

## EU Fundamental Rights Agency

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is an independent body which contributes to ensuring full respect of fundamental rights in the EU in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Agency addresses various topics, including discrimination of minorities, hate crime, data protection, access to justice, gender-based violence and fundamental rights of asylum-seekers and migrants.

### Mandate, structure and budget

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency ([FRA](#)), which succeeded the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, was established in 2007 by a [Regulation](#) of the Council of the EU, with the objective to provide independent, evidence-based assistance and expertise on fundamental rights to EU institutions and Member States when implementing EU law. It does so by collecting and analysing information and data, conducting surveys and comparative research, preparing opinions and conclusions on thematic topics, publishing annual reports on fundamental rights issues as well as thematic reports and annual reports on its own activities.

The Agency's eight areas of activity are defined by the Council, on a proposal from the European Commission and in consultation with the European Parliament, in a five-year [framework](#). It conducts research or prepares opinions on topics outside those areas, if so requested by the Parliament, the Council or the Commission, including in the course of legislative procedures. Parliament has requested a number of opinions, including on the proposal to establish a [European Public Prosecutor's Office](#) (EPPO), on the [confiscation of proceeds of crime](#), on the [EU data-protection reform package](#), and on the fundamental rights compliance of the then-proposed directive on the [use of Passenger Name Record \(PNR\) data](#).

FRA maintains links with national governments through its network of [national liaison officers](#); with organisations such as the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; and with national human-rights bodies. It talks to civil society through its [Fundamental Rights Platform](#) and holds an annual fundamental rights conference with key stakeholders.

Based in Vienna, the Agency has 90 staff whose work is guided by the Management Board, consisting of independent experts from each Member State, two Commission representatives and one independent expert appointed by the Council of Europe. The Board adopts FRA's annual work programme, monitors its work and approves its budget. Its 2018 [budget](#) is €22.35 million, compared to €22.85 million in 2017.

### Possible future role

In recent years, the [debate](#) around FRA has focused on its future role, especially on giving it a broader mandate and greater independence, enhancing its ability to monitor and report on violations of fundamental rights and permitting it to have a presence in human rights dialogues with third countries. According to law expert [Armin von Bogdandy](#), in order for FRA to be a truly independent and pluralistic human rights institution, its active mandate should include police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, it should be able to give own-initiative opinions in legislative procedures and should have considerable autonomy when preparing its multiannual work programme. Some [experts](#) also suggest that due to the limitations of its mandate, FRA's potential for providing fundamental rights advice is under-utilised. Its Management Board has made a number of [recommendations](#), including on FRA's role in the rule of law mechanism, as [discussed](#) by some stakeholders. In that context, the Board refers to the Council [declaration](#) and recommends that the Commission include in the founding regulation a reference to a possible role for FRA in the framework of [Article 7](#) TEU. Moreover, it considers tasking FRA with data collection and analysis with regard to respect for [Article 2](#) values. In its [resolution](#) of 3 July 2013, Parliament reiterated that FRA's mandate should be enhanced to include regular monitoring of Member States' compliance with Article 2 TEU.

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