EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Inventory of Factors of Change

Supporting FRA's strategic foresight exercise on fundamental rights in Europe to 2040

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Introduction

This inventory brings together factors of change that could shape possible long-term futures for fundamental rights in Europe up to 2040. The factors cover events, developments and emerging issues with the potential to influence how fundamental rights are understood, protected and realised.

Each factor includes a title, a short description and the sources identified through horizon scanning. The inventory follows the STEEPVL framework, grouping the factors into seven domains: social, technological, ecological, economic, political, value-related and legal. It contains 43 factors of change: 7 social, 7 technological, 7 ecological, 5 economic, 8 political, 5 value-related and 4 legal factors.

The inventory was reviewed and validated at an April 2025 workshop involving foresight specialists, human and fundamental rights experts, and representatives of civil society organisations.

Social Factors of Change

Changing social contract & resilience of civil society

Description: Recent overlapping crises have strengthened civil society's capacity to respond to diverse challenges and act collectively (Hudson, 2025). Digital education and new forms of informal learning strengthen information literacy among younger and older people (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, EC, 2020). Nevertheless, the absence of credible models for future living, declining trust in democratic institutions and rapid technological change are disrupting the current social contract. Although patterns of mobilisation are changing, emerging movements are calling for a new social contract (Ponce Bertello & Almeida, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: rights of future generations, non-discrimination (minorities and vulnerable populations).

Demographic changes & intergenerational justice

Description: An ageing population is challenging the social welfare system and labour market. Migration can counteract this trend but is not a sustainable solution (Curtale et al., 2025). Intergenerational justice is challenged by demographic developments (Clover, 2024; Ohlsson & Skillington, 2023). A potential brain drain towards the EU from the US is possible (Guglielmi et al., 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: rights of the child, environmental protection, rights of the elderly.

Rise of disinformation and risk of undue interference

Description: With the broad diffusion of digital tools and platforms in society, disinformation is spreading (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023). Information is being weaponized by states (Matthews & Bisht, 2025), e.g. to interfere in elections, while public trust is further disrupted by deep fakes and disrepute campaigns (Khan, 2023; Petrić Howe & Thompson, 2023). The decreasing heterogeneity of the public media landscape threatens the freedom and independence of media. We are entering a post-factual public sphere.

Fundamental rights relevance: freedom of expression and information, right to vote.

Widening of economic and social disparities

Description: Inequalities are growing, and economic and social disparities between groups and countries are widening (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023). Greater use of technology could exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones. Given that the twenty richest people produce 8,000 times more CO2 emissions than one billion of the poorest people (Oxfam International, 2022), climate governance and international human rights law (Benoliel, 2024) could help address vertical inequalities within societies, including concentrations of wealth and power, and global inequalities between countries, including wealth accumulated through colonial legacies.

Fundamental rights relevance: equality and non-discrimination, fair and just working conditions, right to education, environmental protection, social security and social assistance.

Neurorights vs. Neuroeconomics

Description: As neuro devices and wearables become cheaper and more accessible — from workplace productivity tools to cognitive enhancement, often enabled by AI — new tensions emerge between surveillance and social benefit, and between economic opportunity and personal freedom (Szoszkiewicz & Yuste, 2025). Emerging neurorights frameworks aim to interpret existing human rights in the context of brain data, raising questions about whether today's legal systems are equipped to handle mental privacy,

identity, and cognitive liberty (Salles et al., 2024). Meanwhile, neuroeconomics reframes brain data as an economic asset (ESPAS, 2018), shifting the value of privacy and fuelling debates around monetisation, regulation, and behavioural influence.

Fundamental rights relevance: integrity of the person, protection of personal data, right to liberty and security, respect for private and family life.

Shrinking space for civil society & societal dialogue

Description: Civic space is shrinking across the EU and threatened by attacks on rights and freedoms (Narsee et al., 2024). Restrictions on rights to protest, cut of funds, and persecution of protesting citizens and media threaten the freedom of expression. How and where to negotiate the "new social contract"? What will the "public space" look like in 2040? Hundreds of groups call on the EU to uphold civic space, rights and democracy: EU institutions are urged to prioritise actions to promote a vibrant civil society space, uphold democracy and protect fundamental rights (Gianesello & Sabourin, 2024).

Fundamental rights relevance: all fundamental rights; freedom of expression and information; freedom of assembly and association.

