



Submission by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to the European Commission in the context of the preparation of the annual Rule of Law Report 2025

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I Fundamental rights and the rule of law

The European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection, Michael McGrath, asked the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for input for the European Commission’s 2025 Rule of Law Report. The request called for a contribution based on the rule of law-relevant work of the Agency, including the FRA civic space monitoring.

FRA views its role as the EU’s independent body specialising in the promotion and protection of human rights in the EU to include also the role of a defender of the rule of law. The work of FRA is relevant to the rule of law due to the inherent interdependency between fundamental rights, the rule of law and all of the other values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)¹. Article 2 TEU recognises the rule of law as a constitutional principle that is common to the constitutional traditions of the EU Member States and is a foundational basis of the EU. Through EU secondary legislation and the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), this has also become a well-established and elaborated constitutional principle of EU law.² This understanding shapes the structure and substance of this contribution to the Commission’s 2025 Rule of Law Report.

Under the rule of law “all public powers always act within the constraints set out by law, in accordance with the values of democracy and fundamental rights, and under the control of independent and impartial courts.”³ As the Commission has noted, “[w]hile Member States have different national identities and traditions, the core meaning of the rule of law is the same in all of them and can be defined along six principles: legality [...]; legal certainty; prohibition of the arbitrary exercise of executive power; effective judicial protection [...]; separation of powers; and equality before the law.”⁴ This constitutional principle has both formal and substantive components and is “intrinsically linked to respect for democracy and for fundamental rights.”⁵ Consequently, democracy cannot exist without the rule of law, and respect for the rule of law entails respect for the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental rights.⁶ In the EU context, the

¹ Treaty on European Union (Consolidated version 2016), OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, Article 2, first sentence provides: “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.”

² See, for example, Laurent Pech, *The Rule of Law as a Well-Established and Well-Defined Principle of EU Law*, *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* (2022) 14:107-138, p. 109.

³ See the EUR-Lex glossary on the rule of law: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:rule_of_law.

⁴ See the website of the European Commission “What is the rule of law?”: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/what-rule-law_en.

⁵ European Commission, *A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law*, COM(2014) 158 final/2, p. 4.

⁶ European Commission, *A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law*, COM(2014) 158 final/2, p. 4.

interrelationship between the foundational values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law has also been likened to a tripod: if any one of these values is abandoned, the whole tripod will topple.⁷

Within this model, fundamental rights play a dual role. At the broadest level, under the rule of law, the full catalogue of applicable fundamental rights must be respected and protected. Consequently, where the violation of fundamental rights is widespread and persistent, this may point to a (systemic) problem with the rule of law.

On a more specific level, certain fundamental rights are also considered to be essential rule of law safeguards, in particular equality and access of justice, including the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial.⁸ Simply put, the principles and rights provided for by law cannot be considered to be fully operational if they are not enjoyed by everyone without discrimination, and if it is not possible to guarantee them through effective legal remedies provided by an independent and impartial judiciary.

In this sense, indeed, fundamental rights are an integral component of the rule of law. This understanding is echoed in the words of the European Court of Human Rights, which has referred to the European Convention on Human Rights as “essentially a rule-of-law instrument”⁹. Due to these interrelationships, all work on fundamental rights will have a direct or indirect relevance for the rule of law.

The link between fundamental rights and the rule of law is becoming increasingly visible, with acknowledgment of the relevance for the rule of law of the institutional landscape established to protect and promote fundamental rights. The annual Rule of Law Report is part of this trend, as it addresses Civil Society Organisations and National Human Rights Institutions rather prominently. It also includes key thematic areas such as corruption and media freedom that are intrinsically linked to fundamental rights, including the right to good administration and the right to freedom of expression and information. FRA highlighted these developments in its submission to the recent consultation on the update of the Venice Commission’s Rule of Law Checklist.

This contribution to the European Commission’s Rule of Law report 2025 presents FRA work from 2024-2025 that most directly speaks to the promotion and protection of the rule of law. Therefore, the range of issues selected is based on FRA data and analysis produced in 2024 and not necessarily reflects a selection or order based on urgency. The submission covers six key areas:

1. A vibrant and enabled civic space.
2. National Human Rights Institutions as defenders of the rule of law.

⁷ See European Commission video [Democracy depends on the rule of law](#).

⁸ See for equality Articles 20-26 of the Charter and for access to justice Articles 47-50 of the Charter.

⁹ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), *Grzęda v. Poland*, No. 43572/18, 15 March 2022, para. 339.

3. Mutual trust, mutual recognition and the efficiency of justice: the case of the European Arrest Warrant.
4. Equality and non-discrimination: addressing racism in policing.
5. Respect for fundamental rights in border and asylum procedures.
6. Data protection and data protection authorities.

Looking forward, the submission also provides a preview of key FRA reports that are upcoming in 2025-2026 and can support policy development in the years to come. Finally, the Annex provides an overview of FRA work from 2024 containing relevant information for the different aspects of the rule of law identified by the Commission in the four pillars addressed in the annual Rule of Law Report: justice systems, anti-corruption framework, media pluralism and media freedom, and other institutional issues related to checks and balances. It additionally points to work that addresses other facets of the rule of law beyond the four pillars.

II The rule of law in specific areas of FRA’s recent work

1. A vibrant and enabled civic space

Rule of law relevance:

There is a growing awareness that an enabling framework for civic space is a precondition for a solid rule of law culture, and that civil society organisations (CSOs) play a key role in upholding the rule of law.¹⁰ For example, in the 2022 report on the application of the Charter, the European Commission emphasises the role of CSOs in holding national authorities and EU institutions “accountable for respecting fundamental rights and the rule of law”, and describes civil society as “a key partner of the EU in promoting a stronger rule of law culture”.¹¹ Also in legislation, the EU recognises that financial support for civil society organisations promotes the rule of law and its application.¹² Recent and ongoing FRA research solidifies this understanding in a number of ways.

