

Avaleht>Tele õigused>Põhiõigused>Põhiõigused Euroopa Liidus

Fundamental rights in the European Union

The bodies and legal documents that protect your rights in the EU

Legal instruments

Your fundamental rights are protected in the EU at:

national level – by EU countries' constitutional systems

EU level – by the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#).

The **Charter**:

brings together all the rights (personal, civic, political, economic, social) enjoyed by people within the EU, in a single text

codifies them as a series of **fundamental rights**

contains **more recent rights**, such as data protection and good administration.

For more details, see our [Charter app](#).

See also the Commission [strategy for implementing the Charter](#).

The Charter does not grant EU institutions (the European Commission) a general power to intervene in fundamental rights issues in EU countries.

The Commission **can only intervene when EU law comes into play**, for example when a national measure applies EU law in a manner incompatible with the charter.

Bodies

The following bodies can possibly help you with issues you think are infringing your fundamental rights:

1. EU Court of Justice

You can bring a case before the Court if you **believe an EU legal act violates your fundamental rights** (as either an individual or organisation). Under certain conditions, the Court can annul such an act.

You **cannot take action directly** against another individual or organisation or government through the Court of Justice.

2. European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe)

You can bring a case before this court if you believe an EU country has violated a fundamental right protected by the [European Convention of Human Rights](#).

[Check whether your complaint is admissible](#)

The court interprets the Convention <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-convention/> – not an EU instrument, but one that is binding on all EU countries.

3. Fundamental Rights Agency

The [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) provides **assistance and expertise** on fundamental rights to EU institutions and EU member governments when they implement EU law.

It collects and publishes data on how these rights are observed in all EU countries, within the scope of EU law.

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