



FRA Press Release

Vienna/Luxembourg, 6 June

## How to strengthen Europe's fundamental rights protection: FRA suggests ways forward

**As EU ministers meet to discuss the future of the EU's policies on freedom, security and justice, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) outlines practical suggestions in its Annual report about how to ensure people in the EU can have their rights better protected. It also maps out the fundamental rights challenges and achievements that took place over the course of 2013.**

*"FRA's Annual report points to the many fundamental rights challenges in Europe today. But it also testifies to the significant achievements that have been made in 2013,"* says FRA Director [Morten Kjaerum](#). *"The concrete suggestions we have put forward should help ensure that rights protection across the EU makes further progress. The choices the EU makes now will shape fundamental rights for the years to come. We need to work together to ensure that the laws we have today deliver fundamental rights in practice for everyone in the EU."*

As in past years, the FRA Annual report 2013 highlights challenges and achievements in many areas of fundamental rights from across the EU. This includes for example:

- FRA surveys on violence and discrimination towards [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender \(LGBT\) people](#), [on violence against women](#), and [on antisemitism](#) all revealed general feelings of fear and high levels of under-reporting among **victims**, particularly hate crime victims. Greater efforts are needed to strengthen support and protection of victims under the 2012 EU Victims' Directive.
- The tragic events off the Italian coast of Lampedusa underlined the [urgent need for EU-wide action](#) to safeguard the lives and rights of **migrants**. The European Commission initiative to reduce deaths at sea sets out lines of action to address many of the issues through stronger European cooperation.
- The revelations of widespread data surveillance pointed to apparent weaknesses in the authorities responsible for **data protection** at European and national level. Significant reforms of the EU's data protection rules that resulted from the backlash should help strengthen data protection across the EU.

As the Council discusses the priorities in the area of justice and home affairs in the coming five years, FRA's Annual report underlines the need for the EU and its Member States to reaffirm and strengthen their joint commitment towards protecting and promoting fundamental rights. It suggests the creation of an internal fundamental rights strategy and an annual policy cycle to better link up and to regularly assess fundamental rights efforts at EU and national levels. This would mirror the existing external human rights framework and consolidate the EU as a beacon of human rights worldwide.

To read the report, see: [Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2013](#)

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**Notes to editors:**



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EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS



- The FRA 2013 Annual report provides concrete and comparative data on the fundamental rights situation on the ground in the 28 EU Member States. The report identifies 'key developments', 'promising practices', and challenges 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; access to efficient and independent justice; and rights of crime victims. There is also a focus chapter on “*An EU internal strategic framework for fundamental rights: joining forces to achieve better results*”.
- The EU’s current framework for justice and home affairs, the [Stockholm Programme](#), covers 2010-14. Following the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 5/6 June, the European Council of June 2014 will adopt the next Strategic Guidelines for legislative and operational planning in the area of freedom, security and justice.
- 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.