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Meeting: GR-EXT – 6 March 2018

Item reference: 3. Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

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Réunion : GR-EXT – 6 mars 2018

Référence du point : 3. Coopération entre le Conseil de l'Europe et l'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne

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Overview of the co-operation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe

(1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017)

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Part I. Objectives, methods and review of co-operation

1. Introduction

The co-operation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (the Agency or FRA) and the Council of Europe (CoE) is based on the FRA Founding Regulation¹ and on the Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on co-operation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe, which was adopted in 2008.² This Agreement established a general co-operation 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 co-operation, the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) decided not to revise the Agreement for the time-being as it provides for an appropriate and flexible instrument for co-operation.

The co-operation 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 co-operation and provides concrete examples of co-operation activities in relevant fields from the period 1 January 2017 – 1 December 2017.

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

The key objectives and strategic priorities of the co-operation relate to the promotion and protection of human rights, as identified through a thorough exchange of views between the Agency and the CoE. The co-operation 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 co-operation 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 2013.³

- 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 co-operation, except in criminal matters;
- f) Rights of the child;
- 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.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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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3. Methods and review of co-operation

3.1. Permanent mechanisms of co-operation

Different mechanisms laid down in the Agency's Founding Regulation and in the EU-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 Chairperson of the FRA Management Board and the FRA Director contribute further towards an efficient co-operation between the two organisations.

Moreover, the CoE is associated with FRA's work with civil society organisations, mainly through FRA's Fundamental Rights Platform.

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 (*Fundamental Rights Report*) in particular. In addition, Article 3 of the Agreement between the EU and the CoE on co-operation 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 co-operation. The Council of Europe is part of the pre-selection panel of the members of the Scientific Committee, which verify the eligibility of candidates.

3.2. Forms of co-operation at operational level

The operational co-operation between the FRA and the CoE is an ongoing day-to-day process. This co-operation 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. Such exchanges ensure cross-references of each other's work.

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) and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The ECtHR case law regularly cites the Agency's reports.⁴ ECRI's reports also make regular reference to FRA's work, in particular the EU-MIDIS and the LGBT surveys as well as the *Fundamental Rights Report*. Similarly, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) refers to FRA data in its country reports.⁵ FRA also cooperates with 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 Venice Commission, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, 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.

⁴ See for example: ECtHR, *Bălșan v. Romania* (application no. 49645/09), 23 May 2017 on violence against women.

⁵ See for example: GREVIO, [Baseline Evaluation Report – Denmark](#), 24 November 2017.

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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, as well as reports of the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights. FRA also has an online overview for the 28 EU member States of the status of acceptance of international human rights obligations (UN and CoE). In addition, these comparative tables include data on acceptance of specific provisions of the European Social Charter and the percentage of compliance with these as assessed by the European Committee of Social Rights as well as core statistics from the ECtHR on cases related to the 28.⁶ 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 supported by FRA data and findings. For example, the ECRI's fifth monitoring reports on France, Italy, and the United Kingdom refer and use data and information of FRA research as evidence, in particular the EU-MIDIS survey, the LGBT survey, the Roma survey, the opinion on the Framework Decision on Racism and xenophobia – with special attention to the rights of victims of crime and the thematic reports on Access to effective remedies: the Asylum-seeker perspective and Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Moreover, the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) makes reference to FRA reports and surveys (e.g. EU-MIDIS Roma survey, Indicators Framework developed by the Roma Working Party facilitated by FRA; FRA thematic reports on education, housing and gender) in its thematic reports.

For more information: <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/library/publications.asp#TopOfPage> & <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom>

Such cross-references contribute to disseminating on a reciprocal basis the results of the respective activities of the CoE and 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 co-operation

Co-operation 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 co-operation during exchanges of views with the independent person appointed by the CoE 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, and contribute further towards an enhanced collaboration.

