

# Targeted European Commission consultation of local and regional authorities on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for the 2025 Charter report

Summary of survey results

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers  
Directorate C — Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy  
Unit C.2 — Fundamental rights policy and free movement

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Summary of survey results

Manuscript completed in May 2026

First edition

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## Executive summary

Knowledge of the Charter among local and regional authorities (LoRAs) could still be improved, with a minority of 25% claiming very good or good knowledge on the Charter and 35% assessing their knowledge to be average. Correspondingly, only 25% find available trainings to be sufficient and only 14% say they have participated in Charter-related training in the past five years. Majority of participants would like other local and regional authorities to share good practices on the Charter, indicating insufficient networking efforts. Participants also call for further training opportunities and guidance. The existing online tools provided by the FRA and via the Justice portal seem not to be widespread, indicating a need to not only improve training opportunities and guidance but also to better advertise the existing resources.

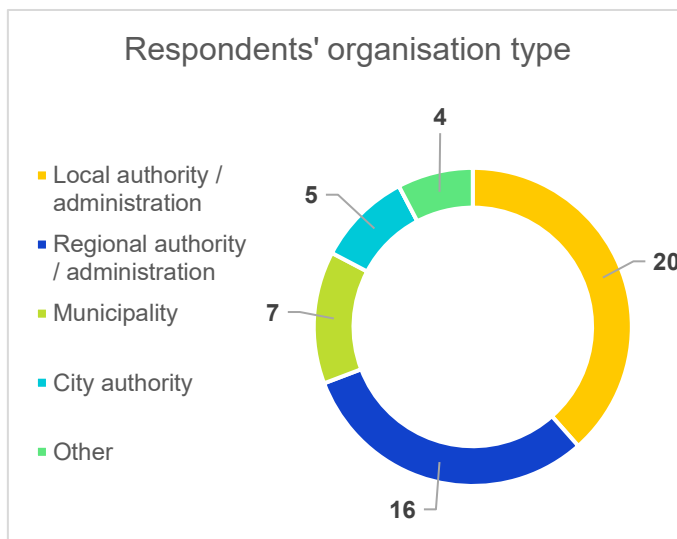
## Key takeaways and learning points

- There is little Charter knowledge among LoRAs, with only 25% of respondents reporting “good” or “very good” knowledge within their administration (35% “average”, 25% “not so good” and 14% “no knowledge at all”). However, 56% of respondents say they use the Charter “often” or “sometimes” in their work (24% “rarely”, 8% “never”, 12% “do not know”).
- Respondents think the Charter can be used most effectively in the areas of equality and non-discrimination (80%), followed by housing, health, education, social protection and support of vulnerable groups in these areas (59%), and local democracy (57%).
- Only 14% say they have participated in Charter related training organised by their administration or other organisations in the past five years (74% “no”; 12% “do not know”), further illustrated by only 20% saying the currently available opportunities for online or in-person training were sufficient (25% “no”, 55% “do not know”).
- Only 20% say they are taking dedicated measures to increase the use of the Charter by their authority; only 18% say they check the compatibility of local/regional decisions, laws or policies with the Charter for issues related to EU law.
- This is further highlighted by the fact that the tools provided by European institutions were not utilised heavily, with the FRA/Council of Europe thematic handbooks on Charter and ECHR being the most broadly used (24% of participants claim to use it in their work). The FRA Charterpedia was used by only 6% of respondents, and the Charter checklist on the Justice Portal by 4%.
- Majority of respondents was not aware of the FRA framework of Human Rights Cities (59%).

- The responses underline the critical need for regular training and workshops to enhance local authorities' understanding and application of the Charter.
- There's a widespread call for increased financial support to aid local initiatives, particularly in housing, health, and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Providing clear guidance and aligning national legislation with the Charter is seen as essential for effective local implementation. Collaborative efforts among national, regional, and local governments, as well as partnerships with NGOs, are emphasized for coherent policy application.
- Lastly, raising awareness of the Charter and integrating its principles into local strategies are crucial steps identified by respondents.

