

EP: Strengthening Potential of Charter

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News

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The European Union must take resolute steps to strengthen its own efforts to guarantee the enjoyment of all rights of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, including social rights. This is one of the main requests in an [EP resolution of 12 February 2019](#) “on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the EU institutional framework.” The non-legislative resolution was adopted by 349 to 157 votes (with 170 abstentions).

The resolution notes that there is a persistent awareness gap concerning the Charter, its scope, and its degree of application among both rights holders, who benefit from its protection, and legal and human rights experts. It also criticises that national action rarely remedies such a deficiency.

The resolution addresses the importance of the Charter in the following matters:

- Strengthening the integration of the Charter into the legislative and decision-making processes;
- Mainstreaming the Charter into EU policies;
- The Charter in relation to the EU Agencies;
- Implementation of the Charter at the national level;
- More consistent interpretation of the Charter.

MEPs stress that the EU’s legislative proposals must fully comply with the Charter; therefore, they advocate enhanced forms of consultation, comprehensive impact assessments, and legal scrutiny with the involvement of independent experts in the field of fundamental rights. The EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency should play a more vital role in the legislative process.

The resolution supports the introduction of strong and consistent fundamental rights clauses into the operational texts of the draft regulations establishing EU funds. It also calls on the EU institutions and bodies to pay due regard to fundamental rights assessments if economic decisions are taken. The Union’s action internationally must be guided by the principles enshrined in Art. 21(1) TEU.

EU agencies operating in the sphere of justice and home affairs and/or those whose activities could have an impact on the rights and principles deriving from the Charter should adopt internal fundamental rights strategies and promote regular fundamental rights and Charter training sessions for their staff at all levels.

The Commission is called on to strengthen its awareness-raising activities concerning the Charter, with the full involvement of civil society organisations. It should also promote and fund Charter-targeted training modules for national judges, legal practitioners, and civil servants. In this context, the Commission should

give full visibility to the FRA's recently published Handbook on Applying the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in law and policymaking at national level. Where needed, the Commission must safeguard fundamental rights through infringement proceedings.

Member States are encouraged to regularly exchange information and experience on the use, application, and oversight of the Charter and to mainstream examples of best practice already developed at the national level. Member States should also review their procedural rules on legal scrutiny and the impact assessment of bills from the perspective of the Charter.

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