



**Overview of the cooperation between the
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
and the Council of Europe**
(1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019)

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Part I. Objectives, methods and review of cooperation

1. Introduction

The cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (the Agency or FRA) and the Council of Europe (CoE) is based on the FRA Founding Regulation¹ and on the Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe, which was adopted in 2008.² This Agreement established a general cooperation framework with the aim of avoiding duplication and ensuring complementarity and added value to the work of the Agency and the CoE. Pursuant to Article 23 of the Agreement, based on a positive evaluation of the cooperation, the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) decided not to revise the Agreement for the time being as it provides for an appropriate and flexible instrument for cooperation.

The cooperation between the Agency and the CoE has been evolving continuously in recent years towards an improved coordination of activities and synergies between FRA and the Secretariat, the Parliamentary Assembly, the European Court on Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights. This document presents key objectives and methods of this cooperation and provides concrete examples of cooperation activities in relevant fields from the period 1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019.

2. Key objectives – What do we want to achieve together and in which areas?

The key objectives and strategic priorities of the cooperation relate to the promotion and protection of human rights, as identified through a thorough exchange of views between the Agency and the CoE. The cooperation between the two organisations mainly focuses on:

- Developing joint projects in areas of mutual concern;
- Engaging in dialogue with stakeholders in order to improve the situation of fundamental rights in Europe;
- Coordinating communication activities to increase awareness regarding fundamental rights;
- Informing each other on the results of activities of each organisation;
- Exchanging data and consulting each other at operational level.

The cooperation takes place within specific thematic areas of the Agency's Multi-Annual Framework (2018 – 2022), which has been agreed upon by the Council of the European Union and adopted on 7 December 2017.³

- a) Victims of crime and access to justice;

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, OJ L 53, 22.2.2007, p. 1.

² Agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe, OJ L 186, 15.7.2008, p. 7.

³ Council decision (EU) No 2017/2269 of 7 December 2017 establishing a Multiannual Framework for 2018-2022 for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, OJ L 326/1, 09.12.2017, p.1.

- b) Equality and discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, or on the grounds of nationality;
- c) Information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data;
- d) Judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters;
- e) Migration, borders, asylum and integration of refugees and migrants;
- f) Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- g) Rights of the child;
- h) Integration and social inclusion of Roma.

3. Methods and review of cooperation

3.1. Permanent mechanisms of cooperation

Different mechanisms laid down in the Agency's Founding Regulation and in the EU-CoE Agreement ensure complementarity in the relationship between the Agency and the CoE. For instance, the CoE has appointed an independent member to the Management and Executive Boards of the FRA, while representatives of the CoE Secretariat are present as observers at FRA Management Board meetings. Moreover, once a year, a senior representative of the CoE is invited to address the FRA Management Board. This provides the opportunity for an exchange of views between the CoE and FRA and keeps the FRA Management Board fully informed regarding key activities planned by the CoE. Annual exchanges of views between the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT), the independent person appointed by the CoE, the Chairperson of FRA Management Board and FRA Director further contribute towards an efficient cooperation between the two organisations.

Moreover, the CoE is associated with FRA's work with civil society organisations, mainly through FRA's Fundamental Rights Platform.

The Founding Regulation prescribes consultations between FRA and the CoE during the preparation of the Agency's Annual Work Programmes and the Agency's Annual Report on fundamental rights issues (Article 9 of the FRA Founding Regulation). This ensures that CoE priorities, activities and findings are properly taken into account in key FRA documents in general, and in the Agency's Annual Report (*Fundamental Rights Report*) in particular. In addition, Article 3 of the Agreement between the EU and the CoE on cooperation between FRA and the CoE establishes that the Agency and the CoE shall each appoint a contact person to deal specifically with matters relating to their cooperation. The CoE is part of the pre-selection panel of the members of the Scientific Committee, which verify the eligibility of candidates. Furthermore, the services of both organisations carry out regular reviews at different stages of activities and projects, while regular exchanges of information between the respective contact persons, as well as inter-institutional meetings, contribute further towards an enhanced collaboration.

