

FRA Press Release
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Civil society vital for strengthening the rule of law

Civil society is a key component of Europe's fundamental rights architecture. From supporting people affected by the pandemic to helping those fleeing the war in Ukraine, civil society plays a crucial role in upholding people's rights. In so doing, it contributes to a healthy rule of law culture. But despite positive developments, civil society continues to face numerous challenges ranging from harassment to restrictive laws, finds the latest civic space report from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). It underlines the need for Europe to ensure a more conducive working environment for civil society.

"Civil society organisations are critical for contributing to the checks and balances that underpin the rule of law," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). "That is why I firmly believe the EU and its Member States need to do more to ringfence the enabling space that allows civil society to safeguarding human rights across the EU."

FRA's report '[Europe's civil society: still under pressure – Update 2022](#)' focuses on the key role civil society plays in fostering a rule of law culture. It cites good practice examples from across the EU.

These include efforts by civil society organisations to shape laws and policies, support human rights authorities, improve access to justice, accountability and legality. It also "reveals examples of how they engage in tackling disinformation and corruption, and in enhancing media literacy as well as in raising awareness of rule of law issues and the role civil society plays.

The report points to recent national, international and EU tools and guidelines supporting civil society organisations.

The report also contains examples of how civil society is in the vanguard of efforts to support people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Organisations provide hands-on practical assistance, information on rights and services as well as legal advice.

The report updates the findings FRA presented in [2021](#) and [2018](#) on challenges civil society continue to face across the EU.

FRA drew its findings from research in each Member State, and from responses to an online consultation from almost 450 human rights civil society organisations.

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