



DELIVERABLE 2.6

Comparative report on the gaps and strategies to raise awareness and to improve the use of the EU Charter



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Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Gaps and challenges to the implementation of the EU Charter	7
<i>Common gaps and challenges to the implementation of the Charter</i>	7
<i>Specific gaps and challenges to the implementation of the Charter</i>	13
3. Effective approaches and best practices in implementing the EU Charter	16
4. Strategies to overcome the main challenges	22
Challenge 1. Implementation of the Charter into national legal frameworks and public administration	22
Challenge 2. Use of the Charter by national courts and legal and judicial professionals.....	24
Challenge 3. Empowerment of CSO and human rights defenders.....	25
Challenge 4. Raising public awareness of the Charter.....	26
Challenge 5. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Charter	27
5. Communication and awareness-raising initiatives and actions	29
Strategy #1. Policymakers and public administration.....	29
Strategy #2. Legal practitioners	31
Strategy #3. CSOs and human rights defenders	33
Strategy# 4. Media professionals	36
Strategy #5. General population.....	38
6. Final remarks	42

Executive Summary

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (hereinafter, the Charter) plays a critical role in promoting a "culture of rights" across the European Union, driving the development of new legislation and policies that uphold and protect fundamental rights. However, despite progress, the Charter's full implementation at the national level requires more robust and comprehensive policies and measures to address ongoing challenges.

The project "EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Awareness raising and Instruments to promote a Culture of Rights" (hereinafter, FAIR project) comprises a consortium of nine organisations from various EU Member States, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain, and is designed to strengthen people's awareness of their rights under the Charter and of the complaints mechanisms when their rights are infringed.

This report aims to present findings from activities conducted by the nine partners in their respective countries. The activities highlight the Charter's growing awareness among public entities, civil society organisations (CSOs), and human rights defenders. However, it also identifies gaps and challenges in the use of the Charter at the national level, focusing on four categories of stakeholders: policymakers and public administration; legal professionals (such as judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, legal advisors, and law enforcement authorities); CSOs and human rights defenders; and the general population.

Following the identification of gaps and challenges in the national implementation and use of the Charter at the national level, effective approaches and best practices that address these gaps and challenges are also presented. These effective approaches aim to serve as models for wider implementation and contribute to a forward-looking perspective. This report also highlights additional strategies that can be implemented to address the identified gaps and challenges. These key strategies include, among others, the development of specific training tailored to specific stakeholders, the creation and dissemination of tools and learning materials, and the enhancement of sharing practices at both national and European levels. The development of these strategies is sustained through several recommendations on how to implement communication and awareness-raising initiatives, presented in this section. Finally, some concluding remarks are proposed at the end, taking into consideration the overall content of the report.

1. Introduction

The Charter has played a significant role in fostering a "culture of rights" by encouraging the development of new EU legislation that directly safeguards and promotes fundamental rights. Moreover, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has also increasingly relied on the Charter to interpret various legal and policy matters. Nonetheless, the general awareness of the Charter's existence and its implementation at the national level remains a challenge. Therefore, the 2020 EU Commission's Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU¹ upholds the promotion of fundamental rights and values as a shared responsibility. This requires a collective effort from EU institutions, bodies, and agencies, Member States, national and local authorities (including law enforcement authorities), human rights defenders, policymakers, judges, and other legal practitioners, as well as CSOs active in fundamental rights.

The project "EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Awareness raising and Instruments to promote a Culture of Rights" (hereinafter, FAIR project) is designed to strengthen people's awareness of their rights under the Charter and where to turn to when their rights are infringed. The project comprises a consortium of nine organisations from various EU Member States, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain. These countries represent a diverse range of Charter implementation levels and varying challenges related to potential violations of fundamental rights, as well as different approaches to addressing them.

Within this project, several activities have been conducted to assess the level of Charter implementation in each of the nine countries in the consortium. By comparing findings, this report highlights common and country-specific challenges, providing insights into how these issues can be addressed through targeted actions at both the national and EU levels. Additionally, the report aims to provide possible pathways to foster a "culture of rights", raising awareness among key stakeholders and the general public about the significance of the Charter as a tool for protecting fundamental rights.

Therefore, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to derive data-driven insights and capture stakeholder perspectives, including document analysis, surveys, focus groups, and seminars. Concerning document analysis, the results derive from a collective report² that was based on individual reports carried out by each of the nine consortium partners. The information draws from research outputs produced in the context of the FRANET research network over 2019-2023 and other government research reports, case law and academic publications focusing on the use of the

¹ European Commission (2020) [*Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU*](#), COM(2020) 711 final, Brussels, 2 December 2020.

² Comillas (Cood.) (2024), [*Deliverable 2.1 Comparative analysis of gaps in the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*](#), Spain, FAIR Project.

Charter at the national level. Each individual report presents, on the one hand, the use and implementation of the Charter at a national level with respect to legislation, public policies and jurisprudence and, on the other hand, makes analyses to which extent CSOs, legal professionals, human rights defenders and the general population are aware of and made use of the Charter, in order to identify gaps and pathways for a better “domestication of the Charter”. In order to provide a cohesive portrait, nine thematic areas were analysed: 1) Equality and Non-Discrimination; 2) Racism and Xenophobia; 3) Roma Equality and Inclusion; 4) Asylum and Immigration; 5) Information Society and Privacy; 6) Rights of the Child; 7) Access to justice (and rule of law); 8) Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; and 9) Gender-Based Violence Against Women and the LGBTQIA+ Community.

A 21-question online survey was also conducted to supplement these findings and further assess respondents’ awareness and perceptions of the Charter. The results of this survey are compiled in a report published by the FAIR Project³. The survey was conducted from 1 September to 31 October 2024, with an additional extension of seven days. The target group was pre-selected to cover the FAIR consortium countries. Yet, it was not geographically limited, allowing respondents worldwide to share their input since it was disseminated in eleven languages⁴. The questionnaire targeted diverse respondents who might have used the Charter for personal, professional or activism purposes. It is worth noting that the survey was designed to be unbiased. Nevertheless, due to the low response rate within the dissemination campaign, which targeted the general public, the partners decided to disseminate the survey among their associates and contact lists. As the FAIR partners are also FRANET partners, they may have already identified potentially targeted groups that are interested in fundamental rights and possess some knowledge of the Charter.

The desk research and survey results were then shared with key national stakeholders (mainly representatives of public entities and authorities and CSOs) to gather additional insights and ensure that the perspectives of various sectors were fully represented. This was done by conducting two focus groups and one public seminar in each partner country. The discussions conducted during these activities were also relevant in identifying best practices, measures, and strategies to improve the national implementation and use of the Charter. Most countries conducted the focus groups online to suit the participants’ preferences and availability better. Each focus group was conducted by a moderator with the help of an assistant moderator who took notes and addressed any issues that arose during the discussion. The results of these activities can be found in a published report⁵.

³ Tsvetilova, B., Doichinova, M. (2024), [Deliverable 2.3 Report on the main findings of the FAIR survey](#), Bulgaria, FAIR Project.

⁴ Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch, English, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian, Spanish, and Turkish.

⁵ Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (2024), [Deliverable 2.4. Report on the Focus Groups activities](#), Italy, FAIR Project.

Nine public seminars were also conducted between the end of January and mid-February 2025, serving as a relevant moment to emphasise the Charter's role in promoting and defending fundamental rights. The main objective was to show how the Charter can be effectively applied within national contexts, thereby promoting its adoption and integration into national policies, legal frameworks, and professional practices. While most of the seminars were online, one was conducted in a hybrid format. They were also open to professionals who deal with the Charter in their daily work, public entities, academics and researchers, CSOs, and the general public. The results of these activities are compiled in an unpublished report⁶.

The present deliverable is structured around four main sections. The first section concerns gaps and challenges to implementing the EU Charter. It provides a detailed analysis of the barriers to the effective use and enforcement of the Charter in the nine participating countries. The second section contains effective approaches and best practices identified during the activities described above, providing valuable insights into practical actions that have already achieved positive results and could be extended to other national and EU contexts. The third section intends to present a range of strategic approaches to address the main challenges identified in implementing the Charter at a national level. The fourth and final section presents practical recommendations to enhance the Charter's visibility, understanding and use in national contexts. Based on the work done within the FAIR activities, this section also intends to outline stakeholder engagement strategies, identifying the key actors responsible for implementing the proposed communication and awareness-raising initiatives and actions.

⁶ Centre for Social Studies (2025), *Deliverable 2.5. Report in the National Seminars on the Use of the Charter*, Portugal, FAIR Project.

2. Gaps and challenges to the implementation of the EU Charter⁷

Within the European legal ecosystem, the Charter is considered a cornerstone for safeguarding individuals' fundamental rights and freedoms. The fact that the Charter gained legal value with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon⁸ only further emphasised its significance within the EU's legal framework. However, the activities conducted within the FAIR project showed significant gaps and challenges in implementing and using the Charter at a national level. Despite the Charter's overarching goal to establish standards for the protection of fundamental rights, the results indicate that there are common and specific gaps and challenges in translating this goal into the legal, judicial, and social protection systems at the national level.

