



**FRA**

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY  
FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

# CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

—  
2020

REPORT



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# Consolidated Annual Activity Report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

## 2020

In pursuance of FR 2018/1046, FFR No 2019/715<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ 2019 L 122 (*General Financial Regulation*).

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# Management Board analysis and assessment

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' (FRA) Management Board,

Having regard to:

- Council Regulation (EC) No. 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- General Financial Regulation of 18 December 2018, in particular Article 48 (1)
- FRA's 2020–2022 Single Programming Document adopted by the Management Board on 13 December 2019, and in particular the work programme for 2020

Acknowledges the results achieved by FRA during the exceptional year of 2020, which has been impacted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and makes the following comments:

1. This report contains a comprehensive and thorough account of the activities carried out by FRA in the implementation of its mandate and programme of work during 2020. FRA has met its obligations under Article 48 (1), providing a detailed account of the results achieved in relation to the objectives set out in the annual work programme for 2020 and the five strategic areas defined in FRA's strategic plan 2014–2020, of the financial and management information, and of the risks related to the organisational activities and measures.
2. Takes note that the executive director, in his capacity as authorising officer, had no reservations to report.
3. Notes that, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency's results in 2020 were in line with its multiannual Single Programming Document and its amendments.
4. Welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 168/2007, introducing elements of judicial and police cooperation and clarifying that the scope of the agency's activities covers all the competences of the European Union (EU). The decision will support FRA initiatives in the area considering that FRA can engage in such matters only on receipt of a request from an EU institution. There was an increase in requests in the areas of criminal justice and security in 2020, particularly in relation to procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings.
5. Notes with satisfaction that the key performance indicator results were positive across all activities and the targets set were achieved in all cases.
6. Welcomes the successful implementation of the annual work programme, resulting in a fully implemented budget with 100 % commitment appropriations. In particular, it acknowledges the agency's contributions to:
  - Analysing the fundamental rights impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU by releasing six bulletins focused on different thematic areas. The bulletins have proved to be a real-time barometer of the fundamental rights situation during a year that has been

exceptionally challenging, with different set of measures taken at the level of Members States impacting particular groups in society. The relevance and timeliness of the bulletins have shown the agency's ability to adapt to a changing environment and to continue to provide high-quality evidence-based data.

- Providing its data and analysis to policymakers in the EU so that they can draw on FRA's work on the development of strategies on topics as diverse as anti-racism and the promotion of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. FRA's contribution to the Commission's new *Rule of law report* has also been recognised; this draws on FRA research as well as data generated by the agency's European Union Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS). The policy relevance of FRA's work has been repeatedly acknowledged in 2020, with FRA supporting the proceedings of many working groups and parties of the Commission and presidencies of the Council of the EU, appearing before committees of the European Parliament, and participating in virtual meetings of Member States and civil society.
- Producing a wide range of publications and running virtual events that covered all five strategic pillars defined in the FRA Strategy 2018–2022. FRA published the first three papers from the ground-breaking Fundamental Rights Survey in June 2020, which, for the first time, captured the views of the EU's general population on human and fundamental rights. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) survey became the most downloaded of FRA's publications after its launch in May 2020, with the *Relocating unaccompanied children: Applying good practices to future schemes* being another well-received report.
- Delivering continuous results in the area of asylum and migration, with regular overviews of migration-related fundamental rights concerns issued on a quarterly basis. The proposed asylum and migration management regulation anticipates that FRA's regular migration bulletins will be taken into account when the Commission assesses Member States' migratory pressures.
- Adapting its communication methods during the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining the distribution of information at a level higher than in 2019. Many meetings were held virtually, but the agency has still been accessible, with the Fundamental Rights Dialogue taking place virtually for the first time. The agency adapted to the current restrictions by increasing the number of video statements and messages given by the director. Through its continuous media presence, FRA steadily increased its number of media mentions throughout the year, with a remarkable 400 articles referencing FRA in the week of 21 September 2020 alone.

7. Acknowledges the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures introduced by Members States to contain the virus, which have impacted not only the time to publication of FRA reports and the launch of results, but also the implementation of the 2020 Roma Survey and other fieldwork activities planned under different projects. However, the diligence shown by the agency in following up on the measures and finding solutions for the sound implementation of projects is welcomed.

8. Acknowledges the continued challenges that FRA faces in terms of the efficient use of its resources and welcomes FRA's efforts to prioritise its demanding workload, which has also been impacted by the pandemic.

9. Welcomes the positive results that have been confirmed in *ex post* evaluations, concluding that the agency's work is of high quality and important for its stakeholders.

10. Considers that the main risks that threatened the achievement of the strategic and operational objectives during 2020 have been properly identified and that the necessary measures have been adopted to mitigate their impact



or likelihood, and that the internal control systems put in place by the agency are adequate, as confirmed by various audits carried out throughout 2020.

11. Observes that the director's declaration of assurance is based on a robust control system built around the internal control framework introduced through a Management Board decision of 17 May 2018, which is also confirmed by the absence of significant findings from the Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors.

12. Notes FRA's diligent response to findings from the European Court of Auditors and the Internal Audit Service and supports FRA's efforts in its transparent implementation of the recommendations.

13. Considers that the information provided in the *Consolidated annual activity report 2020* gives the Management Board reasonable assurance that the resources available to FRA in 2020 were used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management. Furthermore, the control procedures in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

In light of the above, the Management Board requests that the *Consolidated annual activity report 2020* be forwarded, together with this analysis and assessment, to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Commission and the ECA.

Vienna, 20/05/2021



Elise Barbé

*Chairperson of the Management Board*



# Executive summary

The *Consolidated annual activity report 2020* provides an overview of the activities and achievements of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in that year. It follows the guidelines established by the European Commission.

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

### **Identifying trends: collecting and analysing comparable data and evidence**

Overall, FRA's data collection and analysis activities were regarded as the most relevant aspect of its work in 2020 in terms of contributing to the current European Union (EU) policy context and fundamental rights challenges. FRA's extensive surveys on the discrimination of marginalised groups and the Fundamental Rights Survey have formed the basis of a number of strategies.

FRA published findings from the 2019 survey on discrimination, violence and hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people, the largest such survey ever carried out worldwide. The survey was referenced in 32 academic journal articles in 2020. The European Commission's upcoming EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and the new EU strategy on LGBTIQ equality were based on the survey findings.

Furthermore, through the Roma and Travellers Survey, FRA developed estimates on the life expectancy of Roma and Travellers for the first time. FRA cooperated with several national statistical institutions to build data collection and monitoring capacity at the country level.

### **Contributing to better law-making and implementation with independent advice**

Overall, FRA's activities contributing to better law-making and implementation were regarded as highly relevant for FRA stakeholders in 2020. FRA was highly influential across its many areas of activity, particularly in providing legislative and policy advice to EU and national stakeholders on matters relating to the rights of the child; asylum, migration and borders; and equality and non-discrimination. For instance, FRA identified 20 good practices in the field of asylum, migration and borders in 2020.

FRA continued to strengthen its role as an independent core actor informing EU law, despite the adverse circumstances brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic, by participating in 205 hearings and presentations. FRA also provided its expertise directly to EU institutions, responding to 14 requests for opinions. Most of these requests were in relation to non-discrimination issues, such as work on the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive<sup>1</sup>.

FRA also extended its fundamental rights advice to other EU agencies, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex); the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA); and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). For example, FRA renewed its service-level agreement with

Frontex in 2020, assisting it with the deployment of 40 fundamental rights monitors across its operations. FRA also played a vital role in contributing to EU priorities through its influence on EU law and policy, including work on digital rights by contributing newer EU legislative initiatives pertaining to artificial intelligence and fundamental rights.

### **Supporting rights-compliant policy responses: providing real-time assistance and expertise**

Overall, stakeholders considered FRA's contribution to supporting rights-compliant policy responses as very relevant to the EU policy context in 2020.

FRA responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by publishing six bulletins, which provided a timely and comprehensive overview of the fundamental rights implications of national measures adopted across the EU to safeguard citizens from the virus. The bulletins were downloaded over 12,000 times within 28 days of publication, with the first bulletin being the second most used FRA publication of the year. Emerging findings from an independent evaluation of the bulletins note that they were effective in their reach and scope and that the bulletins were used and referenced by stakeholders and in academic journal articles.

FRA also responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by contributing to conversations on the economic and societal challenges brought about by the pandemic, on integration and migration against the background of the pandemic and on the future of the European Disability Strategy.

Furthermore, child protection remained one of FRA's priorities during 2020. FRA contributed to child protection policy by providing guidance on standard operating procedures for the relocation of unaccompanied children to other EU Member States, implementing training modules in this area and reacting to several fundamental rights challenges in Greece, including the closure of its land borders, suspension of access to asylum and the Mória Refugee Camp fire.

### **Effectively promoting rights, values and freedoms**

FRA's activities in the promotion of fundamental rights, values and freedoms were considered very relevant by FRA stakeholders.

FRA engaged in a number of awareness-raising activities in 2020 aimed at fostering a culture of protecting, promoting and fulfilling fundamental rights in the EU. FRA continued its awareness-raising activities on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and published its *Fundamental rights report 2020*, which summarised and analysed the major human rights developments and challenges in the EU in 2019.

FRA's *Fundamental rights report 2020*, together with FRA's opinions, were downloaded more than 8,400 times. FRA also contributed to raising awareness on fundamental rights at the EU's external borders through the publication of a report on fundamental rights compliance at the EU's external land borders, requested by the European Parliament. FRA also continued to contribute in 2020 to discussions on how to communicate rights more effectively through the provision of training sessions and participation in webinars and events, where it presented and applied the *10 keys to effectively communicating human rights*. To achieve a higher level of awareness of human rights, FRA continued to work closely with the European Commission, Member States, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), civil society and international organisations (i.e. the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe,

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, European Network of Equality Bodies and European Network of National Human Rights Institutions).

FRA also adapted quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering several of its awareness-raising activities, events and training sessions online. FRA still topped the ranking for print dissemination through the Publications Office of the EU website in 2020. FRA's media references and social media footprint have been growing over recent years. FRA recorded 11,000 new followers on LinkedIn and 12,000 new followers on Twitter and Facebook in 2020. FRA's media outreach has also increased considerably, with more than double the number of media mentions in 2020 compared with 2019 and with 40 countries reporting on FRA in the media in 35 different languages. FRA's work was also referenced in 25 documents of the Council of the European Union and 85 documents of the European Parliament.

### **Strengthening cooperation with national and local fundamental rights actors: working with communities of support**

FRA stakeholders highly valued FRA's work in 2020 on strengthening cooperation with national and local fundamental rights actors. Throughout the year, FRA increased its knowledge and data on national human rights action plans. In addition, in 2020, the agency made available a report on national human rights action plans in the EU and published key findings from its 2019 survey on Roma and Travellers in six countries.

Throughout 2020, FRA also contributed to fostering the creation of an enabling civic space and strengthening human rights capacities in EU Member States, primarily through its work with NHRIs and cooperation with civil society organisations through the Fundamental Rights Platform. FRA published a report in 2020 entitled ***Strong and effective national human rights institutions – challenges, promising practices and opportunities***, which analyses the situation of NHRIs across the EU, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom. FRA also contributed to a revised Council of Europe recommendation on NHRIs and continued its work on fundamental rights at local level by providing support to cities to become human rights cities. In addition, FRA contributed around 20 submissions to the United Nations and Council of Europe monitoring bodies responsible for reviewing Member States.

Drawing on its expertise in data collection covering different fundamental rights, in 2020 FRA provided assistance and methodological advice to Bulgarian authorities on how to generate data and populate indicators on hard-to-reach populations at risk of rights violations and on how to use human rights indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. FRA plans to extend the methodological advice provided to Bulgaria to other Member States in 2021.

### **Financial management and internal control**

In accordance with the terms of its statutory governance, FRA conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, by working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the high level of professional and ethical standards expected of an EU agency.

To ensure the achievement of policy and management objectives, FRA has adopted a set of internal control principles based on international good practices.

Financial regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used to implement the budget be set up in accordance with these principles. FRA has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that they are effective and that the

required components and principles are present and functioning well overall. However, some minor improvements are needed to principles 4, 5, 6 and 14. The appropriate corrective actions are being undertaken. See Part III for further details.

In addition, FRA has systematically examined the available control results and indicators as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors. These elements were assessed to determine their impact on management assurance with regard to achievement of its control objectives. See Part III for further details.

In conclusion, the management team is reasonably confident that, overall, suitable controls are in place and are working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The director, in his capacity as authorising officer by delegation, has signed the declaration of assurance.



# PART I: ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

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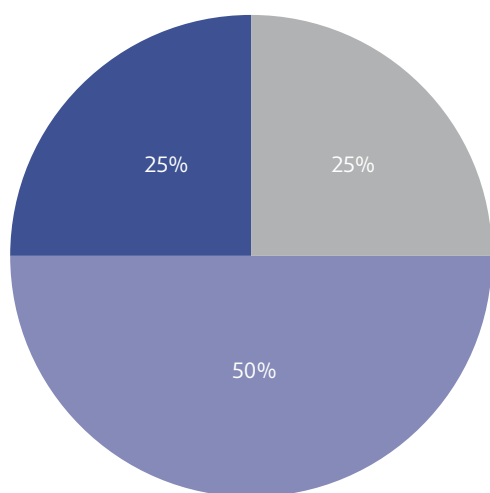
**Part I describes the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' (FRA) contribution to the European Commission priorities, as well as the agency's achievements in terms of its strategic pillars, objectives and areas of activities. FRA's strategic pillars and objectives are defined in detail in its strategic plan for the period 2018–2022. Its strategic areas of activities are divided into nine thematic areas. The strategic pillars describe the actions and steps to be taken to achieve FRA's essential objectives to promote and defend fundamental rights across the European Union (EU). The strategic pillars have been adopted in the 5-year multiannual framework (MAF) by the Council of the European Union on the proposal of the European Commission for the period from 2018 to 2022.**

## 1.1. FRA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PRIORITIES

In 2019, the Council of the European Union adopted a new agenda for the period 2019–2024 and a new European Parliament and European Commission were formed. The new European Commission identified policies and fundamental rights priorities that build on the Council's agenda for its new mandate. In total, 75 % of the stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 considered that information contained in FRA's evidence and opinions was well aligned with the EU priorities and policy agenda (Figure 1).]

For translation:

**FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF STAKEHOLDERS WHO CONSIDER THAT FRA INFORMATION IS WELL ALIGNED WITH EU PRIORITIES AND POLICY AGENDA**



■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Figure 2 summarises the new Commission's priorities and provides some examples of FRA's contributions to these priorities in 2020.

### 1.1.1. A European Green Deal

The European Commission – and also Council of the European Union priority – of building a green Europe is currently covered by the FRA Strategy 2018–2022, which expressly mentions the importance of the work of the agency in developing indicators in the context of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2020, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), FRA contributed to the review of the implementation of the SDGs in five EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland and Slovenia).



In December 2019, the agency also contributed to the UN Human Rights Council intersessional meeting on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, in 2020, FRA published a report on business and human rights that looks at obstacles faced by victims when they seek redress for business-related human rights abuses. In June 2020, FRA became part of the Platform on Sustainable Finance of the European Commission, which provides advice to the Commission on the implementation of the EU Taxonomy Regulation, which seeks to channel funds to more sustainable causes. FRA also participated in the 2020 General Conference of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. FRA plans to carry out a project on 'Business and human rights: Consumer protection

and the environment' in 2021. This research will support the Commission's efforts in further promoting the EU's sustainability agenda in the coming years, taking into account the UN SDGs.

### 1.1.2. An economy that works for people

FRA was involved in a significant number of projects and activities in the areas of equality, non-discrimination, racism and xenophobia in 2020, thus contributing to the European Commission's priority 'An economy that works for people' and the Council's priority to build a fair and social Europe.

In 2020, FRA published its annual update on data collection on antisemitism. In July 2020, the agency submitted a summary of findings relevant to racism and xenophobia from its research in this area to the European Commission as an evidence base for the upcoming Commission Action Plan on Racism and Xenophobia for 2020–2025. The information provided to the Commission included, among other things, evidence on the levels of poverty and social exclusion among certain minority groups. FRA also provided the Commission with input on the upcoming report on the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive<sup>2</sup>. In addition, FRA published findings from its 2019 survey on Roma and Travellers in six countries and a bulletin analysing the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on Roma and Travellers.

In May 2020, FRA published a report on the second EU lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) survey entitled *A long way to go for LGBTI equality*. This discussed discrimination, victimisation and life experiences of LGBTI persons. FRA has also launched the LGBTI survey data explorer, which enables the data obtained from the second LGBTI survey to be explored in different ways.

In October 2020, FRA took part in a round table organised by the AGE Platform and the European Disability Forum to discuss the situation of older persons and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. In addition, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, FRA published a bulletin analysing the impact of the pandemic on fundamental rights, with a specific focus on social rights, and a bulletin focusing on the impact of the pandemic on older people.

In August 2020, FRA joined the hearing of the European Economic and Social Committee on diversity management and the future of EU diversity policies for migrants and ethnic minorities. The agency presented relevant findings from its **second EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey** (EU-MIDIS II), the **Fundamental Rights Survey** and other research projects (i.e. 'Integration of young refugees in the EU' and 'Together in the EU').



FRA is currently analysing data on young people and children from EU-MIDIS II to contribute to the development of the new Strategy for the Rights of the Child and the implementation of the Youth Strategy.

### 1.1.3. A Europe fit for the digital age

The greater role of FRA in relation to this priority is recognised in the agency's strategy and programming documents, which expressly state the need for FRA to explore the possibilities of big data analytics and their implications for fundamental rights, and to examine fundamental rights challenges in the digital environment.



One of the European Commission's main objectives under this priority is the adoption of new legislation on artificial intelligence (AI) that is adapted

to existing risks but allows for innovation. In this context, in 2020, FRA provided formal and informal input to the Commission to inform its work on the upcoming proposal for a legal act on AI. In addition, based on existing data and findings, FRA provided input to the public consultation launched by the Commission on its **White Paper on artificial intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust**. FRA is also a member of the Commission’s High-level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence.

FRA’s work on digitalisation and AI has also contributed to the work of the Council in this area. For example, the Council conclusions on ‘Access to justice – Seizing the opportunities of digitalisation’ referred to relevant FRA work in the area of justice and data protection. FRA’s findings on AI also fed into the Council conclusions on the ‘Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of AI and digital change’.

In addition, in 2020, FRA also published a document based on the Fundamental Rights Survey that presented **data on the opinions and experiences of people in the EU in relation to data protection and technology**. The FRA survey on fundamental rights also explored issues related to people’s experiences of cyberbullying, online banking and payment card fraud, as well as illegal access to data. FRA also presented its survey results on the use of facial recognition at a European Parliament hearing on AI in criminal law.

In addition, in December 2020, FRA published the report **Getting the future right – Artificial intelligence and fundamental rights**, which looks at the how the use of AI can interfere with fundamental rights and presents examples of how companies and public administrations in the EU are using, or trying to use, AI, focusing on four core areas: social benefits, predictive policing, health services and targeted advertising. FRA also launched a series of short video clips on AI, dealing with issues related to automating public administration and fundamental rights challenges in relation to AI. Moreover, FRA also published a report highlighting the fundamental rights challenges associated with the increase use of new technologies by governments and public administrations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. FRA hosted the online event ‘Fair technologies as a tool to safeguard public health?’, which aimed to reflect on the impact that new technologies in the field of public health may have on fundamental rights.

#### **1.1.4. Protecting our European way of life**

FRA is heavily involved in the areas of asylum, migration and borders. The level of requests for the agency’s support and expertise in this area from Member States and EU institutions has increased considerably over the years and is expected to continue to increase. Some examples of the work of FRA in this area in 2020 included the support provided by the agency for setting up a new facility for refugees in Lesbos and the delivery of training and capacity-building activities for border guards in several Member States. At the request of the European Parliament, in 2020, FRA also prepared a report on compliance with fundamental rights at EU borders, including the effective application of the EU asylum acquis and the Schengen Borders Code. In December 2020, FRA published jointly with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) the third edition of the **Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration**. FRA has also strengthened its cooperation with Frontex and will help the Agency develop a handbook for future fundamental rights monitors. In addition, FRA has contributed to ensuring the proper functioning of the Schengen Borders Code through the delivery of fundamental rights expertise in the context of Schengen evaluations and the support provided for training evaluators. FRA has also contributed to this EU priority through



its work on large-scale information technology (IT) systems (e.g. the Entry/Exit System).

Counter-terrorism is also a key priority for the EU, as demonstrated by both the new Council strategic agenda for 2019–2024 and the new Commission priorities. In response to this priority, FRA is currently undertaking a project on ‘The impact of counter-terrorism legislation on fundamental rights’. FRA has also contributed to the area of internal security through ad hoc requests received from EU institutions. For example, the agency provided input to a review of several legal instruments in the field of security, such as Council Directive 2004/82/EC on the obligation of carriers to communicate passenger data and Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism. In 2020, FRA published the paper ***Your rights matter: Security concerns and experiences***. The results presented in the paper contributed to the **European Commission’s Security Union Strategy**.

Regarding the rule of law, FRA has also contributed to some extent to existing debates on this matter, primarily in connection to issues related to access to justice. In 2020, FRA contributed to the Commission’s first annual *Rule of law report* with data collated from its new European Union Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS). The report ***Strong and effective NHRIs: Challenges, promising practices and opportunities*** also addresses issues related to the potential use of NHRIs to uphold the rule of law in the EU. Moreover, the agency’s Fundamental Rights Survey published in 2020 also directly addresses issues related to the rule of law (i.e. independence of the judiciary and government interference in the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)).

#### **1.1.5. A new push for European democracy**

One of FRA’s objectives for the period 2018–2022 is to create a safe and inclusive space for dialogue with key actors to respond to pressing human rights challenges. FRA contributed to the European Democracy Action Plan in 2020 through its activities on communicating and raising awareness of fundamental rights, in particular through the publication of the ***Fundamental rights report***, the Fundamental Rights Survey and the promotion of civil society engagement through the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP). Through its annual consultation with the FRP, FRA collected data on existing threats to the work of civil society organisations and the reduction of their participation in civic and democratic spaces. The 2020 report ***Strong and effective NHRIs: Challenges, promising practices and opportunities*** also analyses the situation of NHRIs across the EU, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom, and identifies current challenges and opportunities to strengthen them in the EU.



FRA has also carried out intensive work in the area of hate crime and hate speech. This includes the delivery of several training sessions and participation in a Working Group on hate crime recording. FRA plans to publish a report in 2021 on ‘Encouraging reporting of hate crime in the EU’.

FRA has also contributed to raising awareness and collecting data on the role of minority groups in civic spaces and their democratic participation. Thus, data from FRA’s EU-MIDIS surveys has helped to populate indicators on immigrant civic citizenship and democratic participation, individual and collective freedoms, respect for the EU’s core values and trust in public institutions. Similarly, findings from FRA’s Roma and Travellers Survey aimed, among other things, to guide policymakers in developing more targeted policy responses in the field of civic participation and trust in public authorities by Roma populations. FRA has also started a project on ‘Children and young people’s experiences of fundamental rights fulfilment’, which aims, among

other things, to support EU efforts to strengthen child and youth participation in political and democratic life.

To avoid spreading misinformation, ensure fact-based communication and assist journalists in the coverage of migration issues, in 2020, FRA also launched an e-media toolkit on migration and published a trainers' manual targeting journalists and editors.

#### **1.1.6. A stronger Europe in the world**

As required by its Founding Regulation, FRA cooperates with a number of international organisations, thus creating synergies and contributing to the external coherence of the EU's human rights policies. In 2020, FRA cooperated with a wide range of UN bodies in the context of UN monitoring of EU Member States, as well as in connection with the UN Universal Periodic Review process. FRA also contributed to the UN *Global study on children deprived of liberty* and provided input to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 'General Recommendation on trafficking in women and girls'. In addition, FRA activities have also contributed to the implementation of the UN SDGs in the EU.



FRA also supports the work of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and, in particular, its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Some of the main areas of cooperation between FRA and the OSCE include combating hate crime and violence against women (VAW), and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

FRA also cooperates closely with the Council of Europe (CoE). The agency and the CoE have permanent mechanisms for cooperation, and representatives of the CoE have a place on FRA's Management Board. At the operational level, FRA also cooperates with several relevant bodies and services of the CoE, that is, the Secretariat – Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law and the Directorate General of Democracy, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, the ECtHR; the European Committee of Social Rights and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). Some examples of cooperation between FRA and the CoE in 2020 include the support provided by FRA to the new CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (which will conclude in 2021), FRA's contribution to the work of the CoE's Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) and FRA's contribution to the revised CoE recommendation on NHRIs. The CoE regularly cites FRA's reports and findings and in 2020 several ECRI country reports referred to, and used as evidence, data and information from FRA's research. FRA also cooperates with the CoE, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet) through a collaborative platform on social and economic rights. The main goal of the platform is to increase the effectiveness of the standards for national bodies and contribute to finding solutions to fundamental rights challenges in Europe.

In addition, FRA meets twice a year with international organisations working on business and human rights (i.e. the OHCHR, International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and CoE). Furthermore, since December 2019, the agency has had regular consultations with chief communications officers from nine international (inter-governmental) organisations mandated to protect and promote human rights in Europe (e.g. OHCHR, CoE, Commissioner for Human Rights, OSCE, ODIHR, Equinet and ENNHRI).

Furthermore, through the EFRIS, FRA has also contributed to creating synergies with key international actors by establishing a unique entry point for data

from international monitoring mechanisms (i.e. UN, CoE and ECtHR). The EFRIS is expected to be expanded to also include data on the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) case law.

**FIGURE 2: FRA'S CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRIORITIES**



NB: Throughout Part I, icons are displayed to indicate where key areas of FRA's work have contributed to EU priorities.



## 1.2. ACHIEVEMENTS BY STRATEGIC PRIORITY, OBJECTIVE AND AREA OF ACTIVITY

The following sections describe FRA's key achievements by strategic priority, objective and area of activity.

### 1.2.1. Identifying trends: collecting and analysing comparable data and evidence

#### FRA's objectives for 2018–2022 are to:

- generate comparable, robust and reliable data and evidence to identify trends in the fulfilment of fundamental rights;
- develop and use fundamental rights indicators to benchmark gaps and achievements;
- use analyses of collected data and evidence to generate fundamental rights assessments on the implications of mainstream policies and interventions at EU and national levels.

#### Key achievements of the year

In 2020, FRA continued to publish comparable, robust and reliable data and evidence in relation to fundamental rights. This was highly valued by stakeholders and has contributed to the implementation of legislation and policies at EU level. FRA has published data and findings of global significance, including findings from the largest survey of LGBTI people ever conducted worldwide, the first comprehensive set of comparable data on the experiences of and opinions on fundamental rights, and, for the first time, estimates on the life expectancy of Roma and Travellers. FRA also shared data in the areas of fundamental rights and AI and discrimination. Furthermore, FRA supported capacity-building of national statistical institutes. Overall, FRA has met and exceeded all targets set under this priority, in particular targets regarding stakeholders' views of its datasets and databases. Seventy-seven stakeholders surveyed in 2020 agreed or strongly agreed that FRA produces high-quality and reliable datasets and databases (target: 10).

Overall, stakeholders consulted in the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 considered FRA's activities under this priority to be the most relevant of all the priorities in relation to the current EU policy context and fundamental rights challenges<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, stakeholders identified that this priority brings the greatest added value<sup>4</sup>. Stakeholders consulted in the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 considered FRA's outputs to be useful for implementing EU legislation and policies. In total, 75 % of stakeholders responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they had used FRA's outputs for the implementation of legislation and policies at EU level<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, 87 % of stakeholders surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that FRA produces high-quality and reliable datasets and databases and 83 % agreed or strongly agreed that FRA datasets and databases are useful and relevant to their work<sup>6</sup>.

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**Stakeholders reported that FRA produces high-quality and reliable datasets and databases, which are useful and relevant to their work**

In 2020, FRA published data and findings on the lived experiences and discrimination faced by Roma and Travellers and LGBTI people in the EU.

Through the 2019 **Roma and Travellers Survey**, FRA collected data on the experiences of Roma and Travellers in core areas of life – employment, education, housing and health – as well as on experiences of discrimination, harassment and hate crime. The survey covered six countries in Europe (Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom).



In 2020, the Roma and Travellers Survey was implemented in 10 countries across Europe<sup>7</sup>.

In September 2020, FRA published a report on its Roma and Travellers Survey, including key findings and the questionnaire. The report provides comparisons with the nine Eastern and Southern European Member States<sup>8</sup> surveyed in EU-MIDIS II and, for core indicators, with the general population in each of these Member States. In total, 30 % of stakeholders surveyed in the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 reported having used this report in their work.

Draft indicators, findings and data from the 2019 survey fed into the European Commission's EU strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation (2020–2030) and provided a baseline for the outcome indicators in each of the nine Member States in the EU-MIDIS II survey. The 2020 survey will continue to populate indicators to monitor the implementation of the Roma strategic framework.



In March 2020, based on data from the survey, FRA expanded its research and **developed, for the first time, estimates on the life expectancy of Roma and Travellers**. The indicator on life expectancy was endorsed as a headline indicator in the strategic framework. Preliminary survey results were also shared with the European Parliament as requested by the secretariat of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) in April 2020. This fed into the review of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020.

Furthermore, in 2020, FRA cooperated with national statistical institutes in Belgium, Czechia, North Macedonia and Slovakia in relation to their national data collections on the Roma population. FRA provided technical assistance and methodological expertise, including providing its questionnaire on the Roma population. This work has helped to build capacity at the country level and ensure that comparable data are available across these countries for monitoring purposes.



FRA's 2019 LGBTI survey is the **largest survey on discrimination, violence and hate crimes against LGBTI people ever carried out worldwide**. Almost 140,000 participants took part in the survey across the EU, North Macedonia and Serbia. It follows FRA's first survey on LGBT people in the EU, conducted in 2012.

FRA published selected findings from the 2019 survey in a report entitled the **A long way to go for LGBTI equality** on discrimination, victimisation and life experiences of LGBTI persons<sup>9</sup>. The report, published in May 2020, shows that, although more LGBTI people are now open about gender identity and sexuality, fear, violence and discrimination remain prevalent. The report notes that little progress has been made over the past seven years in relation to discrimination faced in everyday life, when looking for housing, when accessing healthcare or social services and in shops. Specific challenges were highlighted for trans and intersex people in these areas. In total, 73 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 that consulted this publication said that it was useful to their work, timely and of high-quality<sup>10</sup>.

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### Almost 140,000 participants took part in FRA's 2019 survey on discrimination, violence and hate crimes against LGBTI people

The survey and accompanying report have been referenced in academic journal articles in 2020 and have provided key inputs to EU policy. For example, the new EU strategy on LGBTIQ equality was based on the survey findings. The survey was referenced by 32 academic journal articles in 2020, which is the highest of any FRA output in 2020. The survey was referenced extensively in the 2020 **European Parliament briefing on the rights of LGBTI people in the European Union**. On 16 July 2020, FRA's director presented the results of the **LGBTI survey to the LIBE Committee** of the European Parliament.



**Almost 140,000 participants took part in FRA's 2019 survey on discrimination, violence and hate crimes against LGBTI people**

Furthermore, FRA's director supported the European LGBTI movement's online events by releasing **two video messages**, one for **Athens Pride** and another for the European region of the International LGBTI Association's (**ILGA-Europe**) **online gathering**. Through these messages, the director linked the results of the 2019 LGBTI survey with these events and stressed the importance of cooperation between civil society and FRA.



In 2020, FRA continued to emphasise the importance of fully upholding fundamental rights standards in the use of AI. FRA contributed to this policy area by publishing the main results of its research project '**Artificial intelligence, big data and fundamental rights**'. The report ***Getting the future right – Artificial intelligence and fundamental rights*** is based on case studies on the use of AI in five Member States (Estonia, Finland, France, the Netherlands and Spain) and mapping of applicable national laws in those countries. The case studies covered the areas of health services, targeted advertising, social welfare and predictive policing. The results highlight horizontal issues and rights areas relevant to the application of AI, such as data protection, non-discrimination and access to justice. These results were published as part of an online event co-organised by FRA with the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 14 December 2020. In total, 70 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 consulting this report stated that it helped them gain a deeper understanding of the fundamental rights issues in this field".

FRA furthered its contribution to discussions on the topic of AI and fundamental rights at a number of events. FRA's director delivered a data-driven statement on 'Law as a service? How digitalisation changes access to justice' during the virtual German Presidency conference 'Access to justice in the digital age – Trends and challenges' in July 2020. Furthermore, FRA shared data on AI and fundamental rights at:

- the European Commission's expert workshop on AI and criminal law;
- a panel debate on developing AI for criminal law during an online conference on 'Digitalisation of justice – Interconnection and innovation';
- the second assembly of the European Commission's AI Alliance;
- several sessions of the Internet Governance Forum in November 2020, including the workshop on AI in the area of health, in cooperation with the CoE.

FRA furthered its work in promoting fundamental rights in the use of digital technologies. FRA's 2018 report on the **use of biometric data in large-scale IT systems** found that there is a lack of information provided to people when their fingerprints are taken for immigration, asylum and border management purposes. To improve the provision of information to migrants and asylum applicants registered in the European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database (Eurodac), FRA published a **leaflet** jointly with the Eurodac Supervision Coordination Group in January 2020. The leaflet helps authorities to **better inform people on why fingerprints are taken** and what happens to biometric data stored

in Eurodac. National data protection authorities committed to translating the leaflet into different EU languages and promoting its dissemination.

In June 2020, FRA published the first results of the **Fundamental Rights Survey**. The report ***What do fundamental rights mean for people in the EU?*** presents people's opinions on human – or fundamental – rights, their views and perceptions of the functioning of democratic societies, and their thoughts and engagement with public services that have a duty to enforce human rights law and protect people's rights. The results are based on 35,000 interviews carried out in 2019 in 27 EU Member States, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom. In total, 80 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey that consulted this report said that it gave them a more comprehensive overview of current and emerging fundamental rights trends.<sup>12</sup>



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**FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey provides the first comprehensive set of comparable data on 35,000 people's experiences and opinions of their fundamental rights**

FRA also published two papers based on the results of the Fundamental Rights Survey. First, ***Your rights matter: Data protection and privacy***, which was published in June 2020, focused on data that people share about themselves and their awareness of the EU legal framework on data protection. The paper contributed to the European Commission's report on the application of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Second, ***Your rights matter: Security concerns and experiences***, which was published in July 2020, looked at people's security concerns and worries about certain crimes, as well as experiences of cyberbullying. The results presented in the paper contributed to the European Commission's Security Union Strategy. FRA's survey results also contributed to the development of the Action Plan on Racism and Xenophobia, the report on the application of the Equal Treatment Directive, the EU Roma strategic framework, the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and the report on the application of the GDPR.

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**FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey contributed to at least five key EU strategies, actions plans and reports on data protection, security and discrimination in 2020**

The survey results were shared at several events. In February 2020, the survey results on the use of facial recognition were presented at a European Parliament hearing on AI in criminal law. FRA developed a paper based on the results of the survey for the conference 'Strengthening older people's rights in times of digitalisation – Lessons

learned from COVID-19', organised by the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in September 2020. FRA's director spoke about the data and on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results from the Fundamental Rights Survey contributed to a number of other FRA reports in 2020, including:

- ***Strong and effective national human rights institutions – Challenges, promising practices and opportunities;***
- ***Business and human rights – Access to remedy;***
- ***Roma and Travellers in six countries***
- ***Antisemitism: Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union 2009–2019;***
- ***Getting the future right – Artificial intelligence and fundamental rights;***
- ***FRA's second bulletin on the COVID-19 pandemic.***

In parallel, FRA continued to analyse the survey results and prepare a report on people's experiences of crime victimisation and safety. This **report** has been launched in February 2021, together with the online data explorer for the survey.

