

## FRA's work on equality data, fundamental rights indicators and on strengthening statutory bodies

This brief provides a summary of [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) (FRA) research, advice and expertise on equality data collection, developing indicators and strengthening equality bodies and other statutory bodies in the EU Member States. It is provided to inform the meeting on “Stronger Equality Bodies to Combat Discrimination”, organised by the European Commission on 6-7 June 2024.

### Equality data collection

FRA's research reveals a consistent lack of comparable and regular data collection on equality and non-discrimination in the EU Member States, limiting the effective and evidence-based assessment of the application of non-discrimination laws and policies at EU and Member State levels.

In the absence of EU-wide and Member State data collection on hard-to-reach or underrepresented groups in society and their experiences of fundamental rights FRA continues to fill this gap by providing EU-wide comparable data. FRA's large-scale survey data collection is a central pillar of the Agency's work. Since 2006, FRA has carried out 18 surveys on, [Roma](#)<sup>1</sup>, [immigrants and descendants of immigrants](#)<sup>2</sup>, [LGBTIQ people](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Muslims](#)<sup>4</sup> and [Jews](#)<sup>5</sup> on their experiences in the EU.<sup>6</sup> The surveys are repeated regularly and, by providing robust and comparable data, allow for trend analysis and assessment of the state of equality in the EU. Findings from all FRA surveys show low rates of reporting of discriminatory incidents among all the population groups surveyed. The low rates of reporting are consistent over time, across countries and across the different population groups covered in the surveys, leaving incidents of discrimination largely invisible to institutions that have a legal obligation to assist victims of discrimination, including equality bodies.

FRA surveys have informed the development of the EU policy framework delivering on the Union of Equality, providing evidence, to the [EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation 2020-2030](#); the [EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#); the [EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life 2021-2030](#); and the [LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025](#).

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<sup>1</sup> FRA Roma (and Travellers) survey (2011, 2019, 2021, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> FRA Minorities and discrimination survey – EU-MIDIS (2008, 2016, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> FRA LGBTI Survey (2012, 2019, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> FRA Minorities and discrimination survey – EU-MIDIS (2008, 2016, 2022). Report on Experiences of Muslims in the EU from the 2022 EU Survey on Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants forthcoming in 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jewish people (2012, 2018, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> In addition: [FRA survey on displaced people from Ukraine](#) (2022); [Fundamental rights survey](#) (2019); [Violence against women survey](#) (2012, 2023).

Acknowledging the importance of equality data, in February 2018, the [EU High Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity](#) established a [Subgroup on Equality Data](#) to help Member States improve the collection and use of equality data. The European Commission asked FRA to facilitate the work of this subgroup until 2025, in line with the Agency's mandate to develop methods and standards to improve the comparability, objectivity and reliability of data at the European level.

The subgroup has produced guidelines and tools providing concrete guidance and practical examples on how to improve the collection and use of equality data at national level

- [Guidelines on improving the collection and use of equality data](#) (2018)
- [Compendium of practices for equality data collection](#) (2018, updated in 2023)
- [Equality data diagnostic mapping tool](#) (2019)
- [Guidance note on the collection and use of equality data based on racial or ethnic origin](#) (2021)
- [Guidance note on the collection and use of data for LGBTIQ equality](#) (2023)
- Guidance on the national implementation of all sets of guiding principles in relation to the collection and use of equality data (2024, forthcoming)

Relevant FRA research and opinions (selected examples):

- [Fundamental Rights Report 2023 - FRA opinions | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2023), see FRA Opinions #3.3; 4.3, 5.3 (pp. 8, 12 and 15)
- [Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2023), see FRA Opinion #2 (p. 16)
- [Antisemitism in 2022 - Overview of Antisemitic incidents recorded in the EU | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2023), see section 2 (pp. 7-9)
- [Equality in the EU 20 years on from the initial implementation of the equality directives \(europa.eu\)](#) (2021), see FRA Opinions #6, 7 (pp. 19-21) and section 5 (pp. 63-67)
- [Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2018), see FRA Opinion # 2: (p. 11).
- In the context of the EU Working Group on hate crime recording, data collection and encouraging reporting under the [EU High-level group on combating hate speech and hate crime](#), which FRA coordinates, the Agency provides assistance and expertise to national authorities in the area of hate crime recording and data collection.