Common gaps and challenges to the implementation of the Charter

Across the nine countries involved in the FAIR project, there are some common gaps and challenges in implementing the Charter at a national level. These gaps and challenges include the limited use of the Charter by policymakers, public and governmental administration, and judicial authorities; gaps in training on how to apply the Charter; a lack of awareness among the general public, CSOs and human rights defenders about the Charter's intrinsic value and potential, and significant gaps in the assessment and monitoring of its actual implementation, both globally and in specific areas.

Awareness and use of the Charter by national policymakers, public and governmental administration entities, courts and legal professionals

The nine thematic areas analysed show that national legislation is becoming increasingly aware of the Charter, but its national use is still highly limited. There are very few instances where it can be argued that the Charter was a driving force in the design and implementation of a new law or public policy. Moreover, the results also confirm that although several legislative initiatives align with the values enshrined in the Charter, it is unclear if they were planned with the Charter in mind.

Several reasons are pointed out for this trend. The general nature of the Charter and its overlap with other international and national instruments make national actors choose instruments that are perceived as more concrete and specific in their scope.

⁷ The information presented in this section results from the information collected, by all partners, during the FAIR activities, namely desk research, survey, focus groups and seminars.

⁸ European Communities (2007), [Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community](#), OJ 2007 C 306.

“Look: the Charter is a framework agreement. It's not even an agreement, it's a framework document that concerns only the Member States of the European Union. In comparison, the Human Rights Convention [i.e. the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)] concerns all the members of the Council of Europe, which is a little bit broader. Correspondingly, there is also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which concerns all the United Nations members (...). So all these things overlap and overlap.” (Bulgaria, CSO focus group)

The limited cooperation and networking efforts among public authorities at all levels of governance also hinder effective implementation. In some countries, because legislative and public administration entities don't exchange information and best practices, they resort to using already existing legislation, which results in less use of the Charter.

Two participants in the focus groups pointed out another reason: the historical and cultural trajectory of the EU isn't recognised as relevant to fundamental rights, as its genesis was based more on economic interests. Therefore, the late assumption of fundamental rights as a structural pillar of the EU makes it more difficult to assume the Charter as a reference document.

“I think it's a practice based on this cultural view that human rights and fundamental rights are not a matter for the European Union. The European Union, its main objective and its main action and its history and genesis have very little to do with human rights and fundamental rights. When we look at the European Union, it's difficult for the first word that comes to mind to be fundamental rights or human rights.” (Portugal, public authorities focus group)

“As a researcher, I think it may have to do with the fact that it is a very late Charter, that is, it only comes into force with the Treaty of Lisbon, in the context of an overdose of Human Rights mechanisms at national and European level, and at international level. So, I believe that there is very clear competition between the human rights system of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.” (Spain, CSO focus group)

Another interesting result is that there appear to be areas where the Charter has more expression in its use than others. Areas concerning Information Society and Privacy tend to show higher levels of engagement with the Charter. On the other hand, areas related to the combat of racism and xenophobia or the rights of people with disabilities are areas where the Charter has a lower level of engagement. This can be explained by the fact that national legal systems are already equipped with robust protection mechanisms for defending what are considered more “classical fundamental rights.” Since areas related to Information Society and Privacy tend to be linked to the expansion of new technologies, the Charter appears to have successfully addressed

potential gaps in national legal systems, exerting a more substantial level of influence in the development of laws concerning these themes.

The results from the activities of the FAIR project further corroborated this finding. Although the results of the survey show that 63.7% of the respondents consider the Charter to be very important and the majority of the participants of the focus groups recognise the importance of the Charter, they also admit that the Charter is used as a supporting tool, complementing other national, European or international instruments that are more familiar and perceived as more directly applicable.

*“We have a lot of national legislation and many decrees. We have all these basic principles that have been incorporated [into our national legislation], and we refer to them (...) but in addition, we should also refer to [the EU Charter], because it provides more 'power,' more authority. And we actually overlook that aspect, which should always be considered, even in our own legal cases and mediations. They are also bound by it. It's a fundamental principle that could make our solid foundation even stronger, and we need to use it more.”
(Belgium, public authorities focus group)*

The use of the Charter by national courts and legal professionals tends simultaneously to be brief and complementary. Ideally, the Charter and national legislation should work together in order to offer a strong legal defence or decision. However, the results lead to the conclusion that national laws outstrip the authority of the Charter. This doesn't mean that there are no examples of judicial decisions in which the Charter is cited as a legal source⁹. Nonetheless, courts' use of the Charter tends to be more complementary, serving as a support tool. In this sense, the Charter is more used as a form of “namedropping” since courts tend to prioritise national law or the European Convention on Human Rights¹⁰. This lack of judicial reliance undermines the Charter's perceived authority and relevance.

“I do not think that the EU Charter can compete at all with the European Convention on Human Rights, either in scope or in access to the court. It is a completely different form of legal protection, or a different scope of legal protection, which is really strictly linked to EU secondary law.” (Slovenia, public authorities focus group)

⁹ For instance, in Belgium, Articles 20 (Equality before the law) and 21 (Non-discrimination) of the Charter were invoked in a significant court case to partially annul a law that differentiated men who had sexual contact with other men and the rest of the population concerning the possibility of donating blood. The Slovenian Ombuds has also requested the constitutional review of provisions in the Police Act concerning the processing of air passengers' personal data for counterterrorism and serious crime investigations, citing potential violations of privacy and data protection rights under Article 8 (Protection of personal data) of the Charter.

¹⁰ Council of Europe, [Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#), ETS No. 005, 1950.

One legal practitioner participating in a focus group further pointed out that although the Charter has theoretical potential, its practical application in courts can be very limited. Even if a right foreseen in the Charter is successfully invoked and a violation is proven, there is no guarantee that the right will ultimately be respected or enforced, which can undermine its effectiveness. Moreover, unlike clear-cut legal rules, using human rights arguments in court often requires extensive groundwork, making them more complicated to apply. This complexity can pose a challenge, particularly for judges who may favour more concrete legal frameworks and defences.

“We are used to use very concrete, very specific rules where A+B equals C. I give one example of a case where a disabled person didn't like personal contact, but he could not live without nurses touching him. But he didn't like the fact that the organisation that was taking care of him switched nurses all the time. The organisation said ‘Yes, but for us, we have shortage of personnel; we don't have the possibility’. In the end, the person complained one time too much, and the organisation taking care of and said ‘OK, we stop all contact, and we'll transfer your case to another organisation, and there will be another nurse who comes to you’. Took it to court, presenting human rights arguments, but the judge would not consider that. We want the case based on contract law - because that's very concrete and easy to apply.” (Belgium, CSO focus groups)

An interesting finding is that, although there is evidence that legal and judicial professionals receive some training regarding the Charter, no examples of the Charter being used in strategic litigation were cited. So, while there is evidence that these professionals are being taught how to use the Charter, there is no concrete evidence that they are using it consistently or even prioritising it over other human rights international legal documents.

The same appears to apply to administrative and governmental entities or authorities. There is evidence that public officials also receive training regarding the Charter; however, they are not sufficiently informed about how to adapt their actions to it, nor do they receive political/administrative guidelines on how to apply it or have the necessary legal instruments to do so.

“Our institutions are not sufficiently informed about the content and their obligation to adapt their actions in accordance with the right to good governance... and, importantly, how to harmonise the actions of bodies with guaranteed rights, even in cases where the body is not obliged to act under the Charter.” (Croatia, Public authority focus group)

The survey showed that most respondents (34,9%) were employed within public institutions. Although there is a bias in the survey results, as explained above, the survey confirms this trend: representatives of public bodies are aware of the Charter. Furthermore, 23.5% of respondents reported becoming aware of the Charter through

their professional and institutional contexts. So, while this proves that public administration and public officials are aware of the Charter, it also attests that the use of the instrument is very limited. As a CSO officer pointed out, this may be explained by the value that public administration and public officials attribute to the Charter.

“Although we are aware of it, we don’t use it. Whenever we try to quote it, the receivers are not aware of it. In order to speak the same language with our receivers, this language does not include the Charter or its value. With the agencies that we do advocacy work, we tend to use other instruments such as ECHR, but not the Charter.” (Cyprus, CSO focus group)

Another reason pointed out during the focus groups is that, in spite of the existence of training, there is a lack of clear linkages between fundamental rights and the practical work of administrative authorities. This means that public administration and public officials have the information in theory but can’t turn the knowledge into concrete day-to-day work.

“Where we should aim as a service is how to make a connection in people’s minds that every action they take should be in the context of the EU Charter and not just in theory because the practice is working in the field and it’s a very hard thing and difficult... every employee, everything they do should have that framework (i.e. fundamental rights) in mind and act according to that... This is a very difficult bet; we are trying to do this by constantly integrating new trainings and referring to the theoretical framework, but I believe we still have a long way to go.” (Greece, public authorities focus group)

Awareness and use of the Charter by CSOs and human rights defenders

The activities also showed that the use of the Charter is more common among CSOs and human rights defenders than in national legislative and judicial systems. Several national CSOs have started initiatives citing the Charter. For instance, several civil society organisations have worked to improve reporting mechanisms for Islamophobic incidents by increasing awareness of Charter protections in Spain. However, the level of use remains generally low. This can mean that relevant stakeholders, such as CSOs and human rights defenders, still have a limited understanding of the Charter’s existence and applicability at the national level. It can also mean that CSOs and human rights defenders prefer to use other frameworks over the Charter because they advocate the same principles and already have specific or thematic mechanisms in place for implementation.