Issues:

FRA’s *2024 Fundamental Rights Report* features a chapter that examines the importance of a vibrant and enabled civil society for an effectively functioning democracy, which is a prerequisite for any country or union of countries based on the rule of law. Enabled civic space actors can contribute to democratic debate and policy-making with expertise and unique perspectives. This helps to ensure that everyone’s rights and interests will be given due consideration. The chapter focuses on the key fundamental rights of civil society actors that have to be protected: the freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of expression and information. Only if these are protected and respected will civil society be able to properly function as part of the system of checks and balances that holds governmental power to account under the rule of law.

Data collected by FRA shows that state interference with the freedoms of association, of peaceful assembly, and of expression and information, as well as attacks by third parties, continue to threaten the work of CSOs in different parts of the EU. A significant proportion of respondents to FRA’s 2024 civic space consultation (376 CSOs) reported that they or their employees or volunteers had experienced online verbal threats and attacks often (18 %) or sometimes (49 %) in the past 12 months.¹³ Suspected surveillance by law enforcement was indicated as having occurred often by 3 % and sometimes by 15 %.

¹⁰ FRA, [Europe’s civil society: still under pressure - 2022 update](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2022; European Commission, *A thriving civic space for upholding fundamental rights in the EU*, 2022 Annual Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, COM/2022/716 final, 6.12.2022.

¹¹ European Commission (2022), *A thriving civic space for upholding fundamental rights in the EU*, 2022 Annual Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, COM/2022/716 final, 6.12.2022.

¹² Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget, Recital 14.

¹³ FRA, results from FRA civic space consultation covering 2024, not yet published.

Offline verbal attacks and threats had been experienced often by 3 % and sometimes by 33 %. Physical attacks were reported to have occurred sometimes by 10 %. Eight % of respondents indicated that they had experienced excessive administrative controls or audits by authorities often and 28 % sometimes. When asked who had been responsible for the most serious incident against their organisation, staff or volunteer, 31 % responded that it had been a state actor (public official or civil servant).

Overall, 67 % of respondents said that the general conditions for human rights CSOs at the national level had deteriorated or greatly deteriorated in 2024. Forty-four % of responding CSOs had experienced an unexpected funding cut in the last 12 months, mainly by their own government or by the US.¹⁴

FRA evidence also shows that whereas the meaningful participation of civil society actors in policy- and law-making is crucial, Member States do not always have adequate rules for public participation in place. Where they do exist, implementation often lacks transparency, and consultations are limited in scope or shortened excessively. FRA research reveals that there is often too little time or opportunity for stakeholders to provide meaningful input on draft legislation, in particular when accelerated procedures are used or bills cover a number of different issues. Moreover, when CSOs with fundamental rights expertise are not sufficiently consulted, there is a greater risk that fundamental rights will not be adequately mainstreamed or taken into consideration in law- and policy-making.¹⁵

Recommendations:

Based on these findings, FRA calls on EU Member States to fulfil their obligations under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Charter) and international human rights law, including in relation to the freedoms of assembly, association and expression, that are instrumental to ensuring a vibrant civic space in which a very wide spectrum of civic space actors freely and actively participate in public processes. Member States should refrain from undue interference with the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression, and ensure that any restrictions to these rights meet the requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality. Member States should also ensure that policies and legislation are compatible with fundamental rights obligations, including through broad public consultation that foresees sufficient time for a meaningful contribution.¹⁶ In so doing, they should provide for measures that support participation of people in vulnerable situations, including people with disabilities and members of ethnic, racial and religious minorities, as well as their representative civil society organisations. FRA

¹⁴ FRA, results from FRA civic space consultation covering 2024, not yet published.

¹⁵ FRA, [Fundamental Rights Report 2024](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2024, p. 71.

¹⁶ See in this regard also the [ODIHR Guidelines on Democratic Lawmaking for Better Laws](#) (2024) providing that “all interested parties and stakeholders should have the opportunity to access the lawmaking process, be informed about it and be able meaningfully to participate and contribute” (Principle 7).

also echoes calls by civil society to consider establishing an observatory to monitor the situation of human rights defenders in the EU.¹⁷

2. National Human Rights Institutions as defenders of the rule of law

Rule of law relevance:

At the Member State level, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) continue to play a key role in promoting fundamental rights and monitoring that they are respected by public authorities and private persons as required under the law. In so doing, they are also helping to ensure respect for the rule of law in their Member State as well as in the EU as a whole. In order to be considered credible and to operate effectively, these institutions must comply with the minimum standards known as the Paris Principles, including independence from government that is set out in legislation or the Constitution.¹⁸ The Council has recognised the importance of establishing national human rights institutions and providing them with a legislative framework that enables their independence, including through an adequate mandate and appropriate resources.¹⁹ At the broader European level, States have widely recognised independent human rights bodies as key guarantors of the rule of law. For example, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has underlined that “effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions (NHRIs) are among the pillars of respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy.”²⁰

Issues:

Since its 2020 report *Strong and effective national human rights institutions – challenges, promising practices and opportunities*²¹, FRA has been tracking the accreditation status and mandates of NHRIs. FRA’s research shows that four Member States do not yet have an accredited NHRI²², and not all existing NHRIs meet the requirements for A status as fully compliant with the Paris Principles.²³ As for their mandates, many NHRIs in the Member States are not only engaged in monitoring the fundamental and human rights

¹⁷ FRA, Fundamental Rights Report 2024, p. 72.

