

10th Anniversary of Charter: Council Conclusions



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News

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the JHA Council adopted [conclusions on the Charter, their state of play, and future work](#). At its [meeting on 7 October 2019](#), the ministers of justice of the EU Member States reaffirmed that the Union is based on common values, as enshrined in Art. 2 TEU, which is founded on respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These rights are a cornerstone of the European Union and must be fully respected by all Member States and EU institutions. At the meeting, the ministers also reaffirmed the commitment to the EU's accession to the ECHR ([see separate news item](#)).

Taking note of the Commission report on the application of the Charter and the FRA fundamental rights report (see [euclid 2/2019, p. 82](#)), the Council acknowledges that challenges persist, particularly in the area of non-discrimination, and that the fight against all forms of discrimination must continue.

Another problem is the public's low awareness of the Charter. The Council calls on Member States to strengthen their awareness-raising and training activities towards all key stakeholders, including policy-makers, civil servants, legal practitioners as well as national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, etc. The e-justice portal is considered to be an important tool supporting this endeavour. Thematic discussions and the annual exchange of views on application of the Charter at the national level should also be promoted.

The Commission is to ensure the consistency of legislative and policy initiatives with the Charter and to further enhance fundamental rights impact assessments for all relevant legislative proposals.

While welcoming the Fundamental Rights Agency's Charter-related work – including awareness raising, e-tools, and training as well as expertise and data that are useful for the preparation of initiatives –, the Council stressed that it will “consider carefully” any proposal on increasing the Agency's legal clarity and efficiency.

Ultimately, the conclusions recognise the essential role of civil society organisations in promoting fundamental rights. The Council emphasizes that Member States must refrain from any unnecessary, unlawful, or arbitrary restrictions on civil society. It also points out that transparent, sufficient, and easily accessible funding is crucial for civil society organisations.

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