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New practical guide on access to justice in European law

On 22 June 2016, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Court of Human Rights launch a practical handbook on European law relating to access to justice.

"Access to justice is not just a right in itself. It is also a key enabler for making other fundamental rights a reality," says FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty. *"This practical guide provides legal practitioners with a key legal resource to help them actively support all those who face barriers in fully and effectively enjoying access to justice."*

"This handbook summarises key access to justice principles, drawing on a wide body of European law and jurisprudence," says President of the European Court of Human Rights Guido Raimondi. *"Providing easy-to-use information on the main standards in Europe, will greatly assist legal practitioners ensure everyone seeking justice has proper support, a fair trial and access to effective remedies."*

The *Handbook on European law relating to access to justice* is a comprehensive guide to European law in this area. It seeks to raise awareness and improve knowledge of relevant standards set by the European Union and the Council of Europe, particularly through the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Court of Human Rights.

This handbook is designed to assist judges, prosecutors and legal practitioners involved in litigation in EU and Council of Europe Member States with legal issues relating to access to justice. Non-governmental organisations and other bodies that assist individuals in accessing justice will also find it useful.

The publication focuses principally on civil and criminal law. It covers such issues as a fair and public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal; legal aid; the right to be advised, defended and represented; the right to an effective remedy; length of proceedings; and other limitations on access to justice. It also examines access to justice in selected areas: victims of crime; people with disabilities; prisoners and pre-trial detainees; environmental law; and e-justice.

The handbook is available in English and French. Other language versions will follow.

The launch of the handbook takes place during the first Fundamental Rights Forum, organised by FRA in Vienna. This four-day high-level event brings policy makers, opinion leaders, and grassroots workers together to debate new ways of addressing Europe's fundamental rights challenges.

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- echrpress@echr.coe.int; Tel. +33 3 90 21 42 08. To receive the Court's press releases, please subscribe here: www.echr.coe.int/RSS/en or follow us on Twitter @ECHRpress and @ECHRPublication.

Notes to editors:

- **The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** provides evidence-based advice to the EU institutions and Member States, helping to ensure that the fundamental rights of people living in the EU are protected. www.fra.europa.eu.
- **The European Court of Human Rights** was set up in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe Member States in 1959 to deal with alleged violations of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights. Decisions, judgments and further information about the Court can be found on www.echr.coe.int.