¹⁸ See <https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/>.

¹⁹ Council Conclusions of 24.02.2023 on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; The role of civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU, 6675/23.

²⁰ Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions.

²¹ FRA, [Strong and effective national human rights institutions – challenges, promising practices and opportunities](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2020.

²² Czechia, Italy, Malta and Romania. Legislation has been adopted in Czechia to establish an NHRI taking into account the UN Paris Principles.

²³ See <https://staging.fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2025/nhri-accreditation-status-and-mandates-2025-update?page=1#read-online>.

compliance of public authorities but also have a broader mandate that may include, for example, the functions of an equality body²⁴ or of an Ombud with a mandate to monitor and address maladministration. A lack of maladministration has traditionally been viewed as an element of the rule of law, and as a general principle of law in the national constitutional traditions of the Member States and also the constitutional law of the EU. Article 41 of the Charter enshrines the right to good administration, thereby providing expression to a general principle of EU law that binds not only the EU but also Member States when implementing EU law.

Another important role of NHRIs is consultation on and monitoring implementation of the enabling conditions on the effective application of the Charter and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the use of EU funds under the Common Provisions Regulation²⁵. In line with EU values, EU funds must be spent in a way that respects the obligations laid down in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the CRPD, with Member States working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination.²⁶ FRA has explored the challenges to effectively implementing what are known as enabling conditionalities for the use of EU funds through the involvement of independent fundamental rights bodies and CSOs.²⁷ NHRIs must be provided with the necessary additional human, financial and technical resources to effectively fulfil these tasks.²⁸

In 2024, FRA also surveyed NHRIs as to whether they have been formally identified as one of the authorities protecting fundamental rights under Article 77 of the AI Act²⁹. FRA findings reveal that only 10 NHRIs have been formally identified as public authorities or bodies protecting fundamental rights for the purposes of the AI Act. A number of NHRIs that have not been identified pointed to the fact that the scope of powers required under

²⁴ To ensure that equality bodies can effectively contribute to the enforcement of EU legislation on equality, the EU legislator recently harmonised the standards for equality bodies. See: Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies and Council Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the same day.

²⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 (Common Provisions Regulation), OJ L 231. Arts. 4 and 6 (1) of the Conditionality Regulation (EU, Euratom). 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget, OJ L 433I and Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, OJ L 57, also show the interrelationship between EU funding and the values on which the Union is based.

²⁶ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, Art. 81(1)c).

²⁷ FRA, [EU funds: Ensuring compliance with fundamental rights](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2023.

²⁸ EU funds, p. 56.

²⁹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1689](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act) (Text with EEA relevance); OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024.

Article 77 AI Act extends beyond their mandate or that other bodies have the necessary powers and competences for recognition under this article.³⁰

Finally, FRA surveyed NHRIs regarding their role in legislation through *ex ante* and *ex post* human rights impact assessment. Twenty-six of the 34 NHRIs that responded to the survey are involved at some stage of the legislative process.³¹ This involvement is particularly relevant for their role in the system of checks and balances, as highlighted in the Commission's 2024 Rule of Law Report.³²

Recommendations:

Together with project partners of an NHRI Rule of Law project funded by the EEA and Norway Grants, FRA has suggested a number of ways forward to strengthen NHRIs across the EU, including to advance the rule of law.³³ NHRIs should be consulted regularly on human rights impacts assessments and legal scrutiny of policy and legislation to guarantee that independent fundamental rights expertise is duly taken into consideration, thereby contributing to better law-making whenever Member States are acting within the scope of EU law. The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions has repeatedly underlined that NHRIs are often provided with additional specific mandates, for example as being a SLAPP³⁴ focal point or having a role in the protection of whistleblowers under EU law, without being allocated adequate additional resources.³⁵

Additionally, NHRIs engaged in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU-funded programmes and operations should have sufficient human, technical and financial resources so they can perform their core tasks and exercise their powers effectively. In its report *EU funds: Ensuring compliance with fundamental rights*, FRA also calls for Member States to consult independent fundamental rights bodies and specialised CSOs early in the process of implementing the funds covered by the Common Provisions Regulation, including on calls for proposals and selection criteria.³⁶

³⁰ FRA, [NHRI accreditation and mandates – update 2025](#), pp. 10-11.

³¹ FRA, [NHRI accreditation and mandates – update 2025](#), p. 21.

³² COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS 2024 Rule of Law Report The rule of law situation in the European Union, COM(2024) 800 final, p. 32.

³³ Concluding Conference Statement on the role of National Human Rights Institutions, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/conference-statement-role-nhri-feb-2024_en.pdf.

³⁴ As required under Article 19(1) of [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1069](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), OJ L, 2024/1069, 16.4.2024.

³⁵ See for instance past submissions by the European Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) to the Rule of Law Report.

³⁶ EU funds, p. 56.

3. Mutual trust, mutual recognition and the efficiency of justice: the case of the European Arrest Warrant

Rule of law relevance:

The principles of mutual trust and mutual recognition allow for the free movement of judgments and other judicial decisions. They are therefore vital for the functioning of the EU as an area without internal borders. The principles of mutual recognition and mutual trust contribute to the efficiency of justice within the Area of Justice in criminal matters. The efficiency of justice is necessary for the protection of fundamental rights not only on the national level, but also in the Union as a whole. Efficiency is also one of the criteria used to determine whether a justice system complies with rule of law standards.

Under the Treaties, each Member State within the EU and the EU itself must function in accordance with fundamental rights and the rule of law. It is therefore important that all instruments of mutual trust and recognition are fully compatible with fundamental rights, and with the recognised standards for the administration of justice under the rule of law.