## Summary of the responses provided

### **Respondents**



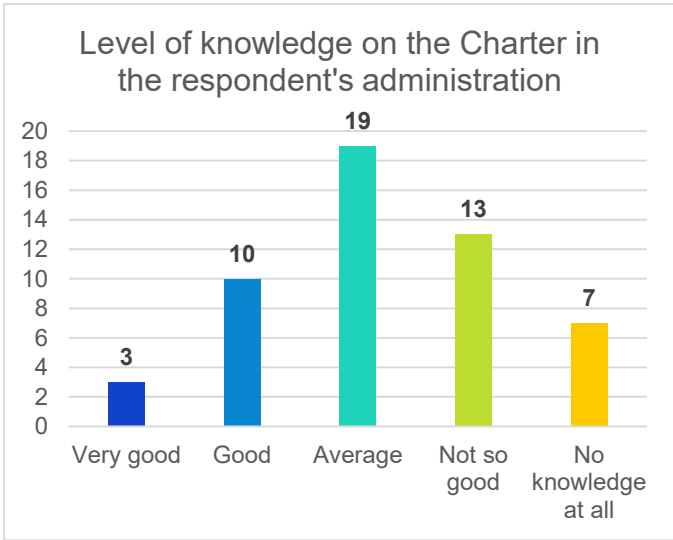
The most represented categories of respondents of this consultation are local authority and administration (20) and regional authority and administration (16).

Among the responding institutions, the great majority (96%) were in Member States.<sup>1</sup> 2% represented an EU level/umbrella organisation, and 2% did not specify.

### **Level of knowledge and use of the Charter**

The level of knowledge on the Charter varies greatly among responding organisations. The majority report to have an average level of knowledge (19). Only 13 responding organisations consider to have a level of knowledge on the Charter that can be qualified as good.

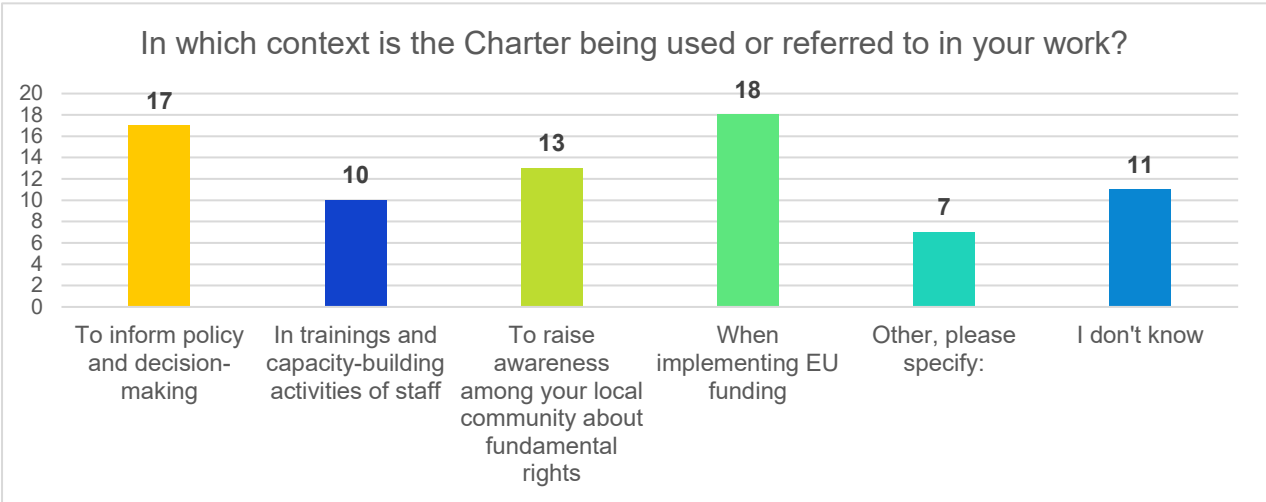
<sup>1</sup> 3 were located in Sweden, 7 in Spain, 1 in Romania, 2 in Portugal, 27 in Poland, 1 in Ireland, 1 in Germany, 1 in France, 2 in Czechia, 2 in Croatia, 1 in Bulgaria, 1 in Belgium and 1 in Austria.



On average, responding organisations sometimes refer to the Charter in their work (23). Only 6 organisations refer to it often.

Respondents use the Charter and refer to it in their work when implementing EU funds (18) and to inform policy and decision-making (17). Some respondents have used the Charter in other contexts than the above-mentioned, such as protection of

