

# Welcome to the eQuarterly of the Fundamental Rights Platform

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Spring 2023

This eQuarterly is the first in a series of regular updates tailored for the organisations participating in the [Fundamental Rights Platform](#) of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.



## A word of welcome by FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty



“ Civil society organisations form the backbone of a strong and vibrant civic space and perform essential functions in the service of people. They create avenues for people to engage in political and public life. ”

That is why I am particularly pleased that the Council of the European Union has adopted on 10 March 2023, and for the first time, [conclusions](#) that acknowledge the role of civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights within the EU. With these, all three EU institutions now prove a strong

commitment to fostering civic space. This is a central plank of the unique human rights infrastructure of the European Union.

The Fundamental Rights Agency's commitment to uphold civic space and support civil society organisations remains as strong as ever. This is evidenced in the good health of the Fundamental Rights Platform, as well as in the Agency's annual reporting on the state of civic space in the EU (which you can read more about in this first eQuarterly).

With these quarterlies, we aim to provide organisations that take part in the Platform with an overview of the Agency's reports, webinars, e-learning courses and other resources that could be of particular relevance to their activities.

I wish you a good read and invite you to spread the word and encourage other civil society organisations in your network to [register with the Platform](#).

**Michael O' Flaherty**

## At a glance: our resources at your fingertips

Tap into the wealth of webinars, reports, handbooks, toolkits, training courses and other resources of the Fundamental Rights Agency that could support your activities.

### Upcoming webinars

**Starting this month, FRA invites you to join regular webinars for FRP organisations. Upcoming webinar dates and topics will be announced in this eQuarterly.**

**By joining the webinars you will:**

- ✓ Learn more about FRA's activities
- ✓ Exchange experiences and practices with other CSOs
- ✓ Connect with other FRP organisations and create synergies

**▣ Wednesday, 29 March, 14:30-16:00 CET:**

Introduction and discussion of the Agency's survey findings and report **Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU**

**Register to attend >**

📅 **Tuesday, 25 April, 14:30-16:00 CET:**

Introduction and discussion of the Agency's e-learning platform and trainers' manual on **Guardianship of unaccompanied children: e-learning platform and trainers' manual**

[Register to attend >](#)

## New product releases 2023

The Agency will be releasing a wealth of new reports this year, many of them also available in national languages.

Check the [upcoming products](#) page for new and upcoming releases regularly!

## A look back at the Fundamental Rights Platform annual meeting 2022

[Read the meeting report >](#)

The 2022 annual meeting of the Fundamental Rights Platform focused on how the civil society can help safeguard the rule of law. It is one of the founding values of the European Union. Civil society organisations need to work together to foster a strong rule of law culture across the EU and in the Member States.

We best achieve this by sharing best practices and improving access to data and funding. This also includes boosting our communications, advocacy, monitoring and networking activities.

The European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders, FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty and Oleksandra Matviichuk, the co-recipient of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize and the head of the Ukrainian Center for Civil Liberties, addressed the participants emphasising the need for strong civil societies.

The annual meeting took place on 10 November 2022. It brought together more than 200 civil society organisations from across Europe.

Representatives from the European Commission, Council of Europe, United Nations (UN OHCHR, UN Women) and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions also joined the meeting.

The meeting coincided with the start of a stakeholder consultation for the European Commission's 2023 annual report on the rule of law, due out in July 2023.

▀ **This year's FRP annual meeting is scheduled to take place in the Autumn 2023. Stay tuned for updates!**

With questions please contact [FRP@fra.europa.eu](mailto:FRP@fra.europa.eu)

## 2023: First quarter highlights

### Results published: the Agency surveyed 14,685 people displaced from Ukraine



The Agency's latest survey report, '[Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU](#)', presents the experiences of some 14,500 people who fled Ukraine to escape Russia's aggression and arrived in the EU.

"The aggression in Ukraine has evoked the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War," said FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty, commenting on the situation. "The EU and its Member States enacted temporary solutions providing much needed support. As the war drags on, we need to put in place effective long-term measures that allow host societies and displaced people to adapt to the upheaval resulting from this war."

The results show that many of those displaced experienced strong support when they arrived in Europe. At the same time though, challenges in accessing and participating in education, in finding work and making ends meet appeared.

The EU's rapid activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive allowed those fleeing the war to settle or travel across the EU. But, in the survey, they spoke of practical difficulties remaining, such as:

- **Language:** Although 23% attended language courses, not knowing the host country's language was among the main reasons people drop out of education, do not work or struggle to get healthcare.
- **Housing:** Although 59% (partly) paid for their housing, they often have to share facilities, such as a toilet or kitchen. Many lacked privacy or a quiet space for their children to study.
- **Education:** 59% of children attended education online with a Ukrainian school or study on their own with material or support from

Ukraine.

- **Work:** Only 33% had a paid job. 33% of women who weren't in paid work didn't work because they need to care for children, or elderly/ sick relatives. 48% say that their new job was below their level of education and 30% say they experienced exploitation at work.
- **Cost of living:** 79% face difficulties in making ends meet.
- **Health:** 49% feel always or often downhearted and depressed since coming to their host country. 49% of young children have difficulty sleeping and/or concentrating.