Issues:

The European Arrest Warrant (EAW) is a key mutual recognition instrument in the Area of Justice in criminal matters. It allows for a judicial decision that has been issued in one EU Member State for a person's arrest and surrender for the purposes of conducting a criminal prosecution or executing a custodial sentence or detention order to be executed in another Member State. In 2024, FRA published a report *European Arrest Warrant Proceedings – Room for improvement to guarantee rights in practice* that examines the fundamental rights implications of issuing and executing EAWs, and how national authorities apply selected procedural fundamental rights and safeguards guaranteed by EU law in EAW proceedings.³⁷

As stated, under the rule of law, all actions by public authorities must be in full compliance with fundamental rights. In criminal matters – including the issue and execution of EAWs – this means in particular criminal procedural rights such as the right to a fair trial and right of defence. The guarantee of these rights is particularly important since criminal proceedings can lead to one of the greatest interferences in a person's life, the deprivation of the person's liberty – and consequently also of their ability to exercise many other fundamental rights and freedoms. Moreover, as with any measure leading to the deprivation of liberty, the prohibition of arbitrary action by authorities and principle of proportionality set the boundaries for lawfulness, and therefore also the boundaries for

³⁷ FRA, [European Arrest Warrant proceedings – Room for improvement to guarantee rights in practice](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024.

compatibility with the rule of law.³⁸ Respect for these rights and principles is therefore also a rule of law question.

The system of mutual trust is built on the presumption that all Member States share the values laid down in Article 2 TEU and thus comply with fundamental rights, which is at the core of the EU understanding of criminal justice. It also relies on the assumption that the justice systems of the Member States comply with the requirements of the rule of law so that they can deliver on the obligation to ensure the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial.

However, in the over 20 years since EAWs were first introduced, a number of problems have been identified with ensuring the fundamental rights of requested persons, as well as with trust in the rule of law compliance of judicial systems in other Member States. Of central importance is the fact that the EAW framework decision does not provide for the non-execution of an EAW on fundamental rights grounds. The CJEU has nevertheless confirmed that the requested state has the right and the obligation to examine whether the execution of the EAW would lead to the violation of fundamental rights, such as the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment, or to a denial of justice, in the specific case.³⁹

FRA findings, published in 2024, show that judicial authorities in the Member States do not always consider the fundamental rights implications of surrendering individuals when executing an EAW, and rarely examine the potential for denial of justice. Some authorities erroneously consider that the principles of mutual trust and recognition prevent them from examining the individual situations of requested persons, as well as detention conditions and access to justice in the issuing Member States.⁴⁰

With regard to procedural rights, the FRA data shows that the right to access to a lawyer in the *executing* state is generally respected. However, EU law also requires that the right to access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings involving an EAW also be guaranteed in the *issuing* state. The lawyer in the issuing Member State should assist the lawyer in the executing state in ensuring the effective exercise of the rights of requested persons under the EAW framework decision. FRA's research shows that in practice, such dual representation is rare. The research also reveals that while the overall situation is quite good, there are still some shortcomings in providing information to requested persons in EAW proceedings at the standard required by the directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings⁴¹, as well as with providing interpretation or translation in

³⁸ FRA, European Arrest Warrant proceedings, p. 5.

³⁹ CJEU, judgment of 5 April 2016, *Aranyosi and Căldăraru*, C-404/15 and C-659/15 PPU, EU:C:2016:198, para. 88 and judgment of 25 July 2018, *LM*, C-216/18 PPU, ECLI:EU:C:2018:586, para. 80.

⁴⁰ FRA, European Arrest Warrant proceedings, p. 7.

⁴¹ [Directive 2012/13/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012 on the right to information in criminal proceedings, OJ L 142.

accordance with the directive on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings⁴².

Recommendations:

Based on these findings, the report includes five opinions on how to improve the guarantee of procedural fundamental rights to accused and convicted persons in the context of EAW proceedings. These include developing specific materials for police officers responsible for arrests, materials on how to provide information to requested persons in a simple way, developing training and materials for legal professionals, and cooperating with national and European professional associations of legal translators to ensure the availability of qualified interpreters and translators.⁴³

4. Equality and non-discrimination: addressing racism in policing

Rule of law relevance:

One of the tenets of the rule of law is adherence by public authorities to the principle of equality of all persons before the law. The other side of the equality coin is the fundamental right to non-discrimination. Article 2 TEU also lists equality separately, after democracy and before the rule of law, as one of the values on which the Union is founded.

The fundamental rights to equality before the law and to non-discrimination are considered key safeguards for ensuring that the law is applicable and applied to all people on equal footing. The legal framework at the international, EU and national level prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including race, ethnic origin and membership of a national minority.⁴⁴ In any Member State, widespread discrimination by public authorities on any of these grounds is a strong indication of a systemic problem with the rule of law. Moreover, such discrimination undermines trust in public authorities, including the police, while trust in public authorities contributes to lawfulness and a healthy rule of law culture. Finally, structural, institutional and systemic racism are also serious breaches of the rule of law.

⁴² [Directive 2010/64/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings, OJ L 280.

⁴³ FRA, European Arrest Warrant proceedings, pp. 7-12. In 2024, the [European Arrest Warrant and Fundamental Rights ECtHR and CJEU Case-Law Joint Factsheet](#) was also updated. A new factsheet on Independence of the Judiciary will be published in mid-2025. These factsheets are the result of a collaborative effort between the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights and FRA to highlight jurisprudence in selected areas where EU law and the ECHR interact.

⁴⁴ Art 21(1) Charter.