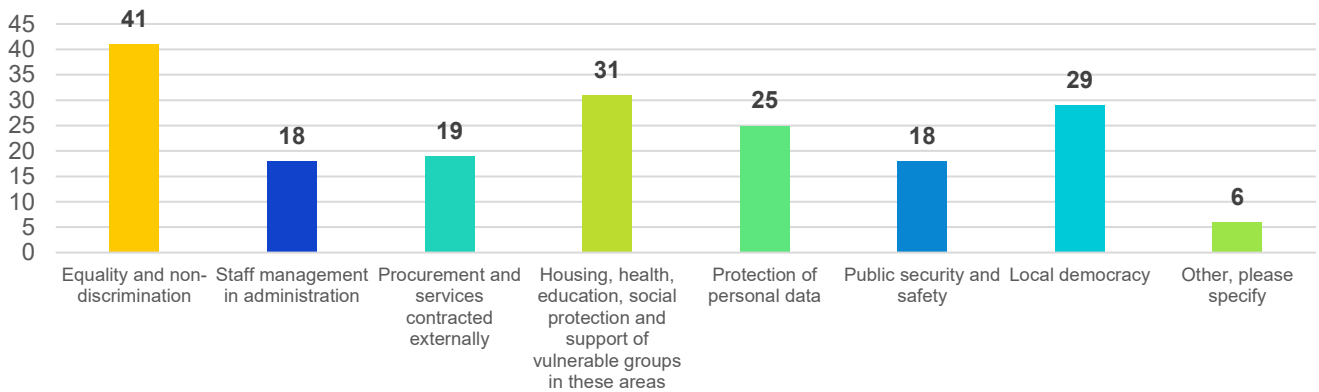
social and civil rights or resolution of files addressed to the individual and administrative processes concerning the citizen (BE, ES, PL).



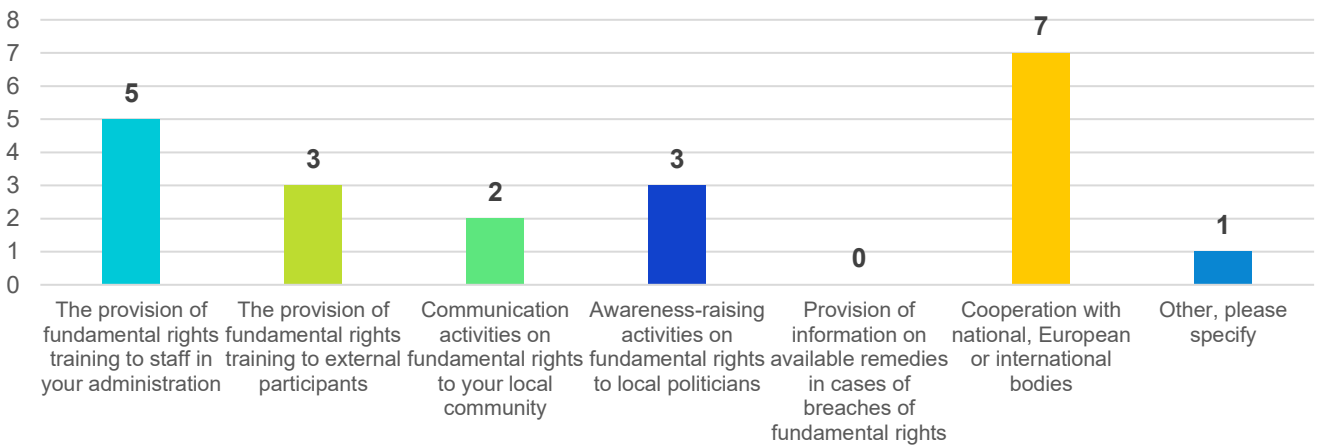
In the respondents' view, the main policy areas in which regional and local authorities, municipalities and cities can effectively use the Charter are equality and non-discrimination (41), housing, health, education, social protection and support of vulnerable groups (31), as well as local democracy (29).

19% of the responding authorities have taken dedicated initiatives or measures to increase their use of the Charter. These initiatives have mostly consisted of cooperation with national, European or international bodies (7) and of the provision of fundamental rights training to staff in their administration (5).

In your view, which are the areas in which regional and local authorities, municipalities and cities can more effectively use the Charter (multiple answers possible)?