FRA continued to contribute to the work of policymakers at EU level on **victims of crime** through four key publications and preliminary findings from the Fundamental Rights Survey. Drawing extensively on FRA's results, the European Commission adopted a five-year strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025) with a view to reinforcing the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive and evaluating the current legal framework, including the Compensation Directive.



### The European Commission's Strategy on Victims' Rights drew extensively on FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey

#### **FRA has contributed to the implementation of the Victims' Rights Strategy.**

First, FRA contributed to a conference co-hosted by the European Commission and the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, where the Commission presented the strategy and the Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, inaugurated the new Victims' Rights Platform. The platform brings together EU-level victims' rights actors, including FRA.<sup>13</sup> Through its involvement in the platform, FRA continues to support the Commission and national-level policymakers to implement the strategy. For example, on 11 February 2020, FRA presented the key findings from the 'Justice for victims of violent crime' project at a conference jointly organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Berlin and the German Institute for Human Rights.

FRA has continued to collect data in the area of migration. FRA commissioned Ipsos NV to implement the **EU Survey on Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants** in October 2020. The survey will cover different target groups in 15 Member States and build on the EU-MIDIS and Roma data collections, among other datasets. The fieldwork is expected to start in 2021, with the contractor exploring strategies to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project.

FRA continued to issue **quarterly bulletins on key migration-related fundamental rights concerns** throughout 2020. Covering Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden, these bulletins highlight fundamental rights concerns at the external land borders of the EU, the substandard reception conditions in Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Spain, and immigration detention of children. The updates issued in **May 2020** and **July 2020** described challenges resulting from measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately half of the stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 that consulted the bulletins said that they used them for policy-making purposes at EU, national and international levels.<sup>14</sup>

FRA's regular data collections will now feed the new EU mechanism for better monitoring and anticipation of migration movements, and enhance information-sharing to facilitate a coordinated response. In September 2020, the European Commission created the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint to which FRA will contribute fundamental rights-related data. Under Article 50 of the **proposed Asylum and Migration Management Regulation**, FRA's regular migration updates will be considered when the Commission assesses Member States' migratory pressures.

Since 2014, FRA has published an **annual update of the forced return monitoring systems** set up by Member States under Article 8 (6) of the Return Directive. The updates report on the indicators for an effective forced return monitoring system, including the organisation responsible for monitoring operations, the number of operations monitored, the phases of return operations monitored, the numbers of staff trained and working as

monitors, and whether or not the monitoring body issued public activity reports. National Preventive Mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture are the main monitoring body in 10 Member States.

In **June** and **December** 2020, FRA updated its overviews of criminal and other procedures initiated against civil society actors involved in **search and rescue** in the Mediterranean Sea. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the seizure of the *Aita Mari* and *Alan Kurdi* vessels in May 2020, there were no NGO rescue vessels carrying out operations at sea until *Sea-Watch 3* resumed operations in early June 2020. In 2020, FRA noted an increase in the use of administrative measures based on the laws of navigation and safety at sea. FRA has noted that as fatalities at sea in the Central Mediterranean continue, search and rescue capacity remains limited.

Following its work on **severe forms of labour exploitation**, FRA has begun desk research on how Member States are applying the protective provisions of the Employers' Sanctions Directive. The desk research covers issues such as claiming unpaid wages and the issuance of temporary residence permits for victims of particularly exploitative working conditions. The findings will support the European Commission in drafting the directive's implementation report later in 2021. A second small-scale desk research project is looking at the effectiveness of legal assistance for persons undergoing return procedures under Article 13 of the Return Directive. The findings will support FRA's interventions in the field of return and readmission, including Schengen evaluations.

In 2020, FRA also collected data on young people. **Data on younger age groups** (16–29 years) from the **EU-MIDIS II** (2016) are being analysed ahead of the development of the new Strategy for the Rights of the Child and the implementation of the Youth Strategy. By the beginning of 2021, FRA completed the analysis of children and young adults' specific experiences of discrimination, victimisation and harassment. In cooperation with the Joint Research Centre and Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography, a reanalysis of EU-MIDIS II data has been linked to contextual data to identify challenges in the effective integration and social inclusion of immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

FRA has created the first dedicated database on anti-Muslim hatred, containing data from 2012 onwards. The database is accessible on its website. At the end of 2019, the **anti-Muslim hatred database** was updated with new data covering the period 2018–2019, collected through desk research carried out by FRA's network, Franet. The database provides information on international, European and national case law and rulings, research reports and findings, statistics and surveys. It also offers up-to-date information on victim support organisations in the Member States. The update for 2019–2020 is being prepared in 2021.

FRA continued its engagement in the area of **gender-based violence**, including by cooperating with other relevant institutions. On 23 January 2020, FRA took part in the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) 10-year anniversary seminar. Measuring VAW was also the subject of a panel debate at the OECD conference in Paris on ending VAW (5 and 6 February 2020), where FRA presented data from the survey on VAW. FRA's work on VAW was referenced by the European Council in its 2020 report *Sexual harassment in the research and higher education sector: National policies and measures in EU member states and associated countries*. The European Parliament also referenced FRA's 2014 VAW survey in its report ***Closing the digital gender gap: Women's participation in the digital economy***.

FRA contributed to the **Commission’s Strategy for the effective implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** through consultation with its networks, including civil society, local authorities, judicial practitioners and national human rights bodies. *Ten years on: Unlocking the Charter’s full potential* takes a closer look at the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which has been legally binding for 10 years. At EU level, the Charter has gained visibility and sparked a new fundamental rights culture. At national level, while courts increasingly use the Charter, its use by governments and parliaments remains low. For instance, there is little indication of anyone regularly scrutinising national legislation that transposes EU law for compatibility with the Charter. Nonetheless, more than half of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 that consulted this report argued that it influenced national policies and legislation in the field of fundamental rights.<sup>15</sup>

In 2020, the FRA handbook *Applying the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in law and policymaking at national level* became available in Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Greek, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Slovak and Slovenian, meaning that it is now available in all of the official languages of the EU. The FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 showed that this publication was the most widely used in policy making at international, national, regional and local levels.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.2.2. Contributing to better law-making and implementation with independent advice

#### FRA’s objectives for 2018–2022 are to:

- strengthen its role as an independent core actor in informing EU law and policy-making;
- provide, on request from EU institutions, opinions on the compatibility of legislative proposals with fundamental rights;
- provide fundamental rights advice to EU Member States when they are implementing EU law, drawing on FRA expertise and evidence.

#### Key achievements of the year

In 2020, FRA provided significant contributions to better law-making and implementation, considered to be of high relevance for EU and national stakeholders. FRA was highly influential across all its areas of activity, particularly in providing legislative and policy advice on matters relating to the rights of the child; asylum, migration and borders; and non-discrimination. FRA strengthened its role as an independent core actor informing EU law, participating in and holding 205 hearings and presentations. FRA also provided direct support to EU institutions through the provision of fundamental rights expertise in response to 14 requests for opinions. FRA also provided fundamental rights expertise to Member States and EU agencies, such as Frontex, eu-LISA and EASO. Overall, FRA has met and exceeded the majority of its targets under this priority. In particular, FRA has exceeded its targets regarding stakeholder opinions on the relevance and impact of FRA activities. On average, 29 stakeholders found FRA evidence and opinions relevant, reliable, of high quality and useful (target: 3). In addition, 73% of stakeholders believed that FRA’s range of activities influenced the development of fundamental rights legislation and policies (target: 50%).



Stakeholders consulted in the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 considered FRA’s contribution to better law-making and implementation with independent advice to be relevant to the EU policy service.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, FRA’s range of activities has had an impact on EU-level and national legislation. In total, 75 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 agreed that FRA’s activities influenced EU legislation and policies in the field of fundamental rights<sup>18</sup> and contributed to the implementation of EU fundamental rights legislation and policies.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, 73 % of respondents believed that FRA’s activities influenced national legislation and policies<sup>20</sup> and actively contributed to their implementation.<sup>21</sup>

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### **FRA’s activities on contributing to better law-making and implementation are considered key to ensure fundamental rights compliance across the EU and monitor the impact of EU laws on fundamental rights**

Across 2020, all EU stakeholders consulted for the FRA user satisfaction survey considered FRA opinions useful and relevant to their work. FRA opinions were also considered to be of high quality and reliable and produced in a timely manner. Similarly, more than half of stakeholders responding to the survey considered FRA’s real-time advice to be reliable, relevant and useful to the work of their institution.<sup>22</sup>

Protecting the **rights of the child** remains one of FRA’s priorities and the agency provided influential input to a variety of stakeholders, including the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) and Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), Cabinet Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, the CoE and the German Presidency.



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### **FRA responded to 14 requests for opinion during 2020**

On request, FRA contributed to the development of the new EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child, the Child Guarantee<sup>23</sup> on tackling poverty, and the EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse.

FRA participated in a variety of activities related to the **Child Guarantee**, including the February 2020 conference on the first phase of the feasibility study for a future EU Child Guarantee to improve children’s equal access to services in five policy areas<sup>24</sup> by investing in children through a preventative approach. FRA also provided advice on the second phase of the feasibility study on the financial requirements of a Child Guarantee based on different implementation options and practices. The final reports included a proposal for FRA to support the monitoring of the implementation of the Child Guarantee.

In June 2020, FRA provided written input to the DG EMPL proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the Child Guarantee. In December 2020, it participated in an exchange on the Child Guarantee with the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL).

**FRA consistently provided the Commission with timely and high-quality evidence on the situation of children’s rights in the EU.** That input was based on FRA’s key findings, promising practices and opinions, with a strong focus on child poverty, child-friendly justice, children in migration, Roma children and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, 86 % recipients of the 2020 brochure *Child rights in the EU – Supporting you, supporting them* considered that it provided timely and relevant information.<sup>25</sup>

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and their rights was the subject of the FRA director’s speech at a high-level panel on child rights in emergencies at the European Forum on the Rights of the Child. His address focused on concerns about how measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19

have exacerbated pre-existing risks among vulnerable groups, especially Roma children. The FRA director also joined panels held by the German Presidency on the impact of school closures on children's risk of violence and abuse, and on combating domestic violence.

In December, **FRA participated in a dialogue on child poverty and intergenerational transmission of poverty with the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**. The objective was to provide input to the UN Special Rapporteur and the thematic report due to be presented at the UN General Assembly in October 2021.

In March 2020, together with the CoE Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, FRA published **a note summarising key safeguards in European law regarding the EU's external borders**. The note was issued after Greece and other Member States suspended access to asylum because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and reiterated the fundamental rights safeguards relating to border controls, use of force, access to asylum and the protection of vulnerable people at the EU's external borders.



In December 2020, FRA, together with the ECtHR, published the third edition of the *Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration*. This handbook examines relevant law in the field of asylum, borders and immigration stemming from both the EU and the CoE. It provides an accessible guide to the various European standards relevant to asylum, borders and immigration. Approximately half of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 that consulted this handbook said that it had a significant impact on the development and implementation of EU, national and international legislation and policies in the field.<sup>26</sup>

Together with the ECtHR, FRA held an inception meeting for an update to the *Handbook on European law relating to rights of the child* in November 2020. The updated handbook will examine relevant law in the field of children's rights, from both the EU and the CoE, and provide an accessible guide to the various European standards relevant to child protection and participation.

In May 2020, FRA engaged with a variety of stakeholders to share the findings of its report *Relocating unaccompanied children: Applying good practices to future schemes*. Webinars and presentations were planned for the European Parliament's Intergroup on Children's Rights, the Greek and Maltese authorities in charge of the relocation of unaccompanied children and members of FRA's FRP.

At the request of the Coordinator on Children's Rights of the European Parliament, in November 2020 FRA conducted online training for Members of Parliament on how to protect and promote the rights of the child in EU policies. The training combined information on legal standards and FRA findings on a variety of issues pertaining to the rights of the child. Overall, the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 shows that the report *Relocating unaccompanied children: Applying good practices to future schemes* had an impact on international policy making.<sup>27</sup>



**FRA trained 60 social liaison officers from the Spanish police on the EU framework on attention to victims of hate crime**





FRA is working on a draft report '**Encouraging reporting of hate crime in the EU**' (forthcoming, 2021). The report will map practices across the EU collected by FRA from the Working Group on hate crime recording, along with FRA data collection and reporting by the High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. It examines barriers faced by victims in the first stages of reporting an incident to national crime reporting systems and explores how

to enable victims to safely report an incident and obtain support and justice. The report serves as a basis to develop "key guiding principles on encouraging reporting of hate crime", which will be endorsed by the High Level Group. The results of the research and the key guiding principles will feed into FRA's prevention of hate crime capacity-building work in 2021 and beyond.



### FRA identified 20 good practices in the field of asylum, migration and borders

In the context of the **Working Group on hate crime recording**, FRA, together with the OSCE's ODIHR, led national workshops in Belgium (January 2020) and Ireland (February 2020). The workshops reviewed existing national frameworks, identified gaps and proposed steps to improve the framework for collecting and recording data on hate crime. FRA also delivered three webinars, organised by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), on hate crime reporting. In February 2020, FRA's director spoke on the rule of law at the European Police Congress in Berlin, while FRA also held a side event on hate crime and discriminatory profiling. In February 2020, the director gave a keynote speech on hate crime at an event in Sofia, organised by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

On 18 June 2020, FRA hosted a coordination meeting for **working groups** under the **EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance**. This event was jointly hosted with the European Commission, CEPOL and the ODIHR.



In September 2020, FRA published its **annual update on data collection on antisemitism**, as well as the use of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s working definition of antisemitism. FRA's 2020 report contains information on national strategies and other relevant measures adopted or being developed to combat antisemitism. For the first time, the report includes data for North Macedonia and Serbia, in addition to the EU-27 and the United Kingdom. The report was published to coincide with the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union conference 'Working together to fight antisemitism in Europe – Structures and strategies for a holistic approach'.



On 27 January 2020, FRA participated in the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. The director delivered a keynote speech on 'Antisemitism today' in Kraków to commemorate the event. FRA also participated in the official ceremony in the Birkenau camp in Poland. In March 2020, FRA began compiling the latest statistics for its annual update on antisemitic incidents in the EU and approached its National Liaison Officers (NLOs) to share their latest data and information on national strategies and action plans to prevent and combat antisemitism, as well as the use of the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism. The FRA 2020 publication *Antisemitism: Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the EU 2009–2019* was considered by 30 % of respondents to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 to have had

an impact on the development and implementation of national policies and legislation in the field.<sup>28</sup>

On 20 July, FRA submitted a comprehensive summary of findings relevant to racism and xenophobia in response to the Commission's request to provide **evidence** for the upcoming Commission **Action Plan on Racism and Xenophobia 2020–2025**. These findings were drawn up from the results of large-scale surveys – EU-MIDIS II, the second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, the Roma and Travellers Survey, the second EU LGBTI survey and the Fundamental Rights Survey. The summary collated key findings on experiences of hate-motivated violence, harassment and discrimination (including discriminatory profiling during police stops) of persons belonging to different minority groups on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin (including skin colour, religion or beliefs). It also showed the general population's level of intolerance towards certain ethnic or immigrant groups and provided evidence on poverty, social exclusion, political participation and representation of certain minority groups.

On 20 November 2020, FRA submitted its findings to DG JUST to contribute to the 2021 key **initiative on extending the list of EU crimes in Article 83 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) to include all forms of hate crime and hate speech**. The FRA submission will help to identify the scale and nature of the problem for all grounds listed in the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. The initiative was announced in the 2021 Commission work programme and is planned for publication at the end of 2021.

On 11 December 2019, in response to a request by the European Commission, FRA launched an online database and a brief **report on criminal detention conditions** in EU Member States. In February 2020, during a meeting of the Council Coordinating Committee in the area of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, Member States emphasised the need to keep the database up-to-date. In the 2020 Council conclusions on 'The European Arrest Warrant and extradition procedures – Current challenges and the way forward', adopted in December 2020, FRA was invited to regularly update this database to ensure that the information provided meets the requirements set out by the CJEU and, in the medium term, to assess whether or not the database meets the needs encountered in practice. In December 2020, at a meeting of the Working Party on Cooperation in Criminal Matters, FRA presented next steps in updating and extending the Criminal Detention Database. FRA has begun consultations with Member States on the scope of the extension of the database. In addition, the Council invited FRA to consider the possibility of continuing the study on access to a lawyer in criminal and European Arrest Warrant (EAW) proceedings, extending it to all Member States and putting a special emphasis on the experiences of lawyers acting in surrender proceedings. FRA also contributed to different policy-relevant events, including the virtual conference on challenges in the implementation of the EAW, which was held on 24 September 2020 in the context of the German Presidency, and the European Parliament's webinar on the EAW on 30 September 2020, organised by the Renew Europe group.



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**Upon popular request FRA has extended its work supporting the Council on the criminal detention conditions database**

At the Commission's request, FRA will undertake **comparative research on the application of procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings** and the relevant fundamental rights. The findings will feed into the Commission's implementation report, due for publication in June 2022.



FRA also continued to respond to requests from EU institutions for **support on specific legislative and policy files in the field of internal security**. In response to a request from the European Commission, FRA launched a research project to inform the Commission’s 2021 evaluation of the added value of Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism, including the directive’s impact on fundamental rights. It also provided input to the review of several other legislative instruments in the field of security, such as Council Directive 2004/82/EC of 29 April 2004 on the obligation of carriers to communicate passenger data. FRA participated in various events on security and fundamental rights, such as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation’s (Europol) series of meetings on setting up an ‘EU innovation hub’ for internal security. FRA provided written input to the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) on a common reporting framework on violent acts motivated by right-wing extremism and participated in several related meetings.

In April 2020, FRA took part in an online workshop on **data governance and privacy challenges** in the fight against COVID-19, drawing on its recently published bulletin on the fundamental rights implications of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The event was organised by the Global Privacy Assembly and the OECD. As in past years, FRA sponsored the ‘Computers, privacy and data protection’ conference (22–24 January 2020), which brought together stakeholders from policy, business, civil society and academia. FRA spoke on facial recognition technology, and the 2018 edition of the *Handbook on the European data protection law* was widely distributed. In fact, 80 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 considered this handbook to have provided a clearer understanding of fundamental rights trends in the field.<sup>29</sup> In addition, according to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020, this handbook was one of the top 2020 FRA publications having the most impact on the development and implementation of EU, national and international policies.<sup>30</sup>



FRA provided formal and informal input to the Commission based on its **AI and fundamental rights** results, informing the Commission’s work on the upcoming proposal for a legal act on AI. On 12 June 2020, FRA contributed to the public consultation that the Commission launched on its *White Paper on artificial intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust*, basing its input on existing data and findings. FRA also contributed to the work of the Council in this area, being referenced in the Council conclusions on ‘Access to justice – Seizing the opportunities of digitalisation’. FRA’s findings on AI also contributed to the Council conclusions on the ‘Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of AI and digital change’, with the Council encouraging FRA to continue its research on the protection of fundamental rights and common values in the age of digitalisation. Similarly, FRA’s findings informed the work of the CoE’s CAHAI to develop a legal framework for the development, design and application of AI, based on the CoE’s standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.



In 2020, FRA renewed its service-level agreement to assist **Frontex** in meeting its duty to deploy at least 40 **fundamental rights monitors** to its operations (Article 110 of the 2019 European Border and Coast Guard Regulation). FRA will help

to develop a comprehensive handbook for future fundamental rights monitors and provide guidance on their training. In early 2020, FRA and Frontex

developed the terms of reference for future monitors, after thoroughly assessing the qualifications required.



FRA intensified its engagement with Frontex as it faced allegations of fundamental rights violations at the EU's external sea borders. The FRA director intervened in two Frontex Management Board meetings, underlining the need to swiftly recruit fundamental rights monitors and take steps to mainstream fundamental rights in its activities. Meanwhile, the **Consultative Forum**, which FRA co-chairs, presented its annual report to the Council Working Party on Frontiers and the LIBE Committee. The forum presented recommendations to Frontex on how to better incorporate fundamental rights in its training of border guards. FRA also advised Frontex on how to reflect fundamental rights issues in operational documents.

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**FRA provided fundamental rights expertise to a variety of other EU agencies, such as Frontex, eu-LISA and EASO**

FRA finalised a cooperation plan for 2020–2022 with eu-LISA. FRA is also part of the EASO Consultative Forum and commented on draft training courses and guidance.



The European Commission invited FRA to provide fundamental rights input in the context of the **European Migration Network (EMN)**. For example, FRA provided fundamental rights expertise at a meeting of EMN's Return Expert Group in June 2020, looking at return practitioners' perspectives and COVID-19-related restrictions.

FRA continued to deliver fundamental rights expertise to **Schengen evaluations** and to support the training of evaluators. In September 2020, it presented an overview of fundamental rights issues in Member States whose implementation of the Schengen acquis will be evaluated in 2021 at the Schengen Committee. After the first five-year cycle of Schengen evaluations under Council Regulation (EU) No. 1053/2013, FRA's 2020 analysis shows that Schengen evaluations in the field of return and readmission frequently look at fundamental rights issues. For example, the review of country recommendations for 19 Member States shows over 80 findings in relation to immigration detention and some 58 findings on the return procedure, including procedural guarantees and legal and linguistic assistance. In the field of border management (in which FRA supports on-site missions), fundamental rights recommendations are fewer and they are often of a general nature.



In collaboration with the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, FRA developed and published practical guidance to support **fundamental rights compliance in the operational work of border guards**. The **guidance** contains 10 'dos and don'ts', suggesting concrete actions that border guards and other competent authorities should take at the operational level to uphold fundamental rights in their daily work. It aims to support them in implementing the fundamental rights safeguards of the Schengen Borders Code (Regulation (EU) 2016/399)<sup>31</sup> and related EU law instruments when carrying out controls at external land borders. FRA discussed how the guidance can be used in practice and incorporated into training for border management authorities. In total, 60 % of respondents to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 argued this publication helped them better understand fundamental rights trends in the area.<sup>32</sup>



**A pocket version of FRA's guidance on fundamental rights compliance in border guards' work was published in eight EU languages**

FRA continued to share its fundamental rights expertise in debates on measures to combat migrant smuggling. On 3 March 2020, at the invitation

of DG HOME, FRA participated in the third meeting with NGOs on the **non-criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to migrants**, with a particular focus on rescue at sea.

In December 2020, FRA began a new project on the **fundamental rights situation of third-country nationals who are long-term residents in the EU**. The fieldwork research will take place virtually in 2021 in nine Member States: Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. It focuses on the rights of long-term residents enshrined in EU law, in particular their right to equal treatment in different areas of life (employment, education, social security and assistance, and tax benefits) and their right to intra-EU mobility. The results of the project will feed into the impact assessment and future revision of the Long-term Residence Directive.



On 6 October 2020, FRA published its report **Business and human rights – Access to remedy** at the ‘Global supply chains, global responsibility’ conference. This comparative report looks at the reality for victims seeking redress for business-related human rights abuses and highlights that obstacles to achieving justice are often multi-layered. FRA interviewed business and human rights experts and practitioners in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom in 2019 and 2020. The findings were presented to Members of the European Parliament on 27 October 2020, during the meeting of the Parliament’s Committee on Legal Affairs on corporate due diligence and corporate accountability. FRA’s contribution was also reflected in the preparation of the Council conclusions on human rights and decent work in global supply chains, adopted by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council in December 2020. Indeed, 90 % of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 who consulted this report considered it to be of high quality and useful for their work.<sup>33</sup>

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### FRA became a member of the European Commission’s expert committee – the Sustainable Finance Platform



With the adoption of the EU Taxonomy Regulation in June 2020, **FRA became a member of the EU Platform on Sustainable Finance**, formally an Expert Committee of the European Commission. The platform provides advice to the Commission on the implementation of the regulation, which seeks to channel funds to more sustainable causes. To date, the regulation has focused on environmental aspects, with minimum safeguards on human rights, but is expected to be enlarged with a ‘social component’, including human rights. FRA also contributed to a project mandated by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group on non-financial reporting in the process of updating a directive (shortly to be the Sustainability Reporting Directive).

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### The majority of FRA’s requests for opinion were in the area of equality and non-discrimination

FRA twice hosted an **online coordination meeting of international organisations working on business and human rights**, a process initiated in 2017. The meetings bring together the OHCHR, ILO, OECD and CoE.

FRA participated in the **OECD’s Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct** on 17 June 2020, presenting on access to remedy needs in the EU as part of a panel on the gaps and opportunities in the field of remedies and dispute resolution mechanisms. On 2 September 2020, FRA participated in the online event ‘Responsible business conduct for children: Strengthening EU policy measures to address business impact on children’s rights in business operations and supply chains’. Organised by the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, the event highlighted the multitude of impacts on children

of business operations and supply chains, and positioned children's rights as an important consideration in debates on business and human rights at the EU level. FRA contributed to a panel discussion on key considerations for EU policy measures, drawing on evidence from its ongoing research on business and human rights. On 11 September 2020, FRA chaired a webinar on access to remedies in the context of business and human rights, as part of the annual conference of the European Law Institute.

In the area of **non-discrimination**, on 27 May 2020 FRA submitted a second input to the EU strategy on LGBTIQ equality (released in November 2020), based on findings from the Fundamental Rights Survey – specifically, questions on people's attitudes towards and opinions of LGBTIQ people.

Article 17 of the **Racial Equality Directive** and Article 19 of the **Employment Equality Directive** oblige the European Commission to report on the application of these directives to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament every five years. Article 17 (2) of the Racial Equality Directive stipulates that the Commission's report will consider the views of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (now FRA). The report has been published on 19 March 2021, with FRA contributing a comprehensive compilation of evidence from its large-scale surveys on experiences of relevant discrimination. In January and February 2020, FRANET collected further information across the EU-27 on experiences of discrimination on the grounds of age and of disability in employment. In November 2020, following an additional request to provide more recent data on equality bodies in the EU, FRA, in cooperation with Equinet, implemented a small-scale online survey. The initial results were provided to the Commission in December 2020, to feed into future legislation on strengthening equality bodies in the EU.

equality2020

The FRA director spoke at the 'Equality 2020: 20 years of equality bodies' conference on 29 June 2020, marking 20 years

of the Racial Equality Directive. He highlighted the need to complete the legislative framework for horizontal equality protection and stressed the critical role of equality bodies and data collection. The director recommitted FRA to supporting policymakers, equality bodies and civil society in their efforts to strengthen equality, diversity and dignity.

On 29 September 2020, FRA facilitated the virtual meeting of the **Subgroup on Equality Data**. The meeting served as an opportunity to provide information on developments at EU and national levels on equality data, exchange information on data collection related to COVID-19 and reflect on future activities of the subgroup. The Task Force on Equality (Secretariat-General) presented the EU Anti-racism Action Plan and explained how it addresses both individual and structural racism and focuses on the effective implementation of existing legislation. The meeting gave attendees the opportunity to discuss the action plan's implications for the future work of the subgroup.



On 27 November 2020, during the 13th virtual meeting of the High Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity, the mandate of the subgroup was renewed and prolonged until 2025. This decision was based on Member States' interest in continuing the work on equality data and the tasks assigned by the Anti-racism Action Plan and the strategy on LGBTIQ equality. The subgroup will continue to be facilitated by FRA and report to the High Level Group.





**63% of respondents to the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 argued that country information sheets are the type of evidence they expect look for from FRA**

In July 2020, FRA provided input to DG HOME on the evaluation of the 2016 Action Plan on Integration. FRA's input also served to inform the preparation of the European Commission's new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, which was published in November 2020. The 2020 action plan makes multiple references to FRA's work (surveys, reports, migration bulletins and the *Together in the EU* report) and acknowledges FRA's key role in monitoring the effectiveness of the EU's integration and inclusion policies. It now covers EU citizens with an immigrant background, recognising that effective monitoring requires disaggregating data by ethnic or racial origin (as in FRA's surveys). In December 2020, FRA provided input to the Commission's Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background for the 2021–2027 programming period.

In November 2020, FRA's director participated in an informal exchange of views with EU Ministers of the Interior and members of the European Commission on integration and social cohesion. The focus of this session was on strengthening social cohesion and fostering shared values across Europe, based on fundamental rights.

In 2019, FRA research on refugee integration that explored the **challenges of young people who fled armed conflict or persecution** and arrived in the EU in 2015 or 2016 revealed the need to pay attention to unaccompanied children reaching 18 years of age. When adulthood is reached, many support measures stop, often abruptly. On 20 October 2020, FRA organised a webinar to share experiences and promising practices among practitioners in Member States, and **published country information** from its 2019 research.



On 27 August 2020, FRA joined the hearing of the European Economic and Social Committee on **diversity management and the future of EU diversity policies for migrants and ethnic minorities**. FRA presented relevant findings online, contributing to the discussion about the future of EU diversity policies. FRA's intervention drew on results from EU-MIDIS II, the Fundamental Rights Survey and other research projects, in particular the reports *Integration of young refugees in the EU* and *Together in the EU*.

In February 2020, FRA relaunched the EU Roma Working Party to support the preparation of the post-2020 EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, and a proposal for a Council Recommendation. FRA was invited to present on the situation of Roma and Travellers in the EU at the Working Party on Social Questions of the Council of the European Union to discuss such a Council Recommendation.

In July 2020, FRA finalised the *Monitoring framework for the new EU Roma strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation: objectives and indicators*. It was developed through consultations with EU Member States in the context of the relaunched Roma Working Party, with input from civil society representatives and the Commission's inter-service consultations. The monitoring framework has contributed to both the Staff Working Document and the Communication on Roma published in October 2020<sup>34</sup> and provides baseline data for the selected headline indicators.

On **12 October 2020**, the FRA director was invited to speak at a panel on monitoring and reporting to enable policy learning at the German Presidency High-level Conference to launch the **new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation**.

On 16 November 2020, the director joined an exchange of views of the European Parliament's EMPL on Roma and Travellers, people with disabilities and older people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FRA also contributed to a meeting of the Working Party on Social Questions of the Council of the European Union, discussing a draft of the Council conclusions suggested by the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union (German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth) on the rights and **well-being of older persons in the age of digitalisation**. FRA referred to the rights-based approach to ageing, data from the Fundamental Rights Survey and the bulletins on the fundamental rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2020, the **Council conclusions** were adopted, with references to FRA's work. It was asked to "explore the impact of digitalisation on the fundamental rights, active participation and well-being of older persons and provide input and expertise to Member States in the framework of the Subgroup on Equality Data on collecting disaggregated data shedding light on inequalities related to age, including data distribution according to socioeconomic background".



FRA participated in a round table organised by the AGE Platform and the European Disability Forum, with the support of the European branch of the OHCHR, to discuss the situation of the fundamental rights of older persons and persons with disabilities and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.



**FRA provided vital insights into the fundamental rights implications of COVID-19 measures across the EU for different communities**

On request, FRA participated in the consultation of DG EMPL with agencies in the area of social affairs, ahead of the drafting of the Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. FRA submitted its input in written form, which included findings from its large-scale surveys and other research, highlighting their relevance for monitoring and promoting the implementation of social rights from a rights-based perspective.



### 1.2.3. Supporting rights-compliant policy responses: providing real-time assistance and expertise

#### FRA's objectives for 2018–2022 are to:

- strengthen the delivery of real-time advice, assistance and expertise to EU institutions and Member States;
- inform EU and national authorities on fundamental rights risks in priority areas;
- support and improve responses to fundamental rights challenges.

#### Key achievements of the year

In 2020, FRA responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by issuing six bulletins on its fundamental rights implications. Through these publications, FRA responded in a timely manner to this real-time fundamental rights emergency. Emerging findings from an independent evaluation of the bulletins note that they provide a comprehensive description and overview of the fundamental rights implications of the whole range of national measures adopted across the EU to safeguard public health from the spread of COVID-19. The bulletins are effective in terms of their comprehensive coverage of areas of fundamental rights, coverage of all areas of daily life impacted and reporting across all 27 EU Member States. FRA also responded to EU policy in the areas of child protection and to fundamental rights challenges in Greece.

Stakeholders consulted in the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 considered FRA's contributions to strengthening Member States' capacity to address fundamental rights risks and challenges when implementing EU laws and policies very relevant to the EU policy context. 90 % of stakeholders consulted in the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 considered evidence and opinions provided by FRA to be relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality.<sup>35</sup>

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, FRA published **six thematic bulletins on the fundamental rights implications of the pandemic and measures taken by EU Member States to protect public health**. FRA responded quickly to this real-time fundamental rights emergency by issuing the first bulletin in April 2020 and publishing the subsequent bulletins on a regular basis in May, June, July, September and November 2020. This regularity of reporting enabled FRA to monitor and report on the fundamental rights implications in the rapidly evolving pandemic context. Just under half of stakeholders (46 %) consulted in the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 had consulted the FRA COVID-19 bulletins.



FRA published its first **bulletin on the fundamental rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU** on 8 April 2020. **Bulletin #1** highlighted the impact on daily life of the measures taken to address the pandemic, for example at work or in education. It also described their impact on particular groups, alongside examples of enhanced racist and xenophobic incidents in several Member States, and issues linked to disinformation or data protection and privacy concerns, as defined by national data protection authorities. The number of user satisfaction survey respondents strongly agreeing that the first bulletin was reliable and of high quality was the most recorded for any 2020 publication produced by FRA.<sup>36</sup>

**Bulletin #2** (28 May 2020) looked at declarations of states of emergency, or equivalent, and considered their impacts on fundamental rights in important areas of daily life. It focused on the processing of users' data to help contain COVID-19, particularly through contact-tracing apps.

**Bulletin #3** (30 June 2020) looked at Member States' measures implemented between 1 May and 31 May 2020, focusing particularly on their impact on older people. It noted that EU countries need better data to understand how the pandemic affects older people to help them make evidence-based decisions for the future. As our societies reopen, governments should take care of the needs of older people, for whom the transition to the 'new normal' will likely be slower and more difficult. The bulletin also looked at other fundamental rights implications of government measures taken to combat the spread of COVID-19.

**Bulletin #4** (29 July 2020) outlined some of the measures that EU Member States put in place to protect public health during and after the first wave of the pandemic. It focused on four inter-related issues.

- states of emergency or equivalent measures;
- measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on social life, education, work, the justice system, and travel to and within the EU;
- impact of the virus and efforts to limit its spread in particular groups in society, namely people in institutional settings, older persons, persons with disabilities, Roma and Travellers, detainees and victims of domestic violence;
- specific areas where the pandemic has prompted significant fundamental rights issues, including racism and xenophobia, asylum and migration, disinformation, and data protection and privacy.

**Bulletin #5** (29 September 2020) documented the specific implications of the pandemic on Roma and Travellers in 15 EU Member States from 1 March to 30 June 2020. This is Europe's biggest minority group and is also the most vulnerable to poverty, exclusion, discrimination and violation of fundamental rights. FRA populated a set of key socioeconomic indicators with data from its surveys to provide the overall context of the challenges encountered. This bulletin built on evidence collected by Franet in the 15 EU Member States where the overwhelming majority of Roma and Travellers live (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden). These inputs were provided to the European Commission in July 2020.