Issues:

The 2024 FRA report *Addressing Racism in Policing*⁴⁵ is the first specific EU-wide study that looks at racism in policing, which includes discriminatory profiling practices, inappropriate communication and excessive use of force, and which points to structural, institutional and systemic racism in policing. Whereas the number of officially recorded incidents of police racism tends to be low, this does not mean that racist policing does not exist, as surveys, other research and data from civil society organisations show. For a variety of reasons, most incidents remain unreported.⁴⁸

It has been widely recognised, including in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), that effective oversight mechanisms are key to ensuring the protection of fundamental rights in the field of security, such as the work of the police. A strong oversight mechanism that can hold public power to account is an essential element of, and safeguard for, the rule of law. The effectiveness of oversight and accountability in the police depends on the level of independence, the scope of powers and the extent to which these are used.⁴⁶ While almost all EU Member States have at least one body that has a general or specific oversight mandate in relation to the police, several of these oversight bodies lack one or more essential powers, i.e. the power to impose fines, power to act as a party during criminal proceedings and power to transmit findings directly to a public prosecutor. The findings also show that not all Member States provide for specific and effective protection for whistleblowers who report breaches of criminal law and other misconduct by public officials, including racist conduct.⁴⁷

The research examines the diversity of the legal frameworks in the Member States that have been adopted to prevent discrimination in policing as required under EU and international human rights law. The study also looks at reporting and recording of racist incidents in the Member States. FRA findings point to gaps and inconsistencies in definitions, including as to what constitutes unlawful profiling and excessive force, as well as in the reporting and recording of racist police incidents, which hinders effective responses at both the national and EU level.

Whereas the Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance strongly encourages Member States to ensure that the composition of the police force reflects the diversity of the population, FRA research shows that only some Member States have made efforts to encourage and recruit applicants from ethnic and racially diverse backgrounds. Moreover, there is a widespread lack of data to indicate whether police forces reflect the diverse compositions of the Member States' populations.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ FRA, [Addressing Racism in Policing](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024.

⁴⁶ FRA, *Addressing Racism in Policing*, p. 58.

⁴⁷ FRA, *Addressing Racism in Policing*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ FRA, *Addressing Racism in Policing*, p. 55.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings, FRA has identified ways forward to combat racism and racial discrimination in policing more effectively. This includes application and enforcement of the domestic, EU and international legal framework, with complementary initiatives to strengthen laws at the national level that apply directly to police action. FRA also calls for more systemic collection of disaggregated, reliable and comparable data on racism and racial discrimination in policing in the Member States. This would allow for a better assessment of the scale of the problem and help policy- and law-makers address the issues more effectively at the national and EU levels. Member States are encouraged to continue strengthening the role and independence of non-judicial oversight bodies and to ensure that national law transposing the whistleblower directive cover reports of racist and discriminatory conduct by police. Member States should also seek to increase ethnic diversity in the police force, and to provide practical guidance or specialised training, including on the potential for discrimination as a result of bias in algorithmic systems.⁴⁹

5. Respect for fundamental rights in border and asylum procedures

Rule of law relevance:

One of the basic tenets of the rule of law is that all public authorities are bound by the law and are therefore prohibited from arbitrary action. As the EU faces the challenges of security and better management of migration, public authorities must continue to operate within the limits of the law. This means that they must fully respect the fundamental rights of all people, including migrants and refugees at the external borders of their country and, as the case may be, of the European Union. Under the rule of law, when alleged violations take place, there must be access to justice, including to an effective remedy in an independent and impartial court of law, and those responsible for violations must be held accountable. This also applies to situations at the external borders of the EU. Access to justice is hindered if alleged violations of fundamental rights are not investigated effectively. Investigations that do not meet the requirements of independence, thoroughness, transparency, promptness and victim participation thus pose a risk to the rule of law.

It has been recognised that independent monitoring of the compliance of state action with fundamental and human rights obligations is key to preventing and effectively

⁴⁹ FRA, *Addressing Racism in Policing*, pp. 79-80. FRA has developed a fundamental rights-based manual for police trainers to help foster a relationship of trust between police and society in all its diversity. It focuses on the rights to non-discrimination, dignity and life. The manual suggests several fundamental rights training tools for the police. See [Fundamental rights-based police training: A manual for police trainers](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019.

addressing violations. This is even more relevant where enforcement is likely to include coercive measures, such as in border management. Independent monitoring is considered to be part of the system of checks and balances that holds public power to account, which is a vital safeguard for the rule of law. A strong and effective oversight mechanism can support investigations of allegations against public authorities by providing objective, evidence-based and unbiased analysis. This improves transparency and accountability, and thus enhances trust in public authorities, which is necessary for a healthy rule of law culture. For all of these reasons, independent monitoring is an important rule of law question.

Issues:

In 2024, FRA published its *Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders*⁵⁰ based on research conducted in 16 Member States at the EU's external land and sea borders.⁵¹ The report is based on desk research and data collection from national authorities that are responsible for carrying out disciplinary and judicial investigations, and also national human rights bodies, organisations providing support or legal aid to refugees and migrants, and lawyers. It covers investigations of incidents of loss of life and allegations of fundamental rights violations by public authorities, including of the right to life and the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that are protected under both the Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).⁵² To ensure these rights in practice, whenever there is a credible assertion that these rights have been violated, national authorities have an obligation to carry out an effective official investigation.

UN and Council of Europe bodies, national human rights institutions and civil-society organisations regularly report serious, recurrent and widespread human rights violations affecting migrants and refugees at the EU's external land and sea borders.⁵³ Despite these credible reports, FRA's findings show that the number of investigations remain low, even when the reported incidents concern alleged ill-treatment. When criminal investigations are initiated, these are often closed at the pre-trial phase. There is generally little information about investigations into such allegations, and it is often difficult to extract

⁵⁰ FRA, [Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders](#), Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024.