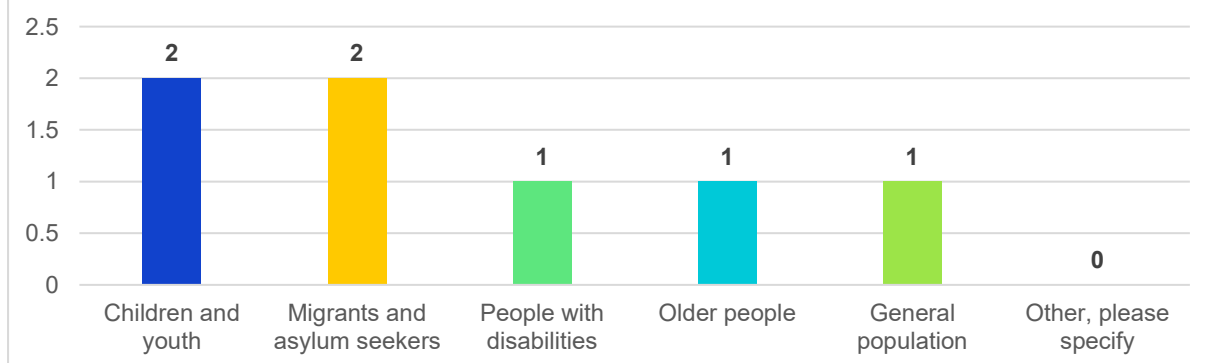


Type of dedicated initiatives to increase the use of the Charter



A small minority of the respondents report carrying out communication activities on fundamental rights (3,92%). Two of the reported activities targeted children and youth and another two targeted migrants and asylum seekers.

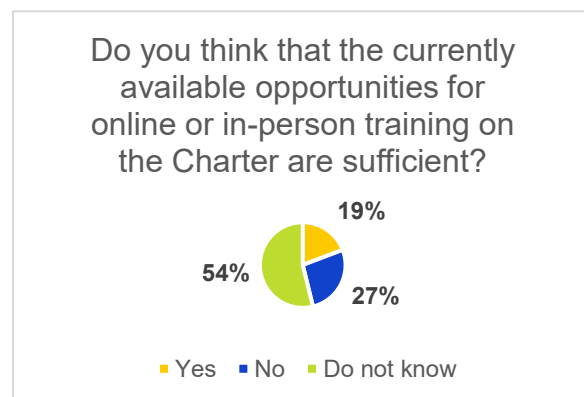
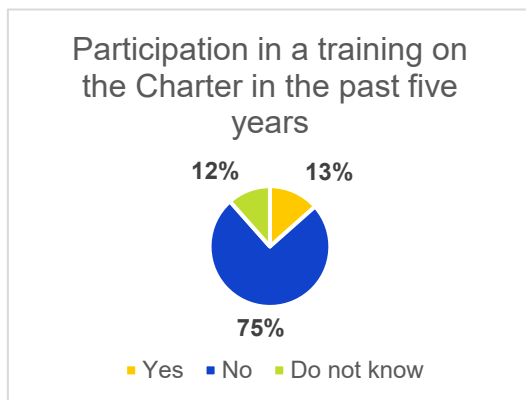
If your authority carries out communication activities on fundamental rights, which groups do you target?



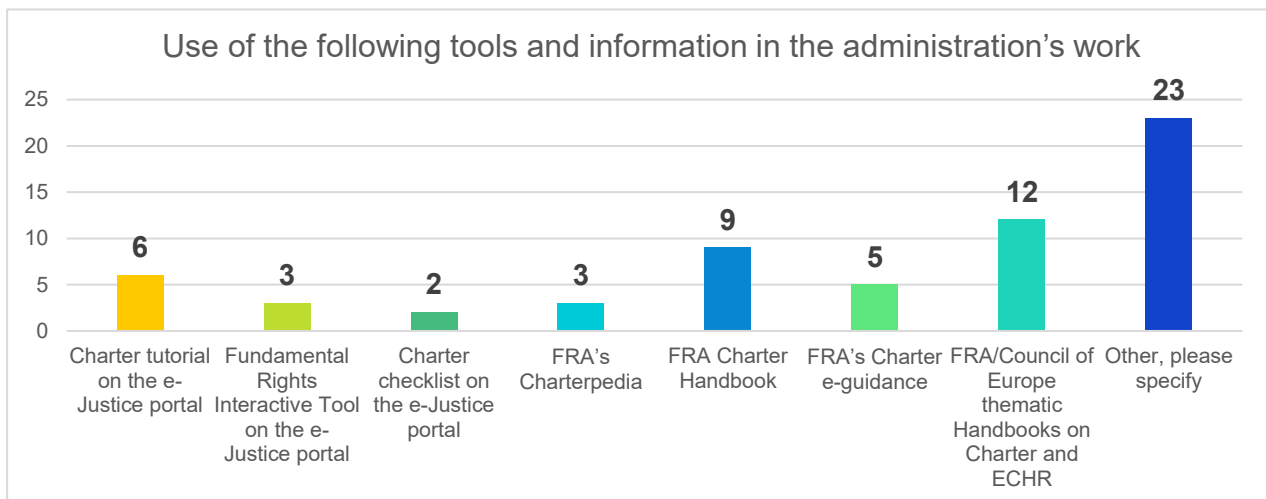
## Training on the Charter

Majority of the respondents have not participated in a training on the Charter in the past five years (75%). However, only 27% of the respondents think that the available opportunities for online or in-person training on the Charter for local and regional authorities are insufficient, with the majority (54%) not having the knowledge on the topic.