Wildcard

EUexit – EU shrinking/disintegrating

Description: The disruption of the social contract and the inability of EU governance to provide the necessary space for the negotiation of a new social contract, leads to the disintegration of the EU. The territory of the EU is shrinking, and many Member States are exiting the Union (Ganderson, 2024; Gastinger, 2021).

Fundamental rights relevance: non-discrimination (minorities and vulnerable populations), social security and social assistance, health care.

Technological Factors of Change

Digitalisation of justice & social services & governance

Description: The digitalisation of justice — including legal technology — as well as social services, healthcare and governance (Allhutter et al., 2024), takes many forms and is driven by the European Union's pursuit of efficient and resilient justice systems (Kapopoulos & Rizos, 2024). An emerging trend is the use of AI in courts and the justice sector (European Commission. Directorate General for Justice and Consumers. & Kantar., 2023), for example to inform sentencing and probation decisions in criminal proceedings (Müller & Pöchhacker, 2019). Beyond the risk of perpetuating bias and discrimination, AI can reshape judicial systems by creating new knowledge regimes centred on statistics, data, models and procedures, and by reorganising relations among economic, academic, judicial and technological actors, including the role of judicial experts (Müller & Pöchhacker, 2019). These risks must be balanced against possible benefits, such as improved access to justice and greater efficiency.

Fundamental rights relevance: access to justice, non-discrimination, defence rights, rule of law, integrity of the person, protection of personal data, equality, right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial.

Increasing personal data availability and changing understanding of privacy

Description: The collection and processing of personal data are expanding significantly through deeper profiling on social media platforms and in the metaverse. This creates new possibilities for using personal data, including facial recognition for surveillance, profiling, tracking and monitoring, as well as new business models and services. As digital natives increasingly rely on the EU General Data Protection Regulation to protect their personal data, attitudes towards data protection and understandings of privacy are changing (Farthing et al., 2024). Technological advances are also reshaping personal privacy (Tuhin, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: human dignity, privacy, integrity of the person, protection of personal data, freedom of expression and information.

Accelerating use of digital technologies driving social polarisation

Description: The greater use of digital technologies is driving hyperconnectivity and societal transformation (JRC, 2024), while biases embedded in AI systems can further exacerbate discrimination based on multiple grounds. The gap between digital haves and have-nots remains a significant challenge in the digital age, and each new generation is becoming more digitally savvy, while others continue to have limited access to digital tools (Kuiler, 2024). As digital tools reshape communication and thought, they also enable new challenges, such as the rise of 'TikTok Jihadists' – indicating the enabling role of social media platforms in contributing to the radicalisation of actors and polarisation of society (oe1.orf.at, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: non-discrimination, liberty and security, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, protection of personal data, freedom of expression and information, the rights of the elderly.

Environmental impact of AI

Description: Digital technologies affect the environment throughout their life cycle, from resource extraction and consumption to the energy, water and labour required for production, use, maintenance, dismantling, recycling and disposal (Crawford, 2024; Crawford, Kate & Joler, Vladan, 2018). The often-hidden environmental costs of digital technologies are distributed unequally and affect a range of fundamental rights. AI amplifies the environmental impact of more conventional digital technologies (Li et al., 2025; Luccioni et al., 2023; Zewe, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: human dignity, right to life, integrity of the person.

Integrating fundamental rights for AI accountability

Description: Fundamental rights could provide a framework for algorithmic accountability (McGregor et al., 2019). Practical tools for assessing the fundamental rights impact of algorithmic systems during development and deployment can help identify potential effects from the design stage onwards (Gerards et al., 2022). Integrating fundamental rights into research and development projects may require additional documentation and administration. It remains unclear whether self-assessment will become a box-ticking exercise or support a genuine shift towards transparency and accountability in algorithmic research and development.

Fundamental rights relevance: fundamental rights by design; fundamental-rights-centred design; equality.

Tech solutionism: deceiving utilitarian view of technology

Description: Concepts such as longtermism and transhumanism are based on the idea that priority should be given to humanity's long-term well-being rather than only to the present and near future — a seemingly rational and philanthropic principle (see Coenen et al., 2015). Taken to extremes, however, this approach can justify overlooking present suffering in favour of a distant future, raising ethical and fundamental rights concerns (Aigner, 2025). Such rationales can underpin technocentric governance and promote technological solutionism. Yet technology alone cannot resolve problems created or intensified by technology.

