



Experiences of civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU

FRA Consultation 2021

FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

First page of the survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in FRA's 2021 consultation on the experiences of civil society organisations (CSOs). This online survey will be open from 16 November 2021 – 13 January 2022. The results will feed into FRA's work to **improve the situation for human rights civil society organisations** in the EU.

You are invited to share your views and experiences, as regards:

- General situation of civil society
- Threats and attacks
- Access to finance and resources
- Enabling regulatory environment and law
- Role of civil society as part of checks and balances
- Access to the decision-making process and participation

The consultation includes a few background questions about your organisation.

Each organisation should complete the questionnaire only once. It should take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete it. Your answers are fully anonymous and cannot be traced back to you.

For more information, please contact us at frp@fra.europa.eu.

We thank you in advance for your time and input.

FRA complies fully with **data protection regulations**. For more information, please refer to the following webpage: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/data-protection>, and in particular to

- [Privacy notice on FRA consultations with with organisations registered in the Fundamental Rights Platform database](#)
- [Privacy notice on FRA consultations with civil society organisations under Art. 10 FRA Founding Regulation](#)
- [Privacy notice on FRA Website and Web Services](#)

The online questionnaire makes use of so-called first-party 'cookies' to ensure, first, that the survey is completed only once by the same device and, second, to ensure that the questionnaire layout is appropriate for the device used. These cookies will be saved on the computer of each survey participant once they have submitted the completed questionnaire. No other information is collected. You can delete the cookies or disable them by using the 'do not track' option in your browser. However, please note that if your browser settings block all cookies (including essential cookies), parts of the website may not work or we may be unable to optimise the way the questionnaire is displayed on your device.



About your organisation

1. Where does your organisation mainly work (or is based in)* - please select only one:

[list: EU level/umbrella organisation, 27 EU Member States, Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia as FRA observers]

Infobox: If your organisation is, for example, based in Brussels, and its daily work mainly concerns the EU level, please select "EU level/umbrella organisation". If its daily work mainly concerns the national or local level in Belgium, please select "Belgium".

2. How many paid employees does your organisation have?*

0	1-10	11-50	More than 51	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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3. How many volunteers does your organisation have approximately?*

0	1-10	11-50	More than 51	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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4. Which is the core activity that your organisation is engaged in?*

Please select only ONE

- Advocacy, campaigns / awareness raising
- Community engagement and development
- Litigation
- Victim support, counselling (legal, psycho-social)
- Research, data collection
- Service provision: projects in social integration / social services / health projects / refugee support etc.
- Other, please explain up to 150 words

5. The most important geographical level of your organisation's daily activities is:*

Please select only ONE

- National / local
- EU / international

6. Which of the following terms describes best your organisation (categories as per FRA Founding Regulation, Art. 10) *only one answer possible*

- Non-governmental organisation
- Trade union
- Employer's organisation
- Social and professional organisation
- Faith-based, religious, philosophical or non-confessional organisation
- University or other qualified experts of European/international body/organisation
- None of them



General situation of civil society organisations

1. How would you describe in general the conditions for civil society organisations working on human rights in your country today? * [for organisations working at national/local level]

Infobox: In your reply please take into account multiple factors e.g. the legal environment, access to funding, political climate, safe and enabling environment.

Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	Do not know
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2. How have these conditions for civil society organisations working on human rights changed in the past 12 months in your country? * [for organisations working at national/local level]

Greatly improved	Improved	Remained the same	Deteriorated	Greatly deteriorated	Do not know
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3. How would you describe the general conditions for civil society organisations working on human rights at EU level (including advocacy and human rights work with EU institutions)? * [for organisations working at EU/international]

Infobox: With general conditions we mean e.g. the legal environment, access to funding, political climate, safe and enabling environment.

Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	Do not know
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4. In your view, how has the general situation for civil society organisations working on human rights at EU level changed in the past 12 months? * [for organisations working at national/local level]

Greatly improved	Improved	Remained the same	Deteriorated	Greatly deteriorated	Do not know
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5. And thinking about your own organisation, how has its situation changed in the past 12 months? *

Greatly improved	Improved	Remained the same	Deteriorated	Greatly deteriorated	Do not know
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Threats and attacks

1. In the last 12 months, have any of your employees/volunteers experienced any of the following due to their work?

	Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
Online verbal threats or harassment				
Offline verbal threats or harassment <i>(Infobox: e.g. postal mail, telephone, in the street, calls to relatives...)</i>				
Physical attack/s				
Harassment in the form of legal action/SLAPP – Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation (individuals/companies/organisations /public authorities bringing or threatening to bring legal action against your employee/volunteer, such as claims for damages, criminal charges, injunctions, administrative action/fines, tax complaints)				
Other attack against employee/volunteer, please specify:				