Part II. Projects and activities undertaken (1 January 2017 – 1 December 2017)

1. Examples of inter-institutional and regulatory co-operation

The independent person appointed by the CoE participated in the FRA Executive Board meetings (1 March, 18 May and 29 September 2017) and the FRA Management Board meetings (18 and 19 May and 29 September 2017). The CoE Secretariat representative participated in all FRA Management Board meetings as observer.

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 with a view to its adoption in the FRA Management Board. It considers the first draft of the text and provides comments and recommendations.

⁶ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/int-obligations>

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On 14 November, the FRA Director visited the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. During his visit he met the Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the European Court of Human Rights and addressed the Rapporteur Group on External Relations of the Committee of Ministers. He also met representatives from the Directorates General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, including Director General and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, and of Democracy. During these meetings, the FRA delegation discussed continued co-operation between FRA and the Council of Europe.

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

On 13 November, a FRA representative presented the Agency's work to approximately 50 staff members of the ECtHR Registry and discussed with them the possibility to enhance FRA co-operation with the Court. The presentation was followed by a meeting with the new FRA contact person at the Council of Europe.

The European Union Fundamental Rights Information system (EFRIS)

Various preparatory meetings took place during 2017 to discuss the setting-up of EFRIS. On 20 and 21 June 2017, Council of Europe representatives took part in FRA's first meeting on EFRIS to explore visions, technical solutions, and possible coverage for the creation of this online tool facilitating access to existing human rights resources. This project seeks to create a tool linking up data, information and jurisprudence on EU member States' commitments and compliance with international human rights law. This online tool aims at enhancing awareness, understanding and usage of human rights and to guide potential users to the rich resources of the Council of Europe and the UN in particular.

On 30 November and 1 December, a FRA representative and the IT company who is developing the EFRIS tool engaged with a range of entities of the Council of Europe in relation to EFRIS. The meeting serves to better understand how EFRIS can access information from the Council of Europe.

3. Examples of joint projects and other types of operational co-operation in different thematic areas

3.1. FRA-CoE Joint Projects

a. Update of the Handbook on European data protection law

The Handbook on European data protection law, jointly prepared by the FRA and the Council of Europe, including the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights 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. An update is planned in 2018 and regular meetings and teleconferences between the Agency, staff from the European Data Protection Supervisor, the Council of Europe, and the European Court of Human Rights took place in 2017 to discuss and review in details the final draft of the update with the contractor.

The HELP course on data protection and privacy rights was updated in March 2017 using as one of the sources the FRA/Council of Europe Handbook.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/handbook-european-data-protection-law> & <http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/otherpublications&c>. & <http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/>

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b. Update of the Handbook on European non-discrimination law

The Handbook on European non-discrimination law is jointly produced by the European Court of Human Rights and the FRA. It is a comprehensive guide to non-discrimination law and relevant key concepts. An update of this Handbook is planned for 2018.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2011/handbook-european-non-discrimination-law> & <http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/otherpublications&c>

3.2. Operational co-operation in different thematic areas

a. Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance

On 6 February 2017, the Council of Europe's programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) began its 'HELP in the 28' course 'Fight against Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Transphobia'. The programme was developed to help member States implement the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) at the national level. The FRA/CoE Handbook on anti-discrimination was used as source in the development of the course. The Agency presented its initiatives in the area of hate crime, elaborating on the positive duty of the state to investigate hate/racist motives beyond the mere investigation of the crime. The course is available for free at the HELP online platform.

For more information see: <http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/>

ECRI is participating and contributing to the subgroup led by FRA "on methodologies for recording and collecting data on hate crime", set up in the framework of the EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The Subgroup is tasked with identifying practices to support a methodology to ensure proper recording of hate crime by law enforcement authorities.

As every year, ECRI and FRA, jointly with the OSCE/ODIHR, issued a statement on 21 March 2017 to mark the international day for the elimination of racial discrimination. This year's statement focussed on the importance of Education as essential tool to preventing incitement to hatred and countering hate speech in the digital age.

