

Civic space: threats, attacks and lack of funding face many civil society organisations in the EU



The '[Civic space – experiences of organisations in 2019](#)' paper draws on views from 205 civil society organisations from FRA's [Fundamental Rights Platform](#). It shows the main obstacles they face in their work:

- Almost half of national and local civil society organisations say that the situation in their country has deteriorated.
- More than half say they faced verbal and online threats and attacks, including hate speech, as well as negative media reports about them.
- One in five say they experienced a physical attack, targeting either one of their employees/volunteers or their office building.
- The majority has difficulties accessing or participating in public consultations, mainly due to short deadlines or lack of feedback from the authorities.
- Many face challenges arising from regulatory frameworks, such as provisions on freedom of expression, assembly and data protection.
- Availability of, and access to funding is a problem for most civil society organisations. The proposed EU Justice, Rights and Values Fund

could assist their finances.

Civil society is an essential component of the democratic system. The quantity, quality and intensity of obstacles affecting civil society's ability to carry out their work provide an indication of a country's general state of fundamental rights, democracy and rule of law.

This second annual consultation shows that many of the human rights organisations that FRA cooperates with continue to face challenges in their daily work.

FRA started an annual consultation with organisations participating in its Fundamental Rights Platform in 2018, focusing on the challenges they experience in their daily work.

The consultation followed the publication of FRA's 2018 report on '[Challenges facing civil society working on human rights in the EU](#)', which highlighted different areas of concern.

The new findings underline the continued relevance of the opinions FRA formulated in its 2018 report on civil society, which EU institutions and Member States should consider.