Fundamental rights relevance: risks to a broad range of fundamental rights.

Wildcard

Human rights watch AI agents

Description: AI agents are proliferating work and life and are implemented in diverse applications (ORF.at/Agenturen, 2025). As algorithmic systems are continuously

improved, Human Rights Watch AI Agents are emerging as a potential tool for detecting human rights violations. Human Rights Watch AI Agents encompass algorithmic systems for recognition, predictive modelling, and real-time monitoring to identify early warning signs of various abuses (Bowman, 2024). While they promise to enhance oversight, they also raise concerns about bias, surveillance, and automated decisions that may undermine fundamental rights, especially when deployed as profiling practices by law enforcement authorities but also when used as a means to manage migration flows. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and ethical safeguards will be crucial before such systems are widely implemented.

Fundamental rights relevance: non-discrimination, respect for private and family life, right to good administration, protection of personal data, justice.

Ecological Factors of Change

Just Green Transition

Description: The Just Green Transition is socially differentiated and committed to topics such as extractivism and the regulation it takes to make this just. The Just Green Transition also relies on socio-technological innovations to overcome the barriers of the present economy (United Nations, 2022).

Fundamental rights relevance: environmental protection.

Green & blue infrastructures part of critical infrastructures of the future

Description: A growing movement of intrinsic rights of nature and the turn toward a view of the non-human world is calling the Anthropocene into question. Local networks, especially in rural areas, are forming new movements for nature's legal rights (Putzer et al., 2025). Even businesses are starting to acknowledge this turn and form new, unlikely alliances with nature (Business For Nature, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: place-based fundamental rights "sanctuaries"; autonomous fundamental rights networks and guardians of human dignity, equality and freedom of expression.

Global mental health crisis and eco anxiety

Description: Intergenerational inequality, unregulated social media, insecure employment, the rise of fascism, and the climate crisis are driving a global mental health crisis among youth (Kearns, 2024; McGorry et al., 2024). Eco anxiety entails the apprehension and worry about the potential scope of the anticipated impacts of climate change (Heeren et al., 2022). Climate anxiety a.k.a. eco anxiety could contribute to the worsening of the global mental health state, but it could also lead to an appropriate response to the climate crisis if its social aspects are taken into account, e.g. youth movements.

Fundamental rights relevance: health care, environmental protection, dignity, rights of the child, solidarity.

Energy (in)dependence

Description: The war in Ukraine exposed Europe's deep reliance on Russian fossil fuels, forcing a rapid search for alternatives. However, shifting to suppliers in the Middle East with dubious human rights records adversely affects fundamental rights, and renewables are not yet developed enough to fill the gap. As a result, Europe faces a persistent trade-off between energy security and democratic values, with nuclear and even coal re-emerging as contentious options in the transition toward true energy independence (Drevet, 2023). The EU has learned to take on the accountability for its resource usage. This is supported by innovations in governance, e.g. fully fledged circular economy, decarbonization (Vesnic-Alujevic et al., 2023).

Fundamental rights relevance: access to basic supplies, non-discrimination, access to services of general economic interest.

Personal resource quotas/allowances

Description: With worsening climate change, growing resource scarcity, and increasing energy demand, quotas on emissions, water, and energy use are gaining traction (ESPAS, 2018). The idea is to introduce similar quotas or allowances that exist for business also for individuals, in form of personal carbon allowances (PCA) (Fuso Nerini et al., 2021). Such quotas are often not taken up due to costs of the system, lack of public acceptance and low receptivity among decision-makers (ESPAS, 2018). Algorithmic systems could contribute to a revival of the trend, also new fields of application such as digital service usage could be envisioned. The practicalities of such personal resource allowances remain vague; the consequences for the poorer part of society in view of the wealth of the top 10 per cent would have to be explored.

Fundamental rights relevance: environmental protection, access to basic supplies, non-discrimination.

Access to affordable, ecological and safe housing

Description: New types of housing are adapted to climate change: Housing of the future is energy neutral, affordable and safe (with regard to natural and human disasters). It can cope with overheating (European Environment Agency, 2022).

Fundamental rights relevance: access to basic supplies, health care.

Pressure on corporate leaders for more responsibility in 2040

Description: Consumers buy and consume consciously (Kimpeler et al., 2022). New consumption patterns emerge in the younger generation. The demand for sustainably and ethically produced goods and services — along with the growing number of slow food and fashion initiatives (Razeto, 2023; Slow Fashion Movement, 2025, 2025; Slow Food, 2025), community-supported agriculture (Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2021) and community-supported retail markets (MILA Mitmach-Supermarkt, 2025) — is putting increasing pressure on corporate leaders to act more responsibly by 2040.