**Bulletin #6** (30 November 2020) had a special focus on social rights. Covering the period from 1 September to 31 October 2020, it looked at measures taken by governments and public authorities that affected specific freedoms, such as freedom of assembly and freedom of movement. More specifically, it considered how responses to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected social rights with respect to education, work, healthcare and housing. It also scrutinised the negative impact on the social rights of people in vulnerable situations, including the measures implemented to address this impact.

FRA commissioned an external contractor, ICF, to conduct an evaluation of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Early emerging findings note that the six bulletins achieved their objectives effectively by providing a **comprehensive description and overview of the fundamental rights implications** of the whole range of national measures adopted across the EU to safeguard public health from the spread of COVID-19. The bulletins were effective in their comprehensive coverage of areas of fundamental rights, coverage of all areas of daily life impacted and reporting across all 27 EU Member States. Preliminary findings also note that the choice to provide a descriptive identification of fundamental rights implications in the pandemic context was appropriate and was driven by the aims of the bulletins to provide timely and regular information.

The bulletins also provided added value in focusing on the particular thematic aspects of the fundamental rights implications. They highlighted the impacts of the pandemic on particular groups (i.e. people in institutional settings, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and Roma and Travellers) where these were not at the forefront of policy considerations. It was also important and added value to the policy formulation processes that each bulletin had a special focus on different fundamental rights issues, such as those associated with contact-tracing apps, and/or vulnerable populations at risk of having their rights violated because of COVID-19-related measures, including the social rights of older people. This helped FRA to highlight the fundamental rights implications in areas where such information was lacking.

The ultimate aim of the bulletins was to support policymakers across the EU in ensuring that measures in response to the pandemic adhere to the fundamental rights standards and needs of diverse populations. Early feedback indicates that **the bulletins were successful in reaching policymakers**, who appreciated the information in and insights from the bulletins. Furthermore, FRA staff have used the findings from the bulletins in a range of forums and interactions with stakeholders at EU and national levels, where their inputs and reflections on the pandemic were requested and welcomed.

The impact of the bulletins was widespread. Emerging findings show that the first bulletin was particularly notable for its provision of information when little was known about the fundamental rights implications of the pandemic in its early stages. In total, the bulletins have been referenced in 12 academic journal articles in 2020. The first five bulletins were referenced in a key study in the European Parliament ***Motion for a resolution on the impact of COVID-19 measures on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights***, published in November 2020.

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### 12 academic journal article references to FRA's coronavirus bulletins in 2020



**FRA's six bulletins on fundamental rights implications of the coronavirus pandemic were downloaded over 12,000 times within 28 days of publication.**

The next stage of the study will collect stakeholder feedback on the impact of the bulletins at national, European and international levels.

**Child protection** remained one of FRA's priorities during 2020 and it published a review of the main child protection challenges in relation to migration in 2019 based on its quarterly bulletins. In 2019, over 780 children were stranded at sea on board rescue vessels, often for more than a week, in bad weather and in poor health. Over 4 % of people who died or went missing at sea in 2019 were children.<sup>37</sup> Poor reception standards for asylum-seeking children were reported in Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary Italy, Malta and Spain.

Several Member States continue to detain children for immigration purposes, not just in exceptional cases, as envisaged by EU law.

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### FRA has contributed to EU policy in the area of child protection through guidance and reviews published in 2020.

Following a request by Greece, the European Commission initiated a process for the **relocation of unaccompanied children to other EU Member States**. FRA analysed lessons from past relocation experiences and developed practical suggestions to adjust relocation procedures to better reflect the protection needs of unaccompanied children. The resulting **guidance** informed the development of standard operating procedures for relocation from Greece. FRA presented its guidance in different settings and discussed the guidance bilaterally with Germany, Greece and Malta. An **infographic** was produced, summarising the main considerations.

In response to calls from Member States, FRA will update its 2015 **comparative research on the guardianship of unaccompanied children** and work with the European Guardianship Network to produce a training manual for guardians. These outputs are expected in mid-2021.

FRA continued its capacity-building activities in respect of children deprived of parental care. Two training modules were held as part of CEPOL online courses on ensuring child-friendly proceedings for child victims of trafficking and on trafficking of children who are EU national in EU Member States.

In March 2020, Greece experienced new challenges when Turkey encouraged and aided asylum applicants to reach the **Greek land border** to request asylum. Greece reacted by closing the border and suspending access to asylum. To better understand the situation and be able to suggest legally sound and feasible rights-based solutions, the FRA director visited Greece in March 2020 and discussed the matter with the European Commission and relevant EU agencies. On 2 April 2020, the director intervened in the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament, where he underlined the need to respect EU law safeguards in the field of border management and access to asylum and welcomed the steps taken by Greece in this direction. He also underlined the urgency of relocating unaccompanied children from Greece as a measure of solidarity, noting that this should not be delayed as a result of public health concerns around the COVID-19 outbreak.

After the **Mória Refugee Camp fire**, the FRA director published a **video message**, noting the progress made in setting up a new camp and highlighting urgent measures that were still needed to protect people's basic rights.

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**FRA responded to a number of fundamental rights challenges in Greece including the closure of the land border and suspension of access to asylum and the Moria Refugee Camp fire.**

The European Commission requested that FRA support the task force on creating a new facility in Lesbos by September 2021, which respects EU law standards. A Memorandum of Understanding co-signed by the Greek government, the European Commission and relevant EU agencies, including FRA, sets out the cooperation framework for the establishment of the new centre. The plan envisages FRA's support in a significant number of areas, ranging from child protection to advice on the implementation of safeguards in asylum and return procedures.

As international organisations and civil society actors continue to report on fundamental rights challenges at Croatia's external EU border, FRA engaged in a dialogue with the Croatian authorities. In February 2020, FRA provided **training for Croatian border guards**. The training focused on the Schengen Borders Code, fundamental rights and access to international protection. Other initiatives focused on practitioners in several Member States. For example, in March 2020, FRA gave a lecture as part of an online seminar by CEPOL on the identification of vulnerable people and victim protection during initial registration at external borders.



On 9 July 2020, the **CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-Equinet collaborative platform** on social and economic rights discussed the societal challenges triggered by the COVID-19 outbreak, their impact on equality and human rights, and the role of NHRIs and national equality bodies in recovery efforts. FRA presented the evidence collected for its bulletins.

FRA has begun to prepare for a 2021 project related to a **rights-compliant use of EU funds** in the context of the new EU budget for the period 2021–2027. The project will focus on the conditions linked to the EU Charter of Fundamental

Rights and the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, with which EU Member States must comply to make use of EU funds. The project will seek to support national bodies with a fundamental rights remit that it is envisaged will play a role in monitoring the implementation of the national operational programmes funded by the EU.

The EU CRPD Framework met (virtually) with Commissioner Helena Dalli in July 2020. The FRA director contributed to the discussion on **the future European Disability Strategy** and ways to reinforce the EU CRPD Framework. The framework has called for a robust and ambitious disability strategy to ensure that the EU achieves full implementation of the CRPD. The Commission has adopted the strategy in March 2021.

On 28 October 2020, FRA's scientific adviser discussed the agency's findings and opinions relevant to the EU's new disability strategy at a hearing of the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. From October to November 2020, the European Commission organised hearings on the new strategy, during which FRA presented selected opinions.

Organised by the European Programme for Integration and Migration, a group of communicators from the FRA-led **Human Rights Communicators Network** shared know-how and expertise in a series of online labs on 'Migration narratives in a changed world'. The discussions focused on matching narrative tactics to the communication objectives, identifying clearly the target audience and inserting the messages into wider socioeconomic equality narratives.

On 15 July 2020, FRA and eight other EU agencies (CEPOL, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), EIGE, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), eu-LISA, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), Europol and Frontex) published a **joint paper on the response of EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies to the pandemic**.

#### 1.2.4. Effectively promoting rights, values and freedoms

### FRA's objectives for 2018–2022 are to:

- raise systematic awareness of the need to respect, protect, promote and fulfil fundamental rights in the EU;
- create a safe and inclusive space for dialogue with key actors to respond to pressing human rights challenges and shape critical agendas;
- ensure smart communications to maximise the effect of FRA outputs.

### Key achievements of the year

In 2020, FRA contributed to raising awareness on fundamental rights in the EU and exceeded the targets set under this priority for that year. During the reporting period, FRA produced 163,079 materials and tools related to awareness-raising activities (target: 2,150). In total, 88% of stakeholders considered FRA's activities to have positively influenced the work of their organisations and their capacity to promote fundamental rights (target: 50%). In addition, FRA was mentioned 4,708 times in the media (target: 3,501). FRA continued raising awareness of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, published the Fundamental rights report 2020 highlighting the main trends and developments in fundamental rights, provided training on fundamental rights and contributed to key discussions on how to communicate rights more effectively. In 2020, FRA also quickly adapted to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and delivered several of its awareness-raising activities, training sessions and events online. FRA's media outreach and its presence on social media increased considerably.

The stakeholders consulted in 2020 as part of the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 considered FRA's role in effectively promoting rights, values and freedoms very relevant to the current EU policy context and existing fundamental rights challenges.<sup>38</sup> In fact, FRA's activities under this strategic priority were considered particularly relevant in a time of shrinking democratic space in some Member States, where there is a growing need to protect the role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders.<sup>39</sup> In 2020, FRA produced 163,079 materials and tools related to awareness-raising activities. In total, 87 % of the stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 stated that they had used FRA outputs for awareness-raising purposes. The top five FRA 2020 publications used for awareness-raising purposes were the *Handbook on European data protection law*, the COVID-19 pandemic bulletins, the report *Applying the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in law and policymaking at national level*, the *Handbook on European non-discrimination law* and the focus report *Ten years on: Unlocking the Charter's full potential*. Moreover, 93 % of the stakeholders also considered FRA's awareness-raising activities to have contributed to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights in the EU<sup>40</sup> and 88 % thought that the agency's activities had positively influenced the work of their organisations and their capacity to promote fundamental rights.<sup>41</sup>

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**FRA's activities have positively influenced stakeholders' capacity to promote fundamental rights**

FRA's *Fundamental rights report 2020* summarises and analyses major human rights developments and challenges in the EU in 2019 and contains proposals for key areas of action: the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and its use by Member States; equality and non-discrimination; racism and related intolerance; Roma inclusion; asylum, migration and borders; information society, privacy and data protection; children's rights; access to justice; and implementing the CRPD.

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**8,455 downloads of the *Fundamental rights report* and FRA opinions 2020**

Available in all of the official EU languages, the report presents **FRA's opinions** on key developments and a synopsis of the underpinning evidence, providing a compact overview of the main fundamental rights challenges confronting the EU and its Member States. The report was referenced by the European Parliament in its *Draft report on the implementation of Article 43 of Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection*. The *Fundamental rights report 2020* was the most popular FRA output among the stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey, with 67 % stating that they used it in 2020.



The European Parliament asked FRA to prepare a **report on fundamental rights compliance** at the EU's external land borders, including information on the correct application of the fundamental rights safeguards in the European asylum acquis and the provisions of the Schengen Borders Code. In November 2020, FRA submitted its analysis to the European Parliament, concluding that a combination of actions will be necessary to respect and protect fundamental rights in border management. These include enhancing the potential of the existing mechanisms (Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism); supporting border guards in their daily work by providing practical guidance, tools and training; increasing the transparency of the effectiveness of investigations of push-back and ill-treatment allegations at borders; and establishing independent and effective fundamental rights monitoring mechanisms at borders.



The changing media landscape means that news frequently breaks online. To facilitate training on the coverage of migration news, FRA's *Trainer's*





More than 345 journalists across the EU and beyond have registered and used the e-media toolkit on migration 2020

*manual* was published, to be used together with the **e-Media Toolkit on Migration**. FRA's primary goal is to ensure that communications on migration and the issues at stake (border management and security, irregular migration and migrant smuggling, unaccompanied children and a push for effective returns) are based on facts, while giving the people concerned a voice. Eighty-two journalists attended two face-to-face training sessions, including one at the Reuters newsroom in London.



Total YouTube views of FRA videos  
4,905

In response to the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, FRA increased the number of **online events, video statements and video messages delivered by its director**. FRA's videos covered a wide range of topics, including equality for LGBTI people, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Roma children, the importance of partnerships and support to protect the fundamental rights of migrants, the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights and the link between regional and global human rights mechanisms. Stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 considered FRA's online events and networking opportunities to be of high quality,<sup>42</sup> timely<sup>43</sup> and relevant to their needs.<sup>44</sup>

Building on an existing tool developed by the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, FRA has developed an **e-learning tool on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** for judges, which provides step-by-step guidance on the application of the Charter. It shows the relevant constellations of the applicability of the Charter and allows users to assess if the Charter applies in a specific case. It proposes ways in which users can formulate statements regarding the applicability of the Charter and includes case studies that may be of interest to other legal practitioners and law students. FRA continued to offer webinars on the Charter, such as online training sessions provided to the German Ministry of Justice in November 2020 and the 2020 NHRI Academy (see 'Supporting national human rights bodies').

In the wake of the 10th anniversary of the Charter, and ahead of the 20th **anniversary of the adoption of the Charter in December 2020**, FRA continued its **awareness-raising activities**. It presented its work on the Charter to the Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens' Rights and Free Movement of Persons, which constituted a first Charter exchange, as called for in the 2019 Council conclusions on the Charter. Member States also presented developments at national level and the exchange contributed to the European Commission's new Charter Strategy. Together with Equinet, FRA organised a successful two-day training session on the Charter in February 2020 for equality bodies from around Europe. In December 2019, FRA organised the annual fundamental rights dialogue with the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs, which focused on 'Putting the Fundamental Rights Charter into practice: The local and regional perspective'. The discussions were based on FRA's background paper and highlighted the relevance and usefulness of the EU Charter for local and regional authorities, as well as some examples of how human rights cities protect and implement human rights locally. Several stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 said that FRA's focus report *Ten years on: Unlocking the Charter's full potential* improved their understanding of fundamental rights trends<sup>45</sup> and had a positive impact on the development of national policies and legislation.<sup>46</sup>



Since December 2019, FRA has undergone regular **consultations with chief communications officers** from eight international (inter-governmental) organisations mandated to protect and

promote human rights in Europe: OHCHR, CoE, Commissioner for Human Rights of the CoE, OSCE, ODIHR, Equinet, ENNHRI and DG JUST. The objective of these consultations is to exchange experiences and practices on strategic communication and strengthen communication and cooperation on human rights topics. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings have focused on how each institution has adapted its communication strategies, to identify possible common avenues.

FRA's director and staff have continually stressed the need to **communicate rights more effectively**. FRA contributed, for example, to a webinar organised by the European Foundation Centre, which hosts the Communications Professionals in Philanthropy Network, and delivered a 'hands-on' web training session on the *10 keys to effectively communicating human rights* to network members. FRA also participated in an online workshop on challenges in communicating human rights more effectively, organised by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, which brought together key communicators and experts from eight countries.

FRA staff presented and applied the *10 keys to effectively communicating human rights* in training sessions and webinars on migration, organised by the International Organization for Migration, the Migration Policy Group, the European Broadcasting Union and the European Federation of Journalists. At the closing conference of OSCE's project on 'Effective criminal justice strategies and practices to combat gender-based violence in eastern Europe', FRA presented on effective communication campaigns on gender-based violence.

**Most FRA stakeholders became aware of FRA's work and outputs through FRA's communication activities.**<sup>47</sup> FRA's website was the main communication channel used by stakeholders to learn about FRA's work,<sup>48</sup> followed by FRA publications<sup>49</sup> and FRA's newsletter.<sup>50</sup> Overall, FRA's stakeholders were satisfied with FRA's communication channels.<sup>51</sup>



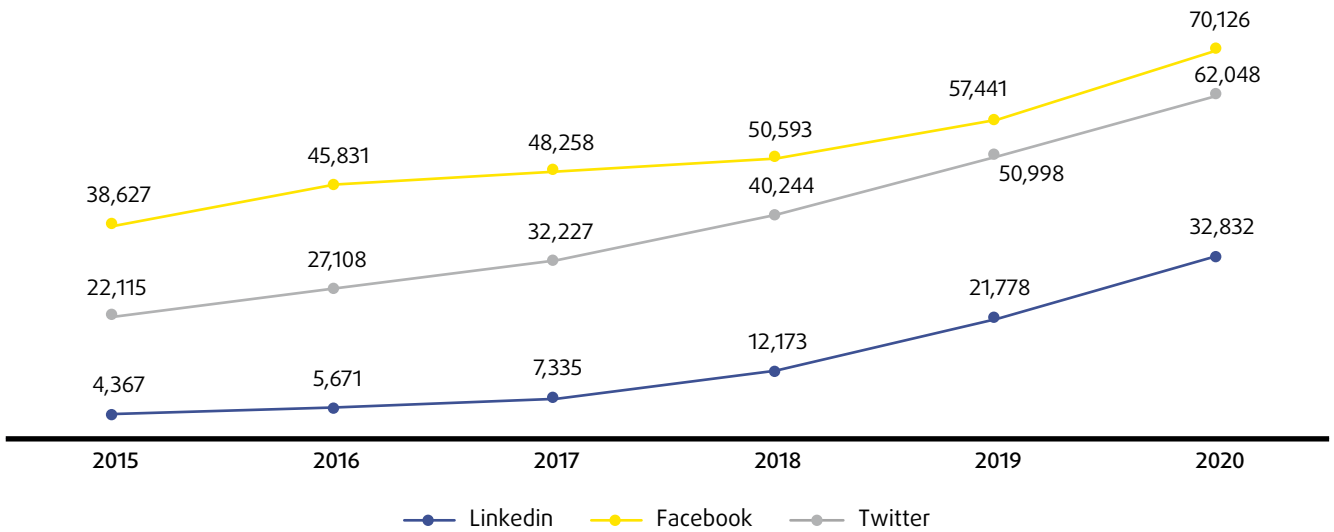
**Number of views of FRA's website  
463,357**

**Media references and FRA's social media footprint** also continued to grow steadily, aided by promotional campaigns in English and German for the Fundamental Rights Dialogue on 13 November 2020.

Campaigns were also run to promote two high-level conferences on AI taking place in December 2020 and the FRA-related report (i.e. **Getting the future right – Artificial intelligence and fundamental rights**), the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the launch of the Fundamental Rights Survey's first report in June 2020. **FRA's social media following increased steadily**, with more than 11,000 new followers each on LinkedIn and Twitter and more than 12,000 new followers on Facebook in 2020 (Figure 3).<sup>52</sup>

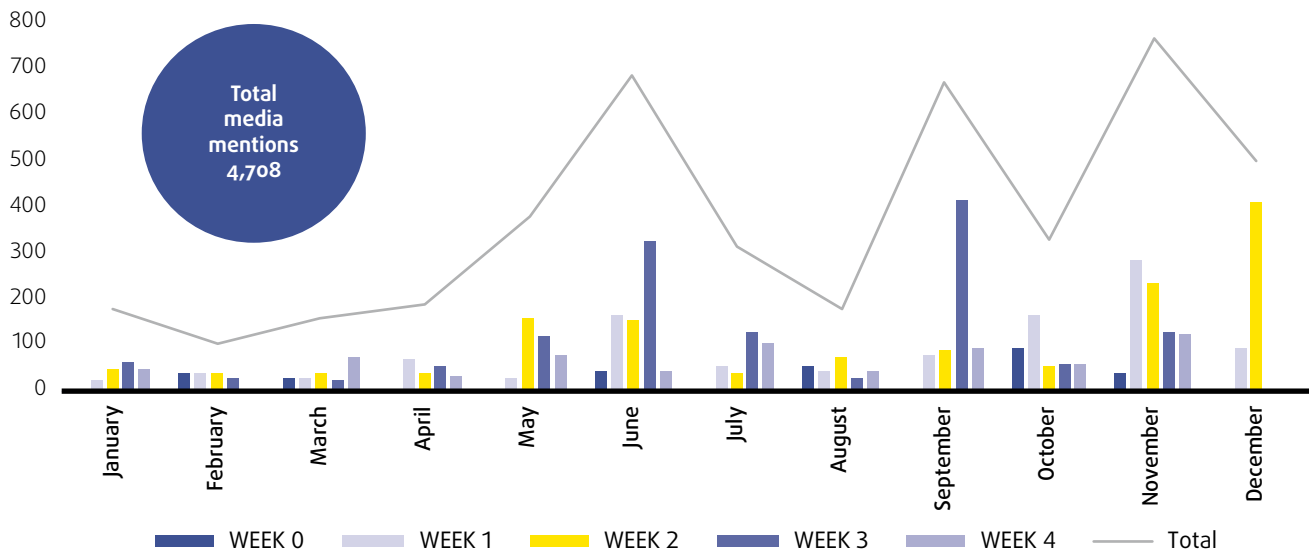


**FIGURE 3: EVOLUTION OF FRA'S FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



When it comes to **media outreach**, FRA has considerably increased its number of media mentions over recent years, with an average of 92 mentions per week and 369 mentions per month in 2020 (twice the numbers of mentions in previous years; Figure 4). A total of 4,708 items related to FRA's work were published in the media in 2020. The top three FRA themes covered in 2020 included LGBTI issues (844 articles), migration (612 articles) and racism (604 articles).<sup>53</sup>

**FIGURE 4: FRA MEDIA COVERAGE FLUCTUATIONS 2020**

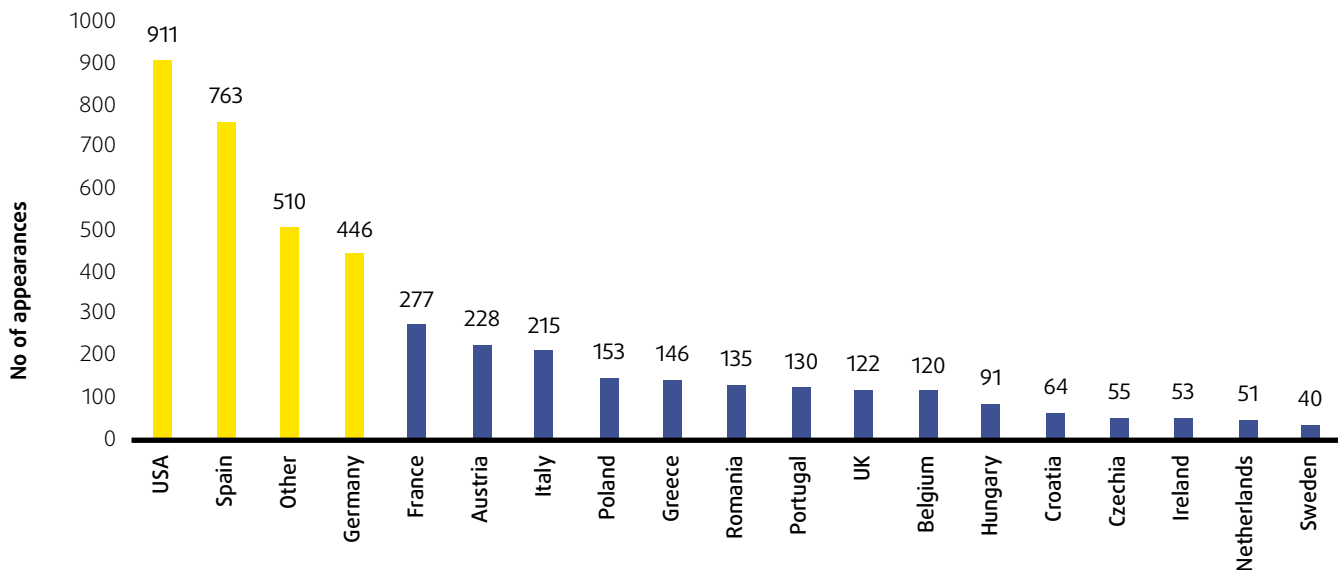


To support the dissemination of FRA's findings at national and local level, FRA made several of its publications available in additional languages, including the *Fundamental rights report 2020 - FRA opinions* - in Macedonian and Serbian, in addition to all other official EU languages; the *Handbook on European non-discrimination law - 2018 edition* - in 13 EU languages, with Bulgarian and Croatian versions issued in autumn 2020; the *Handbook on European data protection law - 2018 edition* - in 12 EU languages, with the Estonian version issued in autumn 2020; and *Children deprived of parental care found in another EU Member State other than their own* - in all of the official EU languages, with the Czech, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Latvian,

Lithuanian, Maltese, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian and Swedish versions issued in autumn 2020.

In 2020, **coverage of FRA’s work was identified in more than 40 different countries and in 35 different languages.** The countries in which FRA received the most media coverage were the United States of America and Canada (911 appearances), Spain (763 appearances) and Germany (446 appearances) (Figure 5).<sup>54</sup> FRA’s work was also referenced in 25 documents of the **Council of the European Union** and 85 documents of the **European Parliament**.<sup>55</sup>

**FIGURE 5: COUNTRIES’ MEDIA COVERAGE OF FRA’S WORK**



Between September and December 2020, a total of 33,753 **FRA publications** were disseminated through different channels (i.e. direct orders through FRA, the Publications Office of the EU website and mailing lists).<sup>56</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, FRA maintained the rank of first for print dissemination through the Publications Office of the EU website.

**Dissemination of FRA publications from September to December 2020**



### 1.2.5. Strengthening cooperation with national and local fundamental rights actors: working with communities of support

#### FRA's objectives for 2018–2022 are to:

- enhance the relevance and impact of FRA evidence and advice on fundamental rights at national and local levels;
- support the strengthening of the capacity of national and local human rights actors;
- assist national authorities in developing data collection to create evidence-based approaches to rights protection and promotion across Member States.

#### Key achievements of the year

In 2020, FRA went beyond most of the targets set under this priority for that year. In total, 72% of stakeholders thought that FRA had been successful in promoting dialogue with civil society organisations (target: 50%) and 60% believed that the agency's activities have contributed to developing a human rights culture at national and local levels.

FRA increased its knowledge and data on the situation of fundamental rights in EU Member States. It published a report on national human rights action plans and key findings from FRA's 2019 survey on Roma and Travellers in six countries. Throughout 2020, FRA also contributed to developing a human rights culture and strengthening the civic space in EU Member States, primarily through its work with NHRIs and its cooperation with civil society organisations through the FRP. FRA also provided assistance and methodological advice on data collection and analysis to Member States.

Stakeholders consulted as part of the 2020 mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 saw FRA's work in strengthening cooperation with national and local fundamental rights actors as very relevant to the current EU policy context and existing fundamental rights challenges.<sup>57</sup> FRA's stakeholders considered the agency's cooperation with national and local human rights actors very relevant for the realisation of fundamental rights,<sup>58</sup> as it enables the provision of peer support and exchange of good practices<sup>59</sup>

and capacity-building support.<sup>60</sup> The stakeholders also considered that FRA's activities under this strategic priority were relevant to the specific needs of their organisations.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, 72 % of stakeholders consulted through the FRA user

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#### FRA's activities have contributed to developing a human rights culture at national and local levels

satisfaction survey 2020 considered FRA to have been successful in promoting dialogue with civil society organisations<sup>62</sup> and 60 % believed that the agency's activities have contributed to developing a human rights culture at national and local levels. In total, 64 % of stakeholders consulted through the survey used FRA's outputs for policy making<sup>63</sup> and for the implementation of legislation and policies at national level.<sup>64</sup>

NHRIs are independent organisations set up by Member States to promote and protect human rights in their countries in line with the **UN Paris Principles** and **Goal 16 of the SDGs**. The FRA report *Strong and effective national human rights institutions –*



*Challenges, promising practices and opportunities* updates a previous FRA report from

2010 and analyses the situation of NHRIs across the EU, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom, identifying current challenges and opportunities to strengthen NHRIs in the EU.<sup>65</sup>

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FRA's report *Strong and effective national human rights institutions – Challenges, promising practices and opportunities* underlined the underused potential of NHRIs in the EU context, in relation to issues such as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the rule of law.

On the basis of its **ongoing research on NHRIs**, FRA contributed to a revised CoE recommendation on NHRIs (No. R (97) 14)<sup>66</sup> and, together with ENNHRI and ODIHR, participated in the NHRI Academy, an annual event that builds the capacity of NHRIs on topical issues.

In the second phase of the project '**Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights**', funded under the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanism (i.e. EEA and Norway Grants), FRA developed a short module on discrimination, victimisation and harassment, which was delivered to the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (BNSI) in February 2020. Apart from the methodological work related to the development of the module, the FRA team conducted a number of missions to the BNSI to support the Bulgarian team in integrating the module into the national survey for 'hard-to-reach' populations. FRA also attended a two-day train-the-trainers session on 25–27 February 2020 to explain the objectives, logic and content of the FRA module to the trainers and field managers. The module will be rolled out in North Macedonia, Slovakia and, potentially, Czechia.

In October–December 2020, FRA continued to support the BNSI in developing and populating indicators on the fundamental rights challenges faced by hard-to-reach populations and developed a first draft of a handbook on the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation monitoring indicators calculation methodology adapted for the BNSI.

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**A number of the stakeholders consulted as part of the '2020 mid-term review of FRA's strategy 2018-2022 found FRA's assistance with data collection methodologies at national and local levels very relevant to their institutions' needs.**



The 2019 Roma and Travellers Survey followed a participatory approach, engaging with the Roma and Traveller communities in the development and implementation of the survey in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

FRA prepared short country sheets and videos together with national and local stakeholders and representatives of the Roma and Traveller communities in Belgium and Ireland. In November and December 2020, FRA supported the country launches of key findings from the Roma and Travellers Survey in Belgium and Ireland, bringing together national stakeholders to feed into the developments of the national Roma strategies within the new EU Roma strategic framework. The European Parliament *Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies: Combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe* made express reference to the **key findings from FRA's 2019 survey on Roma and Travellers in the six countries** in question. Moreover, some stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 stated that they have used the key findings from FRA's 2019 survey on Roma and Travellers in six countries for the development and implementation of national policies and legislation<sup>67</sup> and, to some extent, for policy making at regional level.<sup>68</sup> Overall, stakeholders consider FRA's country sheets to be reliable, of high quality,<sup>69</sup> relevant<sup>70</sup> and useful to their work.<sup>71</sup>



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**762 views of FRA's videos on Roma and Traveller communities in Belgium and Ireland**

**The 16th meeting of the National Roma Contact Points** on 18 and 19 February 2020 brought together the Cabinet of the Commissioner Helena Dalli (equality), FRA's director and representatives of the European Commission (Non-discrimination and Roma Coordination Unit) and delegates from the governments and statistical offices of 16 Member States to discuss the fundamental rights situation



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**FRA was at the heart of discussions on artificial intelligence in the EU**

of the Roma population across the EU, with a view to developing a new EU framework on Roma equality and inclusion. A number of Member States expressed their interest in receiving capacity-building support for strengthening their data collection activities.



Following a request for technical assistance from the CRPD Monitoring Council in Bulgaria, FRA developed a paper on using human rights indicators to monitor the implementation of the UN CRPD at the national level. The paper provides guidance on monitoring CRPD implementation, indicators based on human rights, international and national monitoring methodologies, and data collection approaches. In February 2020, FRA facilitated a workshop in Sofia for members of the Bulgarian CRPD Monitoring Council, and in November 2020, another online workshop was organised with the Czech Public Defender of Rights.



FRA is contributing to ongoing policy processes on **AI at European level**. FRA is a member of the European Commission's High-level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence and is a participant in the CoE's CAHAI. On 16 January 2020, FRA contributed to an event organised by the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU by presenting findings from its research on challenges linked to algorithmic profiling and, more generally, the safeguards offered by data protection in the context of AI. In March 2020, during a workshop in Barcelona, FRA took part in a panel discussion on international treaties and definitions related to rights and AI challenges. The discussion focused on the role of ombuds institutions and tools to protect and guarantee rights.

Finally, FRA continued to feed into the work of policymakers at EU level by presenting its research findings on the fundamental rights implications of the use of facial recognition technology at several events, including the Council Working Party on Information Exchange and Data Protection, the Law Enforcement Working Party, a workshop organised by the European Data Protection Supervisor on AI and facial recognition, the European Parliament's LIBE Committee hearing and the Microsoft Data Science and Law Forum.

The fundamental rights risks of operationalising large-scale IT systems continued to be an area of focus for FRA's work. On 21 July 2020, FRA presented the fundamental rights issues related to the **Entry/Exit System**<sup>72</sup> during an awareness-raising webinar organised by eu-LISA for Member States.

Throughout 2020, FRA continued its work on fundamental rights at local level. The director contributed to **Vienna's Human Rights Day**, which marked the celebration of Vienna's five years as a human rights city. The FRA director stressed the importance of cooperating with cities and supporting their human rights work. FRA also drafted a **framework of commitments for human rights cities** to promote human rights standards and norms and support cities to become human rights cities. The draft will be developed in cooperation with key city networks and international and European partners, including the CoE's Intercultural Cities Programme and OHCHR. FRA also hosted Norway's NHRI, which is setting up a project to promote human rights cities in Norway, and

the director of the newly established United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's International Centre for Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz, Austria.

In February 2020, FRA and the OHCHR contributed to the review of the implementation of SDGs in five **EU Member States** (Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland and Slovenia). These efforts will support national consultation processes on SDG implementation. FRA contributed to the UN Human Rights Council intersessional meeting on human rights and the 2030 Agenda in Geneva in December 2019. It also continued to contribute **submissions to UN and CoE monitoring bodies** for their reviews of EU Member States.

In March 2020, FRA also took part in the virtual Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organised by the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

In 2020, FRA made available a **report on national human rights action plans in the EU**. In addition, in March 2020, FRA provided input on the development of Finland's next national action plan on fundamental and human rights, at a seminar organised by the Finnish Ministry of Justice, the Prime Minister's Office and the Human Rights Centre.

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**FRA contributed with around 20 submissions to the United Nations and Council of Europe monitoring bodies**

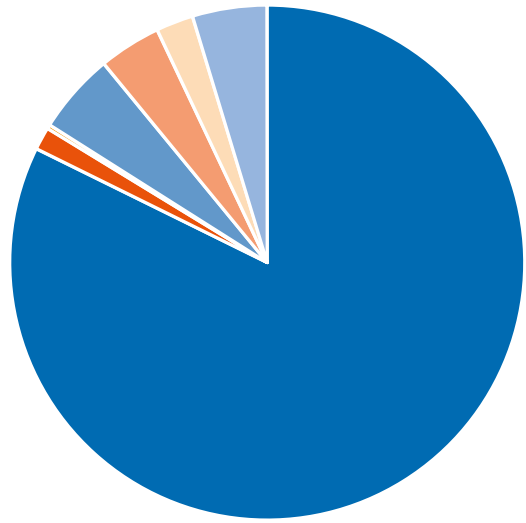
The support of stronger civil society through the **FRA FRP** (FRA's civil society network) continued in 2020. One of the main goals of the FRP is to empower civil society to protect and promote fundamental rights, including by collecting data and raising awareness of civic space challenges. There are currently more than 780 organisations registered on the FRP (Figure 6). In 2020, FRA finalised its update of the terms of reference (which guide its interaction with the platform) to reinforce cooperation. The last meeting of the advisory panel to the FRP focused on how to increase engagement with civil society organisations, including by replacement of the advisory panel with a more flexible and targeted mechanism. Since 2018, FRA has also undertaken an **annual consultation with** the FRP about the experiences and challenges that participating organisations face in their work. In 2020, FRA prepared a paper summarising the key findings of the 2019 consultation. The results of the consultation confirmed that civil society organisations continue to face threats and consider their ability to participate in civic and democratic spaces to be reduced, along with their access to funding and legal room to manoeuvre.



