

FRA Press Release
Vienna, 30 May 2017

Bridging the gap between policies and reality: FRA's Fundamental Rights Report 2017

Over the last decade, new fundamental rights laws and policies have been adopted and specialist institutions created. But fundamental rights challenges still remain and rights are under attack, underlining the lack of a fundamental rights culture across institutions and societies, as the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) reveals in its 2017 Fundamental Rights Report.

"We have the laws and the structures to protect human rights in the EU, but we are losing people's trust that they will deliver," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). "We have to give a robust reply to those who challenge the very system of rights protection and demonstrate to people that human rights make a better society for everyone. We need rights to fight the massive inequalities that plague society, such as child poverty and violence against women, and ensure justice for all."

Ten years after FRA's establishment, this year's [Fundamental Rights Report](#) reflects on the highlights and shortfalls of human rights protection in the EU over the last decade. The report summarises and analyses major human rights developments in the EU over 2016, with [proposals for action](#) covering the EU's Fundamental Rights Charter and its use by Member States; equality and non-discrimination; racism, xenophobia and related intolerance; Roma integration; asylum, borders and migration; information society, privacy and data protection; child rights; access to justice; and implementing the UN's disability convention.

To enhance rights protection in the EU, the report makes proposals including:

- **Use the Charter of Fundamental Rights'** full potential in national legislation and case law as well as in EU policy cycles like the European Semester to deliver on equality and justice for all across the EU. The creation of an EU internal strategic framework for fundamental rights and the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights would further strengthen rights protection in the EU.
- **Counter the erosion in the commitment to fundamental rights and values.** Against a backdrop of mounting intolerance and xenophobic rhetoric, low trust in public institutions, and backsliding in certain aspects of the rule of law, new ways to explain why rights matter to and for everyone must be found.
- **Support human rights defenders.** With fundamental rights under attack, human rights defenders need to be empowered and enabled. Civil society's frontline role in promoting and protecting rights needs to be safeguarded. Building on national human rights institutions and support networks with appropriate resources can also increase the collective ownership of fundamental rights.

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