Fundamental rights relevance: environmental protection, non-discrimination, fair and just working conditions.

Economic Factors of Change

Changing nature of work

Description: The nature of work is changing fundamentally. New skills and competencies especially for green jobs are in high demand (Knudsen, 2023). Digitalisation and emerging digital technologies are driving the rise of employment in the informal sector, e.g. through outsourcing data labelling tasks by technology companies and AI developers. This new type of informal work raises issues of exploitation, psychological trauma and dependencies (Perrigo, 2023; Schräer, 2024), but also provides opportunities for informal workers in the Global South (Lakemann, Tabea & Lay, Jann, 2019). These developments are accompanied by a spread of employment practices that maximise efficiency at the cost of individual rights (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023).

Fundamental rights relevance: freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work, freedom to conduct a business, fair and just working conditions, social security and social assistance.

Dominance of security over economic over social values

Description: The EU legal framework upholds both fundamental social rights and economic freedoms at its highest level. However, tensions arise when these rights come into conflict, leading to complex legal and political challenges. Over time, such disputes have fuelled broader concerns about a potential imbalance between social and economic priorities within the European integration process (Garben, 2020). The current policy agenda of competitiveness emphasises economic priorities (Draghi, 2024). Security and conflict arguments are now taking precedence, even over economic values.

Fundamental rights relevance: balancing fundamental rights; social security and social assistance; healthcare; environmental protection.

Rising protectionism

Description: Global tariff disputes – such as the recently imposed tariffs on Chinese, Mexican, and Canadian imports and the threat of potential trade restrictions against Europe by the U.S. - mark the beginning of a broader pattern of a newly emerging economic protectionism (BBC, 2025a). Cuts to international development funds (BBC, 2025b), trade wars and disenfranchised middle classes in developed economies point towards 'slowbalisation' (Keller & Marold, 2023).

Fundamental rights relevance: access to affordable goods, consumer protection, access to services of general economic interest, solidarity.

Emerging exploration of alternative economic theories & practices

Description: Evolutionary economics, Piketty's economics, degrowth theory and many other concepts are increasingly being discussed and examined as alternatives to current economic practices (degrowth.info, 2025; International Degrowth Network, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: access to affordable goods, consumer protection, access to services of general economic interest.

Wildcard

Assassination of political leaders/actors in power

Description: The assassination of political leaders respectively actors in power could disrupt the current economic system, especially sensitive financial markets (Gilchrist & Ellyatt, 2024).

Fundamental rights relevance: all fundamental rights.

Political Factors of Change

Increasing significance of migration

Description: Climate-induced migration is rising in the Global South (Almulhim et al., 2024). Environmental and anthropogenic disasters, expropriation, and gradual environmental deterioration all contribute to a potential increase of the number of climate refugees in receiving areas (Guedes et al., 2024). Climate-induced stressors already have a differential impact on vulnerable groups (Almulhim et al., 2024), while certain groups of migrants are at particular risk, including unaccompanied children, children with their families, people with disabilities and people with a minority ethnic background (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023). There is a growing trend of securitisation – also of migration. More and more countries in Europe are becoming important migration policy stakeholders. Migration is interpreted more and more as a problem but not as an opportunity despite the great potential it has (Curtale et al., 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: right to life, integrity of the person, liberty and security, prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Global power shifts & newly emerging alliances

Description: Global power shifts lead to newly emerging alliances in a world of strategic competition for scarce resources and emerging technologies (European Parliament, 2024a; OECD, 2023). While new geopolitical alliances stress the importance of democratic norms and values, political practice in part takes on the form of ruthless mercantilism and neo-colonialism (Balfour et al., 2024).

Fundamental rights relevance: threats to democracy, non-discrimination (minorities), equality, solidarity.

Future enlargement of the EU

Description: EU enlargement policy is not only an investment in peace and stability, but it has also become a political instrument that responds to the exploitation of

interdependencies and illiberal pressures (Kaeding et al., 2023). A quantitative simulation based on EU budget data and projections for GDP, population and agricultural land reveals that future accessions will not blow up the budget for cohesion policy funding (Rubio et al., 2025). The Lisbon treaty is undergoing a transition, and the EU is starting a reform to make its decision-making processes more efficient (Triantafyllou, 2023).