⁵¹ Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. The report covers 2020 and 2023.

⁵² Articles 2 and 4 of the Charter and Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR.

⁵³ These reports are described in FRA [Regular overviews of migration-related fundamental rights concerns](#), which were published from September 2015 to June 2023; FRA, [Migration – Fundamental rights issues at land borders](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020; and FRA, [Asylum and Migration – Progress achieved and remaining challenges](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, Chapter 1.

data specific to alleged ill-treatment at the borders by public authorities from generalised statistics and court practice.⁵⁴

FRA's research shows that victims of ill-treatment at borders rarely report these incidents to law enforcement authorities for a variety of reasons. These include distrust in the authorities, fear of reprisals and potential negative impacts on asylum procedures, and a lack of information and awareness of how to submit complaints to access justice.⁵⁵ Where complaints are processed, the data collected indicates that investigations are often not transparent, and the results are often not public, including decisions in disciplinary proceedings and, in some Member States, also judicial decisions. The findings show that very few national court proceedings led to convictions and very few disciplinary proceedings led to sanctions, especially when compared with the number of credible reports about serious fundamental rights violations.⁵⁶

The report identifies a trend whereby victims who do not obtain justice in domestic courts are seeking redress from the European Court of Human Rights. The report examines five judgments in which the Strasbourg Court has found that investigations by national authorities into alleged violations of migrants' rights were ineffective, and that the States in question had therefore breached the procedural requirements of Article 2 (right to life) or 3 (prohibition of torture) of the Convention. Reference is made to an additional 31 similar cases that were pending adjudication by the ECtHR as of 1 January 2024.

Recommendations:

For the national level, building on the research findings and promising practices identified in various Member States, FRA has elaborated 10 points suggesting concrete steps to conduct more effective investigations of loss of life and alleged ill-treatment that occur during border management. For example, to ensure full impartiality and independence, FRA suggests that national investigations should be entrusted to specific prosecutorial departments specialised in investigating cases of criminal offences committed by law enforcement officials. At the Union level, the report sees an important role for the Commission in promoting effective national investigations through monitoring adherence to Schengen rules, as well as in assisting Member States in implementing European integrated border management policies, including through a fundamental rights compliant use of EU funds.⁵⁷

These actions at national and EU level are particularly important in light of the conclusion drawn in the report that prompt and effective investigations would help counter a growing perception that some of what is happening at the EU's external borders puts the supremacy of law into question. The report further concludes that ineffective judicial

⁵⁴ FRA, Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders, p. 14.

⁵⁵ FRA, Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders, p. 11.

⁵⁶ FRA, Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁷ FRA, Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders, pp. 4-5.

protection against widespread rights violations at borders poses a risk to the rule of law, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

FRA has published specific guidance⁵⁸ and recommendations to support implementation of the Screening Regulation⁵⁹ and Asylum Procedure Regulation⁶⁰ that were adopted in May 2024. Under these regulations, Member States must provide for an independent mechanism to monitor compliance with fundamental rights during the screening of new arrivals and when assessing asylum claims at external borders. These requirements will be applicable in mid-2026.⁶¹

6. Data protection and data protection authorities

Rule of law relevance:

In today's digitalised world, the importance of the right to protection of personal data, as guaranteed under Article 8 of the Charter, is greater than ever. Protection of personal data serves to ensure the broader right of all people to respect for private and family life, which is fundamental to any free and democratic society. It allows individuals to have control over their personal data, and to make sure that data collection and processing by other persons – including public authorities – is limited to what is permitted by law. This right is so crucial that EU primary law, i.e. the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 16(2)) and the Charter, explicitly recognises the protection of personal data as a fundamental right and requires that compliance with data protection rules is subject to control by an independent authority. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) further emphasises that each Data Protection Authority (DPA) should be completely independent⁶² when performing its tasks⁶³ and exercising its powers⁶⁴. The European

⁵⁸ FRA, [Guidance: Monitoring fundamental rights during screening and the asylum border procedure – A guide on national independent mechanisms](#), 2024.

⁵⁹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1356](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 introducing the screening of third-country nationals at the external borders and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/817, OJ L, 2024/1356, Art. 10.

⁶⁰ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1348](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU, OJ L, 2024/1348, Art 43(4).

⁶¹ Under the Screening Regulation, member States may also request FRA to support them in developing their independent monitoring mechanisms, including safeguards for independence of such mechanisms, as well as the monitoring methodology and appropriate training schemes.

⁶² [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (Text with EEA relevance) (GDPR), OJ L 119, Art. 57.

⁶³ Art. 57, GDPR.

⁶⁴ Art. 58, GDPR.

Court of Justice has defined the principle of “complete independence” of the DPAs supervision and tasks in its jurisprudence.⁶⁵

The experiences of DPAs are particularly relevant, as these authorities contribute to ensuring the rule of law in a number of ways. First, they have an important role in the system of checks and balances that holds public power to account. Secondly, they help to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of all people, with particular emphasis on the right to protection of personal data, by both public and private actors. Thirdly, with their unique expertise they contribute to the quality of laws and the process of preparing and enacting laws by issuing legal opinions on their own initiative or upon request. Finally, through cooperation among DPAs of other Member States in the European Data Protection Board, they contribute to ensuring the consistent application and enforcement of data protection rules throughout the Union, which is necessary to ensure equality before the law in practice.

Issues:

The 2024 FRA report *GDPR in practice – experiences of data protection authorities*⁶⁶ looks at the experiences of these DPAs six years after the GDPR became applicable. Prior to publication of the second evaluation report of the GDPR by the Commission in 2024, FRA conducted interviews with DPA representatives in all 27 Member States to collect the experiences, challenges and best practices identified by DPAs in implementing the GDPR in relation to: DPAs’ independence; the institutional capacity of DPAs; modern technological challenges; raising public awareness; the investigatory powers of DPAs; sanctioning GDPR violations; cooperation between EU DPAs and the GDPR consistency mechanism; cooperation with other national regulators; and the protection of personal data and competing fundamental rights.