## Fundamental rights indicators

Fundamental rights indicators support evidence-based policymaking grounded in human rights legal obligations, enabling the identification of gaps and tracking of progress over time. In its work of developing and populating human rights indicators, FRA regularly applies the [conceptual and methodological framework of structural, process and outcome \(S-P-O\) indicators, developed by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), and anchored in the obligations of the core UN human rights treaties

Relevant FRA research and opinions (selected examples):

- [Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Human rights indicators | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2023)
- [Monitoring framework for an EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation: Objectives and indicators](#) (2020)
- [From institutions to community living](#) (2017). Three-report series on different aspects of deinstitutionalisation following the OHCHR module S – existing [commitments and structures](#); P – addressing [funding and budgeting](#); and O – looking at [outcomes for persons with disabilities](#). See also [Development of statistical outcome indicators](#) (2018)
- [Human rights indicators on Article 19 CRPD](#) (2015)
- [Indicators on the right to political participation of people with disabilities | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (2014), update forthcoming in 2024
- [Using indicators to measure fundamental rights in the EU: challenges and solutions](#) (2011)
- [Developing indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the European Union](#) (2010)

## Strengthening statutory bodies in line with international standards

The conclusions of the Council of the European Union on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (the Charter), adopted in September 2019, underlined that “independent national human rights institutions, equality bodies and other human rights mechanisms [...] play a crucial role in the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and in ensuring compliance with the Charter.” Statutory bodies, such as Equality Bodies, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Ombuds institutions are key partners for FRA at national level. FRA’s founding regulation specifies that the “Agency shall cooperate with governmental organisations and public bodies competent in the field of fundamental rights in the Member States, including national human rights institutions.” In the EU, fifteen Equality Bodies are also multi-mandated, Paris Principles compliant NHRIs. FRA works closely with respective international networks, EQUINET and ENNHRI, in partnership. EQUINET developed indicators that can assist the EU and its Member States in their efforts to strengthen Equality Bodies. FRA has contributed to the discussion of the indicators and called on Member States to apply them in its opinion on 20 years of Equality Directives (2021).

Since 2010, FRA has engaged in research and capacity building to strengthen statutory bodies in different areas of EU law.

Relevant FRA research, opinions, capacity building (selected examples):

- On internationally recognised standards (including the Paris Principles and Council of Europe Recommendations) to strengthen NHRIs, including those with equality mandates, see FRA report: [Strong and effective national human rights institutions – challenges, promising practices and opportunities \(europa.eu\)](#) (September 2020)
- On strengthening Equality Bodies, including standards developed by EQUINET, see FRA opinion: [Equality in the EU 20 years on from the initial implementation of the equality directives \(europa.eu\)](#), pp. 53-69; Footnote 234. (January 2021)
- Updates on accreditation and mandates: [NHRI accreditation status and mandates - update 2024 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (January 2024)

- Regional FRA project on supporting NHRIs: [Supporting National Human Rights Institutions in monitoring fundamental rights and the fundamental rights aspects of the rule of law | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#) (June 2022-February 2024)
- FRA [Handbook on the establishment and accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions in the European Union](#) (October 2012)
- FRA Focus paper on the [European fundamental rights landscape](#) (2012)
- FRA report [National Human Rights Institutions in the EU Member States \(Strengthening the fundamental rights architecture in the EU I\)](#) (May 2010)
- FRA report [Data Protection in the European Union: the role of National Data Protection Authorities \(Strengthening the fundamental rights architecture in the EU II\)](#) (May 2010)

Mapping of human rights structures: in 2023 and 2024, responding to an expressed need for “mapping of existing national human rights structures” as indicated in the [Conclusions of the FRA-Swedish EU Presidency High-level Conference on Institutional Protection of Fundamental Rights in Times of Crises in 2023](#), FRA engaged in mapping of national human rights structure, including Equality Bodies, as well as existing cooperation between national bodies with different human rights related mandates. In 2025, FRA will release a comparative overview and country reports produced by its multi-disciplinary research network FRANET covering the 27 EU Member states and three accession countries, Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania, which are also observers to FRA. The analysis will provide policy makers with a concise picture of national human rights actors and structures, to help address the issue of progressive fragmentation of human rights structures, mandates, and the need for coordination and cooperation within and between countries.

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