3.2. Forms of cooperation at operational level

The operational cooperation between FRA and the CoE is an ongoing day-to-day process. This cooperation takes various forms, such as: consultations on specific projects and activities; regular exchange of data and information; participation in inception meetings

of projects; joint projects and activities; participation in respective civil society structures; granting of observer status in several CoE human rights monitoring and intergovernmental committees; and complementarity through mutual references to each other's work. The contact persons appointed by the CoE and the Agency are informed about these activities on a regular basis so that they can facilitate the whole process and ensure its continuity and consistency. Such exchanges ensure cross-references to each other's work. For the first time, this year a meeting between FRA and CoE management teams was organised to further strengthen cooperation and to exchange views on respective current and future priorities.

The Agency cooperates at an operational level with a number of relevant bodies and services of the CoE, including the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The ECtHR and ECSR case law regularly cite the Agency's reports.⁴ ECRI's reports also make regular reference to FRA's work, in particular the EU-MIDIS and the LGBT surveys as well as the *Fundamental Rights Report*. Similarly, the 2019 CoE Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) Country Monitoring Report on Portugal and Finland, and the 2019 CoE Commissioner for Human Rights's report of her visit to Poland refer to FRA data from the "Women as victims of partner violence" report; and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) refers to FRA data in its country reports.⁵ FRA also cooperates with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) as well as other human rights monitoring committees, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Venice Commission, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Conference of INGOs, as well as the Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law and the Directorate General of Democracy.

FRA relies in its work on the standards set by the CoE and takes due account of the judgments of the ECtHR and the way they are being implemented, the decisions and conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights, reports and activities of other CoE human rights monitoring bodies and intergovernmental committees, as well as reports of the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights. FRA also has an online overview for the 28 EU Member States of the status of acceptance of international human rights obligations (UN and CoE). In addition, these comparative tables include data on acceptance of specific provisions of the European Social Charter and the percentage of compliance with these as assessed by the European Committee of Social Rights as well as core statistics from the ECtHR on cases related to the 28.⁶ The European Union

⁴ See for example: ECtHR, *Bălșan v. Romania* (application no. 49645/09), 23 May 2017 on violence against women; ECSR *International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights (INTERRIGHTS) v. Greece*, Collective Complaint No. 49/2008, decision on the merits of 11 December 2009, *International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) v. Belgium*, Collective Complaint No. 62/2010, decision on the merits of 21 March 2012, *Conference of European Churches (CEC) v. the Netherlands*, Collective complaint n° 90/2013, decision on the merits of 1 July 2014; *Equal Rights Trust v. Bulgaria*, Complaint No. 121/2016, decision on the merits of 16 December 2018, *European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) v. Bulgaria*, Complaint No. 151/2017, decision on the merits of 5 December 2018; *Conclusions 2011* (Article 7§10, France, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden); *Conclusions 2013* (Article 13§4, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden; Article 30, France); *Conclusions 2015* (Article 19§4, Slovenia).

⁵ See for example: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/country-monitoring-work>; Council of Europe, Human Rights Commissioner's report on the visit to Poland 2019.

⁶ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/int-obligations>

Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS) provided an online tool which automatically captures key elements of EU Member States human rights obligations under international human rights law as well as the various monitoring mechanisms of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. The CoE is also regularly invited to comment on FRA draft reports to ensure, amongst other things, that European human rights standards are properly reflected.

In turn, the work of the CoE is supported by FRA data and findings. For example, ECRI's fifth monitoring reports on France, Italy, and the United Kingdom refer and use data and information of FRA research as evidence, in particular the EU-MIDIS survey; the LGBT survey; the Roma survey; the opinion on the Framework Decision on Racism and xenophobia – with special attention to the rights of victims of crime; and, the thematic reports on Access to effective remedies: the Asylum-seeker perspective and the survey results on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Moreover, the Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) makes reference to FRA reports and surveys (e.g. EU-MIDIS Roma survey, Indicators Framework developed by the Roma Working Party facilitated by FRA; FRA thematic reports on education, housing and gender) in its thematic reports⁷.

Such cross-references contribute to disseminating the results of the respective activities of the CoE and FRA on a reciprocal basis. Reciprocal consultation and feedback, as well as participation at meetings and events, have become integral parts of the working methods of both organisations.

Part II. Projects and activities undertaken (1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019)

4. Examples of inter-institutional and regulatory cooperation

The independent person appointed by the CoE participated in FRA Executive Board meetings (1 March, 16 May, 27 September and 12 December) and the FRA Management Board meetings (16-17 May, 12-13 December). The CoE Secretariat representative participated in FRA Management Board meeting in May and December as an observer.