For more information see:

<https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Library/PressReleases/JointStatement2017-243-en.pdf>

b. Co-operation related to Roma and Travellers

On 25 January 2017, the Agency presented selected Roma findings from its second EU minorities and discrimination survey to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg at a meeting organised by the Support Team to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues. The aim was to inform different Council of Europe stakeholders about the survey background and methodology, and to enhance co-operation in different thematic areas.

On 24 April 2017, the Agency shared its experiences of working with Roma communities during the closing workshop of the ROMED2 programme in Germany, a joint programme implemented by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It talked about how it carried out participatory action research and involved Roma communities during its Local Engagement for Roma inclusion (LERI) research. The meeting brought together local partners, mediators, trainers and Roma and Sinti from the participating cities to reflect on the ROMED experience in Germany, and to discuss sustainable actions for the future.

On 31 May-3 June 2017, a FRA representative participated in the 13th CAHROM plenary and presented an update on EU-MIDIS II survey results and indicators. The report of the CAHROM thematic visit in Greece of October 2016, in which FRA participated for the first time, was examined at the CAHROM plenary meeting in spring 2017.

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On 6-7 November 2017, FRA participated in the sixth International Conference on Roma Women with the focus on political representation of Women in the particular case of Roma and Traveller Women. The Agency presented in a panel on empowering and mentoring Roma and Traveller Women- data from the EU-MIDIS II and some hands-on experiences from its project

c. Equality and non-discrimination

i. FRA projects related to the rights of persons with disabilities

FRA regularly takes part in meetings of the Council of Europe Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH), where it presents the Agency's work on disability rights and participates in the discussions framing the future activities of the Committee. Through this engagement, FRA has engaged repeatedly in the development of the new Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023.

From 27 to 29 September 2017, the Agency took part in the sixth meeting of the Council of Europe's Ad Hoc Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Strasbourg. FRA presented its work developing human rights indicators to measure implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/indicators-right-political-participation-people-disabilities> & <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2014/rights-persons-disabilities-right-independent-living/indicators>

d. Rights of LGBTI persons

On 9 June 2017, the Agency presented the legal aspects of intersectional and multiple discrimination at a conference on 'Being Roma and LGBTI: at the crossroads of discrimination' organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The event brought together representatives of international organisations and NGOs working on multiple discrimination, as well as grassroots activists who have been building bridges between the Roma and LGBTI movements.

On 29 June 2017, the Agency spoke about findings from its [LGBTI legal update](#) during a hearing on the rights of intersex people organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination. The hearing helped to prepare a report on promoting the human rights of and eliminating discrimination against intersex people. During FRA's presentation, the Agency emphasised how the LGBTI legal update chapter dealing with the fundamental rights of intersex people was developed in close co-operation with the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights office. The data which FRA collected for its own analysis was shared with the Commissioner's office at an early stage, in order to contribute to the Commissioner's work on that topic.

e. Rights of the Child

The Council of Europe attended a Conference organised by FRA in Vienna on 28 April 2017 on "Improving child participation in justice and beyond", where the FRA report on "Child-Friendly Justice – Experiences and perspectives of children" was presented.

FRA also contributed, by submitting comments, to the preparation of the Lanzarote Committee's special report on the protection of children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

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In light of the launch of the second report on child-friendly justice in February 2017 that is based on children's experiences and perspectives when involved in judicial proceedings the Agency organised an event with key stakeholders, including the Council of Europe, experts and children to discuss ways to ensure child participation not only in justice related issues, but also in research, events, social media or more generally in policy processes.

Bi-lateral meetings with the Council of Europe children rights division took place during joint participation at events such as the 8th World Congress on Family Law and 11th European Forum on the rights of the child devoted to investigating the vulnerabilities of children affected by deprivation of liberty. Data has been shared in the context of the Agency's project on minimum age requirements, whose first set of findings were launched on Universal Children's Day on 20 November.