“The Charter is a tool that, even for us working with Charter rights on the ground, is not part of our everyday work. The reason is because the Charter rights are already mentioned in other instruments and there is no practical mechanism specifically for the Charter to make it user-friendly. If the Charter came with its own complaint’s mechanism, it would encourage everyone to use

it. At this moment, it is a dry tool, even when used in Court. In the absence of a mechanism, it does not offer any added value. We only used it once in a complaint we filed with the European Commission.” (Cyprus, CSO focus group)

The participants in the focus groups identified additional limitations that hinder the use of the Charter by CSOs and human rights defenders, some of which were already mentioned in other applied methods. The first one concerns training gaps. Although participants are aware of institutions that offer high-quality training, the monetary costs associated with these initiatives often prevent small CSOs and human rights defenders from accessing relevant resources. At the same time, securing funding, particularly EU funding, can be difficult for smaller organisations due to eligibility constraints, which can limit their advocacy and civil education work. This creates an unsustainable project-based approach where it's difficult to continue the activities started once the project ends due to funding struggles. In this sense, the scarcity of funding emerges as a transversal operational limitation to the work of CSOs, a trend that is becoming increasingly difficult, as the gap between large and small CSOs is progressively widening in terms of access to competitive funding from national and international agencies.

One interesting finding is that, just as is the case with legal systems, the use of the Charter by CSO actors and human rights defenders is more expressive in certain areas than in others. Among the thematic areas analysed, equality and non-discrimination, as well as access to justice and the rule of law, are the areas that demonstrate the most widespread and effective use of the Charter. By contrast, areas such as combating racism and xenophobia or the rights of the child are highly limited when it comes to the use of the Charter by CSO and human rights defenders, mainly because it is possible to apply other legal instruments.

Awareness of the Charter within the general population

Regarding the general population's lack of awareness about the Charter's existence, some awareness campaigns targeting the general public were identified to help diminish the gap. It's unclear whether these campaigns are effective, as there is no information available on any evaluation of their results. While individuals broadly understand the concept of human rights and are aware of possible violations, their awareness of the specific scope and content of legal instruments is minimal. In this sense, one relevant challenge mentioned by some participants in the focus groups is the need for the use of more inclusive and simple language that can clarify the content and significance of the Charter to reach and be understood by individuals, regardless of their level of education, digital literacy, socio-economic contexts, among other characteristics.

The perception of knowledge of individual violation of fundamental rights was captured through the survey. In this topic, the survey showed that when respondents were asked

if they had ever faced a situation where they felt their rights under the EU Charter were violated, 40.7% responded with “No”, 30.7% with “Yes”, and 28.6% were unsure. These results suggest that individuals may lack awareness regarding the circumstances in which their rights could be violated and what constitutes a violation. This lack of awareness has an impact on reporting mechanisms, as participants in the focus groups reported that individuals sometimes struggle to identify whom to contact for assistance and exhibit difficulty in filing complaints, which can also hinder professionals' ability to apply the Charter and safeguard fundamental rights.

Another concerning trend registered in the survey is that individuals (including relevant stakeholders outside the human rights sector) tend to confuse the Charter with the European Convention on Human Rights. While approximately two-thirds of the respondents in the survey declared that they had heard about the Charter and knew what the instrument is, a similar share (61.4%) identified the European Court of Human Rights as the body responsible for applying the Charter. Additionally, 51.2% believe it is the responsibility of national authorities even when implementing national law unrelated to EU legislation. The results also indicate that 78.4% believe EU institutions and bodies are required to apply the Charter, while 77.1% think this obligation also falls on the national authorities of EU Member States when implementing EU law.

“From the point of view of the citizen in the street, there is not only, in my opinion, a very low knowledge of this instrument. There is, at the same time, a great deal of confusion between the various European instruments, between the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter, and this is quite obvious, in my opinion. At the institutional level, it is clear that when working in the human rights sector, the Charter is known as an instrument, but it remains in my opinion an extremely sectorial knowledge. Outside the human rights sector, in my opinion, knowledge is very low.” (Italy, public authorities focus group)

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms regarding the implementation of the Charter

Finally, the last common challenge identified concerns the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the implementation levels of the Charter at the national level. The inexistence of effective data concerning the evaluation and assessment of implemented initiatives and use of the Charter limits its understanding and the adoption of any mitigation measures, not only to increase the knowledge of it but essentially to empower the Charter as a reference document in the work of policymakers, public entities, judicial professionals, CSOs and human rights defenders.

Specific gaps and challenges to the implementation of the Charter

While most of the challenges and gaps identified are common to the nine countries involved in the FAIR Project, some country-specific challenges emerged throughout

the activities. These unique challenges are shaped by varying legal, institutional, and socio-political contexts, which influence how each country approaches the implementation of the Charter.

Countries such as Italy, Greece, and Cyprus present some increased challenges in integrating the Charter into national legislation. Although significant challenges exist in effectively implementing the Charter and its principles into national law in all nine countries, these three countries present some added difficulties. For instance, in Italy, there's no comprehensive legislative text governing child protection, and social inclusion of Roma people is still managed as an emergency issue, despite the existence of a national strategy for the period 2021-2030. Regarding gender discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ rights, there's also evidence that legal authorities in Italy have decided to uphold national legislation over EU fundamental rights. Furthermore, the lack of a national independent human rights institution also jeopardises the integration of the Charter since Italy doesn't have a national Ombuds but rather regional ones. In Greece, there is evidence that the Charter isn't integrated into legislation, failing to provide a cover of protections in some areas, such as the combat against racism, xenophobia and violence against the LGBTQ+ community. Still, regarding LGBTQ+ rights, the Cypriot law only covers basic rights and criminalising acts without providing a special frame for investigating and prosecuting perpetrators and supporting victims.

In Portugal, one of the partners where there is evidence that the Charter plays a role in national legislation, several factors can delay and hinder the implementation of Charter-related laws, policies, and measures, such as slow and complicated bureaucratic processes, resistance to change within institutions, and the lack of financial and human resources. There are also some problems regarding the rule of law backsliding. Belgium has been identified as a case of the rule of law backsliding due to the lack of resources in the judicial system, the non-implementation of judicial decisions by authorities, pressures and threats to human rights defenders and weaknesses regarding the right to information. This country also raises an interesting issue regarding the limited use of the Charter in the field of migration, considering the challenges that CSOs face in applying it, and the preference for other legal instruments, as human rights arguments, including those based on the Charter, are sometimes ineffective or disregarded in migration advocacy.

Countries such as Greece, Cyprus and Portugal also showed some limitations regarding access to justice. Greece's efforts to practically implement reforms in its judicial system continue to face persistent inefficiencies, such as the lack of awareness among victims and significant barriers for individuals with disabilities. Cyprus' systemic gaps concerning access to justice include barriers for non-governmental organisations and rights defenders to represent victims in court due to lack of expertise, legal aid limitations, right to appear in court and 'legitimate interest' in judicial review cases. In Portugal, there are difficulties in access to justice due to a lack of awareness of available support services, increasing obstacles to access to justice and support

services when the victim is a migrant or refugee, and limited coordination between different actors and areas, leading to gaps in providing comprehensive support to victims. In this late topic, Bulgaria, Belgium, and Spain have also highlighted the need for stronger coordination and interaction between existing entities and mechanisms to promote the application of the Charter and for more cooperation between public entities and authorities, CSOs, and academia.

Furthermore, Slovenia, Portugal, and Spain share the need to examine the extent to which information on the Charter is present in school curricula, particularly in higher education degrees such as law, public administration, and social work. These degrees tend to educate young people who could make a positive difference in the future by applying and recalling the Charter in their work.

3. Effective approaches and best practices in implementing the EU Charter¹¹

During the FAIR activities, several efforts were identified to enhance the implementation and use of the Charter at the national level. Although challenges remain, as explained above, effective solutions are already being implemented and can be built upon to increase the impact of the Charter in each country. Alas, the examples below intend to highlight best practices that have already achieved positive results and can be extended to other national and even EU contexts. To highlight the best practices implemented within the national contexts that compose the consortium, they are categorised according to specific topics, allowing for a clearer understanding of their scope and impact.

The Charter into national legal frameworks

One of the main conclusions of the activities conducted under the FAIR Project is that there are significant gaps in implementing the Charter into national legal frameworks. This does not mean that there aren't good examples of good practices that can improve its implementation into national legal frameworks, such as the case of Croatia's Action Plan for Human Rights, which specifically sets out to "...promote effective implementation of the Charter' and to raise awareness and knowledge of state officials that work on the design of public policies and legislative proposals, lawyers, representatives of the judiciary, members of parliament, lawyers working in civil society organisations and local administration". This plan also outlines a measure to strengthen the implementation of the Charter through European Union Funds in order to promote its awareness and legislative power.