The CoE Secretariat representative participates as an observer in the regular meetings of the Management Board's Annual Report Editorial Committee (AREDIT). The AREDIT Committee was created to assist in the preparation of the Annual Report with a view to its adoption by FRA Management Board. It considers the first draft of the text and provides comments and recommendations.

On 22 January, FRA took part in an event marking the 20th anniversary of the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights in Strasbourg. The event was organised by the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of

⁷ For more information: <http://www.CoE.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/library/publications.asp#TopOfPage>
& <http://www.CoE.int/en/web/portal/cahrom>

Ministers. FRA Contact Person for the cooperation with the CoE met with CoE officials to discuss cooperation and to explore avenues of future collaboration.

On 11 April, a delegation of the Secretariat of the CoE's Department of the European Social Charter (ESC) visited the agency to meet with FRA experts in Vienna. The purpose of the visit was to discuss cooperation, to exchange information about ongoing and planned work related to several themes and how the European Committee of Social Rights could use FRA data in its reporting and collective complaints procedures. FRA presented the agency's available information in the thematic areas of Roma and Travellers; rights of people with disabilities; LGBTI; asylum seekers, migrant workers and social rights; poverty and social exclusion; child rights; as well as human rights in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. Discussions also touched on the development of the agency's [EU Fundamental Rights Information System](#) (EFRIS). The ESC delegation presented relevant examples of its ongoing and planned work on Roma and Travellers⁸, the rights of the child⁹, persons with disability¹⁰, migration¹¹ and violence against women¹².

On 20 June in Strasbourg, the independent member appointed by the CoE to FRA's Management Board, Rainer Hofmann, gave a presentation to the CoE's Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH). The presentation built upon the overview of cooperation between FRA and the CoE including concrete examples of successful cooperation and suggestions for further strengthening cooperation in areas such as: artificial intelligence and its impact on human rights; protection of civil society actors in culturally diverse societies; and in new areas such as methods of alternative dispute resolution and its impact on human rights.

On 27 June, FRA and CoE both participated in the EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanism Office's second International Partner Organisation coordination meeting in Brussels. The meeting allowed for discussions on the role of the OECD, the CoE and FRA in the design and set-up of programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants' Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. The meeting facilitated cooperation and coordination, and a better understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of the International Partner Organisations and the challenges they face.

On 10 September in Strasbourg, the independent member appointed by the CoE to FRA's Management Board, Rainer Hofmann, gave a presentation to the CoE's Rapporteur Group on External Relations of the Committee of Ministers (GR-EXT). The presentation built upon the overview of cooperation between FRA and the CoE including concrete examples of successful cooperation and suggestions for further strengthening cooperation in areas such as: artificial intelligence and its impact on human rights;

⁸ See notably Conclusions 2019 on Articles 16 and 31 of the Social Charter, to be published in 2020, as well as pending collective complaints No. 157/2017 European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and Mental Disability Advocacy Centre (MDAC) v. Czech Republic, No. 178/2019 Amnesty International v. Italy, No. 185/2019 European Roma Rights Centre v. Belgium.

⁹ See Conclusions 2019 on Articles 7 and 17 of the Social Charter, to be published in 2020, as well as pending collective complaints [No. 148/2017 International Commission of Jurists \(ICJ\) v. Czech Republic](#); [No. 157/2017 European Roma Rights Centre \(ERRC\) and Mental Disability Advocacy Centre \(MDAC\) v. Czech Republic](#); [No. 173/2018 International Commission of Jurists \(ICJ\) and European Council for Refugees and Exiles \(ECRE\) v. Greece](#).

¹⁰ See Conclusions 2016 on Article 15 of the Social Charter (the next assessment based on reports is due in 2020, to be published in 2021), as well as pending collective complaints No. 141/2017 International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Inclusion Europe v. Belgium; No. 168/2018 European Disability Forum and Inclusion Europe v. France.

¹¹ See Conclusions 2019 on Article 19 of the Social Charter, to be published in 2020

¹² See Conclusions 2019 on Article 16 of the Social Charter, to be published in 2020.

protection of civil society actors in culturally diverse societies, in particular human rights defenders.

On 19 September, at the Expert Seminar in Strasbourg, FRA moderated the panel on “developing synergies between the European Social Charter and EU law” with reference to the European Pillar of Social Rights.