References to FRA publications and FRA produced child-friendly justice material have been embedded by the Council of Europe into the HELP online course on child-friendly justice that was launched on 20 November which also now addresses professionals in European member States. FRA videos on raising children's awareness of their rights and the FRA checklist for professionals are going to be translated into the languages of the pilot countries, starting with Ukrainian.

f. FRA report: Immigration detention of children

FRA research project on immigration detention of children – covering both unaccompanied children and children with their parents or guardian – was developed in consultation with the CoE. FRA's research complements CoE initiatives on immigration detention and it also intends to support its work on developing European rules on immigration detention.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2016/migration-detention-children>

On 11 October, the Agency presented the main findings of its report on immigration detention of children during a meeting of the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly. FRA underlined that although EU law does not prohibit immigration detention of children, it does contain a significant number of substantial and procedural safeguards, which – if implemented correctly – would result in limiting immigration detention of children to really exceptional situations.

g. Guardianship for unaccompanied children and age assessment

FRA had numerous interactions and informal consultation with CoE with regard to guardianship for unaccompanied children in the context of the CoE work on children in migration (e.g. in relation to CAHENF, PACE). FRA's support on the issue is referenced by the Agency's extensive work in this area and specifically its report on Guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the European Union and the FRA/COM handbook on Guardianship for children deprived of parental care – A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care-handbook-reinforce-guardianship>

On 2-3 February and on 19-20 September 2017, the Agency took part in the Council of Europe's drafting group responsible for developing standards on guardianship for children, and on age assessment in the context of migration. The meetings were attended by representatives of the Council of Europe member states, the European Commission, the European Asylum Support Office, UNHCR, UNICEF, the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children and civil society.

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The Agency also provided input to roundtable on child-friendly information for children in migration under the [Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children](#) from 29-30 November 2017.

h. Asylum, immigration and integration of migrants; visa and border control

FRA and CoE continued to work together in the Frontex Consultative Forum.

On 15-16 February 2017, FRA participated as an observer in the joint meeting of the Council of Europe Drafting Group on Migration and Human Rights (CDDH-MIG) and the Committee of Experts on Administrative Detention of Migrants (CJ-DAM), organised by the CoE Chairmanship of Cyprus in Nicosia. The event also saw the 5th meeting of the CJ-DAM, which aims at codifying existing European rules and standards on administrative detention of migrants. The Agency has been taking part in the work of the CJ-DAM as an observer since autumn 2016. The 5th meeting of CJ-DAM examined two new parts of the draft codifying instrument (European Immigration Detention Rules), namely on vulnerable persons and other places of detention than closed centres. A public consultation of the civil society and key stakeholders on the whole project took place on 31 May and 1 June 2017 in Strasbourg, where FRA participated as one of the rapporteurs in the consultation meeting with National Preventive Mechanism of CoE member States. The aim of the consultation was to discuss the draft CoE rules on the administrative detention of migrants, which seeks to codify existing European rules and standards on that matter. A further public consultation of the civil society and key stakeholders on the first comprehensive draft instrument took place on 22-23 June 2017 in Strasbourg.

On 22 May 2017, the Agency brought together experts to discuss the fundamental rights implications of possible sanctions aiming at discouraging unauthorised secondary movements of asylum seekers. Experts from academia, member States, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the UN's Refugee Agency and the International Labour Organisation took part in the discussions. Various possible measures to sanction irregular secondary movements, including those withdrawing or reducing socio-economic rights, have been reviewed and assessed in light of the EU's Fundamental Rights Charter and other fundamental rights standards.

The Agency also provided fundamental rights input to discussions at the 8th meeting of the CJ-DAM, which took place from 25 to 27 October in Strasbourg. The committee examined the restructured and overhauled new version of the draft codifying instrument, which was prepared after consultation with civil society and National Preventive Mechanisms.