FIGURE 6: COMPOSITION OF FRA'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS PLATFORM

788  
organisations

- Non-governmental organisations dealing with human rights
- Trade Unions
- Employers' organisations
- Social and professional organisations
- Church, religious, philosophical or non-confessional organisations
- Universities
- Other qualified experts of European/international body/organisations



FRA contributed to a discussion at the **Open Government Partnership (OGP) Steering Committee** on how commitments in OGP national action plans could better support an enabling environment for civil society. The OGP is a multilateral initiative bringing together almost 80 governments worldwide, including governments from 21 EU Member States. The Contact Group on human rights defenders – an initiative of FRA and ODIHR – brings together staff responsible for cooperation with civil society and for supporting human rights defenders from inter-governmental organisations and EU institutions and agencies. A series of online meetings took place in April 2020 to discuss the impact of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on human rights defenders in Europe. Through its social media channels, FRA has promoted the initiatives of its civil society partners to highlight the essential role of civil society during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in supporting vulnerable communities.



## Endnotes

- 1 Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin
- 2 Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
- 3 Fifteen FRA external stakeholders were interviewed and 97 % of survey respondents as part of the mid-term review.
- 4 Twenty-three FRA external stakeholders were interviewed.
- 5 Performance indicator I22: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from research findings contribute to the development of policies and legislation in a manner that reflects the desired impacts of the agency; performance indicator I26: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 6 Performance indicator I13: proportion of key stakeholders and experts who consider that reliable, relevant and high-quality information resulting from FRA's data collection, research and analysis activities is delivered to the intended target group (by type of output).
- 7 Eight EU Member States (Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain), North Macedonia and Serbia. Note that the survey fieldwork, which was due to take place in the first half of 2021, has been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8 Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain.
- 9 The initial launch of the report, planned for mid-March 2020, was delayed because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 10 Performance indicator I13: proportion of key stakeholders and experts who consider that reliable, relevant and high-quality information resulting from FRA's data collection, research and analysis activities is delivered to the intended target group.
- 11 Performance indicator I16: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's awareness-raising activities contribute to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights.
- 12 Performance indicator I16: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's awareness-raising activities contribute to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights.
- 13 The platform includes FRA; the Commission; the European Network on Victims' Rights; the EU Network of national contact points for compensation; other relevant EU agencies such as the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE); and civil society.
- 14 Performance indicator I22: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from research findings contribute to the development of policies and legislation in a manner that reflects the desired impacts of the agency.
- 15 Performance indicator I26: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 16 In total, 73% of stakeholders responding to the FRA user satisfaction survey had consulted the report *Applying the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in law and policymaking at national level*; performance indicator I22: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from research findings contribute to the development of policies and legislation in a manner that reflects the desired impacts of the agency.
- 17 93% of survey respondents.
- 18 Performance indicator I26: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 19 Performance indicator I27: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has actively contributed to the implementation of fundamental rights legislation and policies in practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 20 Performance indicator I26: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 21 Performance indicator I27: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has actively contributed to the implementation of fundamental rights legislation and policies in practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 22 Performance indicator I12: proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA to be relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality.
- 23 Both the EU strategy on the children's rights and the Child Guarantee are due to be published in the first half of 2021.
- 24 Health, education, nutrition, housing and early childhood education.
- 25 Performance indicator I13: proportion of key stakeholders and experts that consider that reliable, relevant and high-quality information resulting from FRA's data collection, research and analysis activities is delivered to the intended target group (by type of output).
- 26 Performance indicator I27: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has actively contributed to the implementation of fundamental rights legislation and policies in practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities); performance indicator I26: proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities).
- 27 Performance indicator I21: proportion of relevant stakeholders that consider FRA's conclusions and recommendations from research findings, opinions and other policy advice to have directly influenced **policy development** in a manner that reflects the desired impacts of the agency.
- 28 Performance indicator I23: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the **development** of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency; performance indicator I24: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the **implementation** of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency.
- 29 Performance indicator I16: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's awareness-raising activities contribute to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights.
- 30 Performance indicator I23: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other



- policy advice contribute to the **development** of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency; performance indicator I24: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the **implementation** of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency.
- 31 Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)
- 32 Performance indicator I16 The proportion of stakeholders who agree/strongly agree that FRA's awareness raising activities contributes to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights.
- 33 Performance indicator I12: proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality.
- 34 **Commission Staff Working Document - Analytical Document Accompanying The Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament And The Council. A Union Of Equality: Eu Roma Strategic Framework For Equality, Inclusion And Participation And Its Accompanying Proposal For A Revised Council Recommendation On National Roma Strategic Frameworks For Equality, Inclusion And Participation**
- 35 Performance indicator: I12 Proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA are relevant, reliable – of high quality, and useful.
- 36 Performance indicator I12: proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA to be relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality.
- 37 A total of 80 people out of 1,885 who died or went missing.
- 38 98 % of the stakeholders consulted through the survey (N = 110).
- 39 One FRA external stakeholder was interviewed and five survey respondents thought that FRA's activities were particularly relevant (N = 50).
- 40 Performance indicator I16: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's awareness-raising activities contribute to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights.
- 41 Performance indicator I30: proportion of non-governmental stakeholders that agree that FRA's work has directly influenced their work and their capacity to promote fundamental rights.
- 42 75 % of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 43 63 % of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 44 72 % of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020; performance indicator I15: proportion of FRP and other network members/stakeholders that consider the networking/collaboration activities organised by FRA to be useful to their organisation for promoting fundamental rights.
- 45 13 of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 46 9 of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 47 Performance indicator I17: proportion of stakeholders that came into contact with FRA as a result of the communication activities. Only a minority of stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 became aware of FRA's work through channels other than FRA communication channels (17 %).
- 48 80 % of the stakeholders consulted through the survey.
- 49 63 % of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 50 61 % of the stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 51 FRA user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 52 Performance indicator I20: proportion of media coverage of FRA's activities.
- 53 Performance indicator I20: proportion of media coverage of FRA's activities.
- 54 Performance indicator I20: proportion of media coverage of FRA's activities.
- 55 Performance indicator I25: number of references to FRA's conclusions or recommendations or FRA's activities in policies and legislation.
- 56 Performance indicator I6: number of relevant stakeholders receiving FRA information; performance indicator I7: number of stakeholders receiving a copy of the publications.
- 57 92 % of the stakeholders consulted through the survey (N = 108).
- 58 Eleven survey respondents (N = 48).
- 59 Five survey respondents (N = 48).
- 60 Seven survey respondents (N = 48).
- 61 85 % of the stakeholders consulted through the survey (N = 107).
- 62 Performance indicator I14: proportion of stakeholders/FRP members that think that FRA has been successful in promoting dialogue with civil society.
- 63 Performance indicator I22: proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from research findings contribute to the **development** of policies and legislation in a manner that reflects the desired impacts of the agency; performance indicator I23: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the development of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency.
- 64 Performance indicator I24: proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the **implementation** of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency.
- 65 38 % of the stakeholders consulted through the FRA user satisfaction survey 2020 have used this FRA report.
- 66 Recommendation No. R (97) 14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the establishment of independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights
- 67 Seven stakeholders consulted through the survey.
- 68 Two stakeholders consulted through the survey.
- 69 71 % of stakeholders; performance indicator I12: proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA to be relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality.

- 70 53 % of stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 71 63 % of stakeholders consulted through the user satisfaction survey 2020.
- 72 The Entry-Exit System will register biometric data of third-country nationals who cross Schengen borders and stay in the Schengen area on a short-term basis.



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**Assurance is an objective examination of evidence to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.**

This examination is carried out by management, which monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. Its results are explicitly documented and reported to the director. The reports produced are as follows:

- activity-based management;
- the management of financial resources (including planned and actual, as well as deviations);
- the management of human resources (HR) (including planned and actual, as well as deviations);
- activity-based costing;
- *ex post* controls;
- internal control standards (ICS) gap analysis;
- observations and recommendations reported by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the European Commission;
- observations and recommendations reported by the European Court of Auditors (ECA);
- recommendations of the European Parliament.

This part outlines the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives. This includes the following aspects:

- effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations;
- reliability of reporting;
- safeguarding of assets and information;
- prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities;
- adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes, as well as the nature of the payments (FRA financial rules, Article 32).

The "Management" part of the report looks also at the management of FRA's human and financial resources and assesses the results of internal and external audits, including the implementation of audit recommendations.

## 2.1. MANAGEMENT BOARD

FRA carries out an annual risk assessment exercise, which includes an evaluation of potential risks, their likelihood of occurrence and their potential impact. The results of the exercise are summarised in a risk register. An extract of the risk register is annexed to the Programming Document. This annex presents the risks that the management team consider relevant to the implementation of the Programming Document. It also presents the corresponding preventative and mitigating actions.

In 2020, no significant risks materialised that would have required a Management Board decision.

## 2.2. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The year 2020 was characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which FRA has had to reinvent the way it operates to accommodate the restrictions imposed.

Like other agencies, FRA introduced the use of electronic workflows to replace paper-based workflows, and conducted meetings and events online instead of in person. These actions ensured business continuity and eliminated the disruptions caused by the implementation of public health measures.

The business continuity plan was activated in late February 2020 and related actions took place, such as meetings of the emergency team to review the situation, decisions on upcoming events and meetings involving externals, inviting the medical officer to speak to staff, proceeding with remote working as per authorities' instructions and communicating information to staff on a daily basis.

On 16 March 2020 the director informed all staff that telework would be mandatory.

The pandemic affected the way that Management Board meetings were organised. As a result, in 2020, based on decisions made by FRA's Executive Board, all three scheduled meetings of the Management Board and three of the four scheduled meetings of the Executive Board were held virtually (one Executive Board meeting was held in person in February 2020). While FRA's rules of procedure did not explicitly anticipate such virtual meetings, following a proposal by the Management Board chairperson, the Executive Board deemed it necessary to host the meetings online, considering the COVID-19-related restrictions linked to travel, health and safety. In the absence of in-person meetings and to facilitate the decision-making process, a series of Management Board decisions were taken in the form of written procedures.

FRA was able to accommodate 100 % teleworking straightaway because of the existing IT infrastructure and systems introduced in 2014. Furthermore, it had previously introduced the appropriate document management system and policies, allowing the swift implementation and introduction of new e-workflows to accommodate internal collaboration needs, such as financial workflows.

The agency established communications with Commission services and also received updated information via IntraComm. FRA also joined the EU Agencies Network Advisory Group on return to the office, which is currently called the Advisory Group on the New Ways of Working.

The agency conducted two COVID-19 surveys in May and December 2020. These indicated that staff were satisfied with the availability of the IT systems and the way that the agency was handling the pandemic. More specifically, the surveys assessed staff satisfaction with IT tools, communications on the pandemic developments and the support offered.

With regard to recruitment, FRA made use of videoconferencing technologies, especially for candidate interviews. This approach meant that the agency had to adjust how interviews were carried out to ensure that principles of confidentiality and security were respected. It is worth noting that, despite the pandemic situation, HR activities, including recruitment, were successfully carried out, as initially planned.

With regard to project implementation and follow-up of the Single Programming Document 2020-2022, the agency reacted by reallocating funds and setting up a cross-unit team on preparing a series of bulletins on the fundamental rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU. The key challenge was to gather national data, despite the difficult conditions in which Franet had to work. In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fieldwork activities was substantial, with the Roma Survey 2020 and other fieldwork activities being postponed.

In the last quarter of 2020, a specific risk assessment was performed on all 2020 projects, taking into account the risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those risk factors included the areas of business continuity and financial impact.

The rapid response and preparedness shown by the agency from the start of the pandemic indicates its capacity to adapt its services and meet its business targets and objectives in an unfavourable context.

## **2.3. BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### **2.3.1. Information transmitted currently in the report on budgetary and financial management**

The EU subsidy allocated to the agency's 2020 budget amounted to € 23,691,000, which included North Macedonia's contribution (€ 179,000) and Serbia's contribution (€ 186,000).

Two budgetary amendments were adopted throughout 2020, mainly triggered by the Austrian authorities, corresponding to the annual rent and the cooperation agreement between the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) and the agency. A total amount of € 476,314 was added to the EU subsidy mentioned previously.

The implementation rate of C1 commitment appropriations maintained the 2019 trend, remaining at 100 %. The implementation rate for payment appropriations reached 71 %; therefore, 29 % of the appropriations were carried forward from 2020 to 2021. The level of carryovers for Title III was 80 %.

It should be noted that most of FRA's operational projects have an implementation period of at least 1 year. In these cases, FRA is compelled to automatically carry forward a high level of outstanding amounts at the end of the financial year.

The cancellation rate of C8 commitment appropriations remained low at 2.4 %.



In 2020, three budgetary transfers were submitted to the Management Board for adoption. In addition, the director authorised five budgetary transfers. The total amount transferred among titles amounted to € 1,433,482.

Full details on the budgetary and financial data for 2020 can be found in FRA's *Report on budgetary and financial management 2020*. Concerning procurement, the agency launched 11 procedures, two open and nine negotiated. It signed 632 contracts: three direct contracts (€ 3,362,306); 529 specific contracts or order forms against framework contracts (€ 7,824,667); and 100 low-value contracts (€ 486,243).

### **2.3.2. Summary of the information on grant, contribution and service-level agreements**

The agency does not have any grant, contribution or service-level agreements with the Commission; however, it receives some non-EU contributions, which are detailed below.

In December 2017, the agency signed an agreement with the FMO of the EEA and Norway Grants, through which it agreed to contribute up to € 1,500,000 towards FRA's expenses in carrying out activities in the role of International Partner Organisation. This role is articulated under three programmes, under two of which the agency has already begun to cooperate with Czechia (human rights, Roma inclusion and domestic and gender-based violence) and Greece (Roma inclusion and empowerment). The programmes are envisaged to end on 31 December 2024. The agency receives the grant contribution through half-yearly disbursements.

In addition, on 11 June 2019, the agency signed a Project Partnership Agreement with the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria. The project will run until the end of 2021 and the amount allocated to the agency for the project is € 248,111. By the end of 2020, the agency had already received € 136,461.05.

### **2.3.3. Control results: costs and benefits of controls**

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives. FRA's assurance-building and materiality criteria are provided in Annex VII, which outlines the main risks together with the control processes for mitigating them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.

#### **a. Effectiveness**

FRA has set up internal control processes intended to ensure the adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned. The objective of the controls is to provide reasonable assurance that the total amount of any financial operation authorised during the reporting year that would not be in conformity with the applicable contractual or regulatory provisions does not exceed 2 % of the authorised commitments.

In the context of the protection of the EU budget, no overall amounts at risk were identified.

#### *Summary of materiality criteria*

Regarding the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, the objective is to ensure that the estimated residual risk of error is less than 2 % at the end of the financial year. The residual risk of error is estimated by the residual error rate obtained from an examination of a representative sample

of transactions less any corrections made resulting from the supervisory and control systems in place.

#### *Recoveries resulting from ex post controls*

At the end of the reporting period, the results of *ex post* controls did not reveal any amounts to be recovered.

#### *Risk at payment*

FRA's portfolio consists of segments with a relatively low error rate. This is thanks to the inherent risk profile of the projects and the performance of the related control systems.

The only payments that could be considered at risk, meaning expenditure operation for which the corresponding deliverables are not received in exchange to the payment, could be the pre-financing provided. This type of payment amounted to € 29,895 at the end of 2020 and was associated with two different economic operators. As the amounts were not significant in either case, no bank guarantees were requested. Therefore, no risk was considered and no future problems are expected in relation to these advance payments.

#### **b. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness (economy)**

The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between the resources employed and the results achieved. The principle of economy requires that the resources used by FRA in the pursuit of its activities be made available in due course, in an appropriate quantity and of an appropriate quality, and at the best price. This subsection outlines the indicators used to monitor the efficiency of the control systems, including an overall assessment of the costs and benefits of controls.

#### *Qualitative analysis of the management review of the registry of exceptions and internal control weaknesses*

The exceptions registered are analysed to identify specific areas of concern and actions for improvement, assisting the decision-making process. In addition, they enable the management team to handle exceptional circumstances with a reasonable degree of flexibility and in a transparent and justified way. The IAS and ECA examined the exceptions during their audits and raised no observations.

The annual analysis of the level of compliance with the Internal Control Framework includes qualitative analysis and recommendations for improvement, which are communicated to the management team.

FRA regularly implements preventative measures together with internal awareness-raising activities, such as regular presentations and training sessions for staff members.

In 2020, no exceptions were registered with a value greater than € 5,000.

#### *Qualitative analysis of the results of the supervisory controls on the procurement procedures*

All procurement procedures were subject to a supervisory review before the launch of the call for tenders. The minutes of these controls are recorded on paper and corrective actions are introduced where necessary.

FRA has set up measures to quantify the costs of the resources and input required to carry out significant controls, and, insofar as is possible, estimate their benefits in terms of the amount of errors and irregularities prevented, detected and corrected by these controls.

The corrective actions included modification of the tender specifications, mainly in terms of the selection and award criteria. This improved the quality of the tenders and, as a result, the efficiency of the procurement procedures.

The procurement procedures are, to a large extent, a regulatory requirement that cannot be curtailed. In addition, as the risks outlined in Section B of Annex VII show, a significant proportion of the appropriations would be at risk if these controls were not in place.

FRA assessed the possibility of recording time for operational initiations, operational verifications and authorisations. However, the time dedicated to these controls was found to be insignificant. Therefore, FRA does not keep a record of this information. Finally, FRA has no additional financial verification function.

#### *Qualitative analysis of the results of the ex post supervisory controls*

In accordance with its financial rules, in 2020, FRA performed an *ex post* control exercise.

Based on a specific risk assessment, an exercise was completed on a sample of transactions performed during the last weeks of the 2018/2019 financial year. In total, 16 transactions corresponding to an amount of around € 450,000 were subject to a supervisory desk review.

For supervisory measures, an estimated amount of around € 7,000 was invested in preparing the risk assessment and checking the 16 financial transactions.

In addition, there are a number of non-quantifiable benefits resulting from the controls aimed at ensuring that the financed projects contributed to the achievement of objectives and from the deterrent effect of *ex post* controls. Furthermore, FRA considers that the necessity of these controls is undeniable, as the totality of the appropriations could be at risk if they were not in place.

#### *Activity-based budgeting*

In 2020, FRA executed in commitment appropriations €24,162,567 consisting of C1 and Ro funds. Based on the traditional presentation of budget execution, i.e. Titles I, II, III and IV, €15,592,487 was spent on overheads (Titles I and II), representing 65 % of the overall expenditure. The amount of €8,570,080 was spent on operational expenditure (Titles III and IV), representing 35 %, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 8 presents the ABB of the budget execution. FRA's expenditure is split as follows, compared with the traditional presentation:

- 78 % for operational expenditure instead of 35 %;
- 22 % for support expenditure, i.e. overheads, instead of 65 %.

Compared to 2019, the proportion of person days worked in support activities decreased by 3 % in 2020. Further details are provided in Annex V.

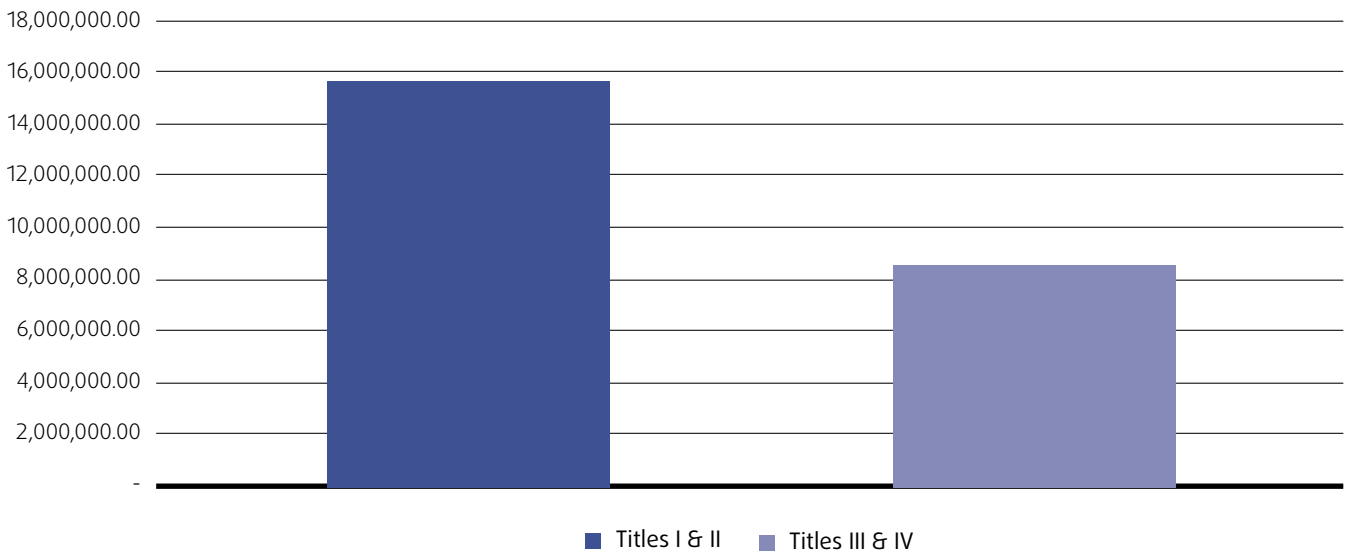
### **c. Conclusions**

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, FRA has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control systems and

has reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible.

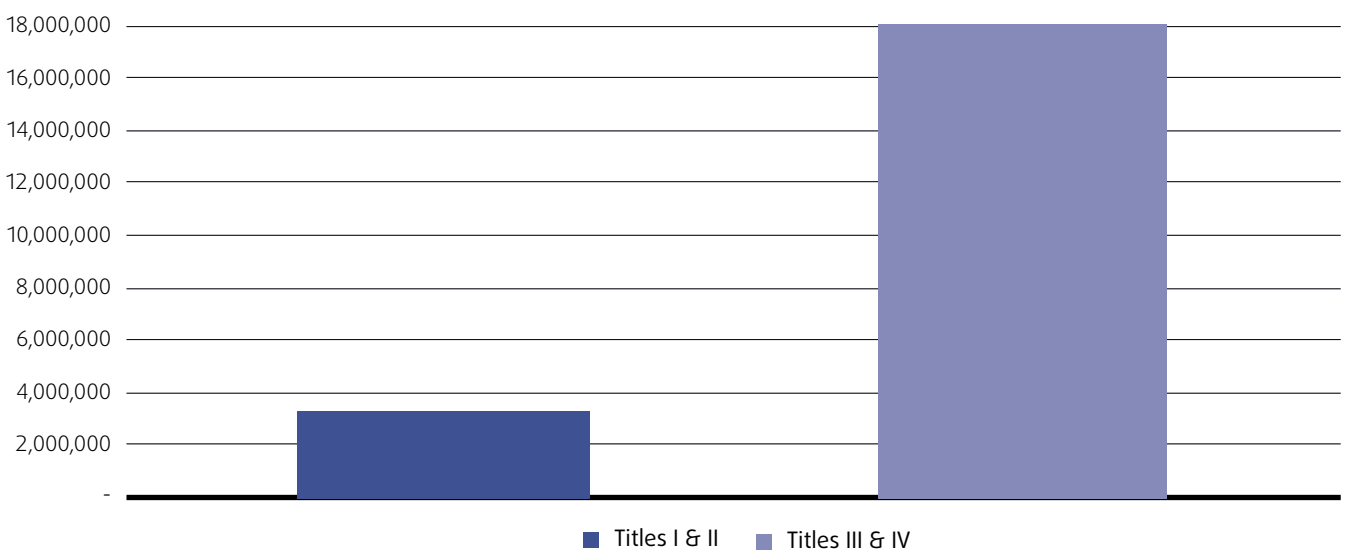
Where FRA's control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year (compared with previous year(s)), the conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls is deemed to be unchanged (i.e. a positive conclusion).

**FIGURE 7: TRADITIONAL PRESENTATION OF BUDGET EXECUTION (EUR)**



Source: FRA, 2020

**FIGURE 8: ACTIVITY-BASED BUDGETING PRESENTATION OF BUDGET EXECUTION (EUR)**



Source: FRA, 2020

## **2.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION TO FRA STAFF**

No changes to the authorising officers by delegation or subdelegation took place during 2020. The director delegated his powers as authorising officer to the heads of the five units of FRA. In addition, the Head of Corporate Services subdelegated part of his power to the Head of Sector Finance and Contracting.

The delegation for the Head of Corporate Services is the same as that for the director, for all titles and for an unlimited amount.

Those for the heads of units are only for Titles III and IV and are limited to € 170,000.

The subdelegation for the Head of Sector Finance and Contracting is for all titles and is limited to € 170,000.

All delegations have an unlimited duration.

The ECA checks the correctness of the delegations every year and no comments were made about their implementation.

## **2.5. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

In 2020, the harmonisation of job titles was finalised, reflecting the latest restructuring exercise.

The job descriptions exercise is expected to be finalised in 2021. These job descriptions will also be used in the human resources information system SYSPER - Job Information System module.

The agency is advancing its efforts to adopt SYSPER and the system is expected to be in production by June 2021. The adoption of SYSPER will contribute to the digitalisation efforts of the agency by replacing paper-based workflows while offering better reporting capabilities to its staff and the HR function.

Following the installation of SYSPER, which is a prerequisite, the agency plans to introduce the Commission's Mission Processing System (MIPS) during the second half of 2021. Hence, the introduction of SYSPER and MIPS will contribute towards the optimisation of human and financial resources while enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

Learning and development activities in 2020 were significantly impacted by the restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of a total of 35 planned training activities, only 20 actually took place, using online solutions, representing a low 57 % implementation rate.

However, in spite of the pandemic a number of key HR processes were successfully executed. A well-being survey covering various thematic areas was carried out and the results are in the process of being turned into an action plan. In addition, with the help of an external expert, an agency-wide workload assessment analysis was conducted, with its recommendations being considered for implementation. Similarly, the first phase of a competency-based talent management system for the agency was concluded in 2020 with the development of a competency framework comprising of a Competency Dictionary and aspirational competency profiles for all job profiles at FRA. In 2021, the next phase, which involves conducting a competency assessment and gap analysis of the workforce, is planned and should culminate in the

introduction of competency-based FRA talent management process for learning and development, career advancement, workforce planning, and recruitment and selection.

In 2020, FRA's Executive Board adopted a new implementing rule on setting up a staff committee (Decision 2020/06), which followed the Commission's adoption of Commission Decision C(2016)3323 for which an *ex ante* agreement from the Commission was received. A further two Executive Board decisions were adopted, as follows: Decision 2020/02 on the application by analogy of Commission Decision C(2020)1559 amending Decision C(2013)9051 of 16 December 2013 on leave, and Decision 2020/06 on the application by analogy of Commission Decision C(2020)4818 amending Decision C(2011)1278 of 3 March 2011 on the transfer of pension rights.

FRA undertook the 2020 benchmarking exercise using the methodology approved for EU agencies. The results of this exercise are shown in Annex IV.

## 2.6. STRATEGY OF EFFICIENCY GAINS

The elaboration of an efficiency gains strategy is based on the following (non-exhaustive) list of initiatives:

- introduce changes to current business processes through mapping and re-engineering of processes;
- introduce changes to increase system efficiency through automation of repetitive tasks;
- introduce changes to the organisational set-up leading to a potentially better use of existing capacity;
- introduce a more systematic and continuous set-up of cooperation platforms as well as establishing shared services with other agencies;
- simplify the rules and procedures to be applied for human and financial resource management, facilitating the achievement of efficiency gains;
- carry out a qualitative assessment of the efforts to increase efficiency.

In relation to the list above, it appears that service transformation and redesign of processes are crucial to achieve both technical and allocative efficiency and to unlock transformational improvements in efficiency. To this end, the agency has implemented a number of actions that have resulted in an increase in productivity and achievement of efficiency gains. With a view to gaining further efficiencies, the agency is currently undertaking the following initiatives in the four efficiency clusters.

### 2.6.1. Cluster I: digital services and facilities

As described in the 2020-2022 Programming Document, the agency invested resources to set up the necessary cloud services infrastructure to allow it to adopt Office 365 cloud services. The migration to Office 365 was initiated in the fourth quarter of 2020 and all user accounts have been migrated by the end of March 2021. In the meantime, the agency has migrated one of its main intranet-based applications to an Office 365 plan and, based on its phased implementation approach, the remaining services will be moved to the cloud in 2021.

This approach has reduced costs linked to IT hardware replacement and maintenance costs while offering more features, better performance and enhanced security.

In 2020, the agency started the migration to SYSPER. FRA plans to finalise this migration during the first half of 2021. This development will result in gains related to the maintenance of in-house applications. Furthermore, as a result of the pandemic-related restrictions on missions, the use of

videoconferencing has increased exponentially. The agency hopes to continue to use videoconferencing as an alternative to missions to reduce costs and the agency's environmental footprint, by reducing travel-related carbon dioxide emissions.

Finally, as a consequence of the pandemic, cleaning, electricity, heating and utility costs of facilities and building management were reduced.

#### **2.6.2. Cluster II: quality management system**

1. The continuous development of the FRA's quality management system, built on the principle of 'plan, do, check, act', offers avenues for refining the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency's internal processes. In 2020, the revision of the internal processes continued, with the aim of simplifying workflows and optimising task performance.
2. The financial circuits for Title I were simplified by a reduction in the chain of control and merging of some control functions like the Financial Verification Actor with the Authorising Officer. This has increased the level of efficiency while maintaining the necessary level of compliance, as shown by the positive results of the external audits carried out by the ECA and IAS.
3. The annual *ex post* control exercise was designed following a risk-based approach with the introduction of high-quality techniques, using the analysis of statistical data retrieved during the budget execution. This allowed the execution of controls on a sample of selected transactions, combining different dimensions of risk. The exercise resulted in a reduction in the working hours for controls, otherwise performed on samples of all the budget lines.
4. An annual compliance check was performed to integrate in selected areas similar tests performed by external auditing bodies. The process analysed the correct execution of the workflows while assessing the achievement of the objectives in relation to the use of existing resources.

#### **2.6.3. Cluster III: planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

In the planning and operating environment, FRA analyses synergies and efficiency gains in an ambitious and comprehensive way, from both strategic and operational angles. It is against this background that the following indicative areas of action are presented.

#### **Alignment of the tasks and resources of FRA with key political priorities**

The EU is now coping with immense challenges and the stakes are high. It is for the EU to allocate sufficient resources where needs are most pressing and action at EU level can have the biggest impact. Focusing on key priorities and delivering on them will guide EU action in the coming years. Therefore, it is essential in this context that the activities of FRA support EU policy priorities at the operational level and the added value of the agency for the EU policy agenda is clearly addressed.

This is ensured by many different means and is assessed throughout the programming cycle and presented in the Programming Document, which includes both multiannual and annual perspectives as well as related information on the human and financial resources needed. In particular, since the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 was adopted, several changes to the external environment of the agency have occurred, including emerging fundamental rights challenges and the election of a new European Commission with new EU priorities. Despite these changes, the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 found that it is still relevant to the EU policy context and current fundamental rights challenges and is flexible enough to fit within the new European Commission priorities and to adapt to changes in the field of fundamental rights. Most stakeholders consider all priorities and objectives

outlined in the FRA strategic plan to be relevant to the EU policy context and current fundamental rights challenges.

### **Elaboration of efficiency gain strategies at the level of the planning of annual and multiannual strategies (and reporting on the achievements)**

To ensure a prompt, effective and efficient response to new developments in line with EU priorities, the agency established closer cooperation with and coordination of operational activities of all EU actors in the fundamental rights area. Efficiency gains in operational activities are achieved by closer operational coordination and harmonisation of procedures (e.g. streamlining objectives, deliverables, indicators, governance and stakeholder consultations). These steps have been implemented in 2020 as follows.

As 2020 was the mid-point of the strategic plan, there was a need to step back and take stock of overall progress to date in light of internal and external contextual changes and lessons learned. The mid-term review assessed the relevance of the plan objectives and progress against the strategic priorities. The review also included an in-depth analysis of the current system of indicators, putting forward proposals for the enhancement of the Performance Measurement Framework. The main finding related to the overall purpose of the review was that the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 is still relevant to the EU policy context and current fundamental rights challenges and is flexible enough to fit within the new European Commission priorities and to adapt to changes in the field of fundamental rights. All FRA strategic priorities are relevant to the needs of its stakeholders.

Several stakeholder consultations took place on the agency annual programming involving the European Commission, the European Parliament, the CoE, NHRIs, equality bodies, ombuds institutions and international organisations. Importantly, consultations on FRA programming documents were carried out with a wide range of EU agencies to ensure the necessary complementarities and synergies. Importantly, as part of the programming of activities, the agency presented in a very transparent manner, allowing for close scrutiny by the Management Board of the negative priorities/decreases in numbers of existing tasks.

### **Development of synergies among agencies**

The agency has already undertaken a number of initiatives in this regard: a concrete example of increased synergies and efficiency is provided by the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies (comprising CEPOL, EASO, EIGE, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol and Frontex), which have on a regular basis made progress to intensify their cooperation and work together to address the challenges of the migration crisis.

In 2020, as part of the JHA agencies network, FRA built synergies with other agencies to coordinate their activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The network published a joint paper entitled *COVID-19 responses of EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies* in July 2020 and held a dedicated discussion at the level of the heads of agencies on 9 July 2020. In 2020, FRA also supported the network under the Eurojust chairpersonship to carry out the first exchange of JHA agency practices on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, following the heads of agencies' joint statement on the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was endorsed in November 2019. In addition to its engagement in the work of the JHA agencies network, FRA continued to provide fundamental rights expertise to the JHA agencies in their respective areas of work. There were over 40 activities in the justice and home affairs area where FRA provided expertise to, participated in, contributed to or sought other JHA agencies' inputs. In the field of training, FRA



contributed to at least eight CEPOL webinars and/or online training sessions in 2020. In the field of judicial and police cooperation in criminal matters, FRA cooperated with Europol and Eurojust on its research project (requested by the European Commission) on the fundamental rights impact of the EU Terrorism Directive. In 2020, FRA and eu-LISA finalised a cooperation plan (launched on 12 November) to operationalise their Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2016, with the aim of making cooperation activities more concrete over the years, for example in the areas of training, exchange of information and communication. In addition, FRA has engaged in negotiations with CEPOL on a working arrangement.

#### **Application of better regulation principles to evaluate the performance of the agency**

FRA is in full agreement with the principles behind better regulation and finding effective ways to measure performance. FRA welcomes the emphasis on better regulation of evaluations, to bring positive changes to and increase the effectiveness of EU activities. FRA regularly carries out evaluation activities to strengthen accountability and transparency, providing empirical evidence on the results, with opportunities to learn more about the effectiveness and performance of the agency. One important area where FRA brings a large amount of added value is its ability and flexibility to provide quick responses to fundamental rights emergencies. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the daily lives of everyone in the 27 EU Member States. FRA reacted quickly, publishing six bulletins between March and November 2020 on the fundamental rights implications of the pandemic and the handling of the pandemic and fundamental rights impacts by the EU Member States.

The objectives of FRA's quick response to the pandemic were to provide a comprehensive overview of the measures that EU Member States put in place to protect public health and to analyse the fundamental rights impact of measures adopted by EU Member State governments in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The bulletins also had the aim of supporting policymakers across the EU in ensuring that measures to control the pandemic were in line with fundamental rights protections and the needs of diverse populations. An interim and *ex post* evaluation of the *Coronavirus pandemic in the EU* bulletins began in 2020, conducted by an external contractor, with the aim of assessing the project's objectives and outputs and the extent to which the intended impacts of the project were achieved.