On 10 and 11 October in Strasbourg, a delegation of FRA’s Management Team met with a delegation of CoE’s Management Team to discuss how to further strengthen cooperation and to exchange views on respective current and future priorities and in particular, how FRA data could be used in the CoE’s monitoring procedures. Discussion focused on inequalities and discrimination, the human rights system (including national human rights institutions, human rights defenders, and civic space), child rights, migration and asylum, fundamental rights aspects of rule of law, access to justice, victims of crime, artificial intelligence, and the European Union Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS).

On 11 November, Ambassador Rémi Mortier, Chair of the CoE’s Rapporteur Group on External Relations of the Committee of Ministers (GR-EXT) met with FRA’s Director as a follow-up to Rainer Hofmann’s presentation to GR-EXT on 10 September.

5. Examples of joint projects and other operational cooperation in different thematic areas

5.1. FRA-CoE Joint Projects

a. Updates of Handbooks

Update of the Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration

The Agency and the European Court of Human Rights are updating the 2014 Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration. The updated version is expected to be published in five languages in 2020, with additional translations following in 2021¹³.

New language versions of the updated Handbook on European data protection law

The updated handbook on European data protection law published in 2018 by FRA, the CoE and the European Data Protection Supervisor remains one of FRA website’s most popular downloads. By October 2019, the German, French, Italian and Spanish versions of the handbook were published in addition to the English version. The Bulgarian, Greek and Hungarian versions are to be issued in December 2019¹⁴.

¹³ For more information: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/handbook-european-law-relating-asylum-borders-and-immigration>

¹⁴ For more information: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/handbook-european-data-protection-case-law>

New language versions of the updated Handbook on European non-discrimination law

The Handbook on European non-discrimination law – 2018 edition examines law stemming from the complementary systems of the EU equality directives and the European Convention on Human Rights, drawing on them interchangeably to the extent that they overlap, while highlighting differences where these exist. The handbook is now also available in Finnish and Romanian, adding to the existing versions in English, French, German and Polish. The Italian and Spanish versions are to be issued in December 2019¹⁵.

Rights of the Child

The Polish version is foreseen to be issued by the end of 2019¹⁶.

Cyber-crime

From 14 to 15 May, the Agency, in cooperation with the CoE, hosted the 2nd expert meeting on cybercrime and fundamental rights. FRA invited relevant European and international stakeholders on the fight against cybercrime, including Europol, Eurojust, the EJM, and the European Commission, the Cybercrime division of the CoE, ENISA, UNODC, OSCE and representatives of national prosecution services. This meeting discussed the scope, target group and relevant content of the future [Handbook on European law relating cybercrime and fundamental rights](#) following the outcome of the [first expert meeting](#) held in Bucharest from 15 to 16 November 2018. A summary outcome of this first expert meeting is accessible [here](#)¹⁷.

5.2. Operational cooperation in different thematic areas

a. Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance

On 16 and 17 October 2018, the sixth meeting of the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance took place in Vienna, co-organised by the Commission with the Austrian Ministry of Interior on behalf of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Since 2016, FRA assists the EU High Level Group on Combatting Racism, Xenophobia and other intolerance (HLG) in coordinating a dedicated working group on hate crime reporting, recording and data collection. ECRI is a member of the HLG. ECRI's input to the HLG working groups is structured around relevant case law. In 2018 FRA developed [an ECRI-reviewed focus paper](#) on selected ECtHR cases in order to support EU Member States' responses to hate crime.

In January, ECRI and FRA agreed to continue sharing and referencing each other's data for relevant country reports. This includes summary information from FRA/ODIHR's national data workshops in EU member states (eight workshops in BG, EE, ES, HU, LT, PT, PL, SK) were organised since 2018, with three more scheduled (BE, IE, CZ). FRA always uses ECRI's country findings in its national data workshops and highlights ECRI's

¹⁵ For more information: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2011/handbook-european-non-discrimination-law>

¹⁶ For more information: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/handbook-european-law-child-rights>

¹⁷ For more information: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2018/handbook-european-law-relating-cybercrime-and-fundamental-rights>

recommendations. In 2019, FRA provided input for HELP, the CoE online course for legal professionals on hate crime.

In September FRA gave a presentation to the high-level conference marking the 25th anniversary of ECRI.

b. Cooperation related to Roma and Travellers

In March, FRA participated in the [7th International Roma Women Conference](#), which took stock of the implementation of the CoE's [thematic action plan on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers](#) (2016-2019). The agency participated in several panels, presenting its findings on discrimination of Roma and Travellers, and its report on Roma women.