Some respondents consider online training practical (CZ) and indicate interest in participating in Charter training sessions tailored to the needs of local authorities (PL). Some respondents refer to a lack of knowledge on the training opportunities (SE) and ask for such opportunities to be expanded (ES, SE).



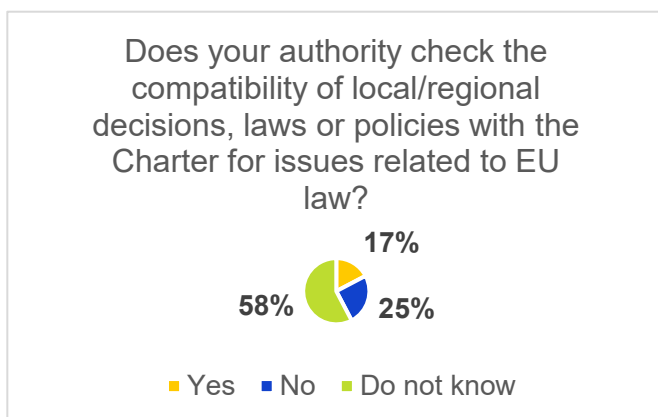
## Use of tools and information on the Charter



The most frequently used tools and information sources on the Charter in respondents' work are the FRA/Council of Europe thematic handbooks on the Charter and the ECHR (12) and the FRA Charter Handbook (9). Some respondents specify that they have no use for these tools or do not use them in their work (CZ, PT, ES, PL, BE, BG, IE, FR). Some local administrations prefer to base their fundamental rights work on national law (PL).

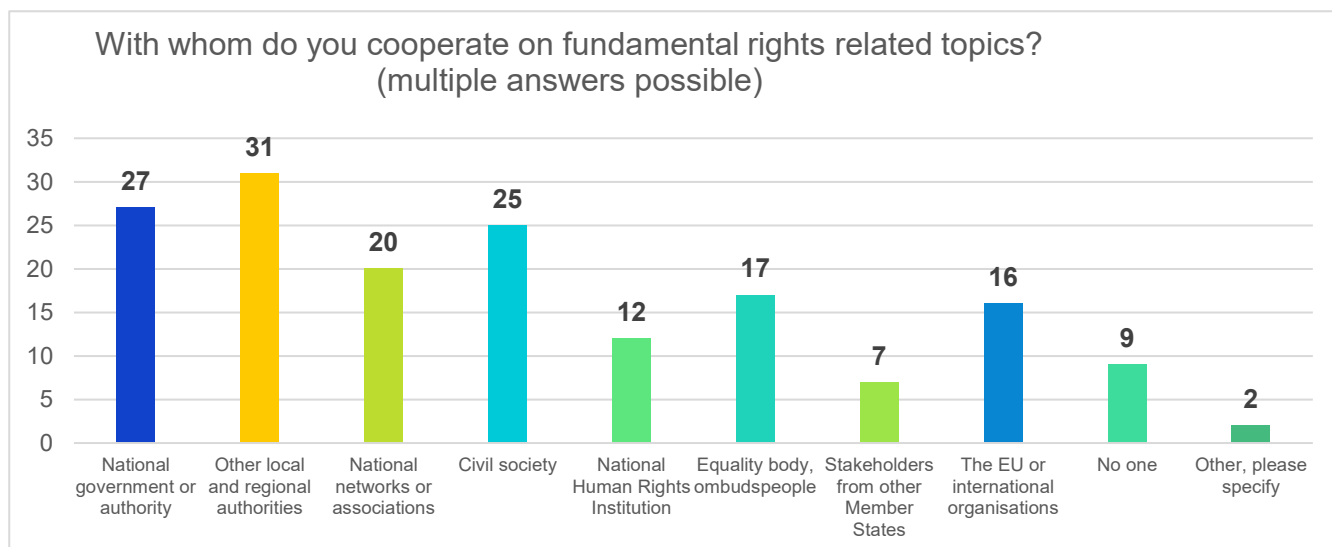
42% of respondents were aware of the FRA framework on Human Rights Cities. Some respondents use this framework to train and strengthen the work of the municipal staff (ES, SE). For instance, the Sopot Human Rights City Team (PL) was established as an advisory body to the Mayor of Sopot regarding the implementation of the Charter.<sup>2</sup> Other cities have similar ongoing projects, such as the ‘Valongo Human Rights City’ in Portugal.