#### **2.6.4. Cluster IV: human resource management**

A number of initiatives have been undertaken in recent years that have resulted in the achievement of overall organisational fitness, efficiency and productivity. In 2020, as result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency was forced to implement a series of HR measures. These resulted in an increase in efficiency, as described in the following examples.

1. The agency introduced the latest IT tools to allow direct access to and full automation of key HR processes, for instance for the management of leave, requests for part-time work and parental leave, and staff performance, appraisals and training and development. Currently, the agency is in the process of joining SYSPER, encompassing services offered by the Paymaster Office (PMO), Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme, Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security and Directorate-General for Informatics. By 2022, the agency hopes to be able to roll out a new recruitment tool.
2. In 2020, the agency began the migration to SYSPER; it plans to finalise this migration during the first half of 2021. The implementation of SYSPER will streamline and automate certain HR management processes.

3. The use of electronic workflows for expenditures under Title I has resulted in the better use of available resources in terms of filing documents. Paper consumption has also been reduced to almost zero. However, the introduction of encrypted signatures will be explored to ensure a secure environment when signing documents related to HR.

4. Increased use of teleworking throughout 2020 provided the opportunity to redefine the “work from home” concept and put a bigger emphasis on work-life balance, resulting in a noticeable increase in the productivity of staff members.

5. The implementation process for the five recruitment procedures launched in 2020 allowed the agency to carry out candidate interviews with the selection committee and the director remotely. This resulted in a substantial reduction in expenditure associated with recruitment procedures. This will be further explored and may be continued when the agency returns to ‘normal’.

6. Inter-institutional framework contracts were used in the areas of training and development and other administrative services, for instance insurance for staff and external workers within the agency’s premises.

7. In 2019, the agency contracted under the inter-institutional framework for the development of a competency framework for the identification of the necessary competencies for the different job profiles at FRA. The objective of the competency framework is to support the latest talent management processes and professional development, as it will be applied to key HR processes such as recruitment and selection, career advancement, training, development and human resource planning. The competency framework is expected to be ready in the first half of 2021.

8. To ensure that it remains responsive to its staff, in 2019 the agency initiated a workload analysis to identify incidences of high workload and take the necessary steps to improve efficiency and staff well-being. The assessment is expected to deliver its final results in the first half of 2021.

Updating of HR tools and optimisation of its processes and its service-level agreement with the PMO enabled the agency to decrease the number of staff working in the HR domain. It is evident from Table 1 that, while the number of service receivers at FRA increased steeply between 2010 and 2020, the agency decreased the number of HR staff, reducing the overall ratio from 0.91:40 in 2017 to 0.79:40 in 2020. By comparison, the European Commission’s estimated target for efficiency and synergy gains in the whole HR community was to reach a HR ratio of 1:40<sup>1</sup> by 2019.

**TABLE 1. STAFF EVOLUTION IN HR VS THE INCREASE OF THE GENERAL STAFFING NUMBER**

Year	HR staff	Total staff
2010	7.8	95.2
2011	7.8	116.7
2012	8.9	134.3
2013	7.1	133.9
2014	7.1	149.0
2015	5.3	136.0
2016	5.5	141.0
2017	3.4	149.0
2018	2.8	146.0
2019	2.8	140.0
2020	2.8	141.0

## CAAR 2019 Human resource management

In 2019, the harmonisation of the job titles was finalised, thus reflecting the 2018 re-allocation of staff in the context of the restructuring. The process of redefining all job descriptions has started and it is envisaged to be finalised in the first quarter 2020 and consolidated in the fourth quarter 2020, following the entry into production of the Job Information System (JIS) module of SYSPER.

FRA is in the first cluster of the European Commission's HR system – SYSPER – that was launched in 2016 to centralise and harmonise the HR information systems.

The building blocks of SYSPER are integrated modules that share common data and functions. Each of these modules supports a specific HR process by delivering paperless functionalities and services to:

individual staff members,

their line managers, and

HR staff members.

It is expected, once the migration of data to SYSPER is complete, to streamline and automate certain management processes, with paperless workflow activities and an electronic validation system. The introduction of SYSPER will contribute to increased efficiency through a better utilisation of human and financial resources.

In 2019 FRA continued Learning and Development activities targeted at the workforce for the enhancement of skill and attitudes. Key training activities during this period included the 'Women in Leadership and Management' which is part of FRA's Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2015–2020. Other key HR Wellbeing related activities was the contracting of the Wellbeing Survey for 2020 as well as the Workload Assessment analysis and, finally, the contracting for the development of FRA's Competency Framework which will serve as the HR reference point for skills and attitudes with regards to Learning and Development; Selection and Recruitment, Career Advancement and Workforce Planning.

Following the update of the legal framework related to fraud prevention and detection as well as compliance with ethical standards in 2018, and the adoption of the new decisions by the Executive Board on the implementation of FRA guidelines on whistle-blowing (Decision No 2018/03) and on outside activities and assignments and on occupational activities after leaving the service (Decision No 2018/06), FRA has focused on the implementation of the strategy and it has organised through its Ethical Officer a series of info sessions with the aim to raise awareness on the importance of following the adopted provisions.

Furthermore, FRA's Executive Board adopted implementing rules concerning the Policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing psychological harassment and sexual harassment (Decision No 2019/02) and the conditions of employment of contract staff (Decision No 2019/03).

Finally, the Executive Board has decided to derogate from application by analogy of the implementing rules on the conduct of administrative inquires and disciplinary proceedings (Decision No 2019/04) pending the Commission's agreement on the respective model decision on this matter for agencies.

FRA undertook the 2019 benchmarking exercise using the methodology approved for the EU Agencies. The results of this exercise are shown in Annex IV.

1. Brief description of the major HR developments (i.e. changes brought to the establishment plan in the reporting year; changes of major Human Resources policies, main achievements in HR policies mirroring the actions planned in the SPD. etc.)
2. Implementing rules adopted year N
3. Brief description of the results of the screening/benchmarking exercise (i.e. overheads/operational ratio; main findings, etc.) (for data please see annex IV: *templates are subject to modifications following results of the WG on benchmarking/screening*).

## **2.7. ASSESSMENT OF AUDIT AND EX POST EVALUATION RESULTS DURING THE REPORTING YEAR**

This section reports and assesses the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors, as well as the limited conclusion of FRA on the state of internal control. The material impact on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on assurance, together with any management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are summarised.

FRA is audited by both internal and external independent auditors: (1) the IAS and (2) the ECA.

### **2.7.1. Internal Audit Service**

In September 2019, the IAS performed an audit on research project design and implementation (including procurement); the final report received in January 2021 identified four important recommendations without specific criticalities. The agency has submitted an action plan for the prompt closure of the recommendations and has undertaken the necessary actions.

All recommendations from the previous audits have been closed.

### **2.7.2. European Court of Auditors**

At the time of preparation of the current report, FRA had not yet received the final comments from the Court for the 2020 exercise; therefore, FRA mentions in the section 2.8a the comments from 2019, as well as the replies provided by FRA.

## **2.8A FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS FOR AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS**

The European Court of Auditors conducted its annual financial and regulatory audit of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency's 2019 accounts and adopted its report on 22 October 2020. In the report, the ECA expressed the following audit opinions:

### **2.8A.1. Opinion on the reliability of the accounts**

In the Court's opinion, the accounts of the Agency for the year ended 31 December 2019 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at 31 December 2019, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted standards for the public sector.

### **2.8.A.2. Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts**

In the Court's opinion, revenue and payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 are legal and regular in all material respects.

Concerning previous recommendations from the Court, please find below the status quo:

ECA's recommendation 2017

Current situation: Closed

E-procurement: by the end of 2017 the Agency had introduced e-invoicing for certain procedures, but not e-tendering and e-submission

FRA is publishing all its open call for tenders on e-Tendering since the beginning of 2019. In 2019 FRA completed all preparatory steps of the e-Submission on-boarding process with DIGIT, including the kick-off meeting, completion of start-up form and definition of on-boarding plan and was ready to publish the first call for tender by December 2019. FRA published its first open call for tenders with e-Submission during the first quarter of 2020

**TABLE 2. ECA RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS PLANS**

ECA's comments	FRA's reply
Carry-overs of committed appropriations were high for Title III (operating expenditure) at € 3.8 million, i.e. 60 % (2018: € 4.9 million, i.e. 70 %). They mainly reflect the nature of the agency's core activities, which include the financing of studies and other activities intended to raise human rights awareness that span several months and eventually continue beyond year end. Since 2018, the agency has aimed to improve planning procedures to better monitor delays between the signing of contracts, deliveries and payments. However, a significant part (28 %) of Title III carry-overs to 2020 were committed in December 2019, as were the payments of carry-overs from 2018 (47 % paid in December 2019). This is indicative of a structural issue. To resolve this, the agency should further improve its budget planning and implementation cycles.	The agency welcomes the understanding of the Court on the nature of its core activities, involving procurement procedures, which, depending on their complexity, require time to be completed; projects that continue beyond the current year; and ad hoc requests from EU institutions at any time of the year. It must be underlined that the second Management Board meeting always takes place in the second week of December. In view of the above, the agency believes that good budget implementation also has to be measured by the level of cancelled appropriations and not by the level of carry-overs. Moreover, the agency has a very high level of out-turn, which is an important indicator of sound financial management.

## 2.8B FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED FOLLOWING INVESTIGATIONS BY THE EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)<sup>2</sup>

No recommendations were issued by OLAF in 2020.

## 2.9. FOLLOW-UP OF OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DISCHARGE AUTHORITY

### 2.9.1. Observations regarding FRA

**TABLE 3. FOLLOW-UP OF OBSERVATIONS FROM DISCHARGE AUTHORITY**

Observations of the Discharge Authority	FRA's replies and measures	Implementation
Notes that, according to the Court's report, carry-overs of committed appropriations were high for operating expenditure, mainly due to the nature of the activities which include financing studies that span several months and often beyond year-end; notes that the Agency has introduced planning procedures to monitor the inevitable delays between the signing of contracts, deliveries and payments; notes that, according to the Agency's reply, the deviation between the initial planned amount and the final amount carried over was around 10%, within the margin of tolerance and that the old application for the monitoring of budget consumption has been replaced by a new one; calls on the Agency to improve its budget planning;	From 2012 to 2018, the agency monitored planned carry-overs using the MATRIX I application. This resulted in a decrease from € 5,062,739 in 2018 for 2019 to € 4,780,176 in 2019 for 2020. Moreover, the cancelled carry-overs represented 2.4 % of the total amount carried over to 2019, or € 121,000, a very solid indicator of good budget planning.  In 2019, the agency began developing a new monitoring software application, which was completed in 2020. The use of the new monitoring tool, MATRIX II, will improve the monitoring of budget planning further by anticipating transfers of funds and procurement procedures.	Ongoing

<p>Welcomes the Agency's cooperation with other agencies, in particular the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA), the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), and the European Asylum Support Office, to achieve common policy objectives; welcomes the fact that, in addition, the Agency regularly supports other Union agencies to reflect obligations stemming from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter) in their work; deems it necessary that the Agency continue the development of strong ties with other relevant Union institutions; encourages the Agency to explore ways of sharing resources and staff on overlapping tasks among other agencies with similar activities;</p>	<p>Following the adoption of the Frontex regulation, in November 2019 FRA signed a service-level agreement with Frontex to provide support for establishing the fundamental rights monitors envisaged in Article 110 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896. The regulation required Frontex to recruit at least 40 fundamental rights monitors and deploy them on operational activities by the end of 2020. By March 2020, FRA had provided Frontex with the first set of documents, including draft terms of references for the recruitment of the monitors, draft guidelines, a set of checklists and a compilation of relevant resource materials.</p> <p>FRA agreed on a cooperation plan with eu-LISA in 2020. Further to the working arrangement concluded in 2016 between FRA and eu-LISA, the agencies developed a cooperation plan covering the period 2020–2022. While the 2016 working arrangement remains the overarching framework for the agencies' cooperation, the cooperation plan aims to elaborate on specific actions, such as sharing best practices and respective experiences in IT security and business continuity in the area of ICT, and sharing expertise and best practices in areas such as HR, finance and procurement, corporate services and administrative matters.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Encourages the agency to pursue the digitalisation of its services.</p>	<p>The agency was able to be 100 % operational from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic because most of its internal procedures are digitalised. It quickly managed to implement electronic workflows for financial and other processes and it is in the process of implementing digital signatures as it follows the developments led by the European Parliament and the Commission.</p> <p>In parallel, the agency is implementing its cloud strategy, which was adopted in 2019, migrating all of its services to the cloud. This activity is in progress with the phase 1 – adoption of Office 365 – will be completed in March 2021. The second phase will include the remaining internal applications and is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2021.</p> <p>During this transition, existing digitalised processes will be revamped and new processed will be created.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Encourages the agency to intensify its cooperation with international organisations, such as the CoE and the United Nations, to find and use synergies, whenever possible.</p>	<p>The agency has further intensified its cooperation with the CoE and the United Nations. In December 2019, the agency launched the <b>EFRIS</b>, a single entry point for human rights information in the EU. For EU Member States and countries with observer status, EFRIS brings together their commitments to UN and CoE treaties and elements thereof, as well as the various assessments by human rights monitoring mechanisms in these organisations. It currently includes 60 of the assessments.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Notes, in light of the related comments made by the Discharge Authority, that e-procurement tools have been compulsory only as of 2019 and that the agency has introduced all e-procurement tools with the exception of e-submission, which was expected to be implemented in the fourth quarter of 2019; calls on the agency to report to the Discharge Authority on the progress made in this regard by June 2020.</p>	<p>The onboarding process of e-submission was finalised by the agency in January 2020. The first call for tenders using e-submission was published on 8 April 2020.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

<p>Notes several ongoing legal procedures regarding violations of the staff regulations and violations of the right to good administration (4); stresses that the agency should ensure that the requirements are met and emphasises that the agency should lead by example in advising on and respecting fundamental rights; deplors the fact that such violations can have a detrimental effect on public opinion and on the EU's reputation; regrets that such legal proceedings are costly for the agency and waste taxpayer money.</p>	<p>The agency would like to point to the existence of a potential misunderstanding on the ongoing legal procedures regarding alleged violations of the staff regulations and the right to good administration, as contained in paragraph 19.</p> <p>In terms of legal procedures, it should be noted that, in the first four months of 2020, two of the cases cited in paragraph 19 (i.e. C-682/19 P, <i>BP v. FRA</i>, and T-31/19, <i>AF v. FRA</i>) were dismissed by the CJEU as manifestly unfounded. The other two cases are at the appeal stage (i.e. C-669/19 P, <i>BP v. FRA</i>, and C-601/19 P, <i>BP v. FRA</i>), with the General Court decision being in favour of FRA in the first instance (T-888/16, <i>BP v. FRA</i>, and T-838/16, <i>BP v. FRA</i>).</p> <p>The agency is a well-functioning body that ensures an internal environment based on trust and respect towards its staff and full compliance with the rules governing EU public administration. In this sense, there are a few measures that the agency has in place to safeguard the protection of staff and EU funds, for example the policy on whistleblowing, the policy on anti-harassment, the agency's network of confidential counsellors, an equality and diversity group, periodical well-being surveys, an ethics officer and an anti-fraud strategy. In 2017, an audit on ethics and governance carried out by the IAS had positive results; minor recommendations were provided, all of which were implemented.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Calls on the agency to focus on disseminating the results of its research to the public and to reach out to the public via social media and other media outlets.</p>	<p>The agency further strengthened its communication procedures and dissemination of findings to the public in 2019, particularly through its social media channels. It increased its numbers of followers on three social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), including increased viewing of audio-visual material, and presented a new updated website in December 2020, making its findings more accessible on all mobile devices.</p> <p>With almost 100,000 print publications disseminated through the EU's main publications portal in 2019, FRA continued to top the ranking among all EU agencies in terms of publication orders at the Publications Office of the EU. Its top 10 publications, including handbooks on European law in different languages, were downloaded 63,887 times.</p> <p>Its contact base among media and influencers was expanded in 2019, with journalists and influencers identified for different topics and targeted email messages sent about forthcoming reports ahead of their issue dates. In addition, FRA issued its e-Media Toolkit on Migration to enhance quality journalism on this topic.</p> <p>Furthermore, in October 2019, the agency organised a workshop with leading human rights communicators to discuss and seek solutions on how best to effectively communicate human rights while engaging the public through powerful narratives. Workshop participants also explored ways to work more efficiently and effectively together as a community of human rights communicators.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>



## 2.9.2 Observations regarding all EU agencies

**TABLE 4. FOLLOW-UP OF OBSERVATIONS FROM DISCHARGE AUTHORITY**

Observations of the Discharge Authority	FRA's replies and measures	Implementation
Calls on all agencies to disclose their level of annual staff turnover and average levels of absence from work due to sick leave (...)	<p>Agency turnover rate in 2019</p> <p>Average level of absence from work due to sick leave</p> <p>Reply</p> <p>In general, staff turnover is consistently very low at FRA, mainly because temporary agent (TA) and contract agent (CA) posts are long-term posts. During 2019, 2 TAs out of 72 (2.8 %) and 3 CAs out of 32 (9.4%) left their posts.</p> <p>3.94 days overall.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>In total, 80 % of staff departures were due to new employment offered at another agency/joint undertaking/institution.</p> <p>None</p>	Implemented
Considers that agencies, bodies and institutions of the EU must set an example in terms of transparency; calls therefore for the publication of the full lists of contracts awarded through public procurement procedures, including those below the legally required € 15,000 threshold; does your agency publish or plan to publish a full list of contracts awarded, including those below the legally required € 15,000 threshold?	The agency publishes on its website before 30 June of the following year the contracts awarded, in accordance with Article 38 (publication of information on recipients and other information) of the Financial Regulation <sup>3</sup> . This article provides under paragraph 3b that details of very-low-value contracts (less than € 15,000) do not have to be published, to protect personal data, as many natural persons are contractors below this amount. This is in line with the guidelines provided by the Directorate-General for Budget and with case law (see <a href="#">C-92/09, Volker und Markus Schecke GbR v. Land Hessen</a> ).	Implemented
Does your agency have in place comprehensive rules, better controls and clear guidelines on cooling-off periods for outgoing staff, as well as other revolving-door-related measures?	FRA currently has in place the EB Decision 2018/06 on application by analogy of the Commission Decision C(2018)4048 on outside activities and assignments and on occupational activities after leaving the service, supplemented by specific declarations on resignation.	Implemented

## 2.10. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

In terms of its environmental management policy, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to extensive mandatory teleworking, FRA's existing measures were unchanged in 2020.

The initially defined targets and indicators for reducing energy and water consumption were met as a result of the limited numbers of staff in the office during the pandemic. Overall consumption was approximately 30 % compared to the normal situation when all staff would be present in the building.

In terms of waste management, the existing waste disposal approach was followed throughout 2020, contributing to the recycling of as much waste material as possible.

As a result of remote teleworking and the introduction of new e-workflows, the use of paper was reduced by 70 %. This aligns with the agency's efforts to digitise its internal procedures and replace paper-based workflows.

Overall, the use of printers and, more importantly, the use of personal printers was reduced exponentially, as paper-based workflows were replaced by e-workflows as part of the digital transformation efforts.

The initially planned donations of used IT equipment could not take place because of the pandemic. These have been postponed until the second half of 2021, depending on how the pandemic develops.



The task of installing light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs was also postponed until 2021, by agreement with the building owner.

## **2.11. ASSESSMENT BY MANAGEMENT**

This section reports on and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance of the achievement of the internal control objectives.

The authorising officer performed the required assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control system, based on the Internal Control Framework.

In addition, the authorising officer systematically examined the available control results and indicators, as well as the results related to budget implementation, the legality and regularity, the procurement procedures, fraud prevention and the observations and recommendations issued by the IAS, ECA and European Parliament through the discharge procedure. These elements were assessed to determine their impact on the management's assurance with regard to the achievement of control objectives.

The assessment of the internal controls demonstrated their effectiveness but also reinforced FRA's commitment to pursue further improvements under some of the areas covered. Overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended, risks and opportunities are being appropriately monitored and mitigated, and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented.

No significant weaknesses that may have a potential impact on the declaration of assurance of the authorising officer were identified and reported in any of the relevant parts as set out in the present report.

# **PART IIB: EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS**

### *Further increasing clarity, efficiency and impact of FRA*

In accordance with Article 30 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 168/2007, the agency has to commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements every five years. The independent external evaluation report looks at the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, coherence and EU added value, and the agency's alignment with the Common Approach on decentralised agencies. In accordance with Article 31 of the above regulation, the Management Board examined the conclusions of the 2017 evaluation and issued to the Commission recommendations regarding changes to the agency. Following on from these recommendations, the Management Board will also ensure follow-up of the external evaluation by delivering the agency's multiannual strategy for 2018–2022. In line with the Common Approach endorsed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission (roadmap action 55<sup>4</sup>), this follow-up action plan specifically addresses those areas of improvement identified by the external evaluator and actions falling under the prerogative of the director. These actions are clustered into three categories of actions, namely actions to increase *clarity* (Table 5), *impact* (Table 6) and *efficiency* (Table 7).

**TABLE 5. INCREASE CLARITY**

	Action to be taken	Actions completed
1.1	Streamline strategic priorities and objectives in the next five-year strategic plan	Following the external evaluation, the strategic pillars and objectives have been identified in the FRA Strategy 2018–2022.
1.2	Implement FRA strategic priorities and objectives in FRA communication activities (e.g. publications, brochures, website and social media channels)	The ongoing actions include identifying four communication priorities in 2019, targeting social media communications, developing a new FRA brochure outlining the agency's objectives and key areas of work, and fully redesigning the website to clearly present the agency's areas of work and priorities.
1.3	Streamline the link between themes/projects/objectives/priorities to better detect the impact at all levels	The FRA Programming Document is now based on the following structure: multiannual programming and annual programming. At both levels of programming a description of the expected results and potential impacts is provided.
1.4	Include specific questions concerning new activities during stakeholder consultation exercises	Specific questions about “planned and potential activities/outputs” are now included in both the consultation on the director's note on the development of the annual work programme (year N – 2) and the consultation on the annual work programme (year N – 1).
1.5	Include in the Programming Document more information about the expected results/impact to be achieved	More information about the planned results and potential impacts has been included in the Programming Document and is described at the level of FRA strategic programmes and FRA thematic areas respectively.
1.6	Include in FRA project fiches more information about policy relevance, target groups and beneficiaries	This information about policy relevance as well as the specific target groups and beneficiaries of FRA outputs is now included in the Programming Document and, in particular, in all project fiches planned in the annual work programme.
1.7	Involve external stakeholders in the mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022	The mid-term review of FRA Strategy 2018–2022 will be implemented in 2020. In this context, a procurement process will be launched at the beginning of 2020 to outsource some of the assessment activities needed for the mid-term review.
1.8	Organise the mid-term review of the strategy based on each pillar/objective and structure the report based on the results	This approach of structuring the mid-term review will be reflected in the terms of reference of the above-mentioned procurement process. As a result, the assessment will be based on each pillar/objective and the report structured according to the results achieved.
1.9	Put in place a stakeholder engagement plan clearly identifying the level and type of engagement and expected outcomes in the agency's programmatic areas	FRA designated policy analysts to each of its thematic programmes to ensure that stakeholders are properly informed and engaged when relevant. In addition, a revised version of the procedure for project design and implementation has been developed, which sets out the “identification of stakeholders and stakeholder engagement plans” as an essential step.
1.10	Enhance the integrated planning approach and revise the key performance indicators and targets of the agency	The integrated planning approach has been enhanced and the revised version adopted by the director/management team and communicated to all staff members. A revision of FRA key performance indicators is currently ongoing and will be finalised in 2021.

**TABLE 6. INCREASE IMPACT**

2.1	Ensure that the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 reflects the recommendations, in terms of priorities and objectives (pillars IV and V)	The current strategy builds on the recommendations received and includes the strategic priorities on which FRA's operational activities are based.
2.2	Prepare a publications policy and dissemination strategy to prioritise and influence policy and clearly identify the role of stakeholders and their multiplying effect	As a result of the internal restructuring carried out in November 2019, the new Communications and Events Unit continued to prepare an annual publications policy and implemented a more strategic and targeted communications and dissemination strategy.
2.3	Apply FRA's <i>10 keys to effectively communicating human rights</i> and give its messages an authentic voice	The Communicating Rights Programme aims to ensure the application of the 10 keys to effectively communicating human rights across all of FRA's communication activities. The programme was created as part of the restructuring carried out in November 2019. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, FRA has intensified its social media communications, including 'real-life' stories from civil society in its postings.
2.4	Continue engagement to provide advice to Member State representatives on data collection in specific fields	Engagement with Member States on data collection in specific fields continues, particularly with regard to the agency's large-scale survey data collection. Research and Data and Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building units work closely to advise Member States on data collection.
2.5	Include in selected projects in the annual work programme specific cooperation activities with EU agencies for the production of joint outputs	Individual staff members have been assigned responsibility to liaise with specific EU agencies concerning cooperation and engagement, including any joint activities in a given year that are reflected in FRA's Programming Document.

2.6	Include a 'follow-up component of activities' in each work programme to generate increased impact of FRA projects at EU/national levels	FRA has invested more internal resources in the development of its survey databases, which are available through the agency's website for public use and which allow for the extraction of data at Member State level. This is intended to increase impact at the Member State level.
2.7	Provide technical assistance through specific projects and capacity-building activities, targeting bodies and agencies at the national level in areas of EU competence	The FRA Programming Document 2020–2022 sets out specific 'EU Charter of Fundamental Rights' training at national level. In addition, all other capacity-building/technical assistance activities carried out refer to the charter.
2.8	Organise FRA conferences in cooperation with EU presidencies and other institutions	FRA continues to provide fora for discussions on fundamental rights involving relevant stakeholder groups at different levels. In 2019, these included two presidency conferences, one national Antisemitism Networking Workshop at FRA and the annual Human Rights Communicators' Network Workshop.
2.9	Support the national human rights infrastructure in selected EU Member States	FRA has completed its research on the situation of NHRIs in the EU and published the report <i>Strong and effective national human rights institutions – Challenges, promising practices and opportunities</i> in September 2020. The report is being promoted nationally to strengthen NHRIs further.
2.10	Implement systematic cooperation with civil society organisations, national human rights structures, international human rights organisations and national authorities	FRA further developed the EFRIS and continued to submit FRA data and analyses to UN and CoE monitoring mechanisms. It tracks the use of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights at national level and, in 2020, the focus of the report was on 10 years of the Charter. The agency implemented various consultations of its civil society network and convened a working party meeting of its network of NLOs on national human rights action plans.

**TABLE 7. INCREASE EFFICIENCY**

3.1	Inform about the roles and responsibilities of all staff and the agency working procedures	During the transition to a new organisational structure, the agency completed the harmonisation of job titles and the revision of the most important internal procedures, policies and processes.
3.2	Review the Single Programming Document to show more clearly how human and financial resources are allocated for all agency activities	Allocation of human and financial resources is now provided at the level of the MAF thematic area as well as for each project, and the allocation of cross-cutting activities is described for each main component of the activities to be undertaken.
3.3	Continue to prepare a six-month priority plan	Preparation of a six-month priority plan will be continued.
3.4	Appoint an adviser on communications and a scientific adviser	Following an internal recruitment procedure, the director appointed an adviser on communications and a scientific adviser in 2018.
3.5	Develop internal and external communication frameworks and define and implement an internal communications policy and related action plan	The external communication framework was developed in line with the FRA Strategy 2018–2022 and the Programming Document 2019–2021 and implemented through the Communicating Rights Programme (see points 1.2, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.8). As a result of the internal restructuring, the position of communications adviser to the director was created.

## Endnotes

- 1 European Commission (2016), *Communication to the Commission: Synergies and efficiencies in the Commission – New ways of working*, SEC(2016) 170 final, Brussels, 4 April 2016.
- 2 Art. 11 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No. 1074/1999, OJ 2013 L 248.
- 3 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012
- 4 Directors to prepare a roadmap with a follow-up action plan regarding the conclusions of retrospective evaluations, and report on progress bi-annually to the Commission.



# PART III: ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

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## 3.1. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

FRA uses the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives, in accordance with the internal control principles and having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

FRA has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on those of the Commission, aimed at ensuring the achievement of policy, management and operational objectives.

FRA conducts various activities with the purpose of assessing the level of implementation and effectiveness of the Internal Control Framework. The assessment and the consequent prioritising exercise are carried out on the basis of the following sources: internal assessment, register of exceptions, *ex post* control, fraud prevention, risk assessment and audit findings (IAS and ECA).

### 3.1.1. Internal assessment

At the end of 2020, FRA started an internal assessment of the level of implementation of the new Internal Control Framework. The new Internal Control Framework is based on five components and 17 principles. Each principle is further deployed in specific characteristics.

Before assessing the internal control system, FRA introduced (where applicable) its own indicators and baselines for each principle, based on those of the Commission and following the description of each characteristic, as best adapted to its specificities and risks. These baselines were a starting point for regular monitoring and specific assessments.

Following the assessment against the established indicators, it can be concluded that the system overall includes all the components of the Internal Control Framework that are present and that are functioning together in an integrated manner.

At the level of principles, it can be concluded that all principles are present and functioning as intended. However some improvements to principles 4, 5, 6 and 14 are required.

In this regard, in 2021, the agency will undertake actions to improve the regular updating of job descriptions (principle 4), will seek to achieve the timely implementation of the career development report exercise (principle 5), will assess the possibility of outsourcing the definition of an integrated internal communication policy (principle 14) and will strengthen with dedicated reporting tools budget planning and monitoring at management level (principle 6).

### **3.1.2. Exceptions**

In addition to the internal assessment and following the provisions of principle 12, FRA has in place a process for the registration and authorisation of exceptions, with the register being centrally maintained and regularly provided to the external auditing bodies IAS and ECA.

The period under evaluation reveals that the Internal Control Framework based on strong *ex ante* controls is able to detect the most significant deviations from the Financial Regulation, leading to the registration of the exceptions and allowing appropriate decision-making.

In 2020, no exceptions were registered with a value greater than € 5,000.

### **3.1.3. Ex post controls**

In accordance with its financial rules, in 2020, FRA performed an *ex post* control exercise. The risk-based identification of target areas allows for an efficient use of resources and a clear identification of areas in need of control.

In 2020, based on a specific risk assessment, an exercise was completed on a sample of transactions performed during the final weeks of the financial year 2018/2019. A total of 16 transactions corresponding to an amount of around € 450,000 were subject to a supervisory desk review. The activity resulted in some formal remarks but no critical issues.

In conclusion, the analysis of the available control results did not show any significant weaknesses that could have a material impact on the legality and regularity of the financial operations. The control objective for legality and regularity has thus been achieved.

FRA considers that the necessity of these controls is undeniable, as the totality of the appropriations could be at risk if they were not in place.

### **3.1.4. Fraud prevention and detection**

The implementation of the internal control systems creates a reinforced overall environment in which fraud is prevented by the integrated application of different measures embedded in FRA processes. Furthermore, IAS activities and the visits from the ECA provide an independent assessment of the existing level of assurance. Aiming to minimise the risk of fraud, FRA continues to raise awareness among staff members and contractors to facilitate the detection and prevention of possible fraudulent activities. FRA has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2014 on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. This is updated every four years. Following the adoption of the revised anti-fraud strategy at the Management Board meeting in December 2018, FRA, in the reporting year, devoted most of its efforts to implementing the relevant action plan. This resulted in constant monitoring of the existing legal framework, revision of its fraud prevention training and raising awareness of staff through the provision of information sessions, and performing dedicated controls and fraud risk assessments.

On the basis of the available information, FRA has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are effective.

### **3.1.5. Prevention and management of conflicts of interest**

Prevention and management of conflicts of interest is carried out through awareness raising and by monitoring the validity of the declarations of interest signed by the Management Board, the management team and staff involved in recruitment and procurement activities. Furthermore, outside activities carried out by staff, including external publications, are closely monitored.

## 3.2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

FRA has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that all principles are present and functioning as intended, with some improvements needed as a result of minor deficiencies relating to principles 4, 5, 6 and 14.

## 3.3. STATEMENT OF THE MANAGER IN CHARGE OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

### Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

*I, the undersigned,*

*Manager in charge of risk management and internal control within FRA,*

*In my capacity as manager in charge of risk management and internal control, declare that, in accordance with FRA's Internal Control Framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the agency to the executive director.*

*I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.*

*Vienna, 20 May 2021*



*Constantinos Manolopoulos*

# PART IV: MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

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4.2.	RESERVATIONS	92

**This part reviews the assessment of the elements reported in Parts II and III, and presents the overall conclusion supporting the declaration of assurance and whether or not it should be qualified with reservations.**

## 4.1. REVIEW OF THE ELEMENTS SUPPORTING ASSURANCE

The information reported in Parts II and III stems from the results of the management and auditor monitoring contained in the reports listed. These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported, and results in complete coverage of the budget managed by FRA.

In conclusion:

- there were no reservations listed in the previous years' annual activity reports;
- there were no critical or very important IAS recommendations, and those of lower importance are being addressed for prompt closure;
- the ECA issued a positive declaration of assurance for the financial year 2019 on the legality and regularity of the transactions;
- there are no ongoing observations from the European Parliament.

## 4.2. RESERVATIONS

At FRA, the weaknesses, which are likely to lead to a reservation fall within the scope of the declaration of assurance, relate to the reasonable assurance on the use of resources, sound financial management and legality and regularity of operations. To assess a weakness as material, FRA analyses the fall in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Materiality is the basis for defining significant weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The materiality criteria used by FRA and the method used to assess their significance are presented below.

Qualitative criteria are linked to failure in achieving FRA's short-term objectives, reputational risks to FRA, significant weaknesses in FRA control systems and repetitive errors. These involve the use of resources, sound financial management, and the legality and regularity of transactions. Their significance is judged on the basis of:

- the nature and scope of the weakness;
- the duration of the weakness;
- the existence of compensatory measures (mitigating controls that reduce the impact of the weakness);
- the existence of effective corrective actions to correct the weakness (action plans and financial corrections) that have had a measurable impact.

In quantitative terms, with regard to legality and regularity, a weakness is considered material in cases where the financial impact or risk of loss is greater than 2 % of FRA's authorised annual budget.

Taking into consideration the above, no weaknesses, including those covering potential reputational events, were identified related to the financial management of appropriations inside FRA, so no reservations are made in this context.

In conclusion, the management team has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and are working as intended, risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated, and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The director, in his capacity as authorising officer, and the Head of Corporate Services, in his capacity as

authorising officer by delegation and manager in charge of risk management and internal control, have signed the declaration of assurance.

# **PART V: DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE**



*I, the undersigned, director of European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights,*

*In my capacity as authorising officer,*

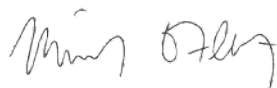
*Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.*

*State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*

*This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, and the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.*

*Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here that could harm the interests of the agency.*

*Vienna, 20 May 2021*



*Michael O'Flaherty*

# Annex I: Core business statistics

## 2020 AT A GLANCE



\* 144 European-level publications, including publications by the European Parliament and the European Council, 98 publications in academic journals and 5 JHA agency strategy documents.