In May, FRA presented the results of its Roma survey during a thematic visit of the CoE's Ad hoc committee of experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) examining national experiences of social and/or geographical mapping of Roma communities and their impact on policy developments.

In June, FRA took part in a CAHROM meeting presenting early findings from its current Roma and Travellers' survey. At the CAHROM meeting in October, FRA participated in the CAHROM. During the meeting, FRA explained its hate crime assistance to relevant authorities, with a focus on anti-Roma bias.

c. Equality and non-discrimination

On 12 September in Paris, FRA attended a hearing of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee of the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly on 'Ethnic profiling in Europe: a matter of high concern'. FRA presented recommendations from its 'Preventing unlawful profiling today and in the future' guide.

On 13 May in Vienna, FRA attended the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development meeting during which the report "Ending Coercion in mental health: the need for a human rights-based approach" was adopted.

Rights of LGBTI persons

On 26 and 27 September FRA attended a conference on the EU-funded 'Call it Hate: Raising Awareness of Anti-LGBT Hate Crime' project. Along with representatives of UN OHCHR and ECRI, it was part of a panel on tackling anti-LGBT hate crime at the international level. During the conference, research papers and (social) media campaigns on raising awareness of hate crimes against LGBT people were presented. FRA also fed into the main results of the research part of the project.

FRA participated in the meeting of the European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points Network, supported by the CoE SOGI Unit, and the meeting of intergovernmental / multilateral organisations, in May in Oslo and in October in Prague.

d. Rights of the Child

On 7 February, an internal cooperation meeting was held in the CoE's premises in Paris to step up and strengthen cooperation between the European Commission, the Agency and the CoE in the area of the rights of the child. The meeting was an opportunity for the coordinators and focal points on the rights of the child to share information on core priorities in order to strengthen synergies and identify areas where work can be aligned.

On 14 and 15 March in Brussels, the Agency attended the conference organized within the EU-funded ProGuard project which gathered representatives of guardianship and child protection authorities, civil society, EU agencies, CoE and the European Commission. The agency presented the principles on guardianship developed in the [Handbook for guardianship for children deprived of parental care](#).

From 2 to 3 April, representatives from the Children's Rights Division of the CoE and the Agency met at the European Forum on Rights of the Child organised by the Commission in Brussels.

On 14 May, FRA attended a meeting of the sub-committee on Children when the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development met in Vienna.

On 20 June, FRA contributed to the mid-term evaluation process of the CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). FRA provided findings from its relevant surveys, and studies.

On 10 October in Rome, FRA participated in the joint workshop on 'Family as a hub for family policies' organised by the CoE and the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The workshop took place in the context of the meeting of the European Social Cohesion Platform (PECS). FRA intervened during the session on the eradication of child poverty presenting findings and opinions from its report on combating child poverty.

On 13-14 November, FRA participated at the CoE Conference "Redefining power: Strengthening the Rights of the Child as the key to a future-proof Europe".

Moreover, the Agency provided regular input in meetings and in writing for the CoE's upcoming guidelines on guardianship and on age assessment, as well as the CoE's soon to be published Handbook on child-friendly information for asylum seeking.

In 2019, the Agency consulted GRETA for the preparation of the publication "Children deprived of parental care found in need of protection in an EU Member State other than their own. A practical guide to enhance transnational cooperation for children who are or may become victims of trafficking", jointly produced by FRA and the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator.

e. Violence against Women

FRA was consulted on different HELP courses developed by the CoE, in particular on strengthening Access to Justice for Women Victims of Violence.

The 2019 CoE Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) Country Monitoring Report on Portugal and Finland, and the 2019

CoE Human Rights Commissioner's report of her visit to Poland refer to FRA data from the "Women as victims of partner violence" report.¹⁸

f. Asylum, immigration and integration of migrants; visa and border control

On 4 April, the Agency spoke during a panel discussion at a conference in Strasbourg on alternatives to immigration detention. The event was organised by the CoE, the European Commission and the European Migration Network.

On 11 - 12 June in Strasbourg, FRA attended and provided expert input at a CoE ad-hoc expert meeting on statelessness. The meeting was organised under the supervision of the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ).

FRA is a member of the CoE Expert Group which drafted recommendations on Age assessment, as well as recommendations on Guardianship.

g. Criminal detention and alternatives

On 24 and 25 April, the Agency participated in a high level conference on prison overcrowding. The conference was organized by the CoE and the European Commission.

