

Home>Your rights>Fundamental rights>Where can I get help>Glossary

## Glossary

If you are unsure of the meaning of a term used while investigating your Fundamental Rights you can consult a glossary explaining the meaning of commonly used terms.

### General rights areas

Term	Description
<b>Right to access courts and other bodies in order to obtain redress, such as a binding decision or a financial compensation</b>	This is for when you are unable to seek justice, when your hearing is unfair or wrongly conducted in private, the court is not independent, the length of proceedings is unreasonable or if you do not receive legal aid or legal representation. It also applies if you are treated as guilty before guilt was proven by a court, if you are held guilty of an act which is not a criminal offence, the penalty is too severe or you are being punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same act.
<b>Consumer rights</b>	This is for when you face unfair treatment buying a product or service (including shopping online), or when what you bought was substandard. It also covers issues such as unfair terms in contracts or if you were misled by advertising or if your holiday package operator went bankrupt.
<b>Environmental rights</b>	This is for when the environment where you live is not being properly preserved or protected. It also covers you if you suffer from pollution, such as poor air quality or toxic chemicals.
<b>Rights related to the freedom of thought, expression and religion</b>	This is for when your freedom to have an opinion, and to receive and transmit information and ideas, including online, is restricted. This also covers activities such as freely creating, performing, distributing or exhibiting works of art.
<b>Asylum and immigration rights</b>	This is for when you are prevented from seeking asylum or if you are being removed, expelled or extradited to a country where there is a serious risk that you could be subjected to the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
<b>Rights related to the freedom to move within the EU</b>	This is for when you are prevented from freely moving or residing within the European Union, to, work, study, start up a business, or accompany a family member, for example.
<b>Non-discrimination rights</b>	This is for when you are treated differently on the basis of your gender, race or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation (for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or intersexual people), religion and belief, or other grounds in areas such as education, employment, social security, healthcare, access to goods and services or housing. This also applies if you are a victim of hate crime - an offence motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, or by your actual or perceived disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.
<b>Rights related to the protection of personal data</b>	This is about the collection of, the access to, and use of your personal data (everything that identifies you, such as your name, telephone numbers, date of birth or photographs) by others (other individuals, companies, public authorities, government, agency or any other body), including online. This also covers unwanted direct marketing calls or mails.
<b>Rights related to the protection of the physical and mental integrity of a person</b>	This is for when you are mistreated, detained unfairly, tortured, or are a victim of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, slavery or forced labour, or human trafficking. It can also apply to cases where a relative, for example, has been killed.
<b>Social and political participation rights</b>	This is for when you are prevented from assembling peacefully, from forming a political party or from joining trade unions or any other association. This also applies if your right to vote or stand as a candidate in an election is being restricted. If diplomatic or consular protection is denied to you by your national authorities, then this too is covered.
<b>Rights related to the protection of private and family life</b>	This is for when your private life or family is interfered with. This includes your personal identity (e.g. choice of name, mode of dress, sexual identity), medical treatment (negligent or without consent), stalking (including cyberstalking), unjustified body searches or fingerprinting by the police, relationships between parents and children, relationship between you and your partner (including same-sex partnership), adoption, etc. This also includes situations where you are dismissed for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity and parental leave.
<b>Property rights</b>	This is for when you are prevented from enjoying your property including land, flats, cars etc. This also applies if you, as an author or inventor, wish to protect your own creation and profit from it. This can relate to works covered by copyright as well as patents, trademarks, and original business methods and industrial processes.
<b>Rights related to good public administration</b>	This is for when you wish to raise an issue about maladministration, such as when your affairs are not handled impartially, fairly or within a reasonable time by a government office, local authority or any other public institution.
<b>Rights in the area of social security and assistance, education, housing and health-care</b>	This is for when you are prevented from accessing social security entitlements and social assistance, primarily during maternity, illness, accident, loss of employment or age. It covers your rights to access basic medical care and treatment, and to social and housing assistance including financial support. It also covers problems with access to compulsory education as well as to higher and further education, including university and vocational training or lack of respect by educational facilities for parents' religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions. It also applies to problems with access to general services such as postal services, telecommunications or transport.
<b>Rights of specific vulnerable groups: persons with disabilities, children and the elderly</b>	This is for when you are prevented from accessing social benefits (such as disability pension) or when your participation in social, cultural and political life is endangered because you are a child, an elderly person or you are not protected specifically as any of the following groups: a child, an elderly person or a person with a disability.