## FRA'S KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

FRA has established a performance management framework (PMF) to better monitor and evaluate its performance and impact. The PMF consists of an intervention logic and indicators. In the context of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report, output and short-term indicators have been populated through the collection of quantitative data and qualitative feedback from FRA's stakeholders. Long-term and aspirational indicators that, because of their own nature, can be measured only after the completion of FRA's activities in the programming cycle (e.g. 2018–2022), have also been partially included in this report. The full assessment of these performance indicators will be carried out through comprehensive external studies (such as the external evaluation of FRA's strategic plan – the next edition will be published in 2025).

The table below shows the PMF indicators populated with data from core business statistics. As shown, FRA has met or exceeded its targets for the majority of the indicators in the PMF in 2020. FRA has performed particularly well in relation to the output indicators, where it has met all targets. The majority of the short-term indicator targets and some of the long-term indicator targets, included in the table below, have also been exceeded in 2020. It should be noted that a comprehensive and more detailed reporting on long-term impact indicators can only be done from a long-term and multi-year perspective.

FRA's key performance indicators with 2020 values

Indicator	Source	Target	2020 value	
<b>Output indicator</b>				
I1	Number of hearings or presentations to institutional stakeholders across levels of governance	Core business statistics	51	205
I2	Percentage of responses to requests for opinions and other advice	Core business statistics	11	29
I3	Number of research activities (per type of task, thematic area, type of outputs and geographical area)	Core business statistics	129	253
I4	Number of good practices identified (per thematic area)	Core business statistics	15	80
I5	Number of publications produced (per thematic area)	Core business statistics	99	4,960
I6	Number of relevant stakeholders receiving FRA information	Core business statistics	825,260	7,557,249
I7	Number of stakeholders receiving a copy of the publications	Core business statistics	2,340	31,265
I8	Number of documents produced whose purpose is to present methods and standards (including sets of indicators)	Core business statistics	44	44
I9	Number of networking events organised	Core business statistics	60	155 <sup>1</sup>
I10	Number of participants at FRA events	Core business statistics	813	8,040
I11	Numbers of materials and tools produced related to awareness-raising activities	Core business statistics	2,150	163,079
<b>Short-term indicators</b>				
I12	Proportion of key stakeholders that consider evidence and opinions provided by FRA to be relevant, reliable, useful and of high quality	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	3	39 (90 %)²

I13	Proportion of key stakeholders and experts that consider that reliable, relevant and high-quality information resulting from FRA's data collection, research and analysis activities is delivered to the intended target group (by type of output)	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	10	77 (67 %) <sup>3</sup>
I14	Proportion of stakeholders/FRP members that think that FRA has been successful in promoting dialogue with civil society	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 50 %	31 (74 %)
I15	Proportion of FRP and other network members/stakeholders that consider the networking/collaboration activities organised by FRA to be useful to their organisation for promoting fundamental rights	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 70 %	32 (73 %)
I16	Proportion of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree that FRA's awareness-raising activities contribute to a greater shared understanding of trends in fundamental rights	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	43 (93%)
I17	Proportion of stakeholders that came into contact with FRA as a result of the communication activities	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	101 (73 %)
I18	Proportion of outputs (publications, opinions, communications, etc.) translated in all 24 official languages of the EU	Core business statistics	6	8
I19	Proportion of stakeholders that consider that they would not have found out about FRA if the it was less active in communicating	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 70 %	141 (65 %) <sup>4</sup>
I20	Proportion of media coverage of FRA's activities (by type of awareness raising material and media channel)	FRA outreach statistics	3,501	4,708 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Long-term indicators</b>				
I24	Proportion of stakeholders that consider that FRA's conclusions and recommendations from opinions and other policy advice contribute to the implementation of legislation and policies in a manner that contributes to the desired impacts of the agency	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	20 (65 %) <sup>6</sup>
I25	Number of references to FRA's conclusions or recommendations or FRA's activities in policies and legislation	Core business statistics	20	4,894
<b>Aspirational indicators</b>				
I26	Proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has influenced EU and Member States' legislation and policies related to fundamental rights practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities)	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 50 %	EU level – 3 (75 %), Member State level – 16 (73 %) <sup>7</sup>
I27	Proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA's range of activities has actively contributed to the implementation of fundamental rights legislation and policies in practice (a) at EU level and (b) at Member State level (by type of activities)	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 50 %	EU level – 3 (75 %), Member State level – 9 (44 %) <sup>8</sup>
I30	Proportion of non-governmental stakeholders that agree that FRA's work has directly influenced their work and their capacity to promote fundamental rights	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	Average target: 50 %	22 (88 %)
<b>Other indicators</b>				
*	Number of formal/oral inputs to EU institutions and Member states	Core business statistics	93	74
**	Number of formal/oral inputs to other stakeholders	Core business statistics	87	86
***	Number of capacity-building activities organised/co-organised by FRA	Core business statistics	23	19 <sup>9</sup>

****	Number of FRA participations in external events without formal presentations	Core business statistics	21	34
*****	Number of press releases/news broadcasts/posts	Core business statistics	61	102
*****	Number of downloads/visits	Core business statistics	2,521,700	6,968,661
*****	Proportion of stakeholders that agree that FRA activities contributed to developing a human rights culture at national/local levels	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	15 (60 %)
*****	Proportion of stakeholders that used FRA outputs for awareness-raising purposes	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	40 (87 %)
*****	Proportion of stakeholders that used FRA outputs for advocacy purposes	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	32 (76 %)
*****	Proportion of stakeholders that are satisfied with the communication channel with FRA experts for receiving real-time advice	FRA user satisfaction survey 2020	N/A	35 (64 %)

NB: N/A, not applicable.

The table below contains detailed data on FRA's performance in 2020 in each area of activity.

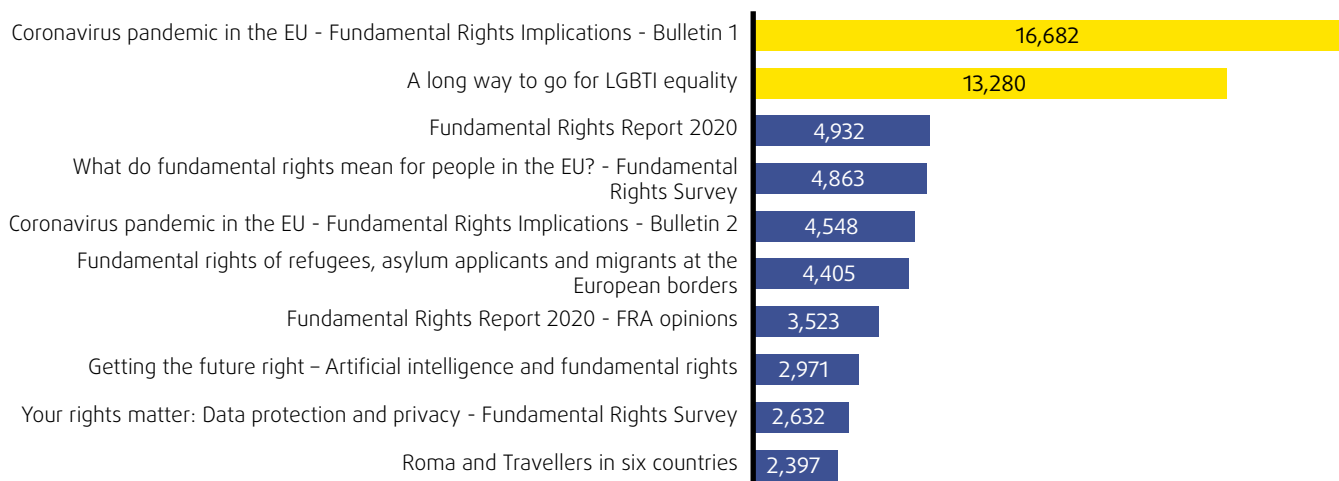
	Equality and non-discrimination	Inclusion of Roma	Racism	Rights of the child	Information society	Judicial cooperation	Victims of crime	Migration	Cross-cutting
Number of hearings and presentations (11)	11	11	8	8	17	0	11	24	115
Number of opinions and other advice (12)	12	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	14
Number of research activities (13)	4	1	32	0	104	34	34	5	40
Number of good practices (14)	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	20	40
Number of publications produced (15)	2	4	2	0	4,709	4	17	18	204
Number of relevant stakeholders receiving FRA information (16)	800	0	200	0	250	8	3	210	7,555,778
Number of stakeholders receiving copies of FRA publications (17)	0	0	4,660	0	13,000	0	8,663	200	4,742
Number of documents produced whose purpose is to present methods and standards (18)	1	3	2	8	11	0	1	4	14
Number of networking events (internal and external events) (19)	23	25	20	4	15	1	4	15	48

Number of participants at FRA events (I10)	0	504	50	0	2,152	0	10	40	5,284
Number of tools produced related to awareness-raising activities (I11)	161,463	6	0	8	8	0	1	4	1,589

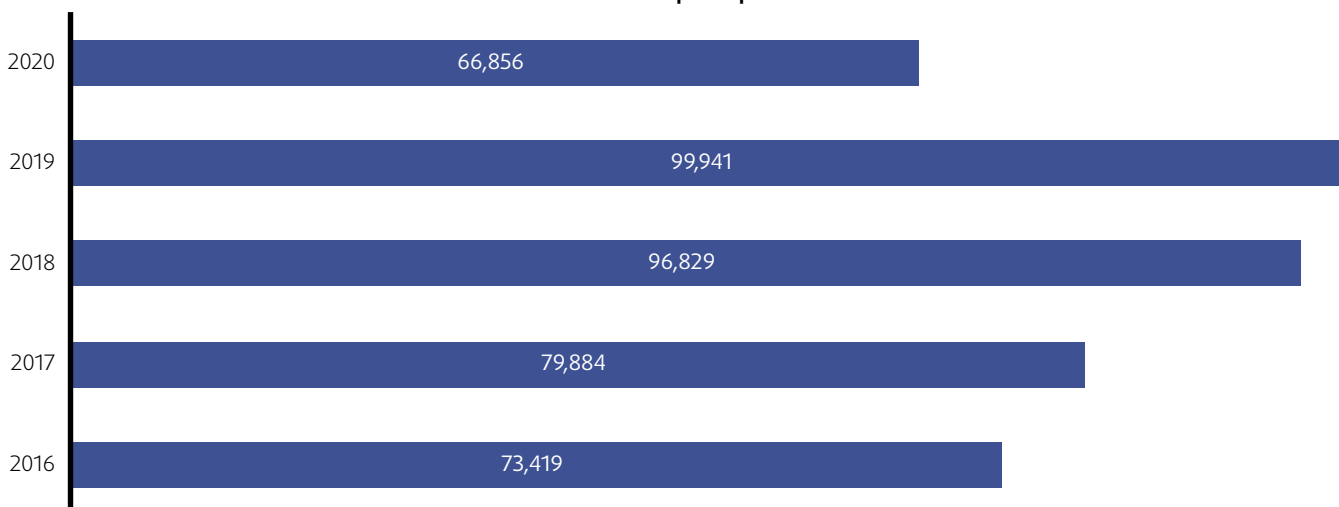
## FRA'S OUTREACH: COMMUNICATION STATISTICS

FRA's media presence has increased considerably over the years. The figures below provide a snapshot of FRA's media coverage and its presence on social media in 2020, as well as some relevant information on the agency's performance in the online space (i.e. online events, videos and video messages). Data included in the figures are based on data collected by the FRA Communications and Events Unit and the analysis carried out by the external contractor eu.Ness.

### Top 10 FRA publications downloaded

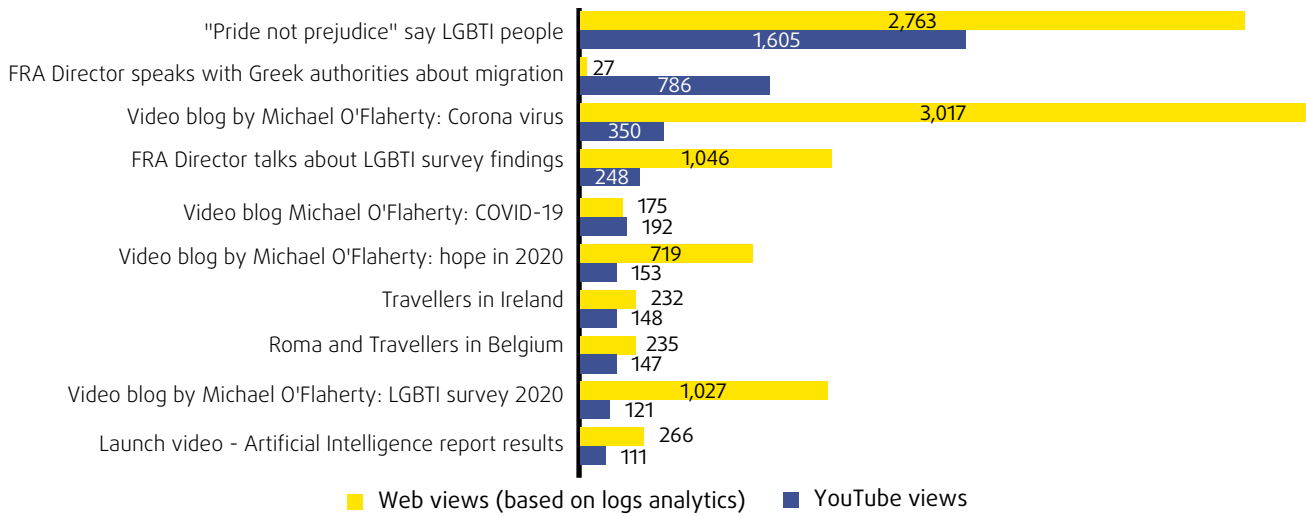


### Number of FRA's print publications

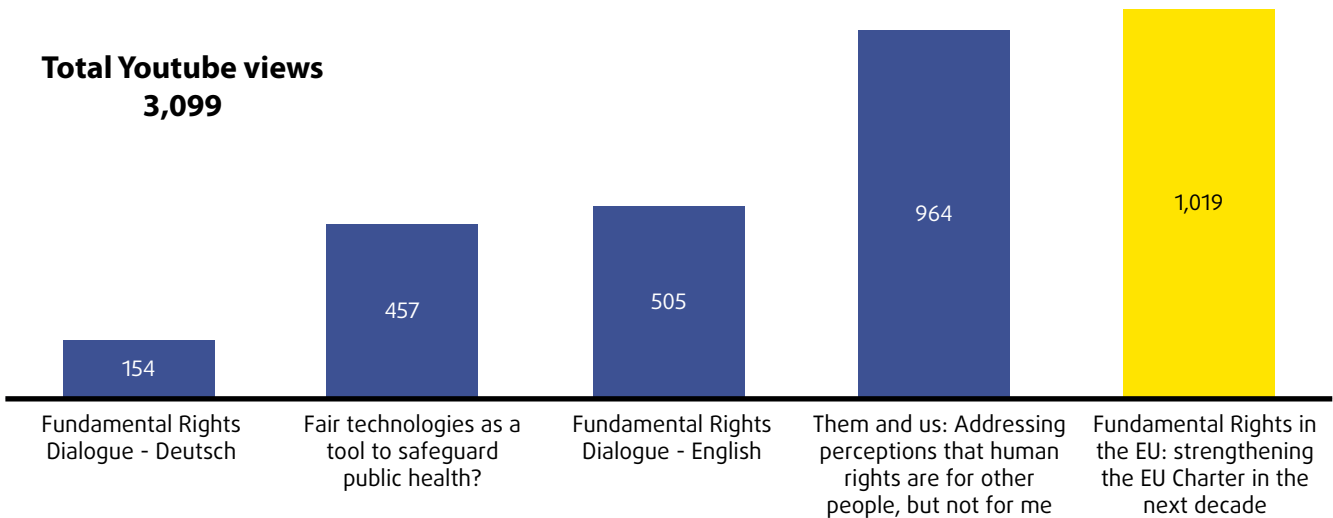


NB: Printed publications include publications disseminated through the Publications Office of the EU as well as publications distributed directly by FRA.

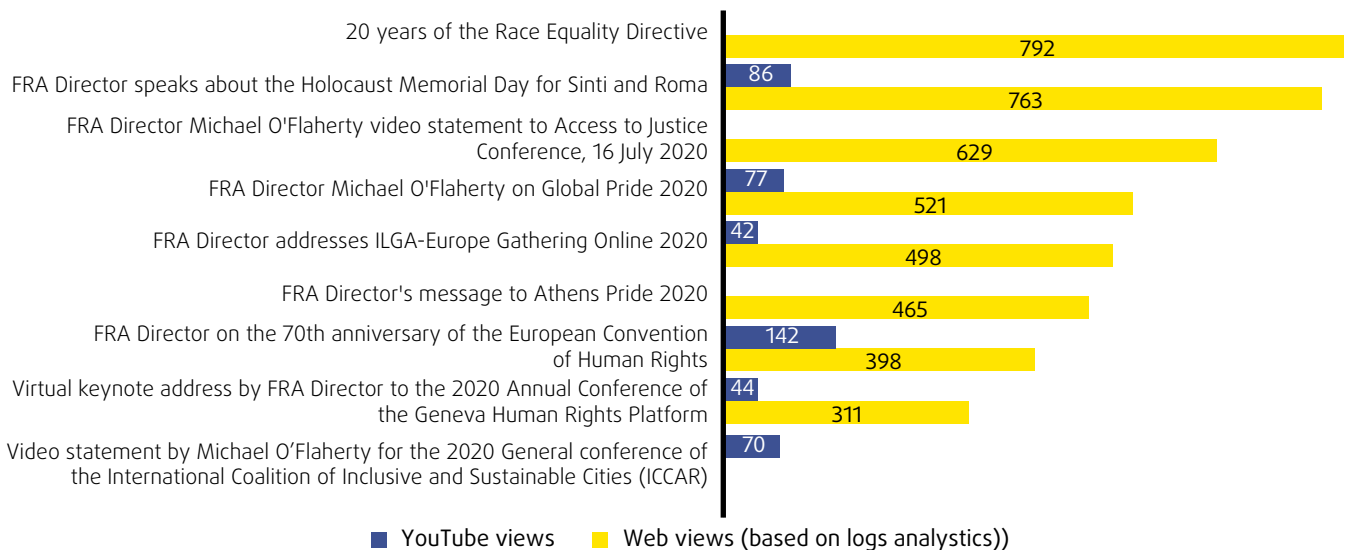
### YouTube and web views of FRA's videos



### YouTube views of FRA's online events



### YouTube and web views of FRA's video messages



## FRA on social media

	Impressions	New followers	Total number of posts
LinkedIn	1,122,172	11,054	365
Facebook	1,498,726	12,685	440
Twitter	4,863,046	11,050	684

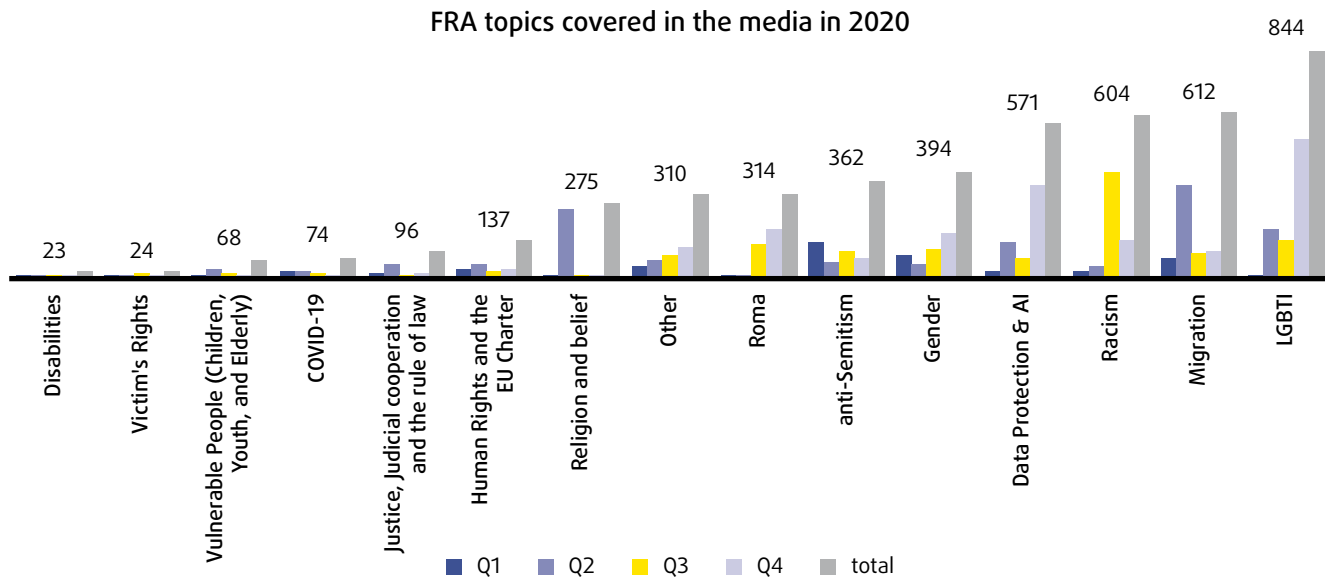
Note: YouTube views of FRA's online events include both recordings of events and livestream views.

## Weekly breakdown of FRA's media coverage in 2020

Month	Week 0	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
Jan		22	46	63	48	179
Feb	35	34	38	28		135
Mar	25	25	36	22	74	182
Apr		69	35	49	33	186
May		25	158	118	75	376
Jun	42	164	153	325	42	726
Jul		49	34	128	100	311
Aug	50	39	70	27	39	225
Sep		75	87	412	94	668
Oct	94	164	52	56	55	421
Nov	37	282	233	129	120	801
Dec		91	407			498

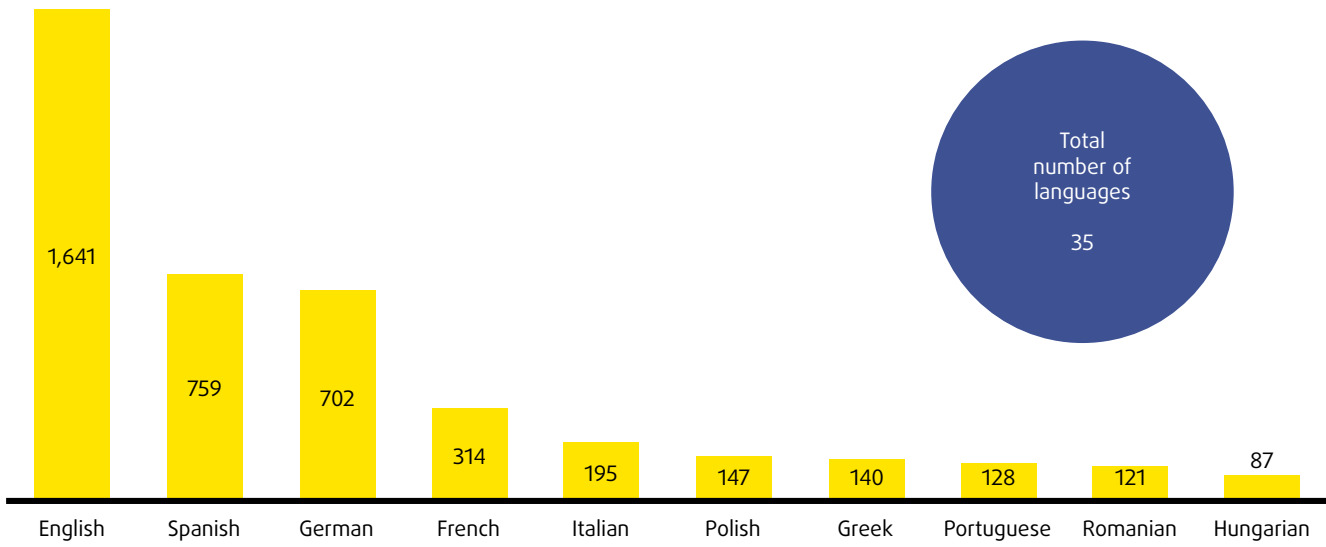
Total number of articles for the year 2020: 4708

## FRA topics covered in the media in 2020

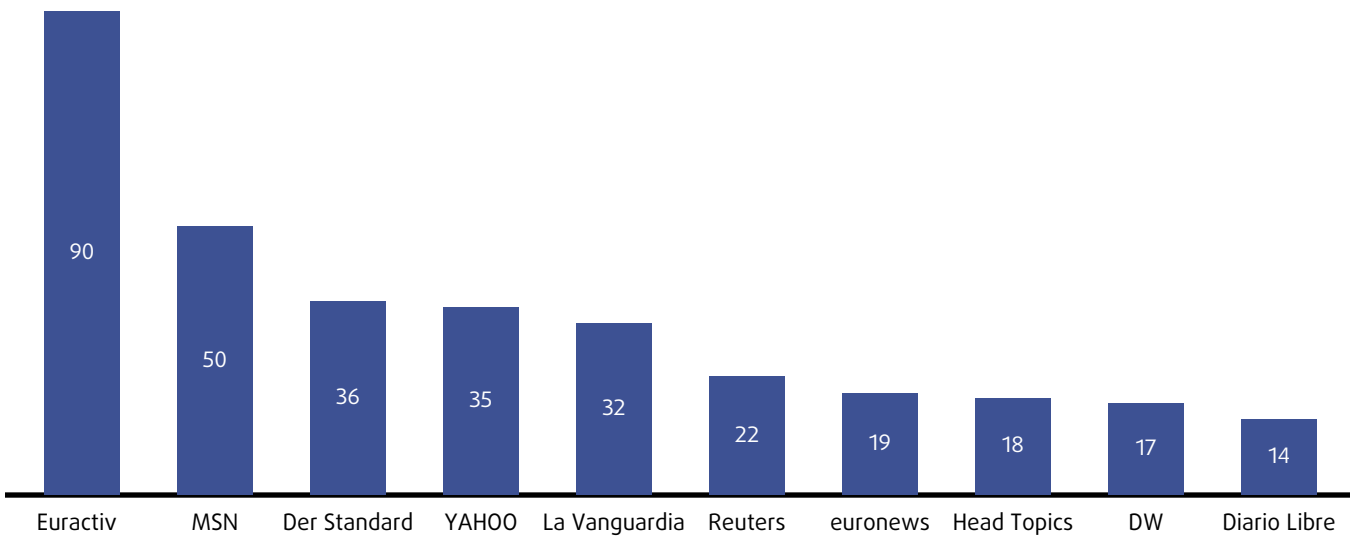




### Main languages FRA media coverage



### Top 10 outlets covering FRA 2020



## REFERENCES MADE TO FRA IN 2020

### References to FRA in academic journal databases

A review of references to FRA's 2020 products in academic journal databases (Google Scholar, EBSCO, JSTOR and Project MUSE) was conducted. A combination of web scraping and manual searches was used. For Google Scholar, FRA products with multiple citation results were scraped, allowing for automatic extraction of Google Scholar listing results such as publication titles, web links and location details. The extracted results showed variation in how FRA products were cited; therefore, the results for 2020 editions of FRA products were manually checked for accuracy. For EBSCO, JSTOR and Project MUSE, researchers searched for the titles of FRA publications published in 2020. For each FRA product, the exact title of the product was used as the search term.

The graph below shows the numbers of references in academic journal databases to FRA's most cited 2020 publications.

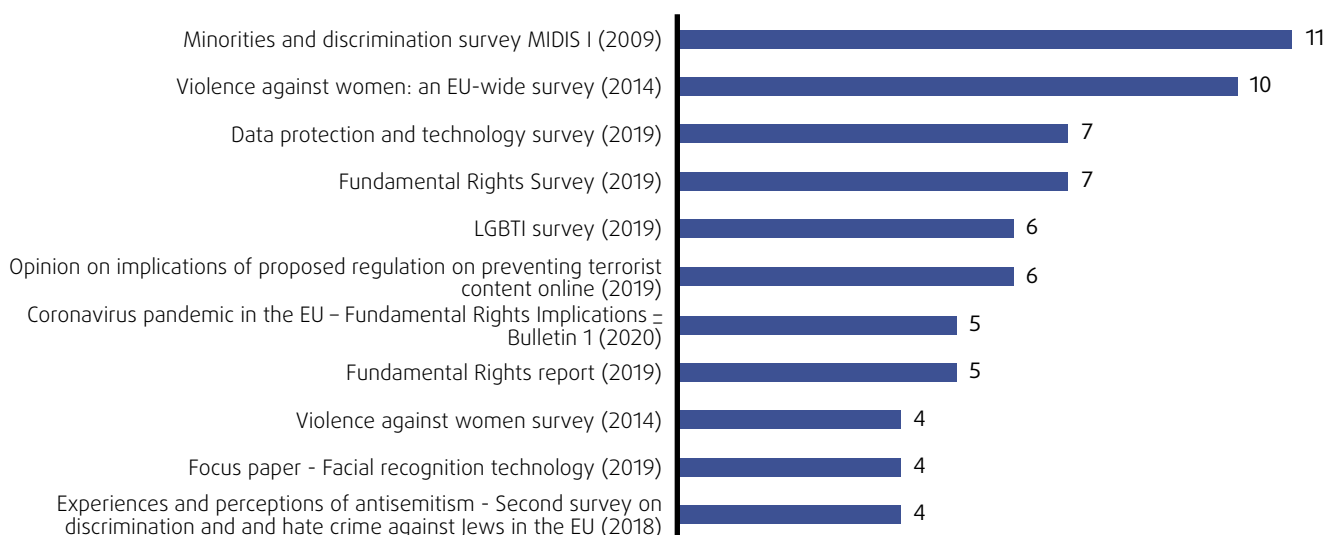
Numbers of academic journal articles that reference FRA's 2020 product



### References to FRA in European-level publications

References made to FRA products in European publications by the European Commission and European Parliament were identified by FRA project managers and categorised by FRA product. The top FRA products mentioned by publications issued in 2020 are shown below.

EU publications that reference FRA products from any year



## References to FRA by other EU agencies

A manual search of JHA agencies' strategy documents covering 2020 was carried out. Five references were made to FRA in the strategic programming documents of the following JHA agencies.

### References to FRA by JHA agencies

EU agency programming document	Reference made to FRA
<b>CEPOL</b> Single programming document: Years 2020–2022	FRA mentioned as an external partner.
<b>EASO</b> EASO single programming document: Multiannual programming 2021–2023	FRA mentioned under 'asylum thematic cooperation' as an EU agency that EASO will continue to cooperate with.
<b>EMCDDA</b> Programming document 2020–22	FRA mentioned under a section on 'Business driver 2: partnership' as a main partner agency that is active in health.
<b>eu-LISA</b> Single programming document 2020–2022	FRA mentioned under 'Core business support activities' in reference to a joint training initiative on the use of IT systems.
<b>Europol</b> Europol programming document 2020–2022	FRA mentioned under 'Cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies'.

## STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

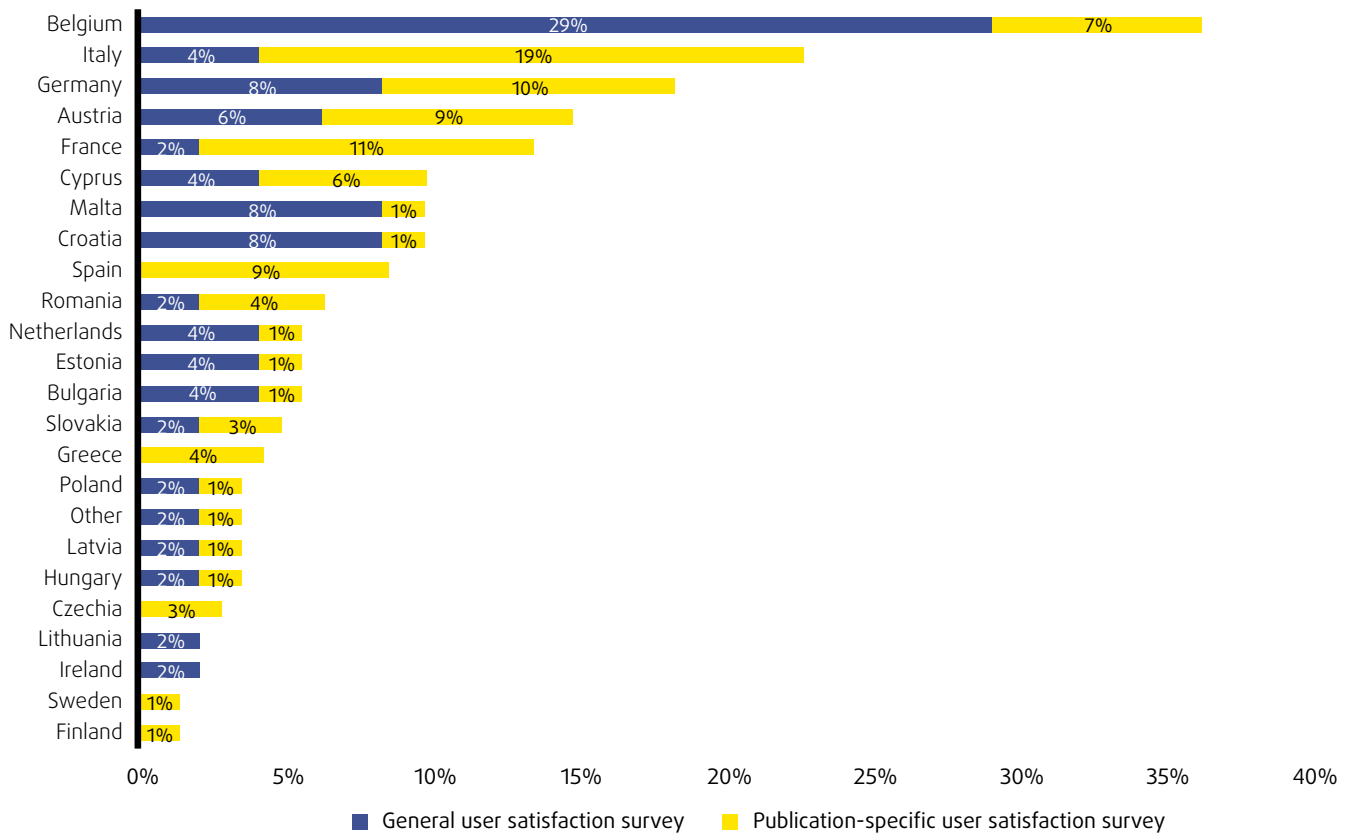
In 2021, FRA commissioned ICF to conduct a stakeholder satisfaction survey. The aim of the survey was to collect stakeholders' views of FRA's 2020 publications (e.g. reports, datasets and handbooks), including how FRA's publications in 2020 had met stakeholders' expectations and their views on the quality, usefulness and relevance of these publications. The survey was based on two different questionnaires: one to target general stakeholders and one to target stakeholders that had been engaged with specific FRA projects in 2020.

The **general user satisfaction survey questionnaire** had two introductory questions, nine questions on information and content produced by FRA in 2020 and four questions on stakeholders' communication preferences. The survey ran from 16 February to 5 March 2021. A total of 49 stakeholders responded to the survey.