An expert meeting in Strasbourg on 20 November, organised in the framework of a study being undertaken for the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, looked at various legal aspects of complaints mechanisms for human rights violations during border controls and expulsions. The Agency's presentation focused on legal remedies in the context of border patrolling at sea drawing on its own research in this field. The aim of the expert meeting was to discuss the accountability regimes of national border and coast guards in selected Council of Europe member States.

i. Criminal detention and alternatives

On 23 March 2017, a network of National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs, a requirement under the UN OPCAT, the optional protocol to the torture convention) to support the enhancement of monitoring of detention conditions was being set up. To help prepare, FRA met with the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights in Vienna on 23 March.

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On 4-5 April 2017, representatives of NPMs from across Europe met in Strasbourg. The meeting kicks off the creation of an EU-specific network of NPMs, within a wider pre-existing network from across Europe. The Council of Europe is taking this initiative together with the European Commission to improve EU cross-border justice.

On 25-26 September, the Agency contributed to a panel discussion during a conference hosted by the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Prague. FRA presented the main findings of its comparative report on the European legal and policy framework on immigration detention of children.

For more information: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/child-migrant-detention>

On 3 October 2017, the Agency hosted a meeting of NPMs where creating a comparative tool on detention conditions was discussed. FRA presented its ongoing project on Criminal Detention in the EU, which focuses on fundamental rights of detainees subjected to transfer to other EU member States. There were participants from 12 European countries and representatives of international bodies such as Council of Europe, European Commission, and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Ludwig Boltzman Institute.

j. Information Society, Privacy and Data Protection

On 15 September 2017, FRA took part in the 3rd conference of the Independent Police Complaints Authorities' Network (IPCAN) in Strasbourg on "the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms in the context of the strengthening of the fight against terrorism", co-organised by the French Defender of Rights and the Council of Europe. FRA joined the session devoted to an examination of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and work of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament in the field of terrorism, surveillance and state emergency.

k. Human Rights and Business

On 9 June 2017, the Agency addressed the opening session of the Council of Europe's high-level seminar on promoting the effective implementation of global and regional instruments related to human rights and business, organised by the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH). FRA presented its April 2017 Opinion on access to remedies in cases of business-related human rights abuses. The event brought together speakers from the Council of Europe, EU, UN, member States, academia and civil society, as well as lawyers.

l. Human Rights /Citizenship Education and Fundamental Rights Promotion

On 22 June 2017, the Agency spoke in a roundtable of international institutions in the Council of Europe's conference on the future of human rights and education for democratic citizenship in Strasbourg. While in Strasbourg, the FRA, the Council of Europe and ENNHRI met with NHRIs active in this area to identify concrete activities which could strengthen NHRIs at the national level in their role as fundamental and human rights promoters and as human rights educators. FRA also took part in the annual meeting of the International Contact Group on Citizenship and Human Rights Education, which brings together European Commission, the Council of Europe, OSCE/ ODIHR, UNESCO, UN OHCHR, Organisation of American States and ALECSO, to exchange information on each other's activities and consider joint projects and co-operation. UNODC and the OECD also took part to the meeting as observers, with a view to their possible accession. The next ICG meeting will take place in 2018, in Vienna, during the Fundamental Rights Forum 2018.

In preparation of the Fundamental Rights Forum 2018, an internal Council of Europe task force has been set up to prepare the possible input to the Forum, and a delegation from FRA took part in a meeting on 7 July 2017 with representatives notably of the Council of Europe Youth Department, in view of its possible contribution to the Forum (for instance as regards social rights with/for young people, the “Enter!” CM recommendation on access to rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the CM recommendation on young people’s access to rights).

m. Human Rights at the Local Level

On 28 April 2017, the Agency hosted the third meeting of the human rights at the local level expert group of the Council of Europe’s Congress of local and regional authorities. The expert group provides advice for the development of the Congress’ manual on human rights at the local level. The focus was on fundamental rights issues faced by cities in the areas of LGBTIQ, Roma and migration. The expert group is composed of representatives from the Agency, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the Congress and the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights. The manual will be released in 2018.

