European Commission - Press release

25 years of the Charter of Fundamental Rights – safeguarding our freedoms and values

Brussels, 5 December 2025

The Charter of Fundamental Rights stands at the heart of the European Union, setting out the fundamental rights enjoyed by everyone in our Union. Ahead of its 25th anniversary, the European Commission has published the 2025 Annual Report on the Application of the Charter in the EU, looking back at all that has been done so far to reinforce and strengthen its application since 2020.

Proclaimed in 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights upholds the founding values of dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights – core values in our lives. The Charter brings together our civil, political, economic and social rights and has become the EU's essential guide for ensuring fundamental rights are respected across all EU policy areas and actions.

In 2020, the Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter in the EU set out a comprehensive agenda for action by the Commission, Member States, civil society and other partners to ensure the Charter's values are upheld. In line with the strategy, the Commission presents every year a Report on the application of the Charter.

This year's Report provides an important opportunity to take stock of the progress in the Charter strategy's implementation. The report presents an overview of the measures taken between 2020 and 2025 to strengthen the Charter's application at the EU level and in the Member States. The report concludes that most of the policy commitments of the Charter strategy have been fulfilled, resulting in strengthened cooperation with Member States, more support for civil society and independent fundamental rights bodies, more awareness and dedicated training for justice professionals, and a reinforced the use of the Charter in the legislative processes. The Commission has continued to support efforts to build and maintain an enabling environment for actors who support the application of the EU's values and fundamental rights, including through funding.

The Report also highlights remaining challenges and identifies areas where further efforts are needed. While awareness of the Charter has risen in recent years, this still remains low amongst the public. Sustained capacity-building, better access to information, and stronger monitoring and enforcement is also needed to ensure the Charter is applied consistently at all levels. The report sets out measures at EU and national level to further support the application of the Charter from 2026 to 2030 and beyond.

Background

From 10 to 11 December, the Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Danish Presidency of the Council will jointly organise a conference to mark the anniversary.

The Commission is also publishing today a Special Eurobarometer which gathers data on the respondents' awareness of and interest in the Charter.

For more information

Your fundamental rights in the EU

EU Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter

Annual reports on the application of the Charter

A thriving civic space to protect fundamental rights

IP/25/2943

Quote(s):

"The Charter of Fundamental Rights is the cornerstone of our Union—our shared commitment to dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. In a moment where these values are increasingly under pressure, we must stand firmer than ever."
Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy - 05/12/2025

"The Charter of Fundamental Rights is the beating heart of fairness and justice in our Union. It transforms our core values - dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law - into real freedoms people experience every day. Fundamental rights are the bedrock of democracy, and our task is clear: to defend these rights, support those who uphold them, and ensure every person in the EU can fully enjoy them."
Michael McGrath, Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection - 05/12/2025

Press contacts:

Markus LAMMERT (+32 2 29 67533)
Cristina TORRES CASTILLO (+32 2 29 90679)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email