There are other countries where national Constitutions bind legislative authorities to comply with international and EU obligations, including the respect for the Charter. Examples of that are Article 117 of the Italian Constitution and Article 8 of the Portuguese Constitution. Additionally, in Portugal, the Charter is used by public authorities in the draft of several opinions, recommendations and legislation assessments. In Cyprus, the Attorney General's Office has a special section that examines European Court of Justice decisions and advises governmental bodies about developments that may concern them, with guidance on how to formulate legal and policy frameworks in a manner compliant with the Charter.

¹¹ This section results from the information collected, by all partners, during the FAIR activities, namely desk research, focus groups and public seminars.

The use of the Charter as a guiding framework to create policy instruments and legislation is another good practice identified. For instance, in Greece, the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Social Integration of Roma 2021-2030 actively uses the Charter as a guiding framework for promoting equality, socio-economic integration, and participation within the Roma community. In Croatia, the National Roma Inclusion Plan 2021–2027 has used Articles 20 and 21 of the Charter to guide its key principles and directives in protecting Roma equality. The Charter is also cited in Article 5a of the Bulgarian Electronic Communications Act, stating that restricting access to electronic communications can't hinder the rights and freedoms outlined in the Charter. Articles 24 and 33 of the Charter have also been cited as the grounds for adopting Italy's EU Child Guarantee.

Lastly, in the case of Bulgaria, the Government developed guidelines to assist the authorities responsible for the programming, management, monitoring, and control of EU funds in the practical implementation of and respect for the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter, by providing a checklist of fundamental rights to be incorporated into the management and control systems of these bodies.

Training of relevant key stakeholders

Raising awareness through training is a proven effective strategy for ensuring that key stakeholders understand the Charter's importance and relevance. The survey showed that 23.5% of respondents became aware of the Charter in a professional context, which confirms that training can positively affect the implementation of the Charter at a national level since a better understanding of the Charter can lead to better use and implementation.

In this sense, several training events were identified during the execution of the FAIR activities that were either about the Charter or used the Charter in some way. Generally, the identified training events targeted legal practitioners; however, public officials, CSOs, and human rights defenders have also been receiving training in the Charter. The events are relevant because they provide information regarding the practical use of the Charter and the ways in which participants can incorporate this legal instrument into their daily work.

The training initiatives most referred by partners were the ones targeting legal and judicial professionals, such as judges, public prosecutors or lawyers. An observed tendency is that these training sessions tend to be given by organisations linked to the justice sector. For example, in Spain, the General Council of the Judiciary has organised training sessions on the Charter to ensure that legal decisions align with the principles of equality and non-discrimination with special emphasis on the Roma population, and since 2022, the General Council of the Spanish Bar Association began offering training to lawyers, prosecutors, and members of the judiciary on proper use of the Charter within the judicial system, helping to establish the Charter as a tool for increasing access to justice. In Italy, the Magistratura Democratica – an independent

association of judges - has organised an online event to enhance judges' understanding of the Charter's role in protecting social rights. Furthermore, the Judicial Academy in Croatia has conducted training on the use of the Charter in the Programme of Lifelong Professional Development for Judicial Officers and Other Judiciary Staff.

Additionally, legal and judicial professionals have also received training from other sectors. For example, in Italy, the University of Campania's 2022 training programme aimed to educate 300 judges on applying the Charter, and a specialised two-year course was launched in 2023 for lawyers, including modules on the Charter and its practical application in protecting human rights. In Portugal, the Portuguese Council for Refugees organised a free training on "The Charter of Fundamental Rights and International Protection", targeting legal professionals working in the field of asylum and/or providing legal assistance to asylum seekers. In 2022, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality published the Slovenian translation of the FRA Handbook on European non-discrimination law (2018 Edition), an important part of which is the proper interpretation and application of the Charter. When issuing the Slovenian edition, the Advocate also organised an online round table to promote the publication among professionals in Slovenia. Also, in Slovenia, the Academy of European Law organised a seminar in Ljubljana dedicated to the EU gender equality law, where a lecture was presented on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, its legal value, and its applicability to case law.

The results also highlighted some good practices when it comes to training initiatives targeting public officials and non-governmental organisations. In Slovenia, the Ombuds organised a training on the importance of the Charter at the national level toward public officials and placed a specific emphasis on the rights of people with disabilities. In 2019, National human rights institutions and the Fundamental Rights Agency organised training sessions on the Charter for civil servants and non-governmental organisations, focusing on the use of the Charter in legislative procedures and strategic litigation with a strong emphasis on victims' reparation and women's rights.

Still concerning training initiatives towards public officials, other training events were identified targeting specific sectors within the public administration. In Portugal, several online training courses have been conducted targeting police forces and prison guards. These courses have been focused on racial discrimination and human rights. In Spain, the Ministry of Education has been expanding professional training programmes for educators and social workers. Slovenia has also promoted the implementation of training programmes for public officials at all levels to ensure they understand their obligations under the Charter.

Sharing of institutional and professional practices

The existent good practices to be shared nationally, in terms of institutional or/and professional practices, are not abundant, as it was possible to identify and collect across all participating countries. Encouraging the sharing of information among

relevant stakeholders, including identifying and disseminating best practices and providing information on available materials and training programmes, can be a highly effective way to boost awareness of the Charter and introduce new approaches for integrating it into the daily work of legal and judicial practitioners, public officials, CSO actors and human rights defenders.

In this sense, some best practices arise from the activities conducted in each country. In 2022, in Italy, during a parliamentary discussion concerning a draft law regarding children's surnames, the Italian Senate issued a Dossier to guide the debate and inform the MPs where the Charter (more specifically Articles 21 and 23) were used - together with other international legislative dispositions and with the jurisprudence of the Italian Constitutional Court, of the European Court of Human Rights and of the European Court of Justice - to sustain the necessity of allowing children to be registered at the civil registry with the surnames of both parents. Similarly, the Chamber of Deputies issued another Dossier in 2022 analysing the impact of several draft laws aimed at introducing a legislative regulation of medically assisted voluntary death procedures.

Regarding the implementation and execution of EU funds, Croatia has established the Network of Coordinators for Non-Discrimination, a mechanism composed of appointed representatives of each body that works in the control, operation and execution of funds and of local representatives that intends to be an exchange information mechanism and provide training regarding the management of funds.

In Portugal, several handbooks have been created regarding the use of the Charter. Their main objective is to provide a sample of national case law, illustrating the nature of the challenges facing the implementation of EU law in the field of fundamental rights at the national level, the use of the Charter to address those challenges and the dissemination of good practices in the dialogue between courts.

Empowering CSOs, human rights defenders' role and increasing general public awareness

CSOs and human rights defenders play a crucial role in enhancing the implementation of the Charter at the national level. As they tend to directly interact with the general public and individuals in vulnerable situations, these actors are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of vulnerable groups and to identify ways to empower them. Therefore, disseminating the Charter within CSOs and human rights defenders is crucial to ensure that vulnerable groups are aware of their rights.

In this context, some good practices were highlighted by several partners. In Greece, in order to address the underreporting of discrimination cases against Roma people, the "ROM" initiative was launched in 2021. This initiative, led by the Equal Society Organisation in partnership with Ellan Passe (Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma) and the Union of Greek Roma Mediators, established the first "Roma Human Rights Advocacy and Defence Observatory". The observatory collects and processes

complaints from Roma for resolution by relevant authorities and educates communities and local associations on human rights. While this activity is not planned specifically around the Charter, it provides an example of the types of activities that could strengthen the use of the Charter. Collecting information and creating an observatory is an empowering tool for civil society to monitor the implementation and draw on data and other information when filing complaints under the Charter.

In Italy, legal clinics have been established in university services aimed at teaching law to university students, allowing them to work on practical judicial cases; at the same time, people resorting to these clinics can receive free legal advice and – if eligible, depending on their income – also free legal support in judicial proceedings.

The empowerment of CSOs and human rights defenders contributes to positively increase public awareness of the Charter, which is considered to be one of the main gaps in the implementation of the Charter at a national level. In this topic, there is an example that should be highlighted: in Cyprus, the Ombuds collaborated with the National Equality Body to create a media campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of the equality and non-discrimination rights enshrined in the Charter. The Ombuds then compiled reports about the level of public awareness used to organise training sessions.

Monitoring, evaluation and transparency practices

Increasing monitoring, evaluation, and transparency practices can positively impact the national use of the Charter. It can potentially increase public awareness of the Charter and its relevance and can help CSOs develop capacities to implement it. Although not many good practices were identified concerning this theme, two should be highlighted. In Croatia, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities is the contact point for the implementation and promotion of the Charter, and every year, they produce a report on its implementation in various areas and topics. Additionally, in order to comply with the horizontal enabling condition laid out in the Common Provisions Regulation,¹² in Bulgaria, the government developed guidelines to assist the authorities responsible for the programming, management, monitoring and control of EU funds, in the practical implementation of and respect for the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter and to provide a checklist of fundamental rights to be incorporated into the management and control systems of these bodies. The Ombuds, together with the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), further prepared an Action Plan on improving the application of the Charter in the use of EU funds, setting goals for training public authorities, CSOs and the public on the application of the Charter in EU funding.