Fundamental rights relevance: right to liberty and security, democracy, solidarity.

Rise of illiberal movements and extremism

Description: Many European leaders lack strategic focus, leaving societies vulnerable to populist movements amid mounting security and economic challenges (Visegrad Insight, 2024). Alongside the rise of illiberal movements and tendencies (Cliquennois et al., 2024; Cole et al., 2024; Hafner-Burton et al., 2024), right-wing extremism has become more diverse, complex and visible during periods of social crisis (Habersack & Werner, 2023). New actors and groups are also spreading targeted propaganda and conspiracy theories to radicalise and recruit supporters. International networks and conspiratorial activity among right-wing extremist groups pose further challenges to democratic society (DÖW, 2025). Attacks on democratic institutions and the separation of powers can occur from the bottom up as well as from the top down, raising the risk of authoritarian change in the EU.

Fundamental rights relevance: threats to democracy, individual freedom, minority rights, equality, non-discrimination, human dignity, rule of law.

Securitisation

Description: The increasingly dominant security agenda (ProtectEU, 2025) driving science, technology and innovation (STI) policy and the growing expenditure on defence in R&D budgets lead to a ‘securitisation’ of science and technology development. Internal security threats (terrorism, drugs trade and organised crime) are increasingly cross-border, interconnected and digital. Biosecurity (pandemics, synthetic biology, food, water, power supply, research) emerges as governance priority (OECD, 2023). Security issues receive major attention in the migration and asylum agenda, sometimes even at the expense of justice (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023). Funding for security is prioritized at the expense of social and ecological issues.

Fundamental rights relevance: prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, integrity of the person, liberty and security, protection of personal data, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information.

Democratic innovations and citizen platforms

Description: Democratic systems are evolving beyond traditional elite representation, with growing emphasis on more diverse and socially representative voices in political decision-making, e.g. in parliaments. Democratic innovations — such as citizens' assemblies, participatory budgeting, and citizen platforms — enable new forms of direct engagement and deliberative participation (European Commission, 2025a; Mantoiu, 2024). These developments reflect a broader shift toward inclusive governance, particularly at the municipal and local levels, where everyday concerns and community priorities are more directly addressed.

Fundamental rights relevance: right to political participation, freedom of expression and assembly, equality.

Strong European identity

Description: An increasing number of citizens feel a stronger connection to Europe as a shared political and cultural space. This growing European identity reinforces trust in EU institutions and drives higher levels of political participation at the European level (European Commission, 2025b; European Parliament, 2024b). As a result, there is more public support for harmonising fundamental rights protections, strengthening EU-wide democracy, and pushing back against democratic backsliding within Member States.

Fundamental rights relevance: all fundamental rights.

Wildcard

Hybrid military attack on the EU

Description: A large-scale, mosaic-like military attack on the EU carried out with the help of large online platforms and their server infrastructures puts Europe in a state of emergency (Nentwich et al., 2022). Many member states suddenly impose martial law, impacting human rights and leading to an increase in human rights violations. How can human rights be safeguarded in such a situation (Grignon, 2022; Norosky & Carpenter, 2024)?

Fundamental rights relevance: all fundamental rights.

Value-related Factors of Change

Influence of non-elected actors (sports, culture, techno-oligarchs) on social, public affairs

Description: Non-elected actors — from global techno-oligarchs to influencers, online celebrities, athletes, and cultural figures — increasingly shape public affairs and social values. Major events like the FIFA World Cup or Eurovision offer large public stages where fundamental rights can be either promoted or undermined (Amnesty International, 2024; Brett & Tomlinson, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2023). While some use their platforms to raise awareness about human rights and inclusion, others may spread disinformation or reinforce harmful narratives. This evolving influence challenges traditional boundaries of democratic accountability (Salvaggio, 2025) and raises questions about who shapes the public agenda in the digital age.

Fundamental rights relevance: consumer protection, solidarity, right to good administration, freedom of expression and information.