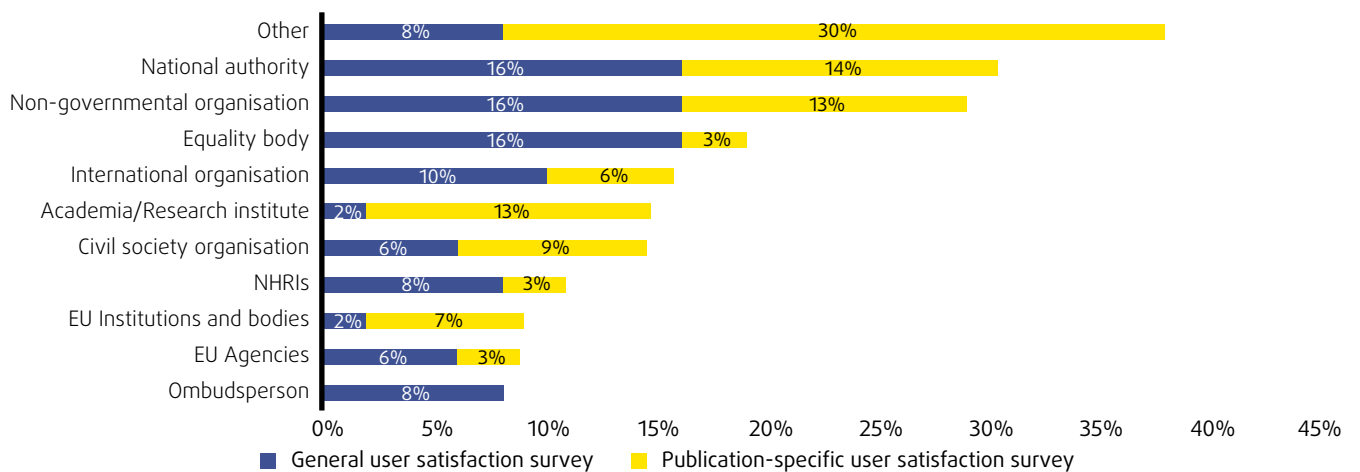
The **publication-specific user satisfaction survey questionnaire** was jointly run by ICF and FRA's Publication Office. This survey focused on stakeholder views of specific 2020 publications pertinent to FRA projects that stakeholders had been involved in. The survey ran from 1 to 5 March 2021. A total of 70 stakeholders responded to the surveys (31 to FRA's PO Office survey and 39 to the ICF-run survey).

The following figures provide a breakdown of respondents by Member State and type of organisation across both surveys.

### Geographical distribution of survey respondents



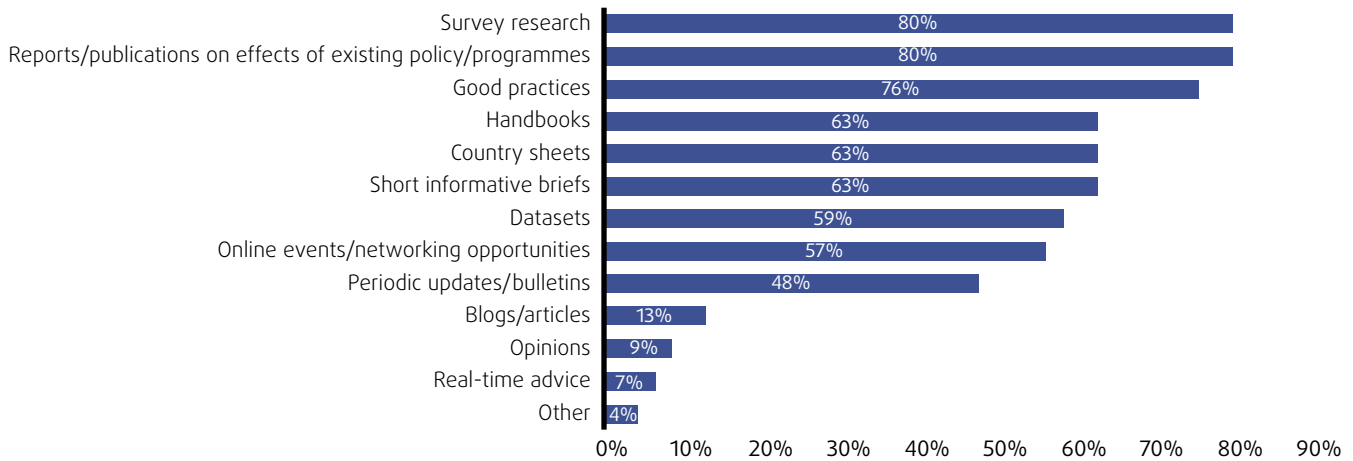
### Types of organisations represented by survey respondents



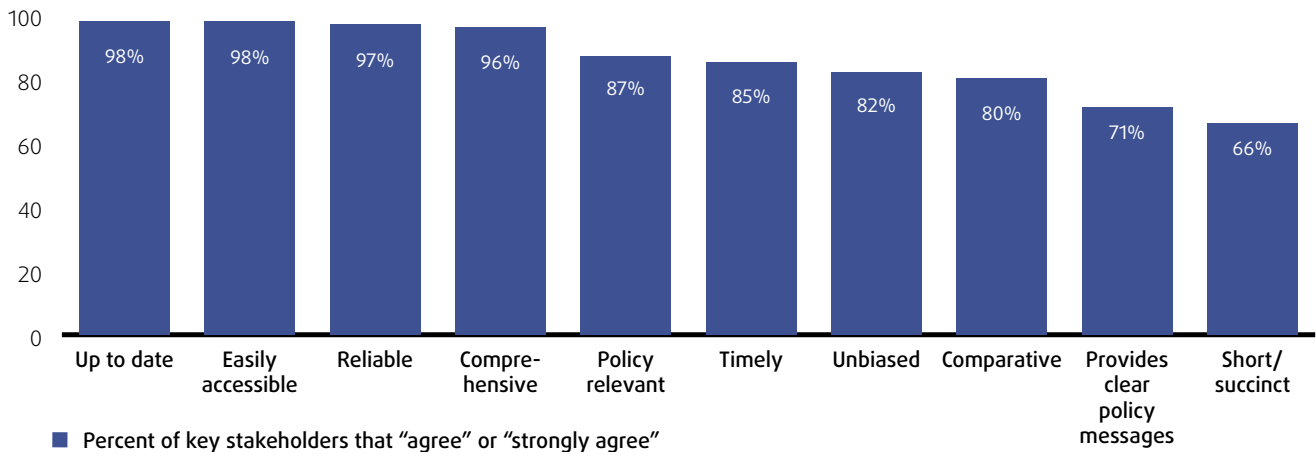
#### User satisfaction survey: general questionnaire

The following graphs provide an overview of the results from FRA's **general user satisfaction survey 2020**.

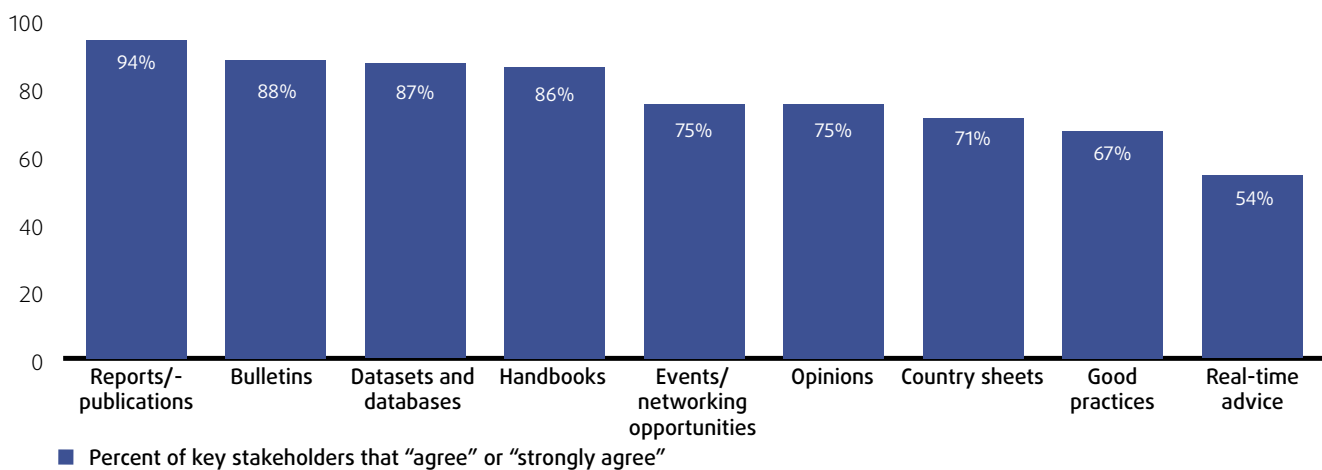
### Type of evidence that stakeholders look for from FRA



### Stakeholders considering FRA output useful and relevant to their work



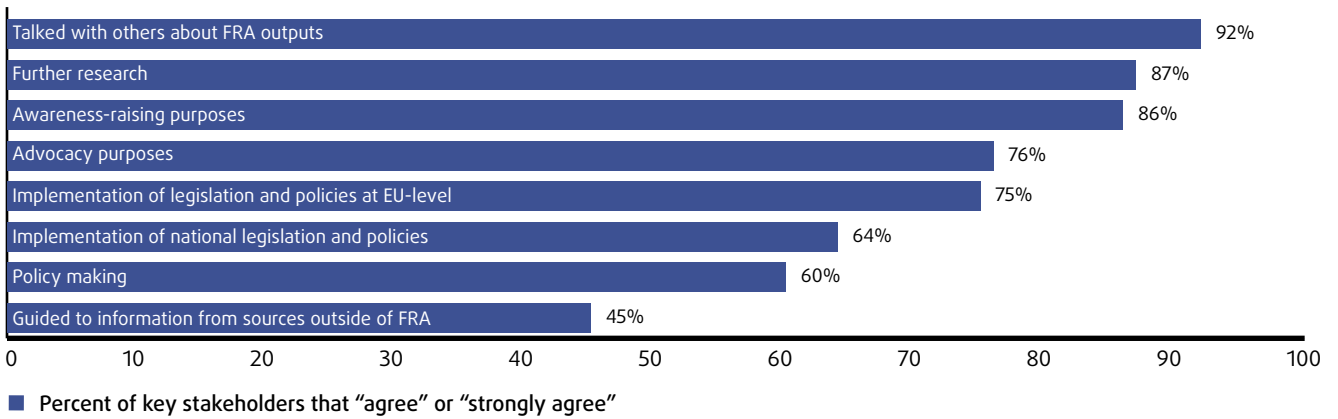
### Stakeholders considering FRA outputs to be of high-quality and reliable



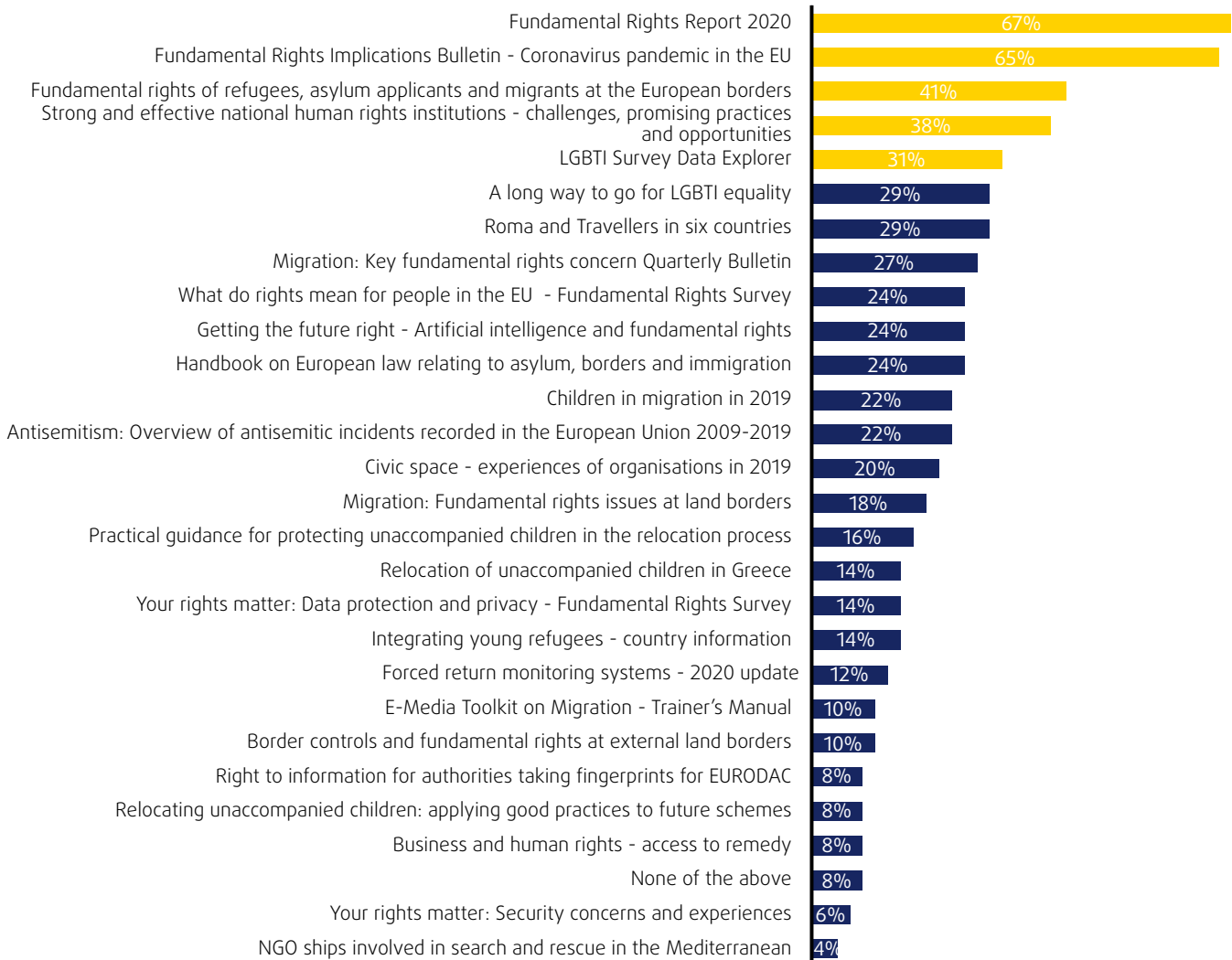
### Impact of FRA outputs



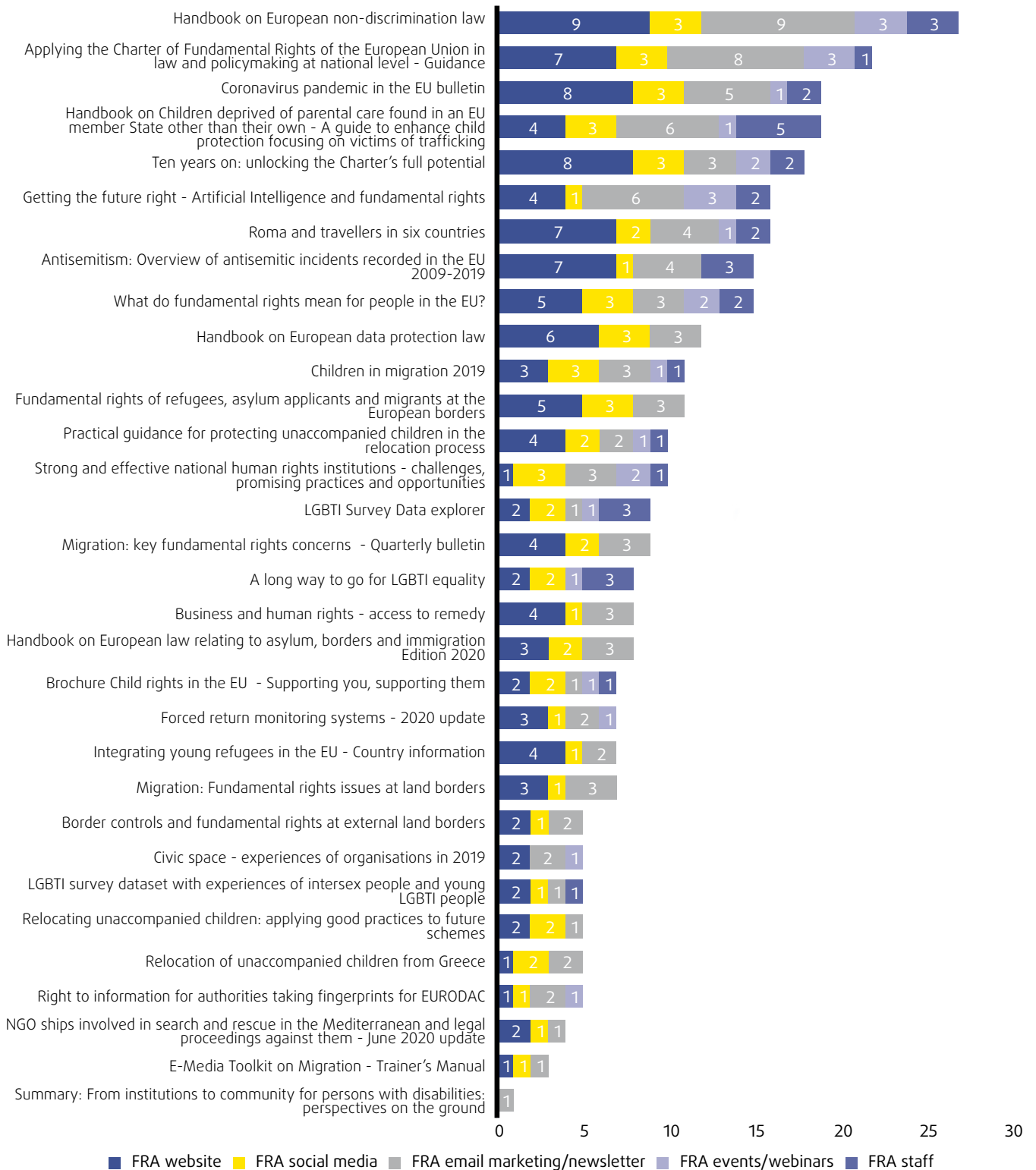
### How survey respondents use FRA outputs



## Most popular FRA outputs in 2020



### Channels through which stakeholders became aware of FRA's publications





## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE DIRECTOR

In line with the Commission's guidelines on key performance indicators for directors of EU decentralised agencies, the following objectives, indicators and targets for FRA's director were identified:

Objective	Key performance indicator	Target	Results
Work programme fully implemented throughout the year and implementation is reflected in the annual activity report for the year	Timely submission of the draft programming document to the Management Board and to the European Commission	December N - 2 January N - 1 December N - 1	100%
	Percentage completion of the activities of the annual work programme/programming document	75 %	80%
	Timely achievement of objectives of the programming document	80 %	
	Timely submission of documents anticipated for publication in the annual work programme/programming document/annual activity report and in particular of the (annual) <i>Fundamental rights report</i> , in cooperation with the Scientific Committee	80 %	100%
Swift, timely and full use of the human and financial resources allocated by the budgetary authorities	Rate (%) of implementation of commitment appropriations	> 90 %	100 %
	Rate (%) of cancellation of payment appropriations	< 5%	2.4 %
	Rate (%) of out-turn (total payments in year N and carry-forwards to year N + 1, as a % of the total EU funding and fee income, where applicable, received in year N)	> 90 %	99.4 %
	Rate (%) of payments executed within the legal/contractual deadlines	> 80 %	94 %
Timely implementation in terms of the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control systems	Rate (%) of external and accepted internal audit recommendations implemented within agreed deadlines (excluding 'desirable')	90 %	100 %
	Average vacancy rate (percentage of authorised posts of the annual establishment plan that are vacant at the end of the year, including job offers sent before 31 December)	< 5 % of total posts	2.78 %
	Review of agency publications	100 %	
	Delivery of overall positive opinions by the Scientific Committee on agency publications, including final sign-off form (by the chair)	100 %	
	<i>Ex ante</i> and <i>ex post</i> evaluations of projects are implemented based on the annual evaluation plan	80 %	80 %
Evidence of the level of staff well-being	Organisation of satisfaction surveys/engagement surveys within the agency	1 every three years	In 2020, there were 4 such activities: 1 well-being survey; 2 COVID-19 staff surveys; 1 workload analysis survey
	Annual average number of days of short-term sick leave per staff member	< 8	5.4
	Member of staff complaining under Article 90 (2) of the staff regulations per 100 staff members	< 5	

External presentation of the agency's activities and effective cooperation with the agency's external stakeholders	Formal presentations to the European Parliament and Council (including its preparatory bodies)	> 4	11 presentations in the European Parliament
	Country visits to present the agency's work <sup>10</sup>	2	
	Number of interviews with or mentions of the FRA director in different media outlets	12 in a year	4 interviews; 1 op-ed; > 200 media mentions
	Cooperation meetings with the agency's networks and partners, including EU institutions, bodies and agencies, NLOs, international organisations, public bodies competent for human rights in the Member States (including NHRIs) and civil society (including participants in the FRP)	> 100 bilateral meetings; > 12 stakeholder meetings at FRA; 2 NLO meetings; > 6 visits to EU institutions, bodies and agencies <sup>11</sup>	> 100 bilateral meetings (including online); 2 formal NLO meetings (online); 1 coordination meeting with ENNHRI and Equinet (networks of NHRIs and equality bodies); 1 visit to the CoE; 1 visit to OHCHR (Geneva); 1 meeting of the FRP

## Endnotes

- 1 Includes internal and external networking events.
- 2 Performance indicator I12: relevant – 25 (77 %), reliable – 41 (89 %), high-quality – 44 (96 %) and useful – 44 (96 %).
- 3 Performance indicator I13: datasets/databases – 107 (78%), reports/publications – 116 (87 %), blogs/articles – 45 (37 %), good practices – 84 (63 %), opinions – 9 (75 %), real-time advice – 35 (45 %) online events/networking opportunities – 92 (70 %), periodic updates/bulletins – 104 (79 %), handbooks – 84 (62 %) and country sheets – 84 (62 %).
- 4 Performance indicator I19: FRA website – 33 (77 %), FRA social media – 18 (43 %), FRA email marketing/newsletter – 28 (67 %), FRA online events – 27 (64 %) and FRA publications – 34 (79 %).
- 5 Total media coverage.
- 6 Survey question does not exactly correspond to the indicator; figure represents survey respondents that agree with the following statements: 'I have used FRA's outputs for the implementation of legislation and policies at EU level' – 3 (75 %); 'I have used FRA outputs for the implementation of national legislation and policies' – 14 (64 %); 'I have used FRA's outputs for the implementation of legislation and policies' – 3 (60 %).
- 7 Performance indicator I26: EU level – 3 (75 %), Member State level – 16 (73 %).
- 8 Performance indicator I27: EU level – 3 (75 %), Member State level – 9 (44 %).
- 9 The value achieved in 2020 was affected by COVID-19-related restrictions.
- 10 Country visits to Member States in 2020 were suspended because of restrictions introduced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 11 Stakeholder engagements were largely conducted remotely in 2020 because of restrictions introduced by Member States in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

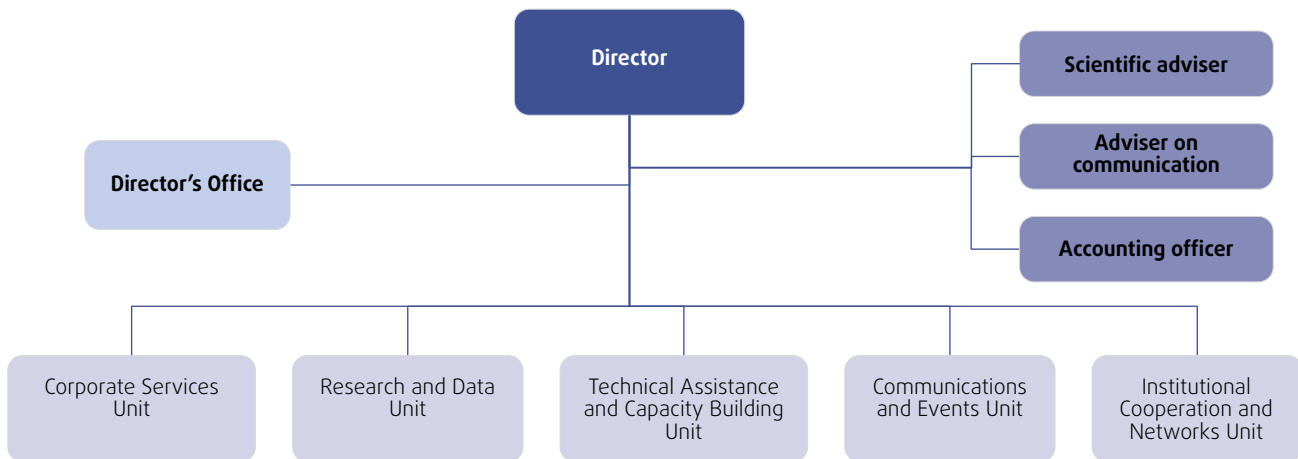
# Annex II: Statistics on financial management

Please refer to the Report on budgetary and financial management available online at the **FRA webpage on finance and budget (2020-report-budgetary-financial-management.pdf)** (<https://fra.europa.eu>)

# Annex III: Organisational chart

At the end of 2020, FRA's structure comprised the director's office and five units, as shown below.

Organisational chart



# Annex IV: Establishment plan and additional information on human resource management

## Establishment plan

Category and grade	Permanent posts		Temporary posts	
	2020 (authorised posts)	2020 (actually filled as of 31 December 2020)	2020 (authorised posts)	2020 (actually filled as of 31 December 2020)
AD 16	-	-	-	-
AD 15	-	-	1	1
AD 14	-	-	3	1
AD 13	-	-	3	2
AD 12	-	-	2	3
AD 11	-	-	5	2
AD 10	-	-	10	6
AD 9	-	-	11	8
AD 8	-	-	8	16
AD 7	-	-	2	4
AD 6	-	-	3	3
AD 5	-	-	-	-
<b>Total AD</b>	-	-	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>
AST 11	-	-	-	-
AST 10	-	-	4	-
AST 9	-	-	2	3
AST 8	-	-	3	3
AST 7	-	-	7	5
AST 6	-	-	6	6
AST 5	-	-	2	4
AST 4	-	-	-	3
AST 3	-	-	-	-
AST 2	-	-	-	-
AST 1	-	-	-	-
<b>Total AST</b>	-	-	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
AST/SC 6	-	-	-	-
AST/SC 5	-	-	-	-
AST/SC 4	-	-	-	-
AST/SC 3	-	-	-	-
AST/SC 2	-	-	-	-

Category and grade	Permanent posts		Temporary posts	
	2020	2020	2020	2020
	(authorised posts)	(actually filled as of 31 December 2020)	(authorised posts)	(actually filled as of 31 December 2020)
AST/SC 1	-	-	-	-
Total AST/SC	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>

NB: AD, administrator; AST, assistant; AST/SC, secretaries and clerks.

#### Indicative table – information on recruitment grade/function group for each type of post

<i>Key functions (examples – terminology should be adjusted to each agency's job titles)</i>	<i>Type of contract (official, TA or CA)</i>	<i>Grade of recruitment, function group*</i>	<i>Indication whether the function is dedicated to administrative support or operations (subject to definitions used in screening methodology)</i>
<i>Head of unit (level 2 in the structure, taking the director as level 1)</i>	TA	AD 9, internal	Administrative support and operational
<i>Head of sector</i>	TA	AD 8	Administrative support
<i>Advisers</i>	TA	AD 13, internal	Operational
<i>Programme managers</i>	TA	AD 8–AD 10	Operational
<i>Project managers</i>	TA, CA	AD 5–AD 8, FG IV	Operational
<i>Programme officers</i>	TA, CA	AD 5–AD 8, FG IV	Operational
<i>(Administrative) Officers</i>	TA, CA	AD 5–AD 8, FG IV	Administrative support
<i>Project assistants</i>	TA, CA	AST 4–AST 9, FG III	Operational
<i>Assistants</i>	TA, CA	AST 4–AST 9, FG III	Administrative support and operational
<i>Administrative agents</i>	CA	FG II	Administrative support

NB: AD, administrator; AST, assistant; CA, contract agents; FG, function group; TA, temporary agents.

\*For TA, please specify if the recruitment was internal, inter-agency or external, and the specific grade of recruitment (no brackets).

**TABLE A4.2: JOB SCREENING/BENCHMARKING AGAINST PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESULTS**

Job type (sub)category	Year N - 1 (%)	Year N (%)
<b>Administrative support and coordination</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
Administrative support	15	15
Coordination	1	1
<b>Operational</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>72</b>
Top operational coordination	3	3
Programme management and implementation	59	58
Evaluation and impact assessment	1	1
General operational activities	10	10
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
Accounting, finance, non-operational procurement, contract management and quality management, internal audit and control	9	10
Linguistic activities	2	2

*NB:* The above figures include all different types of contracts, i.e. temporary agents, contract agents, seconded national experts, trainees, study visitors and external service providers.



# Annex V: Human and financial resources by activity

**TABLE A5.1: HUMAN RESOURCES BY ACTIVITY-BASED BUDGETING ABB ACTIVITY**

ABB activity	HR by ABB activity	
	Total person-days	Percentage
Victims of crime and access to justice	1,109	7 %
Equality and discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or beliefs, political or any other opinions, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation or nationality	1,246	7 %
Information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data	588	3 %
Judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters	844	5 %
Migration, borders, asylum and integration of refugees and migrants	1,247	7 %
Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance	611	4 %
Rights of the child	405	2 %
Integration and social inclusion of Roma	992	6 %
Communication and awareness-raising	1,470	9 %
Supporting Human Rights protection systems	4,130	24 %
Projects and activities covering all MAF areas	431	3 %
<b>Total operational</b>	<b>13,073</b>	<b>78 %</b>
Cooperation agreements	193	1 %
<b>Total cooperation agreements</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>1 %</b>
Support activities	3,741	22 %
<b>Total support activities</b>	<b>3,741</b>	<b>22 %</b>
<b>Total agency days</b>	<b>17,007</b>	

*NB:* The above data rely on FRA's time-recording system, which is a component of the wider implementation of activity-based management in the agency. They represent the actual working time during the reporting year. Therefore, part-time work and absences (unpaid and leave other than the regular annual entitlement) are not reported.

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A5.2: FINANCIAL RESOURCES BY ABB ACTIVITY**

ABB activity	Direct expenditure (Euro)	Indirect expenditure (overheads) (Euro)	Total (Euro)
Victims of crime and access to justice	244,512	1,000,754	1,245,266
Equality and discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or beliefs, political or any other opinions, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation or nationality	3,510,399	1,124,615	4,635,013
Information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data	317,116	530,554	847,670
Judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters	489,942	761,762	1,251,704
Migration, borders, asylum and integration of refugees and migrants	941,474	1,125,232	2,066,706
Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance	85,424	551,537	636,961
Rights of the child	104,449	635,091	469,539
Integration and social inclusion of Roma	101,306	895,032	996,337
Communication and awareness raising	1,417,526	1,327,062	2,744,587
Supporting Human Rights protection systems	646,680	3,727,483	4,373,863
Projects and activities covering all MAF areas	483,986	389,144	873,131
<b>Total operational</b>	<b>8,342,513</b>	<b>11,798,264</b>	<b>20,140,777</b>
Support activities	471,567	174,235	645,802
<b>Total cooperation agreements</b>	<b>471,567</b>	<b>174,235</b>	<b>645,802</b>
Support activities	-	3,375,988	3,375,988
<b>Total support activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,375,988</b>	<b>3,375,988</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,814,080</b>	<b>15,348,487</b>	<b>24,162,567</b>

Source: FRA, 2020

# Annex VI: Grant, contribution and service-level agreements: Financial Framework Partnership Agreements

Non Applicable (please see the explanations under 2.3)

# Annex VII: Specific annexes related to Part II

## A. Materiality criteria

Materiality is the basis for defining significant weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The materiality criteria used by FRA and the method used to assess their significance are presented below.

Qualitative criteria are linked to failure in achieving FRA's short-term objectives, reputational risks to FRA, significant weaknesses in FRA control systems and repetitive errors. These involve use of resources, sound financial management, and legality and regularity of transactions. Their significance is judged on the basis of:

- the nature and scope of the weakness;
- the duration of the weakness;
- the existence of compensatory measures (mitigating controls that reduce the impact of the weakness);
- the existence of effective corrective actions to correct the weakness (action plans and financial corrections) that have had a measurable impact.

In quantitative terms, with regard to legality and regularity, a weakness is considered material in cases where the financial impact or risk of loss is greater than 2 % of FRA's authorised commitments.

## B. Internal control template(s) for budget implementation

### Stage 1 – procurement

#### A – Planning

**Main control objectives:** effectiveness, efficiency and economy; compliance (legality and regularity).

Main risks It may happen (again) that ...	Mitigating controls	Coverage, frequency, depth of controls and benefits	Cost-effectiveness indicators (three E's)
Not applicable as no medium or high risks were identified under this phase	–	–	–

#### B – Needs assessment and definition of needs

**Main control objectives:** effectiveness, efficiency and economy; compliance (legality and regularity).

Main risks It may happen (again) that ...	Mitigating controls	Coverage, frequency, depth of controls and benefits	Cost-effectiveness indicators (three E's)
Not applicable as no medium or high risks were identified under this phase	–	–	–

#### C – Selection of the offer and evaluation

**Main control objectives:** effectiveness, efficiency and economy; compliance (legality and regularity); fraud prevention and detection.

Main risks It may happen (again) that ...	Mitigating controls	Coverage, frequency, depth of controls and benefits	Cost-effectiveness indicators (three E's)
Conflict of interest/unequal treatment of tenderers; for example, because of biased selection criteria or partial evaluations (relating also to the MB and SC)	Formal evaluation process, governed by dedicated internal procedures: Opening Committee and Evaluation Committee including a minimum of five members on the selection panel for open calls for tenders, and three for low- and middle-value purchases, reducing the risk of unequal treatment	100 % – all calls for tenders <b>Depth:</b> all documents transmitted <b>Benefits:</b> compliance with financial rules Difference between the most onerous offer and the selected offer Preventing the unequal treatment of tenderers and therefore the potential complaints or litigation that may occur	<b>Effectiveness</b> Number of complaints or litigation cases filed Number of requests for clarification regarding the tender <b>Efficiency</b> Average cost of a tendering procedure Costs for closing a complaint/litigation <b>Economy</b>
	Declarations of conflict of interest are signed by the members of both the opening and the evaluation panels	100 % of the members of the Opening Committee and the Evaluation Committee <b>Benefits:</b> amount of contracts for which the control prevented the risk of litigation or fraud	Estimation of costs of staff involved in the evaluation process Estimation of costs of running the website (updating, maintenance, etc.)
	Declarations of conflicts of interest are signed by the members of the MB and SC	100 % of declarations of conflicts of interest are signed by the members of the MB and SC <b>Benefits:</b> potential irregularities prevented by avoiding the interference in procurement procedure/contracting	Estimation of costs of staff involved in supervision and in SCs
	Dedicated pages on the FRA website that ensure the transparency of the information	100 % of the information is available on the website <b>Depth:</b> compulsory for calls for tenders' middle value <b>Benefits:</b> participation in the competition of a sufficient number of bidders	
	Exclusion and selection criteria documented and transparent, by including them in technical specifications Existence of the SC Administrative supervision and approval of tender specifications by the AO	100 % of the tender specifications are scrutinised <b>Depth:</b> determined by the amount of the awarded contract <b>Benefits:</b> limiting the risk of litigation Limiting the risk of cancellation of a tender Number of proposed contracts for which the supervisory and approval processes detected a material error	

NB: AO, authorising officer; MB, Management Board; SC, Steering Committee.