<b>Workers' rights and rights related to self-employment and business activities</b>	This is for when you are prevented from freely choosing a job, from working, or from freely setting up and conducting a business. It also covers your rights as a worker to information and consultation at work, the right to collective bargaining and action, protection against unjustified dismissal as well as fair and just working conditions. It also covers lack of protection of young people at work and child labour.
--	--

**Rights related to the protection of the physical and mental integrity of a person**

Term	Description
<b>Human dignity</b>	You have the right to be treated fairly and with respect.
<b>Right to life</b>	This right protects you from, for example, excessive use of lethal force by the police and the death penalty.
<b>Right to the integrity of the person</b>	You have the right to be protected from being physically or mentally harmed or exploited. This right also extends to the protection from being operated on without consent, or the sale of your organs. It also protects the idea of 'humanity' more generally by prohibiting human cloning or interference with reproduction aimed at preventing certain social or ethnic groups from having children.
<b>Prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment</b>	You have the right to be protected against torture and treatments that are intentionally humiliating, painful or distressing.
<b>Prohibition of slavery and/or forced labour</b>	You have the right not to be owned or controlled by another person or to be moved from one place to another to work or to do something against your will.
<b>Right to liberty and security</b>	You have the right to be protected from being detained without good reason. For example, you can only be imprisoned if you have committed a crime; you can only be arrested if you have been suspected of having committed a crime and you should not suffer unreasonable and rough body searches without justification.

**Non-discrimination rights**

Term	Description
<b>Respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity</b>	This right safeguards cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and enables you to participate in and contribute to this diversity.
<b>Discrimination/unfair treatment in the area of employment</b>	You should not be treated unfairly or differently at work because of your race, age, sexual orientation, etc.
<b>Discrimination/unfair treatment in the area of education</b>	You should not be treated unfairly or differently in education because of your race, age, sexual orientation, etc.
<b>Discrimination/unfair treatment in the area of housing</b>	You should not be treated unfairly or differently when trying to find somewhere to live or being at home because of your race, age, sexual orientation, etc.
<b>Discrimination/unfair treatment in the area of social protection</b>	You should not be treated unfairly or differently when receiving social benefits because of your race, age, sexual orientation, etc.
<b>Discrimination/unfair treatment in the area of goods and services</b>	You should not be treated unfairly or differently when trying to access goods and services because of your race, age, sexual orientation, etc.

**Rights related to the freedom of thought, expression and religion**

Term	Description
<b>Freedom of thought, conscience and religion</b>	You have the freedom to freely express your ideas (including ideology and moral values) as well as your religious or non-religious beliefs.
<b>Freedom of expression and information</b>	You have the freedom to express and receive different ideas and information. The press also has freedom to publish any information which is neither false nor defamatory.
<b>Freedom of arts and science</b>	You have the freedom to enjoy, learn from and investigate cultural works as well as scientific studies. If these works are in the public domain or they are not copyrighted, you can also share them publicly.

**Social and political participation rights**

Term	Description
<b>Freedom of assembly and of association</b>	You have the freedom to gather publicly or privately and associate with others for any purpose, as long as the purpose is lawful.
<b>Right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections</b>	You have the right to participate in any election you are entitled to and stand as a candidate.
<b>Right to diplomatic and consular protection</b>	You have the right to receive protection from your embassy or consulate.

**Rights related to the protection of private and family life**

Term	Description
<b>Right to respect for his or her private and family life, home and communications</b>	You have the right to be protected from the unlawful disturbance of your personal and family life, including at home and in your communications with others (including online).
<b>Right to marry and the right to found a family</b>	You have the right to marry your partner as well as to have a family.
<b>Right to reconcile family and professional life (right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child)</b>	You have the right to balance your professional and family life, including the right to be protected from unjust dismissal connected to maternity. This also includes your right to paid maternity and paternity leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

