

Targeted European Commission consultation of Charter focal points on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for the 2025 Charter report

Summary of survey results

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Executive summary

The survey shows that the role of Charter focal points (CFP) differs among Member States. CFPs express the need for more guidance from both their Member State and the European Commission to help define their role and prevent redundancies. They have also indicated a lack of knowledge and awareness of the Charter for various stakeholders in their Member States, emphasizing the need for increased capacity-building.

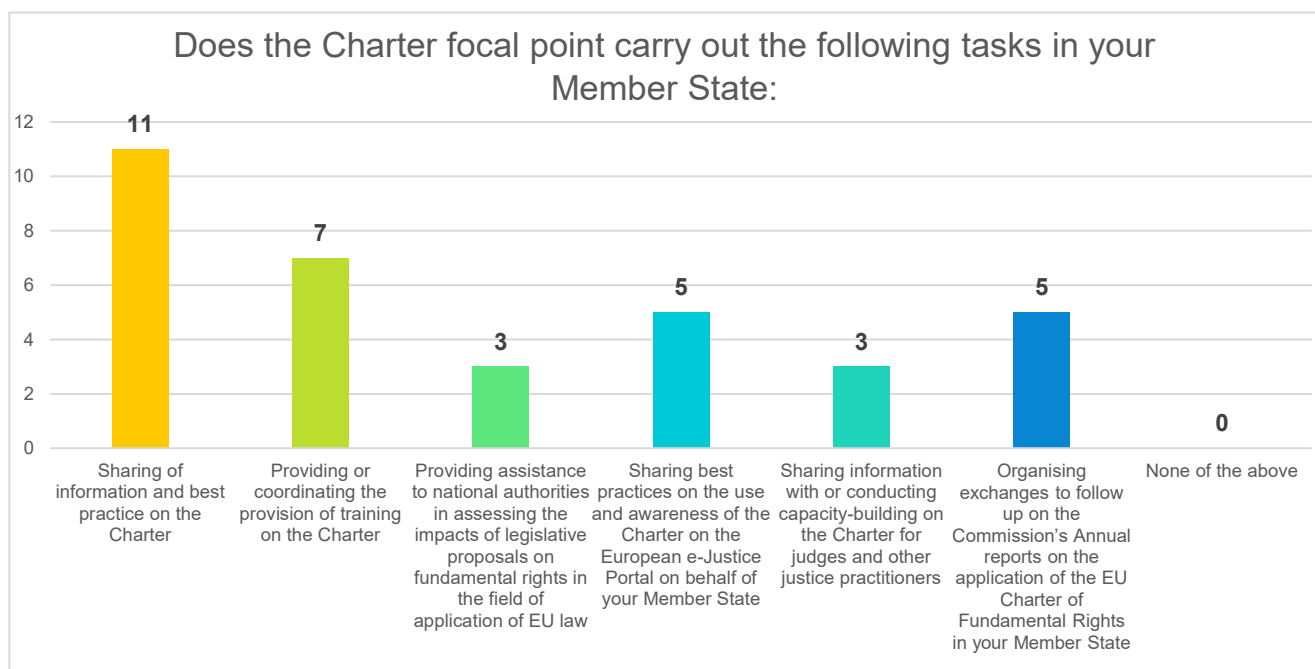
Key takeaways and learning points

- Tasks of CFPs showed some variation, with the only widespread task being the sharing of information and best practices on the Charter (92 %); in addition, 58 % of CFPs provided or coordinated training on the Charter, while other tasks were carried out by less than half of the responding CFPs.
- The role of CFPs in the preparation of national legislation could be greater, with only 25 % of respondents indicating CFPs carry out the tasks of *providing assistance to national authorities in assessing the impacts of legislative proposals on fundamental rights in the field of application of EU law* or *providing assistance to national authorities in assessing the impacts of legislative proposals on fundamental rights in the field of application of EU law* respectively.
- Interconnection within the Member States could also be improved; while 67 % of CFPs carried out their tasks within the national government, only 8 % worked with local and regional administrations and only 17 % worked with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), equality bodies and ombudspeople.
- The most important challenges CFPs faced were a *lack of time due to other work tasks*, as well as a *broad scope of potential tasks* (83 % each).
- Respondents also indicated a need for further training measures, as well as opportunities to network and share best practices. Overall, CFPs wish for the Commission and the Member States to clarify their role and tasks, as well as enhance training opportunities for various stakeholders.

Summary of the responses provided

CFPs from 12 Member States participated in the consultation: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Finland (FI), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Romania (RO), Spain (ES) and Sweden (SE).

Tasks of the CFPs



The most widespread tasks of the CFPs are the sharing of information and best practices on the Charter (92% of total respondents) and the provision or coordination of training on the Charter (58% of total respondents).