Gender equity and identity (LGTBIQ+) achievements under threat

Description: Rising gender-based domestic violence (Eurostat et al., 2024) and increasing perceptions of discrimination based on ethnicity, skin colour, gender identity, disability and socio-economic status point to deepening inequalities (Guillot & Coi, 2024; Rorke, 2024). At the same time, diversity and inclusion offices and posts are being discontinued (Allen, 2025), while access to safe abortion is becoming more difficult (ARD, 2025; Jung et al., 2023; The White House, 2025) and remains prohibited in some EU Member States (SWI swissinfo.ch, 2025). These developments create particular challenges for women in marginalised communities. A return to so-called ‘traditional values’ and regressive gender stereotypes is undermining progress towards gender equality.

Fundamental rights relevance: non-discrimination; equality; liberty and security; freedom of expression and information; freedom to choose an occupation and the right to engage in work.

Increasing threats to freedom of expression and independence of media

Description: Threats to freedom of expression and information take different forms. The growing number of journalists killed is particularly alarming and highlights the increasing pressure on press freedom (CPJ, 2025). Media concentration linked to political agendas, together with funding difficulties for independent, local and community media, points to deteriorating conditions in the media sector (Seipp et al., 2024; Verza et al., 2024). Recent developments also include restricting access to information for media outlets that do not follow emerging political narratives (Bianco, 2025) and cancelling government media subscriptions (Lewis, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: right to freedom of expression and information, freedom and diversity of the media, 'citizens' rights.

Debate on expanding legal personhood and stronger beyond-human rights, e.g. rivers, animals, AI

Description: Debate continues over extending legal personhood to non-human entities, including animals, natural systems such as rivers, and AI (Sebo, 2023; Stucki, 2020). Supporters of stronger non-human rights argue that fundamental rights frameworks could help protect entities that people value (SITRA, 2023), while critics warn that granting legal status to such entities could disrupt legal, political and economic systems (Sebo, 2023). Some natural entities have already been granted legal personality (Eco Jurisprudence Monitor, 2021; Maessen, 2025), although the necessity and implications remain contested. The central challenge is to build moral and political consensus — or at least clarify opposing positions and bring them into public debate. Even a non-binding universal declaration on nature could advance environmental protection (Eco-Business, 2025).

Fundamental rights relevance: right to life, right to property, dignity.

Wildcard

Fundamental rights as a core EU value strengthening European identity and global positioning

Description: Fundamental rights are a core value of the EU shared by all member states and strengthening the EU's identity (European Parliament, 2025). EU citizens are engaged and committed as the EU positions itself as the global guardian of fundamental rights.

Fundamental rights relevance: non-discrimination; equality between women and men; freedom of expression and information; all fundamental rights.

Legal Factors of Change

Rule of law under pressure

Description: When a government disregards judicial decisions, it undermines the rule of law. Unconstitutional or unlawful measures — such as freezing public expenditure, closing government bodies, removing agency heads, dismissing public employees protected by civil-service rules, or threatening deportation on the basis of political views — pose further risks. The rule of law is under increasing pressure in Europe (ENNHRI, 2025; McMillan, 2022; Shaffer & Sandholtz, 2024).

Fundamental rights relevance: threats to all fundamental rights; democracy; the rule of law; justice; the right to good administration.

Future of fundamental rights governance in the EU

Description: As the EU expands its action in sensitive areas such as migration and criminal law, fundamental rights are becoming more deeply embedded in secondary legislation and in the case law of the Court of Justice (Imamović et al., 2024). This expanding scope raises questions about how fundamental rights protection can be reconciled with core EU principles such as autonomy and economic integration (Imamović et al., 2024). Strengthening constitutional resilience also raises broader questions: How can the EU's fundamental rights architecture be improved? How can exchanges among young scholars on the future of fundamental rights be fostered? And will the EU provide principled and courageous political leadership amid global uncertainty and multiple crises?

Fundamental rights relevance: good administration; all fundamental rights.

Disarmament for peace & security

Description: Peace and security are basic conditions for safeguarding fundamental rights (Türk, 2025), especially in face of current rearmament, but also in the context of

obligations towards disarmament (OHCHR, 2024). Questions arise: How do we work for peace? What is happening with the “legacy” of World War II? (Human Rights order, disarmament, etc.).

Fundamental rights relevance: liberty and security; all fundamental rights.

Wildcard

Constitutional crisis – parliament & elections abolished

Description: A constitutional crisis can take different forms. The erosion of freedom of expression and the influence on the education system can be weak signals for a constitutional crisis (Phillips, 2025). In its most radical form, a constitutional crisis implies that the parliament and elections are abolished.

Fundamental rights relevance: threats to all fundamental rights; democracy; the rule of law; justice; the right to good administration.

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