

25 Years of Charter of Fundamental Rights



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News

On 7 December 2025, the EU celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ("the Charter" or CFR in short). On 7 December 2000, EU leaders solemnly proclaimed the Charter in Nice, France. At that time, the Charter had no legally binding effect. However, it carried political significance and the CJEU regularly referenced Charter rights in its case law in subsequent years. When the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, the Charter was given "the same legal value as the Treaties" (Art. 6(1) TEU). This means the rights enshrined in the Charter are legally binding on EU institutions and EU countries when they implement EU law. Its 50 fundamental rights and freedoms, which are grouped under six titles, establish a common basis of principles and values that guarantee protection for the essential rights of all European Union citizens. The Charter has become the "cornerstone" of the EU's legal system.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary, the European Commission, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Danish Council Presidency jointly organised a [conference in Brussels](#) on 10-11 December 2025. Under the title "25 Years of Rights : Reflecting on the Impact of the Charter", participants also discussed the future of the Charter and how to raise awareness of the Charter's relevance in daily life further. In this context, the Commission published the results of a [special Eurobarometer survey](#), which found that 49% of European respondents said they were aware of the Charter while 51% of respondents said they had not heard of it. And even 80% of respondents said that they do not feel well informed about the Charter.

To mark the anniversary, the Commission has published a [series of videos](#) featuring people from across the EU reflecting on how fundamental rights matter in daily life. The Commission also emphasised its efforts to strengthen the application of the Charter within the EU. These efforts include the [2020 "Charter Strategy"](#), which sets out the direction for the Charter's implementation until 2030 (→[euclid 4/2020, 259-260](#)) and the [annual reports](#), which monitor the progress on the application of the Charter (→[euclid 4/2023, 306-307](#)). The [2025 annual report](#), published on 5 December 2025, reviewed progress halfway through the 2020 Strategy. It concluded that determined action is needed to strengthen the respect for, and protection of, the Charter's rights across all EU policy areas. For the second half of the Strategy's implementation (2026-2030), the Commission will engage in further policy measures and support deeper cooperation among EU institutions, Member States, and other stakeholders.

Another important pillar for assistance and expertise on the application of the Charter in the EU institutions and EU Member States are the [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#) and the [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#). The FRA, *inter alia*, provides annual fundamental rights reports, which give an over-

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view of the state of fundamental rights in the EU and highlight critical developments and trends in a year. The FRA also runs [Charterpedia](#) that informs in a practical way and as a single source about the fundamental rights that people have under EU law.

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