 were approved

4 a) Report from the 72nd and 73rd Executive Board Meeting and on the Chairperson's activities

b) Report of the Director on the work of FRA in the last period

Main Conclusions:

- 4.1 The Vice-Chairperson, Rick Lawson, reported back from the 72nd Executive Board Meeting of 21 March, which he chaired. During the meeting the EB adopted two decisions of administrative nature: one on the new Implementing Rule on the probationary period for the Director; the second decision related to opting out from the Commission's decision on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment in order to wait for a tailor-made rules which are more suitable for the agencies.
- 4.2 He also recalled that an MB decision on the authorisation of outside activities of the former Director was adopted as no conflict of interest between his previous position as the Director of the Agency and his new one as the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe was detected.
- 4.3 The Chairperson reported back from the 73rd EB, which took place in the morning during which the members mainly prepared the 45th MB.
- 4.4 The Director updated on the Agency's activities since the last MB meeting. She presented key outputs and progress of work in the operational Units, her external engagements and pertinent developments in the area of internal governance of the Agency. The Director's report was warmly welcomed, and the MB expressed appreciation for the Agency's work and achievements since the last MB meeting.

5 Update and discussion on EU-Fundamental Rights Policy developments (COM)

Main Conclusions:

5.1 The Commission provided an overview of recent fundamental rights policy developments. The Commission representative updated the Board on policy developments and highlighted the first-time holding of a European citizens panel on tackling hatred in society, a participatory method to develop citizen recommendations to the European Commission. She provided an overview of relevant EU legislation adopted since the last MB: Artificial Intelligence Act, Directive on combating domestic violence and violence against women; two Directives on common standards for equality bodies; European Disability Card and Parking Card for persons with disabilities; Migration and Asylum Pact consisting of 10 legislative texts; Forced Labour Regulation; revised Single Permit Directive, and finally the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. She informed about upcoming implementation/evaluation reports on Commission strategies, stressing the importance of FRA survey data in this context, including as regards the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, the Anti-Racism Action Plan, the Antisemitism Strategy, and the Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. She referred to the adoption of the Commission recommendation on integrated child protection systems, thanking for the good cooperation with FRA, as well as the Commission recommendation on civic participation and the updated Code of Conduct against online hate speech. Finally, she mentioned the forthcoming Commission reports on the rule of law (July) and on protecting and promoting fundamental rights through funding (October), expressing appreciation for FRA’s contribution to those.

6 a) Adoption of the Fundamental Rights Report 2024 and b) discussion and selection of the topics for the FRR 2025

Main Conclusions:	
6.1	MB members were presented with the Fundamental Rights Report 2024 by the Chairperson of the Annual Report Editorial Committee (AREdit). They were reminded of the adopted new structure, which consist of a general introductory chapter and three thematic chapters.
6.2	Following a discussion among the members, a modification was introduced contextualising a quote on ECRI. The Fundamental Rights Report 2024 was then adopted with the said modification.
6.3	The Board also discussed and selected the following three topics for the thematic chapters of the FRR 2025: corporate sustainability due diligence: human rights challenges; effectively protecting women victims of violence; respect for fundamental rights in the electoral context.
Decision:	<p>C. The Management Board adopted the Fundamental Rights Report 2024</p> <p>D. The Management Board selected the following three topics for the thematic chapters: of the FRR 2025: corporate sustainability due diligence: human rights challenges; effectively protecting women victims of violence ; respect for fundamental rights in the electoral context</p>

7 Financial matters

Main Conclusions:

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7.1 The Board received an update on financial matters, including on the budget consumption in 2023.

8 Adoption of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023

Main Conclusions:

8.1 The Management Board was presented with the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023.

8.2 The Management Board adopted the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023.

Decision: E. The Management Board adopted the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023.

9 Opinion of the MB on the Final Accounts 2023

Main Conclusions:

9.1 The FRA Accounting Officer presented the Agency's 2023 Final Accounts.

9.2 The Management Board adopted its opinion on the Final Accounts 2023.

Decision: F. The Management Board adopted its opinion on the Agency's Final Accounts 2023.

10 a) Budgetary transfer 2024_01 and b) Amendment of the Programming Document 2024 – 2026

Main Conclusions:

10.1 The Head of Corporate Services (CS) introduced the first budgetary transfer which covers a transfer of surplus from Title I and II to the operational expenditures in Title III. In addition, internal transfers will take place within Title III.

10.2 The Management Board adopted the budgetary transfer n.1 and the amendment n. 1 of the Programming Document 2024-2026.

Decision: G. The Management Board adopted the Budget transfer 2024-01 and the amendment n. 1 of the Programming Document 2024-2026.