The resources, capacity and powers of DPAs are increasingly important as the EU has recently adopted several pieces of legislation, such as the Data Act, Digital Governance Act, Digital Markets Act, Digital Services Act, AI Act and the EU’s new pact on migration and asylum, that will add to DPAs’ responsibilities.

The research shows that inadequate financial, human and technical resources risk undermining the implementation of DPAs’ mandates and their independence, confirming earlier FRA findings. For example, with an increasing number of duties and growing number of individual complaints, DPAs have an ever-greater need for highly qualified legal and IT professionals with data protection knowledge. However, many DPAs report

⁶⁵ See CJEU, C-518/07, *European Commission v. Germany*, 9 March 2010. Note that Art. 16 of the [FRA founding regulation](#) uses the same wording “complete independence”. On the nature of FRA and its independence see J. Morijn and G.N. Toggenburg, *The EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights: The Past, the Present and the Future of an Atypical "Agency"*, in [EU law live February 2024](#).

⁶⁶ FRA, [GDPR in practice – Experiences of data protection authorities](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024.

that recruitment is often a challenge, especially as DPAs must compete with the private sector, where the same experts are sought after by private actors to ensure that their activities are GDPR compliant. Insufficient resources and the need to prioritise complaint handling over other tasks also means that DPAs can devote less time to providing input to policy- and lawmakers, and to conducting investigations of public authorities on their own initiative.⁶⁷

The interviews also revealed that DPAs are not always given the opportunity to provide input into draft legislation in a meaningful way. Moreover, public bodies are sometimes reluctant to consult with DPAs when acting as data controllers. Several DPAs also pointed to difficulties when investigating public administrations due to national law provisions allowing for derogations for public entities from certain obligations contained in the GDPR.⁶⁸

Among other challenges, FRA's findings show that despite increased awareness of data protection rules, there is an apparent lack of understanding of what the GDPR actually requires – both amongst public authorities (the law- and policymakers) as well as individuals. This is witnessed, for example, by a low number of consultations on data protection impact assessments, including by public authorities, and by a large number of trivial or unfounded complaints received by DPAs. Regarding new technologies, several experts expressed concerns over the lack of clarity on the role of DPAs and of other supervisory authorities envisaged in new data-related acts.⁶⁹

FRA findings confirm that strong cooperation between DPAs through the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) will help ensure a harmonised interpretation of the GDPR, which is key for ensuring equality before the law in practice. However, these efforts also entail significant extra work for DPAs. Consequently, many respondents expressed the need to make the EDPB's operations and procedures more effective and to provide the EDPB with sufficient resources.

Recommendations:

Based on these findings, FRA has formulated eight opinions to address these challenges and also to assist the Commission in its review of the GDPR and its application. Importantly, FRA calls on EU Member States to secure the necessary financial, human and technical resources for DPAs. As a key element of independence, DPAs should be provided with the means to adequately perform the entirety of their regulatory tasks. This particularly applies to tasks where DPAs can act on their own initiative, such as the timely

⁶⁷ FRA, GDPR in practice, pp. 6-8.

⁶⁸ FRA, GDPR in practice, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁹ FRA, GDPR in practice, pp 9-11.

provision of advice and opinions on draft legislation and conducting their own investigations of public authorities.⁷⁰

III Forthcoming in 2025-2026

Beyond the above examples of published material, the Agency is currently working on a number of projects at the intersection of the rule of law and fundamental rights. These will culminate in the following key FRA reports and guidance in 2025-2026:

The role of fundamental rights for protection of the rule of law: relevant national case law and other decisions

This project aims to provide examples of how upholding fundamental rights can be instrumental in addressing challenges to the rule of law on the national level. The starting point of the research is that fundamental rights and the rule of law are intrinsically linked such that the protection of fundamental rights may also serve a more systemic, rule of law function. Traditionally, it has been the judiciary that has served to defend the constitutional order and the rights of the population. In the area of human and fundamental rights, this function has increasingly been shared with ombudsman institutions, national human rights institutions, equality bodies and other similar non-judicial bodies. The research will identify specific judicial and non-judicial cases where the protection of an individual's fundamental rights has been directly linked to the protection of the rule of law on the basis of national constitutional law, EU law and/or the European Convention on Human Rights.

FRA will publish 30 short country reports from the 27 EU Member States and EU candidate countries with FRA observer status (Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia), as well as a comparative report with examples and findings in 2026. The report aims to provide concrete examples of how the rule of law and fundamental rights interact, thereby contributing to increased awareness of the links between fundamental rights and the rule of law. This can support policy development and implementation, as well as inform and inspire others to make effective use of fundamental rights protection to safeguard and enhance the rule of law.

Civic space

In 2025, FRA has once again launched an annual civic space consultation with its wide civil society network. In parallel, FRA has undertaken research on the civic space in all EU Member States and its three observer countries, Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, through its FRANET research network. This most recent data collection looks more closely at civic space monitoring, the protection of civic space actors, and participation in policy- and lawmaking. Preliminary findings show that the overall

⁷⁰ FRA, GDPR in practice, FRA opinion 1, p. 7.

challenges and threats for civic space actors, as such, are not consistently monitored by national governments or parliaments. The civic space is generally monitored through a variety of broader or more specific initiatives by National Human Rights Institutions and civil society actors. FRA will publish a report bringing together findings from the FRANET research, consultation, desk research and expert interviews in autumn 2025. This information will be particularly relevant as the Commission prepares to build a Civil Society Platform “to support more systematic civil dialogue and work to strengthen protection of civil society, activist and human rights defenders in their work.”⁷¹

Digitalisation of justice: fundamental rights guidance

Access to justice, effective judicial protection and control of public authorities by independent and impartial courts are considered key elements of the rule of law. One of the aspects of quality of justice is the use of digitalisation and ICT systems, including AI-based systems. Whereas such systems can contribute to the quality and efficiency of justice, in a democracy based on the rule of law, such systems can only be used if they are compatible with fundamental rights.