## Stage 2 – financial transactions

**Main control objectives:** ensuring that the implementation of the contract is in compliance with the signed contract.

Main risks It may happen (again) that ...	Mitigating controls	Coverage, frequency, depth of controls and benefits	Cost-effectiveness indicators (three E's)	
All pre-financing, accrual adjustments and guarantees not identified Mistakes in transactions Commitments, payments and recovery orders recorded with delay Incomplete accounting systems	Use of ABAC system for all accounting records (all pre-financing payments are controlled via ABAC)	100 % of the contracts (via commitments) are entered in ABAC	<b>Effectiveness</b> Percentage error rate prevented Number of control failures Number/amount of liquidated damages, if any Number of actions for improvement implemented <b>Efficiency</b> Late interest payment Amount of damages paid Costs of the <i>ex post</i> controls with respect to the benefits Average cost of an <i>ex post</i> control <b>Economy</b> Costs of licensing of ABAC users Costs of training activities	
		Estimation of costs of staff involved		
		<b>Benefits:</b> centralised control of the payments		
		Access to information for all the participants involved		
		Amount of irregularities, errors and overpayments prevented by the controls		
		Systematic weaknesses detected and corrected		
		Guarantees controlled via ABAC		100 % of the guarantees are included in ABAC
		Training on ABAC compulsory for all nominated users		100 % ABAC users
		Financial workflow based on the 'four eyes' principle (operational and financial checks in accordance with the financial workflow)		100 % of the transactions are controlled <b>Depth:</b> all the transactions are checked
		Centralised financial initiation		
Each transaction is checked by AOD in their capacity as financial verifying agent	100 % of transactions are verified <b>Depth:</b> riskier operations subject to in-depth controls			
Each transaction checked by the accounting officer (i.e. accrual adjustments)	100 % of the transactions are checked			
Registration and authorisation of exceptions	Reported exceptions in line with the internal procedure			
Review of exceptions reported	<b>Depth:</b> depending on the reporting of exceptions 100 % once a year <b>Depth:</b> look for the weakness in the procedures related to the reported exceptions			
<i>Ex post</i> controls	Selected transactions <b>Depth:</b> the control sampling is risk-based			

NB: ABAC, accrual-based accounting financial information systems; AOD, authorising officer by delegation.

### Stage 3 – supervisory measures

**Main control objectives:** ensuring that any weakness in the procedures (tender and financial transactions) is detected and corrected.

Main risks It may happen (again) that ...	Mitigating controls	Coverage, frequency, depth of controls and benefits	Cost-effectiveness indicators (three E's)
Incomplete or inaccurate data in the information system related to contracts	Use of the 'four eyes' principle, including checks of the inputted information	100 % verification of the information uploaded to the tool for managing contracts	<b>Effectiveness</b> Number of errors undetected (related to irregularities and errors)
	<i>Ex post</i> controls	Selected transactions  <b>Depth:</b> the control sampling is risk-based  <b>Benefits:</b> preventing mistakes in drafting and implementing the contracts	<b>Efficiency</b> Costs of undetected errors  Costs of the <i>ex post</i> controls with respect to the benefits  <b>Economy</b> Estimation of the costs of staff involved in running the <i>ex post</i> controls  Costs of the running of the tool for managing contracts (maintenance, updates, etc.)

# Annex VIII: Environmental management

## Context of the agency's environmental management strategy

The agency actively looks at its environmental management approach, which is part of its annual Facilities Management Work Plan. On an annual basis the agency looks at optimising the use of existing environmental measures as well as at the possibilities to introduce new environmental management measures.

## Overview of the agency's environmental management system

The agency implemented a number of actions to reduce its environmental footprint the last years even though it is not EMAS registered. This is because of the limited resources available to it, human and financial, and the condition of the building that it rents. Finally, acquiring an environmental management system certification was not considered a priority. However, the agency took a pragmatic approach in considerably improving its environmental footprint by introducing measures as indicated in section 2.10.

## Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

The list of practical measures and indicators, where possible, are described below.

1. Energy and water consumption: the agency changed its electricity provider to one that produces energy from renewable sources. The agency also changed its data centre cooling system from one that uses purely electricity to an environmentally friendly one, which operates based on the heat exchange principle. This means that if the outside temperature is below 25 °C the data centre is not cooled using electricity, so for about 7–8 months per year the agency makes use of renewable sources to operate the data centre cooling system. Moreover, the agency is in the process of replacing its light bulbs with LED bulbs. The agency monitors the implementation of these measures by keeping stable, or reducing, its annual water and energy consumption.
2. Waste management: the agency takes measures to reduce and recycle internally generated waste. Different recycling bins have been installed, allowing staff to contribute too by sorting out daily waste. Furthermore, the agency ensures that, when the contractor is asked to dispose of waste, it also provides certificates to show that disposal was carried out in an environmental friendly manner and in accordance with the national regulations.
3. Paper use: the agency promotes the use of recycled paper for internal use. In addition, all its paper publications use recycled and environmentally friendly material. Finally, the agency is working to digitise its internal processes and hence reduce the use of printing paper.
4. Building emissions to air: measures to reduce building emissions are linked to the heating system. Heating is provided by the district heating system (*Fernwärme*) instead of from electricity, gas or fossil fuels, thereby reducing emissions.



5. Professional mobility: the agency promotes cycling to work among its employees by offering a secure parking space inside its building. It also supports and promotes the use of videoconferencing technologies, eliminating the need for business travel. During the last years the use of videoconferencing considerably increased. This reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as a result of the reduced number of trips.
6. Green Public Procurement (GPP): the agency follows the practices of the Commission Services when publishing tenders, which include provisions linked to GPP. For example, in tenders related to facilities the use of environmentally friendly products is required.

#### **Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance**

To further improve the agency's environmental management approach, it plans to undertake the following actions:

1. Donations: in 2021, the agency is looking to donate electric and office equipment to charity organisations that, in return, are reusing equipment in their projects. This will contribute to the reduction of waste disposal.
2. Electricity consumption: the agency is in discussions with the building owner to improve the quality of office spaces, which also includes the replacement of conventional bulbs with LED bulbs.
3. The agency plans to eliminate the use of personal printers currently assigned to a large number of its staff and prompt them to make use of the general printing facilities.

In terms of communicating the environmental objectives among its staff, the agency will continue to raise staff awareness through information sessions linked to facilities management, which also includes environmental aspects.

Staff are encouraged to follow certain practices such as switching off lights and monitors before leaving the office, and posters are placed through the building to encourage staff to actively contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of the agency by taking the stairs instead of the elevators, travelling by bicycle and using the parking space offered, or avoiding unnecessary printing.

# Annex IX: Draft/final annual accounts

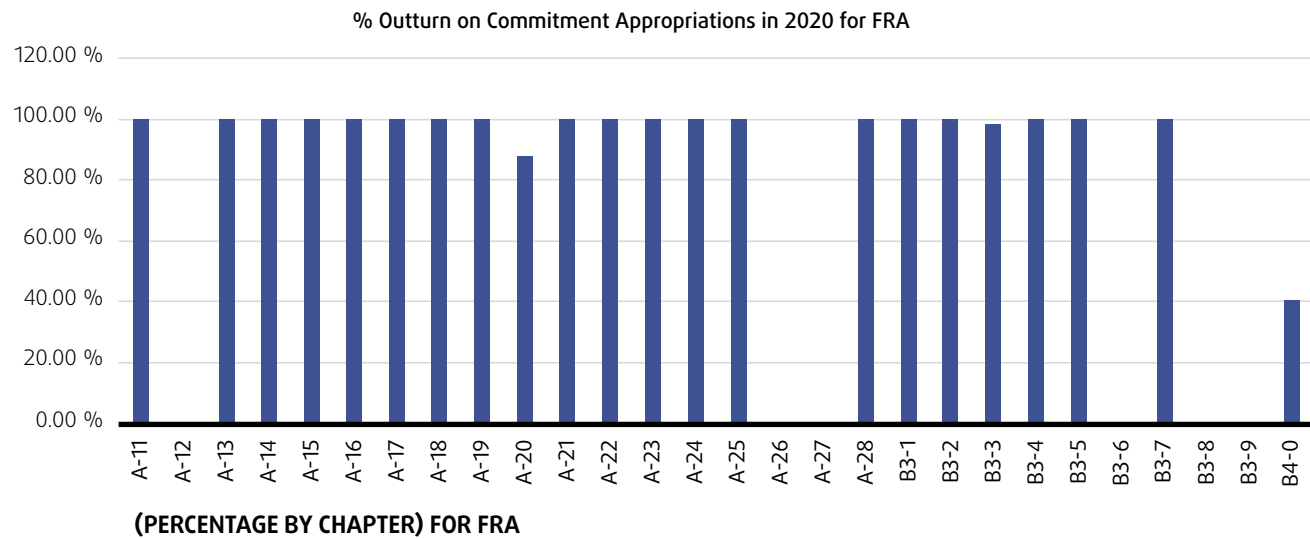
**TABLE A9.1: OUT-TURN ON COMMITMENT APPROPRIATIONS IN 2020 (IN € (MILLION)) FOR FRA**

			Commitment appropriations authorised*	Commitments made	Percentage
			1	2	3 = 2/1
<b>Title A-1 Staff expenditure</b>					
A-1	A-11	Staff in active employment	12.08	12.08	100.00
	A-12	Expenditure on staff recruitment	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-13	Missions and duty travel	0.01	0.01	100.00
	A-14	Sociomedical infrastructure	0.07	0.07	100.00
	A-15	Mobility exchanges of civil servants and experts	0.09	0.09	100.00
	A-16	Social welfare	0.06	0.06	100.00
	A-17	Entertainment and representation	0.00	0.00	100.00
	A-18	Social welfare	1.03	1.03	100.00
	A-19	Other staff-related expenditure	0.05	0.05	100.00
<b>Total Title A-1</b>			<b>13.39</b>	<b>13.39</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
<b>Title A-2 Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>					
A-2	A-20	Rental of buildings and associated costs	1.62	1.42	87.68
	A-21	Data processing	0.59	0.59	100.00
	A-22	Movable property and associated costs	0.01	0.01	100.00
	A-23	Current administrative expenditure	0.04	0.04	100.00
	A-24	Postage and telecommunications	0.11	0.11	100.00
	A-25	Expenditure on meetings	0.00	0.00	100.00
	A-26	Studies surveys consultations	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-27	Information and publishing	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-28	Studies, surveys and consultations	0.03	0.03	100.00
<b>Total Title A-2</b>			<b>2.40</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>91.68 %</b>
<b>Title Bo-3 Operational expenditure</b>					
Bo-3	B3-1	Fair and equal societies	3.80	3.80	100.00
	B3-2	Just digital and secure societies	1.05	1.05	100.00
	B3-3	Migration and asylum	0.96	0.94	98.53

B3-4	Supporting human rights protection systems	0.65	0.65	100.00	
B3-5	Communicating rights	1.42	1.42	100.00	
B3-6	Justice	0.00	0.00	0.00	
B3-7	Horizontal operational activities	0.48	0.48	100.00	
B3-8	Bodies of the agency	0.00	0.00	0.00	
B3-9	Reserve for Title 3	0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Title Bo-3</b>		<b>8.36</b>	<b>8.34</b>	<b>99.83</b>	
<b>Title Bo-4 Other operational expenditure</b>					
Bo-4	B4-0	Cooperation agreements	0.57	0.23	40.56
<b>Total Title Bo-4</b>		<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>40.56</b>	
<b>Total FRA</b>		<b>24.72</b>	<b>24.16</b>	<b>97.77</b>	

\* Commitment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, budget amendments and miscellaneous commitment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

**FIGURE A9.1 OUT-TURN ON COMMITMENT APPROPRIATIONS IN 2020**



Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.2: OUT-TURN ON PAYMENT APPROPRIATIONS IN 2020 (IN € (MILLION)) FOR FRA**

			Payment appropriations authorised*	Payments made	Percentage
			1	2	3 = 2/1
<b>Title A-1 Staff expenditure</b>					
A-1	A-11	Staff in active employment	12.08	12.08	99.98
	A-12	Expenditure on staff recruitment	0.01	0.01	100.00
	A-13	Missions and duty travel	0.04	0.04	88.67
	A-14	Socio medical infrastructure	0.51	0.45	87.91
	A-15	Mobility exchanges of civil servants and experts	0.09	0.08	95.64
	A-16	Social welfare	0.06	0.06	99.86
	A-17	Entertainment and representation	0.00	0.00	78.19
	A-18	Social welfare	1.03	1.01	97.23
	A-19	Other staff-related expenditure	0.05	0.02	40.80
<b>Total Title A-1</b>			<b>13.88</b>	<b>13.75</b>	<b>99.07</b>
<b>Title A-2 Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>					
A-2	A-20	Rental of buildings and associated costs	1.65	1.41	85.85
	A-21	Data processing	0.90	0.86	95.62
	A-22	Movable property and associated costs	0.06	0.05	83.63
	A-23	Current administrative expenditure	0.06	0.06	99.88
	A-24	Postage and telecommunications	0.15	0.12	79.74
	A-25	Expenditure on meetings	0.00	0.00	100.00
	A-26	Studies surveys consultations	0.01	0.01	100.00
	A-27	Information and publishing	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-28	Reports, surveys and consultations	0.03	0.01	45.91
<b>Total Title A-2</b>			<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>88.51</b>
<b>Title Bo-3 Operational expenditure</b>					
Bo-3	B3-1	Fair and equal societies	3.80	0.27	7.16
	B3-2	Just digital and secure societies	2.35	1.50	63.78
	B3-3	Migration and asylum	1.63	0.74	45.19
	B3-4	Supporting human rights protection systems	0.65	0.27	42.14
	B3-5	Communicating rights	1.42	0.42	29.97
	B3-6	Justice	0.44	0.44	99.38
	B3-7	Horizontal operational activities	1.76	1.65	93.66
	B3-8	Bodies of the agency	0.15	0.13	85.90
	B3-9	Reserve for Title 3	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Title Bo-3</b>			<b>12.20</b>	<b>5.42</b>	<b>44.44</b>

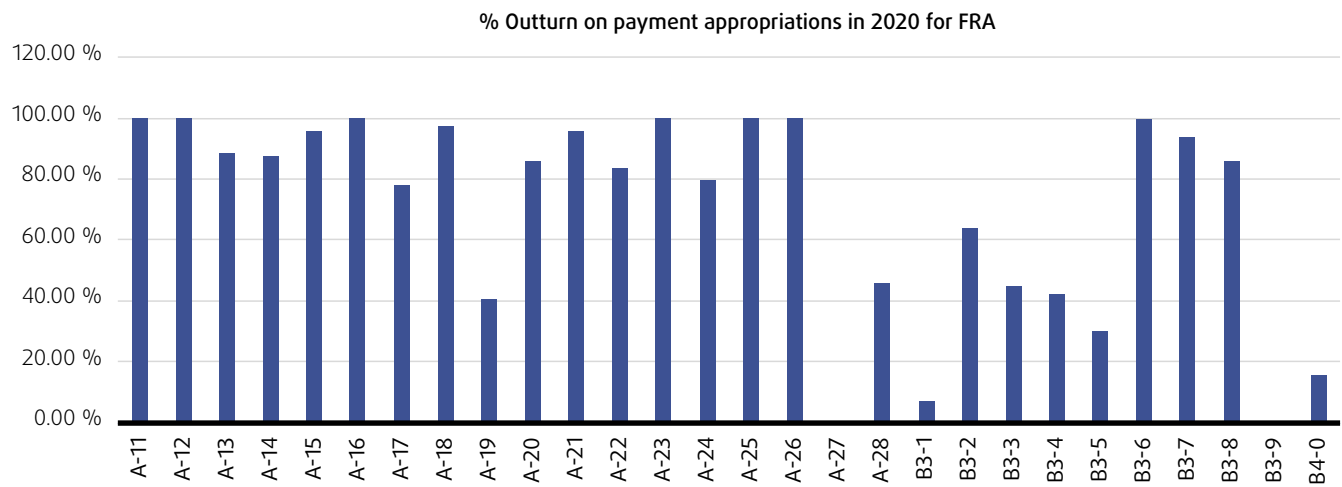
**Title Bo-4 Other operational expenditure**

Bo-4	B4-0	Cooperation agreements	0.75	0.12	15.69
<b>Total Title Bo-4</b>			<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>15.69</b>
<b>Total FRA</b>			<b>29.68</b>	<b>21.81</b>	<b>73.49</b>

\* Payment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, budget amendments and miscellaneous payment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

Source: FRA, 2020

**FIGURE A9.2 OUT-TURN ON PAYMENT APPROPRIATIONS IN 2019 (PERCENTAGE BY CHAPTER)**



**TABLE A9.3 BREAKDOWN OF COMMITMENTS TO BE SETTLED AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 (IN € (MILLION)) FOR FRA**

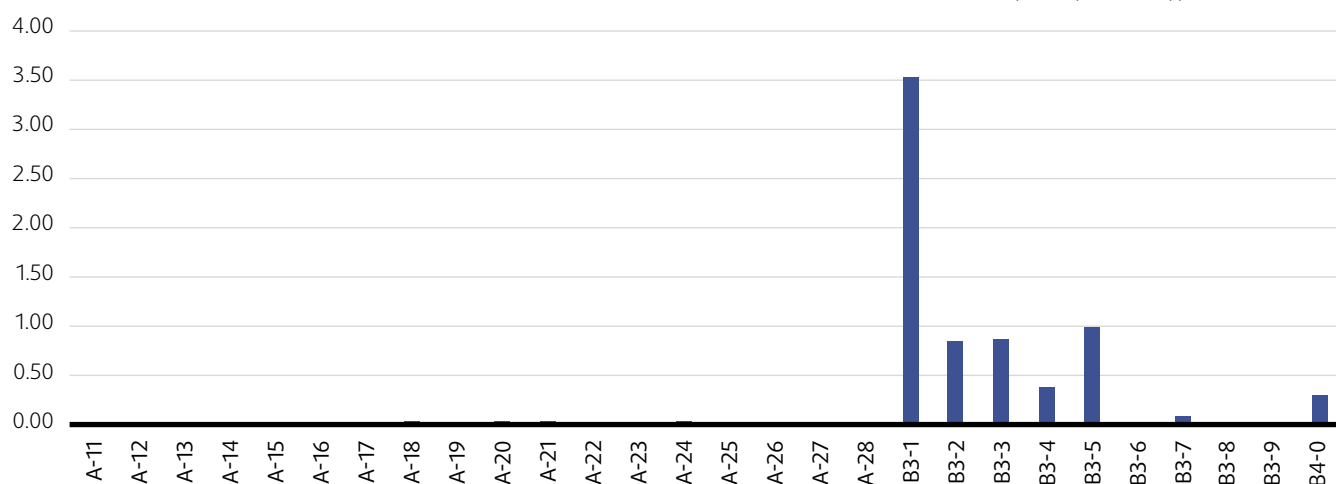
		Title A-1 Staff expenditure				
Chapter		Commitments 1	Commitments to be settled			Percentage to be settled 4 = 1 - 2/1
			Payments 2	RAL 3 = 1 - 2		
A-1	A-11	Staff in active employment	12.08	12.08	0.00	0.00
	A-12	Expenditure on staff recruitment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-13	Missions and duty travel	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
	A-14	Sociomedical infrastructure	0.07	0.04	0.03	36.05
	A-15	Mobility exchanges of civil servants and experts	0.09	0.08	0.00	4.36
	A-16	Social welfare	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00
	A-17	Entertainment and representation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-18	Social welfare	1.03	1.01	0.03	2.77
	A-19	Other staff-related expenditure	0.05	0.02	0.03	59.20
<b>Total Title A-1</b>			<b>13.39</b>	<b>13.30</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.63</b>
		Title A-2 Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure				
Chapter		Commitments 1	Commitments to be settled			Percentage to be settled 4 = 1 - 2/1
			Payments 2	RAL 3 = 1 - 2		
A-2	A-20	Rental of buildings and associated costs	1.42	1.39	0.03	2.24
	A-21	Data processing	0.59	0.55	0.04	6.71
	A-22	Movable property and associated costs	0.01	0.00	0.01	73.04
	A-23	Current administrative expenditure	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00
	A-24	Postage and telecommunications	0.11	0.08	0.03	27.16
	A-25	Expenditure on meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-26	Studies surveys consultations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	A-27	Information and publishing				
	A-28	Reports, surveys and consultations	0.03	0.01	0.02	54.09
<b>Total Title A-2</b>			<b>2.20</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>5.72</b>

		Title Bo-3 Operational expenditure				
Chapter		Commitments	Payments	RAL	Percentage to be settled	
		1	2	3 = 1 - 2	4 = 1 - 2/1	
Bo-3	B3-1	Fair and equal societies	3.80	0.27	3.53	92.84
	B3-2	Just digital and secure societies	1.05	0.21	0.84	80.34
	B3-3	Migration and asylum	0.94	0.08	0.86	91.78
	B3-4	Supporting human rights protection systems	0.65	0.27	0.37	57.86
	B3-5	Communicating rights	1.42	0.42	0.99	70.03
	B3-6	Justice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	B3-7	Horizontal operational activities	0.48	0.39	0.09	18.58
	B3-8	Bodies of the agency	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	B3-9	Reserve for Title 3				
<b>Total Title Bo-3</b>		<b>8.34</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>6.69</b>	<b>80.25</b>	
		Title Bo-4 Other operational expenditure				
Chapter		Commitments	Payments	RAL	Percentage to be settled	
		1	2	3 = 1 - 2	4 = 1 - 2/1	
Bo-4	B4-0	Cooperation agreements	0.23	0.00	0.23	99.94
<b>Total Title Bo-4</b>		<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>99.94</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>24.16</b>	<b>17.03</b>	<b>7.14</b>	<b>29.53</b>	

NB: RAL, outstanding commitments.

Source: FRA, 2020

**FIGURE A9.3 BREAKDOWN OF COMMITMENTS REMAINING TO BE SETTLED AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 (IN € (MILLION)) FOR FRA**



**TABLE A9.4: DRAFT BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 FOR FRA**

Balance sheet	2020 (Euros)	2019 (Euros)
A.I. Non-current assets	456,453.00	399,117.00
A.I.1. Intangible assets	19,161.00	22,520.00
A.I.2. Property, plant and equipment	437,292.00	376,597.00
A.II. Current assets	8,856,831.96	6,785,942.40
A.II.2. Current pre-financing	0.00	0.00
A.II.3. Curr exch receiv and non-ex recoverables	776,116.81	867,799.34
A.II.6. Cash and cash equivalents	8,080,715.15	5,918,143.06
<b>Assets</b>	<b>9,313,284.96</b>	<b>7,185,059.40</b>
P.II. Current liabilities	-2,898,615.88	-2,632,879.22
P.II.2. Current provisions	-90,421.52	0.00
P.II.3. Current financial liabilities	0.00	0.00
P.II.4. Current payables	-770,361.48	-901,546.83
P.II.5. Current accrued charges and deferred income	-2,037,832.88	-1,731,332.39
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>-2,898,615.88</b>	<b>-2,632,879.22</b>
<b>Net assets (assets less liabilities)</b>	<b>6,414,669.08</b>	<b>4,552,180.18</b>
P.III.2. Accumulated surplus/deficit	-4,552,180.18	-5,272,698.88
Non-allocated central surplus/deficit*	-1,862,488.90	720,518.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

*NB:* The balance sheet and statement of financial performance represent only the assets, liabilities, expenses and revenues that are under the control of this Directorate-General. Significant amounts such as own resource revenues and cash held in Commission bank accounts are not included in this Directorate-General's accounts since they are managed centrally by the Directorate-General for Budget, on whose balance sheet and statement of financial performance they appear. Furthermore, since the accumulated result of the Commission is not split among the various Directorates-General, it can be seen that the balance sheet presented here is not in equilibrium. In addition, the figures included in this and the next tables, A9.4 and A 9.5, are provisional since they are, at this date, still subject to audit by the ECA. It is thus possible that the amounts included in these tables may have to be adjusted following this audit.

Source: FRA, 2020



**TABLE A 9.5 DRAFT 2020 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR FRA**

Statement of financial performance	2020	2019
II.1 Revenues	-23,911,476.68	-22,690,187.16
II.1.1. Non-exchange revenues	-23,577,219.81	-22,319,996.69
II.1.1.7. Other non-exchange revenues	-23,577,219.81	-22,319,996.69
II.1.2. Exchange revenues	-334,256.87	-370,190.47
II.1.2.1. Financial income	-2,553.45	
II.1.2.2. Other exchange revenue	-331,703.42	-370,190.47
II.2. Expenses	22,048,987.78	23,410,705.86
II.2. Expenses	22,048,987.78	23,410,705.86
II.2.10. Other expenses	4,397,907.72	4,291,328.66
II.2.3. Exp impl by oth EU agenc&bodies (IM)	4,089,977.71	6,891,019.02
II.2.6. Staff and pension costs	13,557,822.59	12,226,077.86
II.2.8. Finance costs	3,279.76	2,280.32
<b>Statement of financial performance</b>	<b>-1,862,488.90</b>	<b>720,518.70</b>

NB: The balance sheet and statement of financial performance represent only the assets, liabilities, expenses and revenues that are under the control of this Directorate-General. Significant amounts such as own resource revenues and cash held in Commission bank accounts are not included in this Directorate-General's accounts since they are managed centrally by the Directorate-General for Budget, on whose balance sheet and statement of financial performance they appear. Furthermore, since the accumulated result of the Commission is not split among the various Directorates-General, it can be seen that the balance sheet presented here is not in equilibrium. In addition, the figures included in this and the previous table are provisional since they are, at this date, still subject to audit by the ECA. It is thus possible that the amounts included in these tables may have to be adjusted following that audit.

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.6 OFF-BALANCE SHEET FOR 2020 FOR FRA**

Off balance	2020	2019
OB.3. Other significant disclosures	-6,152,684.72	-3,544,977.88
OB.3.2. Commitments against appropriations not yet consumed	-5,492,753.48	-3,116,615.88
OB.3.3.7. Other contractual commitments	-231,569.24	
OB.3.5. Operating lease commitments	-428,362.00	-428,362.00
OB.4. Balancing accounts	5,724,332.72	3,544,977.88
OB.4. Balancing accounts	5,724,332.72	3,544,977.88
<b>Off balance</b>	<b>428,362.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.7 AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES FOR 2020 FOR FRA**

Legal times									
Maximum payment time (days)	Total number of payments	Number of payments within time limit	Percentage	Average payment times (days)	Number of late payments	Percentage	Average payment times (days)	Late payment amount (€)	Percentage
30	1,625	1,516	93.29	7.12005277	109	6.71	42.80733945	505,182.54	6.0
60	386	376	97.41	25.38829787	10	2.59	67.1	33,424.00	2.0
90	2	2	100.00	25				0.00	0.0
<b>Total number of payments</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>1,894</b>	<b>94.09</b>		<b>119</b>	<b>5.91</b>		<b>538,606.54</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Average net payment time</b>	<b>12.78</b>			<b>10.77</b>			<b>44.85</b>		
<b>Average gross payment time</b>	<b>12.98</b>			<b>10.87</b>			<b>46.50</b>		
Suspensions									
Average report approval suspension days	Average payment suspension days	Number of suspended payments	Percentage of total number	Total number of payments	Amount of suspended payments (€)	Percentage of total amount	Total paid amount (€)		
0	40	10	0.50	2,013	88,558.03	0.83	10,635,235.01		
Late interest paid in 2019									
Agency	GL account	Description	Amount (€)						
									0

NB: This table contains statistics only for payments relevant for the time period

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.8 SITUATION FOR REVENUE AND INCOME IN 2020 FOR FRA**

Chapter	Revenue and income recognised			Revenue and income cashed from			Outstanding	
	Current year RO (€)	Carried over RO (€)	Total (€)	Current year RO (€)	Carried over RO (€)	Total (€)	Balance (€)	
	1	2	3 = 1+2	4	5	6 = 4+5	7 = 3-6	
20-0	EU subsidy	23,691,000.00	0.00	23,691,000.00	23,691,000.00	0.00	23,691,000.00	0.00
40-0	Revenue earmarked for a specific purpose	276,313.75	0.00	276,313.75	276,313.75	0.00	276,313.75	0.00
90-0	Miscellaneous revenue	114,015.85	0.00	114,015.85	114,015.85	0.00	114,015.85	0.00
<b>Total FRA</b>		<b>24,081,329.60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24,081,329.60</b>	<b>24,081,329.60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24,081,329.60</b>	<b>0</b>

NB: RO, recovery order.

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.9 RECOVERY OF PAYMENTS IN 2020 FOR FRA**

Income budget recovery orders issued in 2020	Total undue payments recovered		Total transactions in recovery context (including non-qualified)		Percentage qualified/total RC					
Year of origin (commitment)	Number	RO amount (€)	Number	RO amount (€)	Number	RO amount (€)				
			0	0						
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>				
Expenses budget	Irregularity		OLAF notified		Total undue payments recovered		Total transactions in recovery context (including non-qualified)		Percentage qualified/total RC	
	No	Amount (€)	No	Amount (€)	No	Amount (€)	No	Amount (€)	No	Amount (€)
Income lines in invoices										
Non-eligible in cost claims										
Credit notes							1	45,840.96		
<b>Subtotal</b>							<b>1</b>	<b>45,840.96</b>		
<b>Grand total</b>							<b>1</b>	<b>45,840.96</b>		

NB: RO, recovery order.

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.10 AGEING BALANCE OF RECOVERY ORDERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 FOR FRA**

	Number at 1 January 2020	Number at 31 December 2020	Evolution	Open amount (€) at 1 January 2020	Open amount (€) at 31 December 2020	Evolution
2020	0	0		0	0	
Totals	0	0		0	0	

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.11 RECOVERY ORDER (RO) WAIVERS IN 2020 GREATER THAN € 60,000 FOR FRA**

Waiver central key	Linked RO central key	RO accepted amount (€)	LE account group	Commission decision	Comments
Total FRA		0			
Number of RO waivers		0			

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.12 CENSUS OF NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES**

Negotiated procedures – contracts > € 60,000

Number	Name	Contractor(s) Address	Type of contract	Description	Amount (€)	Legal base
Count			0			
Total amount (€)			0			
None						

Source: FRA, 2020

**TABLE A9.13 BUILDING CONTRACTS**

Building contracts

Number	Name	Contractor(s) Address	Type of contract	Description	Amount (€)	Legal base
Count			0			
Total amount (€)			0			
N/A						

NB: N/A, not applicable.

Source: FRA, 2020

**Contracts declared secret**

FRA did not declare any contracts as secret.

*Source:* FRA, 2020.

# Annex X: Performance information included in evaluations

As 2020 represented the mid-point of the strategic plan, it was necessary to take stock of progress to date, in light of internal and external contextual changes and lessons learned. To this scope, in 2020 a **Mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022** was conducted to identify and address any emerging strategic issues and agree on any adjustment needed to ensure effective delivery of the strategy plan for the remaining period.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE FRA: Mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022

In the context of an inter-institutional Framework Contract “Provision of evaluation and feedback services”- in January 2020 FRA asked an external contractor (ICF) to conduct a study to assess the relevance of the strategic plan and any emerging contextual issues within FRA’s operating environment and to identify areas of improvement for a strengthened delivery of the strategy till 2022.

## Mid-term review of the FRA Strategy 2018–2022

<b>Objectives and Scope</b>	<p>This study aimed to provide the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) with an independent assessment of its work over the first two-years (i.e. 2018 and 2019) of implementation of the strategic plan 2018–2022.</p> <p>The study’s main objective was to identify any emerging strategic issues and make recommendations for potential adjustments to the strategy for the remaining period. More specifically, the study’s objectives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To assess relevance of the strategic plan and any emerging contextual issues within FRA’s operating environment;</li><li>• To assess progress against the priorities and objectives of the strategic plan, including what has/ hasn’t worked well in the delivery of the plan so far and reasons why; and,</li><li>• To identify areas of improvement, lessons learned and recommend forward-looking strategic and programmatic considerations for strengthened delivery of the strategy to improve performance for the remaining period of the strategic plan.</li></ul> <p>The scope of the study covers the years since the strategic plan was adopted, i.e. 2018 and 2019, and will build on past assessments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The results of the second external evaluation of the Agency in 2017;</li><li>• The mid-term review of FRA Strategy 2013–2017;</li><li>• The result of the ex-post evaluations of FRA projects.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<p>To accomplish its scope and objectives, the study focused on analysing the <b>relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the strategy</b>. With regard to the <b>cross-cutting issues</b>, the assessment focused on the direct relationship between such issues and the FRA strategy, including the suitability of indicators used to measure the results brought about by the strategy as compared to the desired ones and potential ways to improve the communication of FRA activities and impacts.</p> <p>This study aimed to provide the FRA with opinions of selected stakeholders on the implementation and future of the FRA strategy, particularly through a qualitative external feedback. While the methodological approach is similar to that of an evaluation, the study does not intend to provide any recommendation to the FRA.</p>

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<b>Activities carried out</b>	<p>The methodological approach to the study comprised the collection and analysis of combination of qualitative and quantitative data structured in three phases.</p> <p>Thorough <b>desk research</b> was conducted on the basis of 17 FRA documents and four external documents (i.e. FRA external evaluations, EU Commission priorities). The evidence was structured and analysed according to the criteria as per the study's analytical framework. This analysis generated insights into the progress of the FRA strategic plan, as well as shed light on necessary adjustments and issues to be address with the FRA strategy. The desk research also highlighted data gaps to be filled in by consultation exercises.</p> <p><b>Two targeted surveys</b> were carried out: (1) an online survey for FRA external stakeholders, and (2) an email survey for FRA staff.</p> <p>The online survey for FRA external stakeholders was sent to 308 stakeholders from EU institutions, Agencies, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI), Equality bodies, Ombudspersons, National Liaison Officers (NLOs), Fundamental Rights Platforms (FRPs), International Organisations (IOs) and Norway grants.</p> <p>An online survey in word format for internal FRA stakeholders was sent by email due to mobility restrictions and social distancing measures in place as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was completed by 19 of the 25 FRA staff members contacted.</p> <p>The study team conducted a <b>targeted interview campaign</b> to collect qualitative data from representatives of relevant FRA external stakeholder categories as well as the FRA Director. A total of 29 interviews were completed, and the study team received 12 interview request rejections.</p>
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<b>Finding and Conclusions</b>	<p>The main finding related to the overall purpose of the study are as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FRA strategy is still relevant to the EU's policy context and current fundamental rights challenges, and flexible enough to fit within the new European Commission priorities and to adapt to changes in the field of fundamental rights; All FRA strategic priorities are relevant to the needs of its stakeholders.</li> <li>• The FRA has been effective in achieving its goals and delivering to its external stakeholders against the strategic priorities and objectives in its first two years of implementation. The Agency brings added value across all its priorities, such as its institutional ability to prompt change and provide fundamental rights expertise, and the value of the complementarity of all the priorities. The strategic plan will not require substantial changes to maintain the positive effects it produces.</li> <li>• The FRA strategy is also aligned with the new internal structure of the Agency that, moving from thematic to structural lines of work, has helped the strategy to become more achievable and has a potential to support a better use of resources (both financial and human), particularly to deliver against its Strategy.</li> <li>• A stronger alignment of the Programming Document with the strategic priorities and objectives will allow for enhanced coherence and increase effectiveness measurement of the performance of the Agency at the strategic level. FRA should keep making use of systematic stakeholder consultations and monitoring and evaluation exercises to ensure that findings are incorporated in future work.</li> <li>• The biggest challenges facing the delivery of the strategic plan are a lack of human and financial resources and the prioritisation of strategic areas and themes.</li> </ul>
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