In close cooperation with the European Committee for prevention of Torture (CPT) and the Forum of European National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs), FRA is developing an online database on conditions of criminal detention in 28 EU Member States.

h. Information Society, Privacy and Data Protection

From 25 to 27 February, the Agency attended a [conference on criminal justice in cyberspace](#) in Bucharest, organized by the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in cooperation with the CoE. The agency presented the joint FRA and CoE project to produce a [handbook on European Law relating cybercrime and fundamental rights](#).

From 19 to 21 November, FRA participated as an observer at the 39th Plenary meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (T-PD) which took place in Strasbourg.

h.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

FRA has developed a very good working relationship with the CoE on artificial intelligence, which includes joint organisation of sessions at important conferences, as well as regular exchange ensuring that the work of both organisations is complementary.

¹⁸ See for example: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/country-monitoring-work>; Council of Europe, Human Rights Commissioner's report from the visit to Poland 2019.

FRA is an observer in the CoE's Committee of Experts on Human Rights Dimensions of Automated Data Processing and Different Forms of Artificial Intelligence (MSI AUT), and contributes to the work of the committee whenever possible. FRA participated in three out of the four committee meetings that took place (including two meetings in 2019: 18-19 March and 23-24 September).

On 26 to 27 February, the Agency took part in a high-level conference on the impact of artificial intelligence on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Helsinki, which was jointly organized by the Finnish Chairmanship of the CoE's Committee of Ministers and the CoE. The Agency's Director, Michael O'Flaherty, spoke on a panel on the impact of AI-powered techniques on such human rights as privacy and freedom of expression.

On 28 June, FRA chaired a session on Big Data legal questions during a conference on human rights challenges in the digital age. FRA made reference to its work on artificial intelligence and its latest publication on data quality. The event, which took place in Strasbourg, was organised by the CoE and the European Court of Human Rights.

On 12 September in Paris, FRA was invited by the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination to a Hearing on 'Preventing discrimination caused by the use of artificial intelligence'. FRA presented key elements regarding artificial intelligence and discrimination risks.

FRA and CoE further cooperated at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Berlin in November. The CoE spoke at a session on human rights and artificial intelligence co-organised by FRA at RightsCon in Tunis in June. Upon invitation by the CoE, FRA spoke at a CoE led panel discussion on artificial intelligence at Euro-DIG in June.

i. The European Union Fundamental Rights Information system (EFRIS)

The CoE, alongside the United Nations Human Rights Office, are closely involved in the development of the EU Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS). EFRIS brings together relevant EU, UN and CoE information on fundamental rights to improve visibility and accessibility of existing monitoring mechanisms.

On 7 to 8 February, the Agency hosted its fourth expert meeting to appraise a first pilot version of EFRIS. Three CoE representatives participated.

On 15 January, the CoE PACE's Committee on rules of procedure, immunities and institutional affairs convened a meeting in Brussels to discuss greater rule of law cooperation for Europe with EU and CoE representatives. The Agency gave a presentation on EFRIS.

The tool was launched on 12 November in Brussels, with representatives of the CoE present. EFRIS presentations have also been planned in Strasbourg.

The CoE also participated in the FRA-hosted European Coordination Committee of Human Rights Documentation, 17-18 October, during which EFRIS was discussed.

j. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

From 23 to 25 January, the Agency discussed its upcoming study on National Human Rights Institutions with counterparts in the CoE: the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH); the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI); the

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights; and the Venice Commission. The Agency invited respective CoE counterparts to join the Advisory Board on its NHRI report, which is tabled for publication in May 2020.

From 27 February to 1 March, the Agency joined the CoE's meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) in Strasbourg. FRA fed into discussions on updating the Committee of Ministers' Recommendations on national human rights institutions and Ombudsperson institutions. The Agency provided a second round of feedback on the draft text of the "Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution", ("The Venice Principles"), which were then adopted by the Venice Commission on 15 March. Both set of documents are highly relevant for FRA's NHRI report.

k. National Human Rights Action Plan

On 27 and 28 March, FRA organised a Working Party on National Human Rights Action Plans for its National Liaison Officers and other government experts on the topic. During the meeting, the participants had in-depth discussions on these action plans, and their links to EU law and policy. A representative of the Council of Europe also participated in the meeting, and was actively consulted during the preparation phase, in order to learn from the work of the Council of Europe in this area and to ensure complementarity.

l. Civil Society cooperation and civil society space

The civil society networks of FRA and of the CoE cooperate closely; the elected president of the Conference of INGOs is also an observer to FRA's [Fundamental Rights Platform Advisory Panel](#).