FRA is conducting qualitative research on how digitalised systems and processes in the administration and delivery of justice can impact (positively and negatively) the fundamental rights of individuals - e.g. complainants, defendants and victims – in their interaction with justice systems. The research will also reveal how digitalisation can impact the ability of justice professionals to carry out their work and fulfil their fundamental rights obligations. It will examine multiple examples of digital tools and systems in use across seven Member States: Austria, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Portugal. Based on its findings, FRA will publish guidance in the second half of 2025 for EU institutions and Member States on how to ensure that digitalised justice processes and systems facilitate and protect fundamental rights in practice.

⁷¹ Mission Letter, Michael McGrath, Commission-designate for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law, 17.09.2024. p. 6.

Annex – FRA resources as they relate to the rule of law

Table 1 below follows the structure of the four pillars of the Commission’s Rule of Law report to allow for easy access to relevant FRA information published during the reporting period. A fifth section has been added with aspects of the rule of law that are beyond the scope of the Rule of Law report. Hyperlinks are provided for reports and other materials published on FRA’s website. Activities that are also featured above in this submission are marked with a reference to the relevant point.

Table 1: FRA resources related to the rule of law		
EU Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS)		
EFRIS is a dynamic tool that creates visualisations of data on States’ human rights commitments and compliance collected from databases maintained by the United Nations and the Council of Europe. EFRIS covers the EU-27 plus Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia.		
Case Law Database on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights		
Database with case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) with direct references to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as a selection of national case law with direct references to the Charter from all EU Member States.		
I. Justice systems: independence; quality of justice; efficiency of the justice system		
Title	Date and type of publication	Relevance for the rule of law
European Arrest Warrant proceedings – Room for improvement to guarantee rights in practice	March 2024 Report	See Section II, Point 2 above
Guidance on investigating alleged ill-treatment at borders	July 2024 Guidance	See Section II, Point 1 above
Stepping up the response to victims of crime: FRA’s findings on challenges and solutions	November 2024 Paper Compilation of key findings from FRA’s	The protection of victims’ rights is important for access to justice. Underreporting leads to the law not being applied in practice and to the impunity of perpetrators of crime. This has

	quantitative and qualitative research on victims of crime relating to three areas: reporting crime, protection from secondary victimisation and victim support services.	an overall cost not just for victims, but for society as a whole.
II. Anti-corruption framework: capacity to fight against corruption; prevention; repression		
Title	Date and type of publication	Relevance for the rule of law
III. Media pluralism and media freedom: media authorities and bodies; safeguards against government or political interference and transparency and concentration of ownership; framework for journalists' protection; transparency and access to documents		
Title	Date and type of publication	Relevance for the rule of law
IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances: the process for preparing and enacting laws; independent authorities; accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions; the enabling framework for civil society; initiatives to foster a rule of law culture		
Title	Date and type of publication	Relevance for the rule of law
Addressing threats to democracy and civic space: promoting participation and protection freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression.	June 2024 Dedicated chapter in FRA's 2024 Fundamental Rights Report	The enabling framework for civil society. See Section II, Point 1 above
GDPR in practice – Experiences of data protection authorities	June 2024 Report reflecting 70 qualitative interviews with data protection authority (DPA) representatives in 27 EU Member States	Independent authorities. See Section II, Point 6 above
Monitoring fundamental rights during screening and the asylum border	September 2024 Guide	Independent authorities. See Section II, Point 5 above

procedure – A guide on national independent mechanisms		
NHRI accreditation status and mandates - update 2025	April 2025 Web publication	Independent authorities; enabling framework for civil society. See Section II, Point 2 above
V. Other aspects of the rule of law equality and non-discrimination		
Title	Date and type of publication	Relevance for the rule of law
Addressing Racism in Policing	April 2024 Report	See Section II, Point 4 above
Being Muslim in the EU - Experiences of Muslims	October 2024 Report The findings are based on the experiences of almost 10,000 Muslims living in 13 EU countries and are part of FRA's third EU-wide survey looking at the lived experiences of immigrants and their descendants.	The right to equality and non-discrimination as a core element and safeguard for the rule of law.
EU gender-based violence survey - Key results	November 2024 Report This report presents key results of the EU gender-based violence survey based on data from all 27 Member States. The report focuses on the overall prevalence of physical violence or threats and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator, violence perpetrated by women's intimate	The right to equality and non-discrimination as a core element and safeguard for the rule of law. The protection of victims' rights is important for access to justice. Underreporting leads to the law not being applied in practice and to the impunity of perpetrators of crime. This has an overall cost not just for victims, but for society as a whole.

	partners and by other people (non-partners) and women's experiences of sexual harassment at work.	
Jewish People's Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism	July 2024 Report	The right to equality and non-discrimination as a core element and safeguard for the rule of law.
LGBTIQ at a crossroads: progress and challenges	May 2024 Report Survey of experiences of over 100,000 LGBTIQ people of all backgrounds aged 15 years and above in the EU and neighbouring countries.	The right to equality and non-discrimination as a core element and safeguard for the rule of law.