### Cooperation on fundamental rights related topics



Most of the respondents do not know if their authority checks the compatibility of local/regional decisions, laws or policies with the Charter (58%).

The Charter however plays a role in the drafting and implementation of public policy (ES, PL, AT).<sup>3</sup>



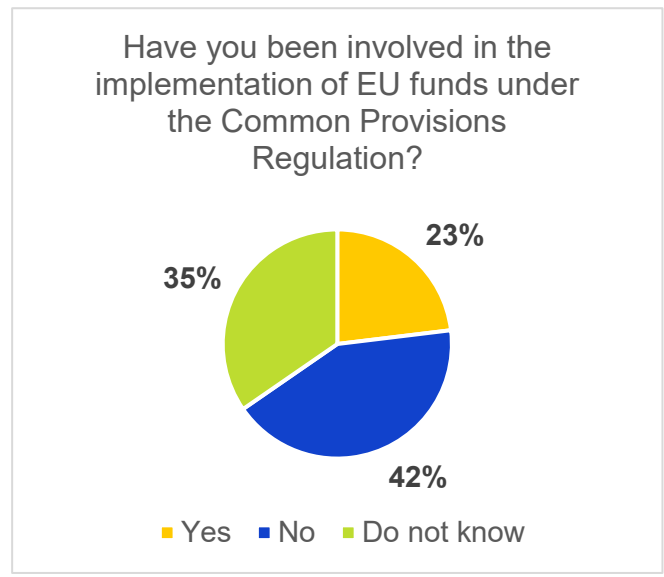
<sup>2</sup> The city uses tools from the FRA framework, such as education for children and youth about human rights, implementing participatory budgeting, conducting research, and training city employees in anti-discrimination and empathetic customer service.

<sup>3</sup> People-centred health and social services are notably mentioned by different regional authorities. Moreover, a regional authority in Poland mentioned an analysis of compliance with the principles of the Charter during the preparation and implementation of EU projects co-financed by the European Social Fund. More generally the Charter was used in respondent’s work in training, HR-education and in EU-funded projects (Austria).

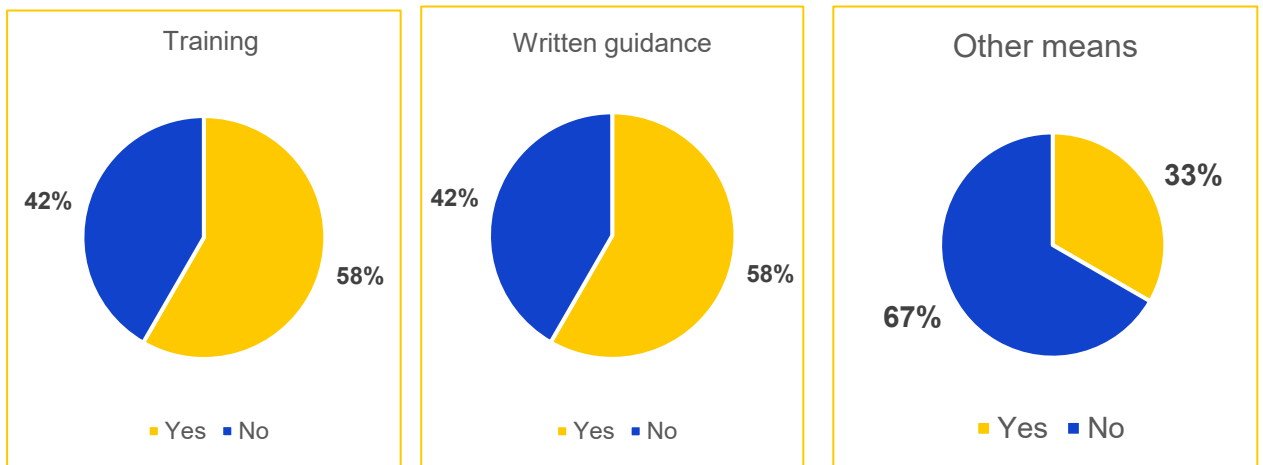
When cooperating on fundamental rights related topics, responding institutions work mostly with other local or regional authorities (31), national government or authority (27) and civil society (25).

**Implementation of EU funds**

Only 23% of the respondents have been involved in the implementation of EU funds under the [Common Provisions Regulation](#).