**Workers' rights and rights related to self-employment and business activities**

Term	Description
<b>Freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work</b>	You have the freedom to decide where to professionally develop your skills, needs and aspirations.
<b>Freedom to conduct a business</b>	You have the right to start a business without additional restrictions over and above standard practices.
<b>Workers' right to information and consultation within the undertaking</b>	You have the right to receive information regarding your rights at work and to have a say when there are changes in your working conditions that affect you directly.
<b>Right of collective bargaining and action</b>	You have the right to interact collectively with others at work as part of negotiations of collective agreements, work contracts and other related negotiations affecting your conditions at work. This right also allows you to start collective actions such as strikes, protests, and other similar actions.
<b>Right of access to placement services</b>	You have the right to freely access employment agencies and other companies who could help you to find a suitable job for your qualifications and experience.
<b>Protection in the event of unjustified dismissal</b>	You have the right to be protected from being dismissed from work which is not in line with applicable labour laws.
<b>Fair and just work conditions</b>	You have the right to working conditions which meet the standards of fairness and justice.
<b>Prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work</b>	You have the right to be protected from being employed under the legal working age. There is also protection if you are working within the legal working age.

#### Rights in the area of social security and assistance, education, housing and health-care

Term	Description
<b>Right to education</b>	You have the right to access educational systems.
<b>Social security and social assistance</b>	You have the right to access to social security systems (including pension, work-related accident protection and different unemployment benefits) as well as other social assistance programmes.
<b>Health care</b>	You have the right to access healthcare systems.
<b>Access to services of global economic interest</b>	You have the right to access general services such as energy, transportation or water services.

#### Right to access courts and other bodies in order to obtain redress, such as a binding decision or a financial compensation

Term	Description
<b>Right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial</b>	You have the right to access courts or use other ways of claiming your rights. The fact that a court exists is not enough; it has to be used to deliver decisions that make a difference on the situation which is the object of the proceedings. Courts also have to be fair - treating you and others equally, and act according to set rules.
<b>Presumption of innocence and right of defence</b>	You have the right to be treated as innocent until guilt has been proven; you also have the right to be defended when being accused of a crime.
<b>Principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties</b>	You have the right to be protected from being punished for a crime that is not prescribed by law. Penalties should also be proportional to the crime committed.
<b>Right not to be tried or punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same criminal offence</b>	You have the right to be protected from being brought before a court and punished for the same crime more than once for a single criminal act.

#### Asylum and immigration rights

Term	Description
<b>Right to asylum</b>	You have the right to claim asylum in another European Union country.
<b>Protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition</b>	You have the right to be protected from unlawful removal, expulsion or extradition from the country in which you are residing.

#### Rights of specific vulnerable groups: persons with disabilities, children and the elderly

Term	Description
<b>Children rights</b>	As a child you have the right to protection and care as is necessary for your wellbeing. You also have the right to have your opinions listened to and be taken into consideration.
<b>Person with disabilities</b>	You have the right to be protected from having your mental or physical condition affect the full enjoyment of your other rights.
<b>Rights of the elderly</b>	As an elderly person you have the right to lead a life of dignity and independence, and to participate in social and cultural life.

#### Discrimination grounds

Term	Description
<b>Gender</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because of your gender, for example if you are not promoted because you are a woman or a man.
<b>Race and ethnic origin</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because of your ethnic or racial background.
<b>Age</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because of your age.
<b>Disability</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because of any type of disability.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because you are, for example, attracted to the same sex or gender or both sexes.
<b>Religion and belief</b>	This protects you from being treated differently because of your religious, atheist or agnostic beliefs.
<b>Other grounds</b>	This protects you from being treated differently on the basis of other grounds than those listed above, such as political affiliation, physical appearance, etc.

#### Discrimination areas

<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Education</b>	This protects you from being treated differently when, for example, accessing education.
<b>Employment</b>	This protects you from being treated differently when, for example, accessing employment or in relation to conditions of employment.
<b>Goods and services</b>	This protects you from being treated differently when buying products or using different services.
<b>Housing</b>	This protects you from being treated differently when, for example, trying to rent or buy accommodation.
<b>Other areas</b>	This protects you from being treated differently in relation to other matters than those listed above, such as in relation to healthcare, media, sports, science, political parties, civil society organisations, etc.
<b>Social Protection</b>	This protects you from being treated differently when, for example, trying to access different social protection schemes in case of sickness, invalidity, old age, unemployment, etc.

Last update: 22/10/2018

This page is maintained by the European Commission. The information on this page does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission. The Commission accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to any information or data contained or referred to in this document. Please refer to the legal notice with regard to copyright rules for European pages.