¹² [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy](#), OJ 2021 L 231 (*Common Provisions Regulation*).



4. Strategies to overcome the main challenges¹³

Several efforts have been made to overcome the difficulties related to the use of the Charter at the national level; however, several challenges remain. Within this context, the FAIR activities were specifically designed to identify the challenges of implementing the Charter at the national level and to develop strategies to overcome those same challenges. This section will present the proposed strategies, emphasising their potential for broad, long-term influence in improving the Charter's implementation at the national level. The strategies presented are not only intended to be adaptable to the specific circumstances and needs of individual countries. Still, they are also designed to be scalable, ensuring they can be applied across various contexts within the EU.

Challenge 1. Implementation of the Charter into national legal frameworks and public administration

One of the most common challenges identified during the FAIR activities was related to implementing the Charter into national legal frameworks and public administration. The general nature of the Charter and its overlap with other international and national instruments, limited cooperation and networking efforts among public authorities, and the historical and cultural trajectory of the EU were reasons cited for the gaps identified in the implementation of the Charter at the national level.

To overcome this challenge, the following measures are recommended.

- a. Development and implementation of tailored training programmes aimed at key stakeholders**, such as public officials and Parliament staff. These training programs must be frequently updated and tailored to meet the target audience, meaning that the content and language used must be well-adapted to achieve the goals. This could include tailored training targeted to public authorities and entities focused on the topic of compliance requirements to apply for funding under EU programmes and how to comply with the obligation to report violations of the EU Charter when they receive such complaints by individuals. Key national human rights institutions, human rights defenders, and CSOs also have to be involved in the development of these programmes.
- b. Implementation of a checklist** within the preparatory/drafting phase of fundamental rights legislation.

¹³ The information presented in this section results from the information collected by all partners during the FAIR activities, mainly in focus groups and public seminars.

- c. Governmental/Legislative authorities should issue guidelines or recommendations to promote the use of the Charter in all areas of governance and public policy.** These guidelines and recommendations can be compiled into manuals and disseminated through various governmental and legislative branches. Once again, these guidelines or recommendations have to be tailored to their specific audiences, with content and language that is easy to understand and apply in practice.
- d. Development and dissemination of easy-to-follow guidelines personalised to specific groups of public officials** in order to promote effective use of the Charter within different public administration sectors. These guides must be clear and practical, address knowledge gaps and pragmatic ways to be implemented in daily work activities. They must also be designed in different formats to reach the diversity of competencies, areas, activities or actions related to each public entity.
- e. Creation of "ambassadors" within organisations specialised in the Charter and its application,** where public officials can seek counselling regarding the use of the Charter in their day-to-day work. These institutional "contact points" must have the necessary training and be capable of providing guidance to other public officials.
- f. Review of the school curriculum of universities and other high education institutions** in key courses such as law, economy, and other social science can increase the sensibility of future key stakeholders. Therefore, the school curriculum can be reviewed in order to incorporate Charter awareness within possible future public officials.
- g. Increasing European sharing of practices** by creating and promoting bilateral and multilateral mechanisms (such as regular meetings and conferences, among others). These mechanisms can also involve the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in promoting an initiative for collecting and sharing independently created tools and resources developed by EU member states, in addition to FRA's already existing tools related to the Charter.
- h. Increase articulation and cooperation between national public institutions at all levels of governance.** National, regional and local authorities must cooperate to promote the sharing of good practices, discuss measures that can be implemented and identify instruments that promote the Charter in practical terms. This can be achieved by promoting events that gather key representatives of all levels of governance or by establishing national, regional and local mandates responsible for ensuring this articulation.

- i. **Creating incentives for public officials and policymakers who successfully incorporate the Charter's principles into their work**, such as awards and professional development opportunities.

Challenge 2. Use of the Charter by national courts and legal and judicial professionals

The use of the Charter by national courts and legal and judicial professionals, such as lawyers, judges and public prosecutors, continues to be minimal and fragmented. Even though courts use the Charter, this use is often complementary and as a form of “namedropping”. Moreover, the results of the FAIR activities also showed that when using European legal instruments, the Courts and legal professionals tend to choose the European Convention on Human Rights instead of the Charter.

To overcome this challenge, the following measures are recommended.

- a. **Increase judicial training and awareness-raising on the Charter.** Create tailored courses within judicial schools and/or the Bar Association. Events such as seminars, workshops or conferences, among others, focused on the Charter should also be organised. It's important to show how legal and judicial professionals can use the Charter in their day-to-day work, so judicial training and raising awareness events have to be practical by using national and European case law where the Charter had a relevant role. As the added value of the Charter's use becomes clear when a lawsuit explains why a specific provision applies and how it has been violated, a deep understanding of the Charter is required. The tailored training courses need to point out that merely citing Charter Articles is usually insufficient. Training could focus on providing practical guidance for the use of each Article. Therefore, inviting judges from the European Court of Justice or the European Court of Human Rights who are known to use the Charter to present practical cases or participate can be a good practice.
- b. **Increase mechanisms for sharing practices at the European level** by creating or promoting bilateral and multilateral mechanisms in which legal and judicial professionals can discuss jurisprudence, case laws, judicial trends and exchange perspectives and good practices on the judicial use of the Charter. These mechanisms can also involve European networks, such as the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary or the European Lawyers Network.
- c. **Develop manuals and databases that centralise case law using the Charter and make it available to legal and judicial professionals.** It is important that these manuals and databases are user-friendly and free of charge. Existing

databases, such as the Charterpedia¹⁴, should also be promoted at the national level. FRA has also developed Charter Courses available on its e-learning platform¹⁵. The Charter Courses include the study of case law, and they can provide practical guidance on when and how the Charter applies at the national level.

Challenge 3. Empowerment of CSO and human rights defenders

CSOs and human rights defenders tend to show higher levels of awareness and use of the Charter than public administrative and judicial authorities. Though, the use level remains very low in general. This can suggest that these stakeholders still have a limited understanding of the Charter's existence and applicability at the national level, the FAIR activities' results have also shown additional limitations faced by CSO and human rights defenders that can hinder the use of the Charter.

To overcome this challenge, the following measures are recommended.

- a. Development and promotion of awareness-raising actions and events with an emphasis on the use of the Charter in strategic litigation.** These events can present and disseminate informational leaflets tailored to CSOs and human rights defenders, teaching them how to incorporate the Charter into their day-to-day work alongside other instruments that they might already be using.
- b. Adoption of accessible models for fundamental rights-focused initiatives** that are free of charge and target CSOs and human rights defenders.
- c. Creation of pathways and participation mechanisms for smaller CSOs and individuals that defend human rights**, so that they can also join and participate in the judicial system training activities, allowing them to have a wide perspective on the potential use of the Charter in strategic litigation.
- d. Creation of specific financing programmes, through national or EU funding, for smaller CSO to promote the Charter at the national level.**
- e. Develop and promote more capacity-building initiatives for CSOs and human rights defenders that promote fundamental rights** and capacitate them to implement and carry out sustainable projects and actions promoting the Charter.

¹⁴ Available at the [website of the Fundamental Rights Agency](#).

¹⁵ Available at [FRA e-learning](#).

- f. **Creation and fostering of CSO networks** that allowed these stakeholders to share experiences and practices regarding the use of the Charter. It is important that these CSOs are active in different areas of intervention so that there is a larger range of experiences and strategies.
- g. **Creation of incentives for CSOs and human rights defenders to use the Charter**, such as awards and public recognition.
- j. **Creating strong partnerships with EU-level umbrella organizations, which can contextualize the Charter's relevance and make it more accessible to smaller groups such as small-scale CSOs**, by providing essential tools, expertise, and guidance that smaller organizations often cannot access on their own.
- k. **Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusion of Smaller Civil Society Organizations in EU Advocacy**. Smaller CSOs face significant barriers in accessing EU funding and participating in key advocacy discussions due to eligibility constraints, resource limitations, and dominance by larger organizations. To bridge this gap, the EU should simplify funding mechanisms, provide capacity-building support, and create inclusive engagement strategies to ensure all CSOs can effectively contribute to fundamental rights protection
- l. **Setting up of national and EU level extra-judicial mechanisms for filing complaints regarding potential Charter violations** should be set up at EU level.

Challenge 4. Raising public awareness of the Charter

Public awareness regarding the Charter and its role is extremely low. While individuals broadly understand the concept of human rights and are aware of possible violations, their awareness of legal instruments' specific scope and content is minimal. Therefore, it is particularly important to implement more actions and mechanisms that actively raise the general population's awareness of the Charter.

To overcome this challenge, the following measures are recommended.