On 14 and 15 June 2017, the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) of the Council of Europe held a seminar in Oslo on human rights in the intercultural city. In presence of representatives of the cities of Vienna, Barcelona, Gdansk, Paris and many other, the event explored how human rights fits into the Intercultural Cities model and concluded that human rights’ based approaches and the intercultural integration policy paradigm promoted by the ICC programme are complementary and reinforce each other. The Agency spoke about its work with local authorities and explored ideas with participants for future cooperation. This was followed up during the FRA Director High-Level Meeting at the Council of Europe on 14 November during which a presentation of the new DG II structure of the Council of Europe and areas of expertise, including issues on migrants integration and human rights cities, were presented to the Agency. In 2018, FRA will engage with the Council of Europe on its activities to promote a human rights-based approach in cities.

n. Social Rights and social cohesion

On 19 and 20 September 2017, FRA took part in the 2nd meeting of the Council of Europe’s European Platform for Social Cohesion in Strasbourg. The Platform mainly took note of developments within the Council of Europe and the member States in the field of social cohesion and social rights, and looked ahead to future work. The event aimed to foster and mainstream social cohesion by promoting the message that everyone can enjoy their social rights, as guaranteed by the European Social Charter.

o. Shrinking Space for Civil Society

On 1 June 2017, the Agency took part in a meeting of the Council of Europe’s Expert Council on NGO law in Strasbourg. The meeting was organised by the Council of Europe’s Conference of international NGOs. It provided an opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by NGOs in the legal sphere in a number of EU member States and the need to take action to ensure international standards were upheld. In this regard, deeper co-operation between FRA and the Expert Council specifically, and the Council of Europe more generally, on the issue of civil society space is foreseen.

On 2 June 2017, the Agency took part in a workshop on National Action Plans on Human Rights organised by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Participants noted the need to ensure proper consultation and involvement of civil society in developing National Action Plans, a clear division of responsibility, targeted and integrated communication and specific target-setting with proper monitoring and evaluation as key success factors for the plans. The Commissioner will issue a report on the meeting.

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3.3. CoE-FRA-Equinet-ENNHRI co-operation within the thematic Platforms

The CoE, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and FRA reiterated, in the course of the joint conference in Vienna in October 2013, their commitment to work together to strengthen the protection of human rights in Europe focusing on four topics (asylum and migration, Roma integration, combating hate crime, and advancing social and economic rights and socio-economic equality), and organising regular meetings of thematic platforms.

On 28 March 2017, the Agency presented its position on the European Pillar of Social Rights and its work on human rights indicators during the 4th meeting of the collaborative platform on social and economic rights.

On 15-16 May 2017, the 4th meeting of the OPRE Platform (Operational Platform for Roma Equality) was held at the Council of Europe Paris Office under the auspices of the French Défenseur des Droits (Ombudsman). The meeting addressed a number of positive policy and legislative developments in France, as well as remaining challenges faced by Roma and Travellers, such as evictions, access to education and justice, data collection and reporting on hate crime, quality education versus school segregation, persons of Roma ethnic origin prevented from boarding planes bound for Canada, as well as forms of violence against Roma women and girls, including child and forced marriages. FRA contributed through a joint partners' preparatory meeting via Skype on 2 May 2017.

On 26 September 2017, the 5th meeting of the collaborative platform on Social and Economic Rights took place in Riga, organised by the Latvian Ombudsman. During the meeting participants discussed on the European Social Pillar and deepened their knowledge of the Council of Europe's legal framework for protecting social rights. They focused on the implementation of certain articles of the European Social Charter, in particular the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, elaborating a rights-based approach to combating poverty in Europe.