As regards the future, one in three (35%) respondents want to return to Ukraine. A similar proportion (38%) would prefer to remain in their host country. One quarter (23%) of respondents remain undecided.

The survey ran from August to September 2022 in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. It targeted Ukrainians or other nationals who were permanent residents in Ukraine before the war. This survey was conducted by the Agency, with its research network [FRANET](#) and the assistance of FRP members. With their support, the survey managed to attract 14,685 respondents. Women account for 91 % of surveyed respondents, since most Ukrainian men aged 18–60 are not allowed to travel abroad.

[Access survey findings and read the full report >](#)

### Upcoming event:

➤ On Wednesday, 29 March, 14:30-16:00 CET, the Agency will host a webinar on the findings of this survey.

[Register to attend >](#)

With questions please email [uas@fra.europa.eu](mailto:uas@fra.europa.eu)

## Training materials available: FRA published a manual and learning platform on guardianship of unaccompanied children



All unaccompanied children are entitled to a guardian under EU law. Guardians have an important job to ensure the well-being, best interests and legal representation of children. Civil society organisations across the EU have been involved in the provision of guardianship in different ways. In some Member States, the provision of guardians, and their training,

**is entrusted to NGOs, under the coordination of national or local authorities.**

Guardians require specific knowledge and skills to promote the rights and best interests of the unaccompanied children they are responsible for. FRA's research has shown, however, that the professional backgrounds and skills of guardians vary widely across the EU. This led the FRA, in close coordination with the [European Guardianship Network](#), to develop materials for trainers and guardians. The material builds on international and EU standards, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Council of Europe standards and EU law.

The [online training and learning platform](#) targets trainers as well as guardians. This includes experienced professionals, volunteers or future guardians. It contains practical exercises, case studies and quizzes to assess participants' knowledge and other resources to allow participants to further develop their skills.

In addition, there is a [trainers' manual for guardians](#), which helps institutions, organisations and individuals train guardians or deliver 'train-the-trainers' courses in a range of training contexts. The manual covers the diversity of guardianship services and training contexts for unaccompanied children found across the EU. It can also be adapted to different contexts, such as professional, academic and volunteer training, and national or local needs. The training materials build on earlier FRA work on [guardianship](#).

### **Resources:**

[FRA e-learning \(europa.eu\) >](#)

[Guardianship for unaccompanied children - A manual for trainers of guardians >](#)

### **Upcoming event:**

☛ On 25 April, 14:30-16:00 CET, FRA will host a webinar to introduce and discuss these training materials.

[Register to attend >](#)

## **High number of civil society submissions in FRA's annual civic space consultation**

The Agency would like to thank the more than 400 civil society organisations for responding to its fifth annual consultation on civic

**space. Civil society organisations from across all EU Member States and EU umbrella organisations contributed to the consultation. It covered their experiences in 2022.**

The Agency will use this information for its 2023 annual report on civic space. Data collected through its multidisciplinary research network ([Eragnet](#)) will complement this information. Your information and our data will feed into the European Commission consultation for its annual report on the rule of law. It will also serve to advise authorities and donors on how to foster a more enabling environment for civil society work.

For the first time, the consultation asked about the impact of attacks on activists and about what organisations do to strengthen their resilience.

A first analysis shows that specific challenges remain, particularly for defenders of LGBTIQ rights, migrants' rights, women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, environmental protection, and to some extent also children's rights.

Almost all responding organisations experienced a form of attack in 2022. Some 46% of responding organisations experienced 'negative media reports/campaigns'; 44% received online verbal threats or harassment.

As many as 31% of the responding organisation say they experienced a 'politically motivated funding cut'. Some 21% of the organisations indicate 'suspected surveillance by law enforcement', and 13% 'criminalisation of the work of the organisation'.

FRA's annual reporting on civic space has informed the work of the EU institutions to protect civil society, expressed in their commitments, see:

- [European Parliament resolution of 8 March 2022 on the shrinking space for civil society in Europe](#)
- [Conclusions of the Council of the EU on the role of the civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU](#)
- [2022 report of the European Commission on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#)

With questions please contact: [FRP@fra.europa.eu](mailto:FRP@fra.europa.eu)

## eLearning platform

Need to brush up your skills or knowledge on human rights? Our e-learning platform is free and open to everyone:

**NEW TRAINING AVAILABLE!** [Guardianship e-learning tool and Trainer's manual](#) supports trainers in developing courses for appointed and future guardians.

[Courses on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) offers guidance and case studies for judges, legal practitioners, students and trainers.

[E-media toolkit](#) brings together practical tools such as media checklists and reporting examples for journalists, public relations specialists and campaign managers.

## Data explorers and visualisation tools



Our data is your ally!

[Access all available FRA data by theme, country and dataset.](#)

**Please encourage others in your networks to join the Fundamental Rights Platform.** [Register with the Platform](#)

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