- a. **Development and implementation of raising awareness campaigns targeting the general population concerning the use of the Charter**. These campaigns shall focus on calling the general population's attention to the Charter's content and how it can be used in case of a violation. The campaigns can be disseminated through different mediums, such as television advertisements, radio broadcasts, social media, handing out brochures, etc. It

is important that the language used is simple, clear and inclusive so that it is understandable by a larger number of people.

- b. Review the curricula of primary and secondary schools and adopt innovative approaches to engaging students in learning about the Charter.** In cooperation with the CSO and other key stakeholders, schools can organise events (camps, field trips, contests, fairs, etc.) that promote the use of the Charter. The Charter can also be integrated into the curriculum of subjects such as Languages, History or Civic Education.
- c. Development of child-friendly materials aimed at raising awareness of fundamental rights.** These materials would help introduce young people and children to their rights in an accessible and engaging way, including educational games, reels and TikTok, among other possibilities.
- d. Development and dissemination of user-friendly and accessible versions of the Charter to raise awareness among vulnerable persons of its content, role, and scope,** including using cartoon versions, musical songs, theatre, and short movies, among many other communication tools and platforms.

Challenge 5. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Charter

One of the critical challenges identified during the FAIR activities was the lack of national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that would allow for a proper assessment of the implementation of the Charter at a national level. Transparent and well-documented monitoring processes allow individuals, CSOs, and governmental institutions to understand better how the Charter is being implemented, what progress was made, and where improvements are still needed.

To overcome this challenge, the following measures are recommended.

- a. Strengthening of national human rights institutions' mandates, resources, and capacity to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Charter to ensure and guarantee their independence.** It's important to guarantee that these institutions operate free from political influence and remain committed to upholding the Charter unbiased and objectively. They can act as watchdogs, providing a straightforward assessment of the implementation process and holding both state and non-state actors accountable.
- b. Establishment of mechanisms for CSOs and human rights defenders to participate in drafting state reports on fundamental rights** that should be elaborated annually in a transversal approach in the public administration and government.

- c. Development and implementation of an awareness campaign targeting media professionals to capacitate them** to identify and report potential violations of the Charter, including mechanisms to present complaints.
- d. Creation and establishment of mechanisms dedicated to data collection** for implementing measures to increase Charter awareness and use. Regular monitoring and evaluation of training programmes, seminars, and awareness campaigns should be implemented to assess their effectiveness, help refine future strategies and ensure that the Charter's provisions are truly integrated into society.
- e. Creation and promotion of user-friendly mechanisms that allow for the reporting and assessing of potential Charter violations.**

5. Communication and awareness-raising initiatives and actions

One of the main challenges identified during the FAIR activities is the limited awareness of the Charter's potential. This constraint diminishes the Charter's impact and limits its ability to implement meaningful changes at the national level. Effective communication and awareness-raising initiatives are essential to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have a clear understanding of the Charter and can make it effectively. This requires strategic and sustained efforts to engage various and multiple segments of society and to promote a “culture of rights”. In this sense, five communication strategies for different target groups are proposed.

Strategy #1. Policymakers and public administration

For policymakers and public administration, the Charter should serve as a fundamental guiding principle in the design, implementation, and evaluation of laws and public policies. In this sense, the strategy now being presented aims to ensure that the Charter is consistently applied in the legislative process, as well as in the everyday functioning of public administrations.

Key message

By establishing a set of fundamental rights, the Charter should act as a cornerstone of EU and national governance, guiding the actions of both policymakers and public administration. These key stakeholders must ensure not only that all policies and public administration comply with the Charter, but also that the rights outlined within the Charter are consistently upheld in practice.

Communication Channels and Tactics

❖ Raise awareness and training events

Seminars, training programmes, and roundtables should be organised to improve awareness and use of the Charter among policymakers and public administration. These targeted efforts will not only help to foster political commitment to integrating the Charter's principles into national policies and actions but also will provide participants with practical knowledge and strategies for applying the Charter in their daily work. Therefore, these events should be organised around thematic discussions on specific areas of governance should be prioritised (e.g. Charter compliance in the context of public funding, data protection in public administration, etc.) and be conducted using different formats (face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc.), considering the target audience and national contexts. Additionally, to increase the success rate of such events, interactive presentations, case studies, and concrete examples of the how Charter is

being used need to be presented in a language that the target audience understands. It's also important that these resources are available to the target audience, so they can be easily passed on or downloaded.

❖ **Communication materials**

Guidelines and recommendations can be issued in order to promote knowledge of the Charter and its use in all areas of governance and public policy. These guidelines and recommendations can then be disseminated through internal channels or through training and awareness-raising events tailored to policymakers and key administrative actors. Additionally, easy-to-follow guidelines can be developed and disseminated to public officials at all levels of government (national, regional, and local), presenting them with how the Charter can be used in their daily work.

All of these communication materials will need to be tailored to the specific branch of government and area and include specific examples. Public service announcements, information brochures, and video content can be distributed to ensure widespread engagement and to establish a robust communication campaign that engages this audience.

Responsible Key Actors

To further support these efforts, interinstitutional articulation should be established between policymakers and government officials and key stakeholders, such as academic and research institutions, professional associations, civil society organisations and human rights defenders. This articulation can play an essential role in strengthening the relevance of the Charter, conducting research, developing case studies, and organising events that demonstrate the impact of the Charter in impact.

Impact Assessment

Promoting a feedback mechanism is essential for continuous improvement. Policymakers and public administrators should be encouraged to provide feedback on the usefulness and effectiveness of the Charter's provisions in their work, helping to identify challenges and areas for further improvement. This participatory approach can encourage policymakers and public officials to use the Charter as they feel that their opinions and perceptions are being heard and valued.

It's also important to monitor the success of the measures being implemented. In this sense, performance indicator reference sheets should be developed in order to track and measure target audience engagement. It's also important to involve policymakers and public administrators through surveys and consultations to gather feedback on their takeaways from the events and actions. This feedback can also be collected and presented in annual reports that analyse the success of the measures being presented, their impact on the use of the Charter and make recommendations for improving the Charter's impact and relevance.

Strategy #2. Legal practitioners

For legal practitioners, understanding the significance and potential of the Charter is crucial to the effectively promotion and protection of fundamental rights. To achieve this, legal practitioners need to understand approaches and techniques for using the Charter, especially in the context of litigation. This strategy aims to raise awareness among legal practitioners and to enable them to use the Charter more effectively.

Key message

In order to promote and protect fundamental rights, especially in the context of litigation, the values and principles enshrined in the Charter should be upheld alongside national law and other European and international instruments. As a cornerstone of EU principles and values, it can also help to align national frameworks with European fundamental rights standards, thereby increasing the protection of individuals. Therefore, legal practitioners should consider its relevance in different fields such as human rights law, administrative law, and constitutional law.

Communication Channels and Tactics

❖ Training programmes and events

Specialised training programmes, seminars, and workshops tailored to legal and judicial practitioners should be organised for judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, legal advisers, or law enforcement authorities. These events may cover the legal implications of the Charter, its alignment with national laws, and its potential to influence legal decisions and reforms. These training programmes, seminars and workshops can be integrated into initial training programmes (e.g. national judicial schools, bar associations, etc.) by introducing modules on the Charter.

Regular seminars and workshops for ongoing professional development should also be organised for continuing professional development, providing interactive opportunities for participants to engage with case studies and concrete examples of the application of the Charter, especially in context of litigation.

Initial or ongoing training programmes and events may also include expert-led sessions in which national and European academics, legal scholars, legal practitioners, and judges share comparative insights into how the Charter has influenced legal complaints or decisions. To coordinate these efforts, it's also important to establish partnership networks with national and European judicial bodies, national associations, and universities to develop joint events and initiatives.

❖ Legal materials and resources

Materials such as legal briefs, annotated guides, and case law analyses should be developed to ensure awareness and understanding of the legal implications in the use of the Charter. These resources would illustrate how the principles of the Charter can be integrated into both the interpretation and application of law in various fields, including human rights, administrative law, and constitutional law. Concrete case law demonstrating the impact and relevance of the Charter in practice would be particularly useful in demonstrating its direct relevance to the legal and judicial professions. In this sense, tools such as the FRA's Charterpedia or the CJEU's database can also be used in order to show how the Charter is being used by European and national courts.

These materials can also be compiled in toolkits and disseminated through the above-mentioned the training programmes and events, national and European legal conferences, bar association meetings, and other judicial events.

A user-friendly digital platform can also be created to serve as a central hub for legal professionals to access relevant resources, engage in discussions, and stay updated on developments related to the Charter. This digital platform should be well-organised and regularly updated, with a wider scope in order to avoid multiplication efforts and overwhelm professionals.

To raise awareness of the Charter, this digital platform can also be used to promote online webinars that allow legal practitioners to share experiences and best practices. It can also set up an email newsletter to share case studies, new research, and updates on upcoming training events and seminars, and even use platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and legal forums to share key insights, promote events, and encourage discussion.

❖ **National and European networks**

A cross-national network of legal experts can promote the Charter's use and share best practices. Collaborative efforts across national and European levels can create a strong advocacy base. Therefore, it's important to set up national and European networks of legal experts who will advocate for the Charter's implementation, contribute to research, and facilitate the exchange of best practices. These networks should also be used in order to promote joint research projects between academic institutions and legal professionals across Europe to expand the understanding of the Charter's impact.