**How have you ensured that the implementation of EU funds is in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, as required under the Common Provisions Regulation:**



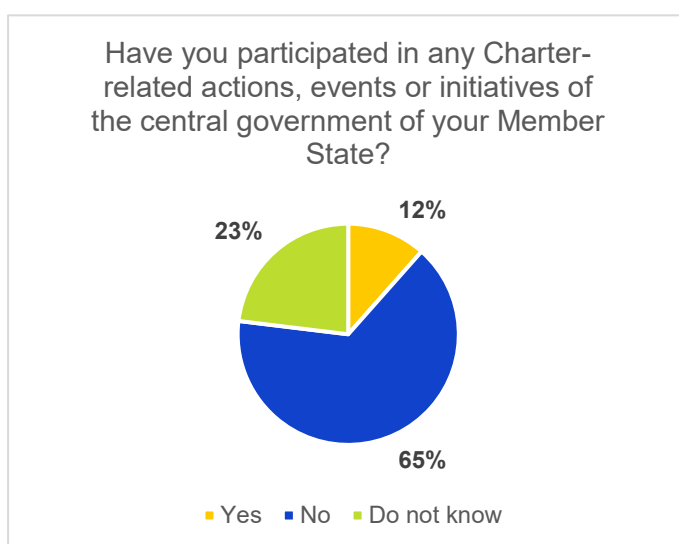
Among those involved, the majority has ensured that the implementation of EU funds is in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, as required

under the Common Provisions Regulation: they've done so through training (58%) and written guidance (58%). 33% have done so through other means.<sup>4</sup>

## Challenges

Respondents noted a few challenges concerning the implementation of the enabling conditions on the Charter in their Member States. Some administrative staff and project partners have insufficient knowledge of the Charter (PL). Implementing the Charter requires cooperation among many units and bodies which then leads to challenges in terms of communication and division of competences (PL). A lack of clear guidelines on how to apply the Charter at the local level and a lack of clear enforcement mechanisms was also noted (PL).

## Charter-related initiatives in Member States

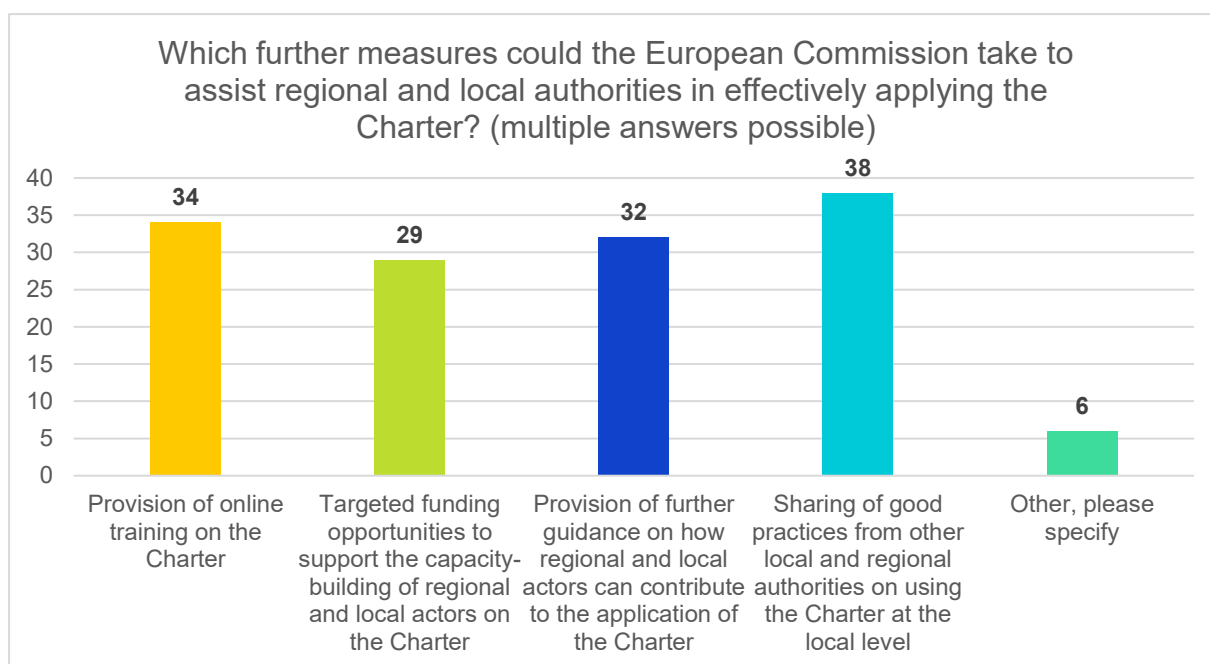


Respondents reported having participated in consultations regarding local strategies and policies aimed at ensuring compliance with the Charter (PL), trainings and the implementation of the RightsCities project (AT) and the monitoring of European funds which includes projects related to fundamental rights (PL).