On 22 March, the Agency took part in the Warsaw Conference on the role and position of non-governmental organisations in the CoE. The Agency presented its [Fundamental Rights Platform](#). The event was organised by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the CoE.

On 12 April in Strasbourg, the Agency presented its latest and upcoming work on civic space to the [CoE's Conference of INGOs](#).

On 7 - 8 May in Warsaw, the Agency and CoE took part in a meeting discussing cooperation with civil society and supporting human rights defenders in Europe . The meeting was organised by the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Agency.

On 18 - 19 September, FRA and CoE took part in a meeting on the protection of human rights defenders which was hosted in Warsaw by ODIHR.

m. Human Rights at the Local Level

Following up on FRA 2018 Policy Lab on human rights cities (23-24 May 2018) to which the CoE contributed, FRA will continue engaging with the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) on its work with human rights cities. On 28 November in Brussels, FRA organised

an expert meeting with human rights experts, human rights cities and international organisations, including the CoE, with the aim to prepare a draft framework of commitments for European human rights cities. The contribution of the CoE ensured that the experience and tools from the Intercultural cities initiative as well as the Congress' guide on human rights at local level (volume 1) can be well-integrated in the framework of commitments.

n. Human Rights Training and HELP

FRA cooperates with the HELP programme in several ways: FRA is regularly invited to contribute to the updating of the HELP online courses. Recently, FRA has been invited to participate in the earlier phases of course design, for example for the HELP on-line courses on child-friendly justice. FRA experts are also invited as trainers to contribute to the HELP training events. In addition, HELP makes use of FRA publications and capacity-building tools (such as handbooks, videos) as part of the respective thematic courses (on-line courses, but also "train-the-trainers" events).

On 22 February, as a member of the European Judicial Training Network's (EJTN) Sub-Working Group on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Agency attended the group's meeting at the Scuola Superiore della Magistratura in Florence. The working group brings together judicial training institutions and representatives from the CoE's Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) and FRA to design and implement trainings for judges, prosecutors and trainers in the area of fundamental rights.

From 18 to 19 June, FRA delivered a presentation during the CoE's launch of the HELP course on Data Protection, organised in Bucharest for 80 judges and prosecutors from Romania, Lithuania and Poland. The event was held at the National Institute of Magistrate.

o. Communicating Human Rights

On 10 April in Strasbourg, a side event on communicating rights was organised by the Agency, the EU Delegation to the CoE and the CoE's PACE. Speakers included FRA director, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Chair of the Legal and Human Rights Committee in PACE.

On 3 - 4 October in Vienna, the Agency organised a workshop gathering leading human rights communicators to discuss how best to effectively communicate on human rights while engaging the 'moveable' middle and new audiences. The Office for the Commissioner for Human Rights was represented at the meeting.

p. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The agency organized a side event on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Human Rights at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 22 March in Geneva. The representative from CoE was invited to speak during the debate of the event.

5.3 CoE-FRA-Equinet-ENNHRI cooperation within the thematic Platforms

The Council of Europe, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and FRA reiterated their commitment to work together to strengthen the protection of human rights in Europe focusing on two topics (Roma integration and advancing social and economic rights), and providing expertise and input at the meetings of the above mentioned platforms.

The CoE-FRA-Equinet-ENNHRI Collaborative Platform on Economic and Social Rights held its 8th meeting on 10 April in Athens, Greece.

On 14 to 15 May, the 6th Meeting of the COE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Operational Platform on Roma Equality "OPRE" took place. FRA presented data from its 2011 Roma survey and EU MIDIS II (Roma) showing the progress between 2011 and 2016. FRA also actively contributed to the discussion on the CoE Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) and the possible priorities for the post-2019 'strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller' that will follow.

On 28 November FRA participated in the 9th meeting of the CoE-FRA-Equinet-ENNHRI Collaborative Platform on Economic and Social Rights that took place in Strasbourg. The meeting focused on strengthening the justiciability of social and economic rights in Europe.

Part III: Annex

Possibly, the speech by CoE to the FRA Management Board meeting