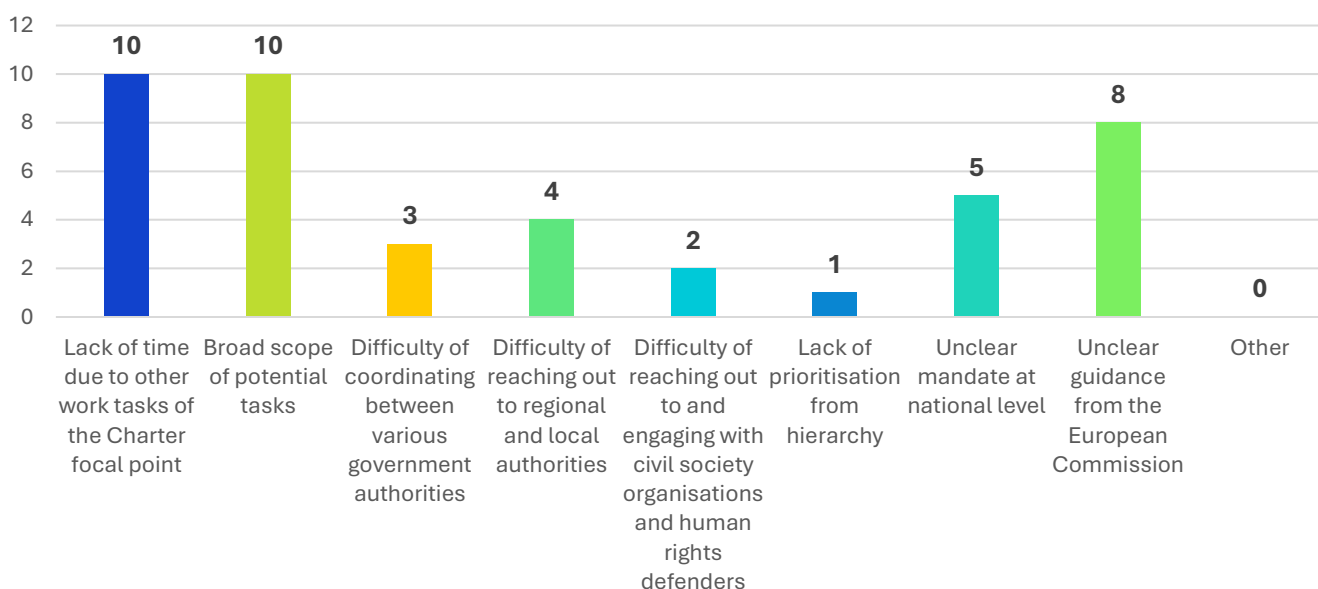
In total, 67% of the respondents reported carrying out other tasks. These were conducting trainings and seminars, monitoring compliance, reporting, and participating in consultations. Many focal points were involved in organising and conducting training sessions, seminars, and informational events on the Charter and its application to stakeholders, such as civil servants and legal professionals. Some focal points actively participate in monitoring committees and develop guidelines or checklists to ensure that EU-funded programs and activities are compliant with the Charter. Finally, some are responsible for handling reporting requests related to the Charter, contributing to Commission reports, and responding to consultations.

A large majority of the CFPs work within their national governments (65%). Cooperation with local and regional administration needs to be increased as only 1 respondent (8%) reported to carry out activities in this context.

Challenges to the work of CFPs

The two main challenges encountered by the CFPs when carrying out their activities were lack of time (83%) and broad scope of potential tasks (83%). The majority of the respondents (67%) also reported unclear guidance from the European Union with “[the] role of the focal point and the Commission’s expectations still [being] slightly unclear” (FI). A few respondents have also specified that the existence of the CFPs (FI) as well as their role and identity are often rather unknown to national administrations (CY).

Which challenges have been encountered in the activities of the Charter focal point? Please select the four most challenging:



These challenges were reflected in the answers about the further measures that could be taken by the Commission to assist Member States in effectively developing the role of the CFPs. Many respondents emphasised the need for the European Commission to clarify and define the mandate and responsibilities of CFP (NL, HR, LV, FI, RO, BE). This includes guidance on the scope of their tasks, which can otherwise be broad and unclear. There is also a strong call for specialised training and capacity-building efforts to enhance the ability of focal points to effectively implement the Charter (ES, MT, FI). Suggestions in this context include practical training, workshops, and tools that focus on the Charter's application. Finally, respondents suggest facilitating regular meetings and platforms for Charter focal points to exchange experiences, challenges, and best practices (SE, ES, MT, FI). This peer learning and networking support could promote mutual cooperation and strengthen the CFPs' role across different Member States.

Similar responses were given about further measures that the European Commission could take to assist Member States in effectively implementing and applying the Charter. A necessity for training and capacity-building was expressed (HR, ES, MT, RO, BE). This includes providing practical training sessions, workshops, and materials for public authorities, legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers), and civil servants to enhance their understanding and application of the Charter. The need for practical guidance and sharing of best practices is once again highlighted (LT, CY). This could involve developing guidelines for applying the Charter in different policy areas, encouraging peer exchanges among Member States, and providing structured information to assist national experts in legislative processes. Respondents call for the development and dissemination of accessible training materials, guidance, and public awareness campaigns (NL, HR, AT, ES, FI). These materials should be designed to educate various target groups, including the public, about the Charter's provisions and significance.

As to the measures that Member States could take to implement and apply the Charter more effectively, the responding CFPs referred to training and capacity-building with many emphasising the need for sustained and enhanced training initiatives for various stakeholders, including civil servants, legal professionals, and public authorities (HR, ES, FI, RO, LT, BE). Answers given include both general training on human rights and specific guidance on using the Charter in legal contexts. There is also a call for increased awareness-raising efforts about the Charter and its application (NL, AT, MT, FI). This includes allocating more human and financial resources to support capacity building and awareness activities targeting different sectors, including civil society and the general public. Some responses suggest improving coordination between existing bodies, like the Ombudsman and Charter focal points, and integrating the Charter more thoroughly in legislative and policy development processes, such as through fundamental rights impact assessments (LV, MT).

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