2. In the last 12 months, has your organisation experienced any of the following?

	Yes	No	do not know	prefer not to say
Coordinated and/or multiple online threats or harassment <i>(Infobox: e.g. bombarded with messages on Twitter, comments on Facebook, disinformation campaigns online, doxxing – the threat of personal data release)</i>				
Online attacks against your digital infrastructure <i>(Infobox: eg. DDoS (distributed denial of service) attack, which is a malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with a flood of Internet traffic)</i>				
Vandalism of your premises (office building) or other property <i>(Infobox: eg. graffiti, broken windows, cars, bikes, outdoor advertising etc.)</i>				
Negative media reports/campaigns				
Harassment in the form of excessive administrative controls or audits <i>(Infobox: interrogations, detention, visits to work place, tax inspections, searches of workplace and equipments)</i>				
Harassment in the form of legal action/SLAPP – Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation <i>(Infobox:</i>				



individuals/companies/organisations/public authorities bringing or threatening to bring legal action against your organisation, such as claims for damages, criminal charges, injunctions, administrative action/fines, tax complaints)				
Criminalisation of our work				
Surveillance by law enforcement , including of your online activities				
Other attack against organisation, please specify:				

3. If yes, do you know or suspect who has been the perpetrator of these actions?

- State actor (public)
- Non-State actor (private)
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

4. In the last 12 months, has any of these incidents resulted in the organisation discontinuing or reducing activities due to external pressure?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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If yes, please specify: (optional)

5. Do you think or know whether the reasons for these threats or attacks were related to specific activities of your organisation, or specific themes you are working on?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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6. Please could you indicate the area of your work that you think or know to have been the reason for the attack: _____

7. Has your organisation reported any of these incidents to the authorities (e.g. police or other competent body)?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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8. If yes to Q7, did the police or relevant authorities investigate the incident, and act in protection of the victim (including public support statements)?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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9. If yes to Q8, are you satisfied with the way these authorities acted upon your report?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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10. If no to Q7, why did your organisation not report the incident?

(select all that apply)

- a) The incident was not serious enough
- b) Inconvenient/too much trouble to report-
- c) Nothing would come out of reporting it
- d) We do not trust the police
- e) It was reported to other services
- f) Fear of reprisals
- g) Other reasons
- h) Don't know

11. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your organisation's experiences with regards to threats and attacks? (open question, optional)

Access to finance and other resources

1. In the last 12 months, how much difficulty did you experience in financing your work?

Much difficulty	Some difficulty	Little difficulty	No difficulty	Do not know
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2. In the last 12 months, did your organisation apply for any national public funding?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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3. If yes, in the last 12 months, did you experience any of the following difficulties when trying to access national funding? Please select up to three.

- a) Publicly available information is insufficient or difficult to find
- b) Limited administrative capacity and/or expertise to find or apply for funding
- c) Competition with other CSOs for limited funds
- d) Restrictive eligibility criteria (*see infobox*)
- e) Lack of transparency and fairness in funding allocation
- f) New or changing national rules for accessing foreign funding
- g) Discrimination because of the topics we are working on
- h) No difficulties regarding the access to funding at national level
- i) Other (please explain)

Infobox for: eligibility criteria, such as: CSOs are not listed as "eligible" although the nature of work is suitable for such entities; calls require minimum duration of existence, number of full-time staff or turnover

4. In the last 12 months, did your organisation apply for any EU public funding?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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5. If yes, in the last 12 months, did you experience any of the following difficulties when trying to access EU funding? Please select up to three

- a) Publicly available information is insufficient or difficult to find
- b) Limited administrative capacity and/or expertise to find or apply for funding
- c) Competition with other CSOs for limited funds
- d) Restrictive eligibility criteria (*see infobox*)
- e) Lack of transparency and fairness in funding allocation
- f) Discrimination because of the topics we are working on
- g) No difficulties regarding the access to funding at EU level
- h) Other (please explain)

Infobox for: eligibility criteria, such as: CSOs are not listed as “eligible” although the nature of work is suitable for such entities; calls require minimum duration of existence, number of full-time staff or turnover

6. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your organisation’s experiences with regards to access to resources? (open question, optional)

Enabling regulatory environment and laws

1. In the past 12 months, has your organisation faced difficulties in any of the following areas (offline or online)?

Freedom of peaceful assembly	yes	no	Do not know	prefer not to say
Freedom of association	yes	no	Do not know	prefer not to say
Freedom of expression	yes	no	Do not know	prefer not to say

Infoboxes:

Freedom of peaceful assembly: e.g. difficulties in organising public gatherings, such as lack of or inadequate police protection, bans on certain assemblies or excessive restrictions on the content of an event, or regarding the time, place or manner of organising assemblies, such as bans on assemblies at certain times or locations.