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<sup>4</sup> Respondents have monitored projects for compliance with the Charter (Poland) and mobilized national authorities that distribute funds within the structural funds (Sweden). For instance, in Sweden, the Region of Östergötland gathers actors both regionally and locally and trains them on the EU's compliance criteria.

### **Further measure to assist regional and local authorities**



Among the proposed measures the European Commission could take to assist regional and local authorities in effectively applying the Charter, the most popular was the sharing of good practices from other local and regional authorities on using the Charter at the local level (38). Providing online training on the Charter would also be greatly appreciated (34), as well as providing further guidance on how regional and local actors can contribute to the application of the Charter (32). Finally, 29 respondents find that targeted funding opportunities to support the capacity building of regional and local actors on the Charter would also assist regional authorities in effectively applying the Charter.

Among other measures the European Commission could take, respondents have specified the need for clarifications on the importance of the Charter at local/regional level, and clarification of what responsibilities the local authorities hold (PL). Finally, a comprehensive approach including the development of clear enforcement mechanisms, unified interpretation of standards, resolution of conflicts with national law, broad education and support from authorities and society was requested (PL).

Moreover, concerning the role played by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to further support local and regional authorities to apply and promote the Charter, different suggestions were made by the respondents.

The CoR should focus on awareness-raising and capacity-building actions to better understand and implement the Charter, such as training and educational programs, which should be directed at local and regional authorities (PT, PL, ES, HR, SE, BE, IE, FR). The creation of platforms for sharing best practices and experiences among regions is also important for effective implementation. Forums for exchange and awarding successful implementations were suggested

(PL, HR, RO, SE). The CoR could provide advisory support and legal guidance and develop recommendations and guidelines for integrating the Charter into local policies (PL, AT, ES, BE, PT). Furthermore, the CoR could also assist in data collection, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation of rights, helping local entities to identify and address challenges effectively (PT, PL, BG). Finally, enhancing financial support and resources to regional and local entities is necessary to facilitate the practical application of the Charter's principles and values (ES, PL).

In Spain and Poland, respondents frequently emphasised the need for more financial support and resources, as well as the importance of language recognition and co-official languages. They also focused on educational initiatives and the sharing of best practices. Respondents from Portugal put an emphasis on raising awareness and integrating the Charter into local policies, with a strong focus on inclusion and digital rights. Finally, some respondents highlight the need for advisory support, pilot projects, and the creation of practical tools and guidelines (CZ, BG, RO).

Respondents working in local and city authorities tend to focus on the need for practical support such as training, awareness campaigns, and financial resources to implement the Charter effectively, while the ones working in regional authorities put a stronger emphasis on policy integration and monitoring and reporting mechanisms, as well as facilitating best practices exchange.

Concerning further measures that Member States could take to assist regional and local authorities in effectively applying the Charter, there is a strong emphasis on providing regular training, workshops, and seminars for local and regional officials to increase their awareness and understanding of the Charter. This includes both online and in-person sessions focusing on practical applications in policymaking (PT, PL, SE, HR, RO, FR). Respondents consistently call for increased funding and financial resources to support local initiatives aligned with the Charter, particularly those addressing housing, health, and inclusion of vulnerable groups (PT, ES, PL, HR). Offering further guidance and adapting national legislation to align with the Charter at the local level is also seen as crucial by respondents. Providing clear directives and materials to assist local authorities in implementing the Charter effectively is regularly suggested (PL, SE, HR, RO, BE, BG, PT). Furthermore, respondents have highlighted that encouraging collaboration between national, regional, and local governments, as well as with NGOs and civil society, is essential for coherent implementation and sharing of best practices (PT, PL, AT, CR, DE, IE, FR). Finally, activities related to awareness raising such as increasing the visibility of the Charter through campaigns, dissemination of information, and integration into local strategies and policies is frequently mentioned as vital for promoting its principles and ensuring rights are safeguarded (ES, PL).

Additional comments were also made on the general topic of this consultation. Notably, an Austrian local authority suggests the establishment of a pool of

experts from local authorities for training the cities under the guidance of the FRA as a new initiative for consciousness-building and implementing the Charter. A municipality in Poland also highlights the lack of permanent structures that would enable the implementation of the Charter regardless of political conditions. This same respondent highlights the need to involve more local government in implementing the Charter and the associated need for available tools and good practices to make the implementation of the Charter more 'accessible'. It also recommends developing a system of training and knowledge exchange between local governments.

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