Responsible Key Actors

As regards the integration of the Charter into initial training, the national judicial schools, national bar associations, and, where applicable, national bodies providing initial training for law enforcement authorities should monitor the integration of the Charter into training curricula and provide guidance on its application. These efforts can be coordinated with national and European experts such as academics and legal scholars. The same actors can also promote other ongoing training programmes and

events, with the support of national high councils of the judiciary and other professional associations.

Impact Assessment

Several steps should be taken to monitor and evaluate the success of the proposed measures. First, feedback surveys should be distributed after training sessions to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the content. These surveys will provide insight into the understanding of the Charter's principles and their practical application by legal practitioners. Additionally, performance indicator reference sheets should be developed to track and measure the engagement of the target audience.

If the proposed digital platform is implemented, platform analytics can be used to track user engagement with the platform, including metrics such as page views, resource downloads, and forum discussions. This data will provide valuable insights into how well the platform is being used and where adjustments may be needed to improve the experience and content accessibility.

Regular stakeholder meetings should be held on a regular basis with key stakeholders, including representatives of the National High Councils of the Judiciary, National Bar Associations, and other relevant bodies. These meetings will serve as a forum to assess the progress of the measures implemented, address emerging challenges, and discuss any evolving needs or opportunities for improvement.

Strategy #3. CSOs and human rights defenders

More than raising awareness of the Charter among CSOs and human rights defenders, it's essential to empower them to increase their use of the Charter and provide them with strategies to integrate the Charter into their advocacy work. Therefore, the aim of this communications strategy is to increase awareness among CSOs and human rights defenders about the Charter's application in different contexts.

Key message

The Charter is an important tool for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights within the EU area. Its values and principles can be applied in different contexts, including national and local community settings, to advocate for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights. Therefore, national CSOs and human rights defenders, including community leaders and grassroots organisations, need to be aware of how the Charter can be applied and have the resources that enable them to do so.

Communication Channels and Tactics

❖ Raise awareness and training events

Tailor-made training sessions, such as roundtables, workshops, and webinars, should be organised to raise awareness among CSOs and human rights defenders about the principles of the Charter, its legal implications, and its application in different contexts. These events must include concrete examples, case studies, and scenarios where the Charter has been successfully used to promote fundamental rights and enhance advocacy. These events must be free of charge and in digital form, so that smaller CSOs and the general public can access them.

Capacity-building programmes and training events should also be organised and disseminated in order to enable CSOs and human rights defenders to strengthen their capacity to promote the Charter. These programmes may include cooperation with human rights experts and national human rights institutions in order to ensure a broader comprehensive understanding of the Charter and its wider implications. Some national and European funding can be used to operationalise these programmes and training events.

❖ **Communication materials and resources**

User-friendly resources should be developed that explain the Charter's legal implications, and provide clear guidance on how CSOs and human rights defenders can apply it in their daily work. These materials should be practical and include advocacy and legal action steps. CSOs and human rights defenders who work at the grassroots level should be provided with specialised resources and tools that explain how the Charter can be applied in local and community settings. Community leaders and activists often have intimate knowledge of local human rights challenges and can be powerful advocates for the Charter's principles. It is therefore essential to create easy-to-understand guides, visual aids, and localised resources that address their specific challenges and contexts.

To make content more accessible and engaging, multimedia materials such as videos, podcasts, and infographics should also be developed and disseminated. These materials can be disseminated through social media, websites, and digital platforms.

A digital platform or dedicated online portal should be created in order to provide CSOs and human rights defenders with a central hub of information and resources. This platform can include the resources mentioned above and allow for the exchange of experiences and good practices to promote a "culture of rights" and further capacity-building.

❖ **Collaboration and advocacy**

Civil society organisations and human rights defenders should also be encouraged to cooperate with other stakeholders - including governments, academic institutions, and international organisations - to raise public awareness and advocate for the integration of the Charter's principles into national legislation and policies.

Joint campaigns, public demonstrations, and media outreach can amplify the Charter's message and ensure its inclusion in the public discourse. Depending on the national context, where cooperation mechanisms already exist between CSOs and government bodies, these can be used to raise awareness and advocate for the protection of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter.

In addition, the creation of partnerships and networks at national and EU-level should also be encouraged and supported in order to contextualise the Charter's relevance by providing essential tools, expertise, and guidance. In order to enhance accessibility and inclusion of smaller CSO, national and EU funding channels for capacity-building support should be created with simplified rules and mechanisms.

❖ **Recognition and incentives**

To motivate continued engagement and advocacy, it is important to recognise and celebrate the contributions of CSOs and human rights defenders in promoting the Charter. Awards, public recognition, and funding for impactful projects can provide positive reinforcement for their efforts. These incentives will boost morale and encourage more CSOs to integrate the Charter into their work and improve its impact on a broader scale. Establishing a recognition programme that highlights the efforts of CSOs and human rights defenders who have made significant contributions to promoting the Charter's principles and offer funding or grants to CSOs working on projects that advance the Charter's principles, especially those addressing human rights challenges at the grassroots level, can be good strategies to be implemented.

Responsible Key Actors

As CSOs and human rights defenders are the main target audience, they should play an active role in the development and implementation of the proposed measures. Furthermore, public administrative entities and National Human Rights Institutions can play an important role in facilitating cooperation and supporting initiatives that raise awareness, promote policy reforms based on the principles of the Charter, and provide expertise to strengthen CSOs and human rights defenders.

Impact Assessment

In order to assess the impact of the proposed measures, it's important to establish performance indicator reference sheets that track the number of participants in the proposed raise awareness and training events, as well as feedback surveys to assess the quality of the sessions and the level of understanding gained. It is also important to monitor the level of engagement with the digital platforms and content developed.

It's also important to assess the number of joint campaigns, public demonstrations, and media activities involving CSOs, governments, academic institutions, and international

organisations, as well as the number of CSOs receiving recognition and funding, and to evaluate the success of their projects in promoting the Charter.

Strategy# 4. Media professionals

The protection and promotion of fundamental rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law are principles enshrined in the Charter. As the media play a crucial role in shaping public discourse, informing individuals, and holding governments to account, it is essential that media professionals understand and accurately communicate the principles and impacts of the Charter. In this sense, this communication strategy aims to provide journalists, editors, broadcasters, and other media stakeholders with the resources and skills they need to effectively report on and promote the Charter.

Key Message

As the Charter is seen as a cornerstone in the European legal system for the protection of individuals' fundamental rights and freedoms, it is essential that media professionals covering issues related to fundamental rights and the rule of law understand the impact of the Charter on specific issues. By acquiring skills in interpreting and contextualising the Charter, these actors can produce more accurate, compelling, and responsible stories but also raise awareness to the Charter.

Communication Channels and Tactics

❖ Training events

Specialised training programmes and workshops should be organised for media professionals – including journalists, editors, broadcasters, and other media stakeholders - to raise awareness of the relevance of the Charter, how it is consistent with the public interest, and how it can be integrated into the principles of media coverage. Alternatively, the Charter can also be incorporated into the curriculum of higher education, particularly in journalism courses. It's important that this training equips media professionals with the necessary skills to report effectively on issues related to the Charter. This can include practical training on how to analyse and interpret the Charter in relation to national and international law, how to identify stories that highlight its importance, and how to ensure accuracy and fairness in reporting.

❖ Communication materials and resources

Media professionals should also be provided with easy-to-use toolkits, press kits, and reference materials that summarise the key points of the Charter, its relevance to current events, and examples of how it has been used in practice. These resources should include press releases, fact sheets, infographics, and backgrounders to help journalists quickly understand and report on the Charter's provisions. Including compelling case studies and concrete examples of how the Charter has influenced

policy or protected rights can help media professionals create engaging and informative content. These toolkits and materials can be developed by national media regulators in collaboration with CSOs and human rights defenders, national human rights institutions, legal practitioners and experts.

❖ **Investigative reporting support and recognition**

Journalists and other media professionals should be encouraged to undertake investigative reporting on how the Charter is being implemented in practice, potential violations, its impact on governance, and its role in the protection of human rights. Specialised support, such as research assistance or funding for investigative projects, can be provided to help journalists develop in-depth stories that explore the Charter's applications. Furthermore, recognising and rewarding media professionals who produce high-quality Charter-focused reporting can encourage wider coverage of the Charter in the media. Awards, grants, or public recognition for media outlets that consistently cover issues related to the Charter can motivate journalists to engage with the Charter.

❖ **Collaborative editorial partnerships and campaigns**

Joint initiatives, such as editorial partnerships, media campaigns, and feature stories, can also help raise awareness and generate discussion about the Charter's impact on governance, democracy, and human rights. Establishing long-term partnerships can also help integrate the Charter into the media's daily news cycles and editorial priorities. To ensure that information about the Charter is presented accurately and responsibly, partnerships should also be established with fact-checking organisations and media monitoring bodies. These organisations can assist in verifying information and ensuring that media coverage of the Charter is accurate and meets journalistic standards. Fact-checkers can help debunk any misinformation or misunderstandings about the Charter that may arise in public discussions or media reports.