Freedom of association: e.g. challenges to the capacity to register and/or operate as a legal person in national law

Freedom of expression: e.g. through political or criminal sanctions brought against the organisation, or through civil or administrative litigation or restrictions limiting access to funding or to the public space

2. In the past 12 months, has your organisation encountered difficulties in conducting its work due to legal challenges in the following areas? You can tick all boxes that are relevant.

	Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
Transparency or lobby laws				
Legal provisions on political campaigning				
Counter-terrorism legislation or policy				



Legislation on civil dialogue / consultations				
Data protection laws				
Anti-money laundering measures				
Changes in tax laws				
Changes in laws governing charitable status				
Travel restrictions / visa bans				
Emergency laws				

3. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your organisation’s experiences with regards to the legal environment? (open question, optional)

Role of civil society as part of checks and balances

1. In the last 12 months, was your organisation involved in supporting any of the following issues as part of checks and balances in the democratic functioning of our societies?

	Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
Assisting victims in accessing judicial and non-judicial mechanisms of justice				
Monitoring the legality and proportionality of laws, measures and practices; triggering the judicial review of laws, measures and practices and the enforcement of rulings; strategic litigation				
Keeping the national anti-corruption framework operational (incl. whistle-blowers and their protection etc.)				
Contributing and maintaining media pluralism and freedom				
Contributing to law and policy making (including involvement in public consultations)				
Feeding into and supporting the work of independent authorities and bodies (e.g. judiciary, NHRI, Ombudsperson)				
Supporting public authorities in countering discrimination, hate crime and hate speech				
Combating disinformation and fostering media and digital literacy				
Fostering a rule of law culture (including through advocacy towards public authorities, awareness-raising activities and civic education)				
Other, please specify:				



2. If yes, could you give a concrete example on how your organisation has been involved? (open question)

3. In the last 12 months, did you face any barriers in conducting any of these activities?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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4. If yes, could you give concrete examples of such barriers that your organisation has faced in implementing any of these activities? (open question, optional)

Access to the decision-making processes and participation

1. In the past 12 months, did your organisation participate in national public consultations for law and policy making – either through online consultations, meetings or other means?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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2. If yes, what were the main difficulties you encountered in national consultations/participation? Please select up to three.

- Lack of timely and detailed information about upcoming participation processes / consultations (e.g. dates, places, processes, ...)
- Need to register with transparency or lobby register in order to participate
- No equal chances for all to participate, discrimination in the access because of the work of our organisation
- Consultation not accessible (online or physical), technical obstacles
- Lack of capacity in our organisation related to time, skills, knowledge of our staff
- Deadlines to provide meaningful input were too short
- Lack of feedback on the outcome (e.g. no information on the use of input, the impact and the reasons for it)
- Consultation was organised after core decisions on the issue had been taken
- Lack of trust between civil society and public authorities
- No difficulties encountered
- Other, (please explain – up to 150 words)

3. In the past 12 months, did your organisation participate in public consultations organised by European Union institutions – either through online consultations, meetings or other means?

Yes	No	Do not know	Prefer not to say
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4. If yes, what were the main difficulties you encountered in EU-level consultations/participation? Please select up to three.

- Lack of timely and detailed information about upcoming participation processes / consultations (e.g. dates, places, processes, ...)
- Need to register with transparency or lobby register in order to participate
- No equal chances for all to participate, discrimination in the access because of the work of our organisation
- Consultation not accessible (online or physical), technical obstacles
- Lack of capacity in our organisation related to time, skills, knowledge of our staff
- Deadlines to provide meaningful input were too short
- Lack of feedback on the outcome (e.g. no information on the use of input, the impact and the reasons for it)
- Consultation was organised after core decisions on the issue had been taken
- Lack of trust between civil society and public authorities
- No difficulties encountered
- Other, (please explain)

5. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your organisation's experiences with regards to participation? (open question, optional)

6. To close, is there any other information you would like to share with us regarding the challenges your organisation is facing? (open question, optional)

Thank you.