



FRA Press Release

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EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presents its Annual report

This year's FRA Annual report highlights challenges and achievements in the area of fundamental rights from across the EU. It also considers the impact of the current crisis on the rule of law, as well as what Member States are doing to ensure trust in their [justice systems](#).

"The EU and its Member States have over the years successfully built a robust fundamental rights infrastructure. However, in many areas, both the EU and Member States can, and must, still do better," says FRA Director Morten Kjaerum. *"Our latest annual report shows that the current crisis is also a test for fundamental rights, and has implications for democratic legitimacy and the rule of law."*

Examples of issues in this year's report include:

- An EU Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, **support and protection of victims of crime** was adopted. Member States are taking measures to ensure that victims have access to confidential victim support services;
- **The impact of budget cuts** on education, healthcare and social services for vulnerable groups, such as children;
- **Roma** continue to face [discrimination and social exclusion](#), with many living in deep poverty and lacking access to healthcare and decent housing;
- The EU is driving forward efforts to [reform the EU's data protection framework](#), the most far-reaching reform of EU data protection laws in 20 years;
- The EU pushed ahead with the increased use of databases and IT tools for **border management** and visa processing, and successfully negotiated **asylum instruments** which were under review. Following the implementation of the Return Directive, many EU Member States have introduced alternatives to detention in national law. However, figures indicate that alternatives are being used effectively only in some countries in practice. In others, detention remains the most frequent measure taken for persons in return procedures;
- Some Member States took further measures to **combat racism and xenophobia** through criminal law. These included ensuring that the criminal code better recognises crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia and related intolerances, or through introducing enhanced penalties for crimes motivated by such biases.
- As 2012 was Year of Active Ageing the EU also focused on the challenges and obstacles facing older people, including those with disabilities.

FRA Annual report: [Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2012](#) and [Highlights - Fundamental rights: key legal and policy developments in 2012](#).

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**Notes to the editors:**

- The annual report looks at fundamental rights-related developments in asylum, immigration and integration; border control and visa policy; information society and data protection; the rights of the child and protection of children; equality and non-discrimination; racism and ethnic discrimination; participation of EU citizens in the Union’s democratic functioning; access to efficient and independent justice; and rights of crime victims. There is a focus chapter on “The European Union as a community of values: safeguarding fundamental rights in times of crisis”.
- The FRA 2012 Annual Report provides concrete and comparative data on the fundamental rights situation on the ground in the 27 EU Member States and Croatia. The report identifies ‘key developments’, ‘promising practices’, and challenges for the immediate future, and also highlights the most recent work of FRA in this regard.
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is mandated to provide evidence-based advice to EU and national decision makers, thereby contributing to more informed and better targeted debates and policies on fundamental rights.