

## **Strengthening the fundamental rights architecture in the EU**

### **A symposium on the institutional mechanisms to protect, promote and monitor fundamental rights in the EU**

7 May 2010, FRA, Vienna

The fundamental rights architecture in the European Union has developed over time and continues to evolve. Regular health checks on the situation are always needed, especially when great change is taking place.

On 7 May 2010, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) will release four reports:

- a survey on rights awareness that in part relates to equality bodies (based on EU-MIDIS data),
- a report on data protection authorities,
- a report on national human rights institutions and
- a report on the impact of the Racial Equality Directive.

These reports are concerned with four sets of highly related issues that all contribute to the overarching architecture for fundamental rights: equality bodies, data protection authorities and national human rights institutions.

For the FRA, these three sets of monitoring bodies at the national level are highly relevant. The FRA is specifically mandated to cooperate with, for example, governmental organisations and public bodies competent in the field of fundamental rights in the Member States, including national human rights institutions with the aim of improved joined-up cooperation between the national level and the EU level. It is the need for an ever more efficient protection and promotion of fundamental rights at the national level in particular, coupled with European and international mechanisms that form the basis for considering the fundamental rights architecture in the European Union.

The Agency is inviting representatives from EU institutions, equality bodies, data protection authorities and national human rights institutions to discuss the findings of these reports.

Lead questions for participants:

- Looking at the main findings in these four reports, which do you consider to be the most pertinent to address - given your experience of working in these fields?
- How best can we strengthen the fundamental rights architecture in Europe - should action be targeted at EU, Member State and/or local level?
- What are the priorities for strengthening the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms for fundamental rights protection in terms of powers, impact, independence and cooperation?

European Union Agency for  
Fundamental Rights

Agence des droits fondamentaux  
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#### DRAFT AGENDA

- 09:00 – 09:30 Registration of participants
- 09:30 – 09:40 **Opening remarks**  
Ilze Brands Kehris, Chairperson of the FRA Management Board
- 09:40 – 11:00 **Keynote addresses**  
VIP speaker – Bibiana Aído Almagro, Spanish Minister for Equality (tbc)  
Protecting fundamental rights in the EU today: New challenges and opportunities for our institutional architecture by Morten Kjaerum, FRA Director  
Questions and comments from the plenary
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 – 13:00 **Panel I: “Protecting, promoting and monitoring fundamental rights today and tomorrow – national structures and links to the EU level”**  
Moderator: Michael O’Flaherty, Co-Director of the Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Nottingham  
Maurice Manning, Chair of the European Coordinating Group, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission  
Mandana Zarreparvar, Chair of the Board of the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), Director of Equality and Diversity Department, Danish Institute for Human Rights  
Alex Türk, Member of the art. 29 Working Party President of the *Commission nationale de l’informatique et des libertés* (CNIL) (tbc)  
Lotte Leicht, Human Rights Watch, Director EU Office (tbc)  
Joanna Goodey, Head of the Research Department Freedoms & Justice, FRA  
Questions and comments from the plenary

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13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

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14:30 – 15:30 **Panel II: “Protecting, promoting and monitoring fundamental rights today and tomorrow – the EU level”**

Moderator: Martin Scheinin, Professor of Public International Law, European University Institute

Kinga Gal, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the LIBE Committee

Peter Hustinx, European Data Protection Supervisor

Nikiforos Diamandouros, European Ombudsman

Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director "Fundamental Rights and Citizenship", DG Justice Freedom and Security, European Commission

Morten Kjaerum, FRA Director

15:30 – 17:00 **Plenary Debate: “Strengthening the effectiveness of fundamental rights institutions at EU and national level”**

Moderator: Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Head of the Research Department Equality & Citizen’s Rights, FRA

Following up on Panels I & II, the debate will explore the following issues in relation to the work of the institutions:

1. Powers
2. Impact
3. Independence
4. Cooperation between the institutions at national and EU level as well as with other actors including civil society

(Coffee served)

17:00 – 17:15 Concluding remarks by Ilze Brands Kehris, Chairperson of the FRA Management Board

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