

Fundamental rights report 2020-2021: MEPs deeply concerned

- Rule of law violations threaten the legal and fair distribution of EU funds, citizens' rights as a whole
- Pushbacks and violence at the external borders strongly condemned
- Discrimination and gender-based violence persist
- Media and the judiciary have suffered from unjustified interference in certain member states

The latest EP report taking stock of EU fundamental rights highlights key issues and calls on member states to better protect freedom, equality and the rule of law.

On Wednesday, the [Civil Liberties Committee](#) voted on the draft report on the state of fundamental rights in the EU in 2020 and 2021. The text was approved with 46 votes for, 11 against, and 1 abstention.

Rule of law violations threaten fundamental rights

MEPs regret the persistent rule of law violations in some member states, reiterating that the rule of law (and, under it, the fair and legal distribution of EU funds) is intimately linked with democracy and fundamental rights. The Commission has to make use of all tools, including the [conditionality mechanism](#), they reaffirm, condemning member states (particularly Poland and Hungary) for not complying with the judgements of the [European Court of Justice](#). They express concerns about the impact that COVID-19 measures had on democracy, core freedoms, and the rights of people in courts, in contact with law enforcement, or in prison.

MEPs welcome the procedures of the [July 2021 infringement package](#), which was the first time the Commission specifically initiated infringements to safeguard LGBTIQ rights. They also welcome the rapid establishment of an efficient [European Public Prosecutor's Office](#) (EPPO), and call on the Commission and the Council to enter into negotiations on an interinstitutional agreement for [a comprehensive EU values mechanism](#).

Discrimination, racism, hate speech, and pushbacks

Discriminatory practices persist in the EU, making the full implementation of the [EU Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia](#) even more necessary. The report underlines the increase of hate speech and smear campaigns against media, NGOs and minorities, welcoming the [Commission proposal to include hate crime/speech in the list of EU crimes](#). The persistence of structural racism (including police violence against Roma people, in line with the [2020 findings](#) of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) must be tackled through measures in the areas of criminal justice, education, housing, and employment, among others. The report strongly condemns pushbacks and violence against migrants, as well as the criminalisation of humanitarian workers and activists, and calls on Frontex (following the release of information about its involvement in pushbacks) to suspend all operations in EU countries where such instances take place.

Gender-based-violence, women's rights and the rights of LGBTIQ+ people

The report denounces widespread gender-based violence in the EU: one in three women has suffered physical or sexual violence and one in two sexual harassment, while the [Istanbul Convention](#) remains to be ratified by Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, as well as the EU itself. The report condemns a series of member states for the backlash against women's rights (including sexual and reproductive health), especially in Poland, Slovakia, Croatia and Lithuania, as well as the actions of anti-gender and anti-feminist movements that systematically attack women's and LGBTIQ+ rights.

Media freedom and protection of journalists

The text reiterates the importance of media freedom and the [protection of journalists from SLAPPs](#), threats, attacks, and violence. It notes that several EU countries' performances have declined in international rankings, and expresses concerns about the rising number of authorities using spyware in violation of [Article 2 of the TEU](#), like [Pegasus](#).

Next steps

Parliament will debate and vote on the report during the upcoming September plenary.

Further information

[Procedure file - Legislative Observatory](#)
[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)
[EU Agency for Fundamental Rights: Fundamental Rights Report 2021](#)
[EU Agency for Fundamental Rights: Fundamental Rights Report 2020](#)
[Factsheets on the EU: The protection of Article 2 TEU values in the EU](#)
[EP Research Service - Study: Violence against women and domestic violence: The new Commission proposal in light of European Parliament requests \(27-06-2022\)](#)
[EP Research Service - Study: Violence against women and domestic violence: The new Commission proposal in light of European Parliament requests \(27-06-2022\)](#)
[EP Research Service - Study: Europe's PegasusGate: Countering spyware abuse \(06-07-2022\)](#)
[EP Research Service - Briefing: Protecting EU shared values: How the European Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations \(27-04-2022\)](#)
[EP Research Service - At a glance: The shrinking space for civil society in Europe \(02-03-2022\)](#)
[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

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