Responsible Key Actors

Media professionals should be at the centre of the proposed measures, as they can provide valuable feedback regarding their specific needs. They will be the main audience for training programmes and the main recipients of the resources and toolkits designed to support in Charter-related reporting.

National human rights institutions, CSOs and human rights defenders, academics, and experts can also play a crucial role in the development and implementation of these measures, as they can provide expertise, case studies, and concrete examples of the Charter being used in order to support media coverage. Additionally, their involvement in joint campaigns and media initiatives can help to create compelling stories that illustrate the Charter's practical impact on governance and human rights.

National media regulators will also play a crucial role in the development and implementation of these measures, as they can ensure that media outlets adhere to ethical and professional standards in their reporting. They can also support the establishment of fact-checking partnerships and help monitor the accuracy of media coverage related of the Charter.

Impact Assessment

In order to ensure the success of the measures now proposed, several indicators should be used. First, participation in specialised training programmes should be measured by tracking the number of media professionals who attend these events. Feedback from participants will also be collected to assess the quality and relevance of the training provided to ensure that media professionals are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to accurately report on the Charter.

The use and distribution of the resources created can also be tracked to see how often journalists access these materials. This will provide insight into how effectively the resources support media professionals in their work. Additionally, the quality and accuracy of media content incorporating the Charter should be assessed, and how well journalists integrate the principles of the Charter into their reporting can also be assessed in order to understand the impact of such resources.

The number and quality of investigative reports, feature stories, or long-term coverage produced by media professionals can also be assessed to determine the extent to which these professionals are exploring the impact of the Charter, violations, and governance-related issues. Recognition and rewards for media outlets and journalists who consistently cover the Charter can also be tracked to measure motivation and impact.

Strategy #5. General population

For the Charter to be fully implemented in national contexts, it's vital that the general population understands its content and guarantees. It's important that the principles and values enshrined in the Charter are clear and relatable to the general public. This strategy therefore aims to make the Charter's core messages clear and appealing to a broad audience, and to promote a deeper understanding of how these rights and freedoms directly improve individuals' lives.

Key Message

The Charter is a powerful tool to protect fundamental rights and freedoms that directly impact every single individual, regardless of their background. So, it's important to convey the message that the Charter can protect the rights and freedoms of everyone and contribute to their security and well-being.

Communication Channels and Tactics

❖ Media and community-based outreach campaigns

Mass media campaigns using television, radio, newspapers and digital platforms should be used to raise awareness of the Charter. Public service announcements, feature stories, and interviews with experts can help communicate the importance of the Charter to a wider audience. However, the information disseminated must be simple, clear, and free of legal jargon. It should highlight how the Charter can make a positive difference to the lives of individuals” by showcasing real-life examples of its implementation. By creating compelling narratives and stories, these campaigns can attract public attention and increase understanding of the Charter’s values.

To ensure that awareness-raising efforts reach even the most marginalised and hard-to-reach communities, it is essential to implement community-based outreach programmes. These initiatives should be conducted through town hall meetings, local schools, community gatherings, local workshops, and grassroots networks. Local leaders, community groups, and CSOs can be instrumental in communicating specific messages to their communities and ensuring that the provisions of the Charter are relevant to local concerns and contexts.

It's important to reinforce that these campaigns need to be able to translate the principles of the Charter into every day, inclusive, relatable language. For example, instead of directly referring legal terminology such as "right to family life" or "non-discrimination", the campaign can use more empathetic language such as presenting a hypothetical or real situation and asking "how would you feel in this situation?" or "does this seem fair to you?". This approach focuses on practical and emotional reasoning, making abstract principles more tangible and understandable.

❖ Educational materials

The development and distribution of accessible educational materials - such as brochures, leaflets, posters, and digital resources - can also be an effective tool for increasing awareness. These materials should be available in local languages and tailored to different audiences' literacy levels and socioeconomic contexts. In addition, creating simple, engaging content such as videos, animations, and podcasts can enhance understanding and make complex legal language more accessible. CSOs and human rights defenders can also have a key role in developing and disseminating these materials.

❖ Social media campaigns

Social media has become an indispensable communication tool, particularly for reaching younger people. Therefore, developing targeted social media campaigns on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and/or YouTube can raise awareness of the Charter and engage the public in discussions about its significance.

Interactive content such as videos, infographics, quizzes, and hashtags can encourage online participation and foster a sense of collective ownership. Hiring/inviting well-known public figures or influencers can also be used as a tool to raise awareness.

Responsible Key Actors

In order to operationalise the proposed measures, a national strategy should be developed and implemented. This national strategy can not only define the actions to be taken but also the responsibility of key actors. The development of this strategy must involve policymakers, representatives of public bodies, national human rights institutions, CSOs and media professionals.

Additionally, national human rights institutions, CSOs and human rights defenders can play an essential role in organising and disseminating key messages and national-level campaigns. They can work with media professionals to ensure broad participation and engagement. CSOs and human right defenders can also be critical in ensuring that the educational materials are appropriate for the target audience (e.g. children, persons with disabilities, etc.) and resonate with local communities.

Media professionals, in turn, can also work closely with national human rights institutions and CSOs to develop impactful content for television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms. Their involvement will ensure that information reaches a wide audience and is accurately covered.

Impact Assessment

To assess the effectiveness of the activities, various methods can be used to track reach and engagement across multiple channels. Surveys and media tracking can be used to assess the campaign's reach, including its presence on television, radio, social media, and through community outreach. Key metrics such as audience size, engagement rates, and media coverage can be analysed to determine the success of the communication efforts and evaluate possible changes.

In addition to monitoring reach, audience feedback can also play a crucial role in understanding the public's perception of the Charter. Regular surveys can be conducted to assess whether the public has a clear understanding of the Charter and whether the messages are resonating with the target audience.

Community participation can also be an important indicator of the outreach efforts' success. The number and diversity of participants in town hall meetings, school events, and other community-based initiatives can be recorded in order to assess the level of engagement. The number of questions or discussions about the Charter can also provide valuable insights into how effectively the campaign has engaged different groups.



Social media metrics can provide an additional means of assessing the campaign's reach and engagement. Engagement statistics such as likes, shares, comments, and the use of specific hashtags can be tracked to determine the level of online conversation and whether the campaign is reaching digitally engaged audiences.

Through these various assessments, the measures can be continuously refined to improve future outreach efforts and ensure that public understanding of the Charter continues to grow.

6. Final remarks

Since its adoption, the Charter has been a cornerstone for the protection of individual rights and freedoms across the EU, serving as the legal basis for EU laws and policies. The CJEU has also increasingly relied on the Charter to interpret various legal questions and issues.

The various activities carried out by the FAIR project consortium, including desk research, focus groups, national surveys and public seminars, allowed three main cross-cutting assumptions to be made. The first is that the Charter is often overshadowed by national legislation and other international instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights. Additionally, its general nature and limited awareness among legal practitioners, public officials and the general public contribute to its underutilisation. The second relates to an empirical and persistent lack of training for legal and judicial professionals, public officials and CSO actors, which often leads to a misunderstanding of the applicability of the Charter and limits its use in legal proceedings, public administration or CSO activities. The third related to the limited use of the Charter in some specific areas of intervention, compared to others, which is correlated with the existence of strong protection mechanisms already in place, in several countries, and with the low commitment of CSOs in particular to fight for specific rights, showing a preference for mechanisms with which they are more familiar and with which they expect more results, using national instruments.

National governments can strengthen integration by aligning legislation and policies with the Charter, providing targeted training for public officials, and using the Charter as a guiding framework for drafting laws and public policies. In this sense, training and awareness campaigns targeting legal practitioners, public officials, CSO actors and the general public are essential to enhance the Charter's use, where civil society organisations can play a critical role in promoting the Charter and ensuring its principles are upheld in national contexts. Strategic litigation can also be a powerful tool for advancing the Charter's application, by setting legal precedents and influencing policy development, ensuring accountability and strengthening the Charter's role in protecting fundamental rights across the EU.

Other best practices, including practical tools for communication and awareness raising need to promote advocating for rights, monitor compliance with the Charter and evaluate potential impacts on its use and concrete implementation. Among the various proposals, using it as a guiding framework for national policies, integrating it into judicial training, and using EU funding mechanisms to promote its principles can contribute to higher success. Awareness can be raised through public campaigns, educational initiatives in schools, and accessible materials such as child-friendly versions of the Charter, involving the media and social platforms to disseminate information widely.

Multiple steps and measures were taken to reach the Charter political and civic main aims, sometimes within a polarised strategy, others trying to combine different actions across a myriad of actors and institutions throughout the national contexts. Nonetheless, the future will have to follow more concrete paths with further articulation, as demanded by several legal, political and CSO actors, in order to use the Charter of Fundamental Rights in their daily work and to have a recognised positive impact fully felt by any individuals. The road is still unclear, but many actors are trying to paddle in the same direction.