11 Amending budget 2024-01

Main Conclusions:

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11.1 The Head of Corporate Services presented the proposed amending budget n. 1 providing a detailed explanation about the funds received by the Agency including from the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) of the EEA & Norway Grants, the Greek Ombudsman (project funded by the EEA & Norway Grants), the Austrian authorities (rent subsidy) and the Romanian prosecutor's office.

11.2 The Management Board discussed and adopted the Amending Budget 2024-01.

Decision:	H. The Management Board adopted the amending budget 2024-01.
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12 Budget Committee (BC): Election of one member

Main Conclusions:

12.1 The Chairperson informed about a vacant position in the Budget Committee

12.2 Katarina Batková (SK) submitted her candidacy .

12.3 The Management Board elected Katarina Batková (SK) as member of the Budget Committee for a term of two-and-a-half years starting on 24th May 2024

Decision:	I. The Management Board elected Katarina Batková (SK) as member of the Budget Committee for a term of two-and-a-half years starting on 24 th May 2024
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13 Update on the Draft Programming Document 2025-2027

Main Conclusions:

13.1 The Board received an update on the SPD 2025-2027 that will be adopted in December.

13.2 Ahead of its formal opinion, the Commission provided its informal views mentioning the importance of FRA's surveys and the timely provision of data to support COM's policy making. COM invited to continue the commitment to allocate sufficient resources to: supporting the implementation of the Commission recommendation on integrated child protection systems; technical support to Member State on developing their antisemitism data collection systems; supporting the implementation of AI Act, in particular fundamental rights related guidance documents to be developed; and to the compliance with fundamental rights when implementing the Migration and Asylum Pact, in particular as regards the development of independent border monitoring systems.

13.3 The Commission also welcomed the planned work on: digitalisation, as regards the interface between illegal hate speech and freedom of expression; the role of national human rights institutions in ensuring compliance with the Charter; and on the support to upholding the rule of law.

14 Director’s note on the development of the Single Programming Document 2026 – 2028

Main Conclusions:	
14.1	The Director outlined the proposed priorities for 2026 receiving strong support from the Board.
14.2	Members of the MB made several suggestions, including enhancing the cooperation with national mechanisms by creating a platform for dialogue to communicate to national actors; finding a strategy to adapt to geopolitical changes in an agile manner while being conscious of the available resources, both human and financial.

15 Reporting back from the Fundamental Rights Forum 2024

Main Conclusions:	
15.1	The MB heard from the members who attended the FRF2024 (in person or remotely). They highlighted and complimented FRA staff on the organisation of the Forum mentioning the variety of topics and the different methods of delivery. In particular, the participation of young people and guests from different backgrounds was highly appreciated.
15.2	The Agency’s Services provided a brief feedback and informed that a formal evaluation of the Forum is ongoing.

16 Exchange of views with the Council of Europe and the cooperation between the Agency and the CoE

Main Conclusions:	
16.1	The Management Board held an exchange of views with Marja Ruotanen, Director General (DG II) of “Democracy and Human Dignity” of the CoE, who provided an extensive overview of the FRA-CoE cooperation.
16.2	She informed about the Reykjavik Declaration and highlighted topics for FRA-CoE cooperation: work with and on civil society, youth, social and environmental sustainability, Ukraine, VAW, Istanbul Convention and LGBTQI .
16.3	The Director took the opportunity to remind the Board of the establishment of a FRA Youth Advisory Panel in the upcoming months. During the discussion, FRA was invited and encouraged to cooperate with the Venice Commission.

17 Promotion and use of FRA’s work at the national level: presentation of activities from MB members.

Main Conclusions:	
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- 17.1 MB members provided some examples on activities undertaken to promote FRA’s work at national level: referencing FRA’s work among the sources of academic publication; inviting FRA experts at conferences; regularly liaising with NLOs and the “FRA Family” to update them on what FRA activities and strengthen liaison methods. FRA reminded the MB of the availability of FRA experts and material (including publications in several EU languages) to be used in the organisation of activities in their professional national context.
- 17.2 A suggestion was made inviting each MB member to think about a national engagement event per year.

18 Thematic discussion - Update on FRA’s role within Artificial Intelligence Act and b) Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

Main Conclusions:	
18.1	The MB was presented with FRA’s work and role in the context of the Artificial Intelligence Act and the newly adopted Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. The Board welcomed positively the two presentations and made some considerations regarding the importance of regular research on developing methodology to ensure that AI systems are in line with fundamental rights regulations and how the cooperation between FRA and the CoE is evolving.
18.2	Particular attention was given to the expertise that FRA has in company law and about the possibility to externally source through contactors this expertise.

19 Any other business

Main Conclusions:	
19.1	The Chairperson informed that the next 46 th MB meeting which will take place online on 27 th September 2024.

20 In-camera session

Main Conclusions:	
The Management Board discussed confidential matters.	

Date of the next meeting: 27 September 2024

Approved on:	27 September 2024
By the Chair:	