

Fundamental rights implications: COVID-19 pandemic



While the Coronavirus has an impact on everyone's life, some people are more affected than others.

From people dependent on care to those detained in overcrowded conditions with poor sanitation and healthcare. For some people it is simply more difficult to escape from it.

As governments increasingly implement measures forcing people to stay at home, women in particular will feel the impact. Women find themselves on the front lines – as mothers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, teachers, shop assistants.

In addition, there are reports that quarantine and lockdowns may lead to an increase in domestic violence. Even without the pandemic, one in five women already suffered violence from their partner, according to an [earlier FRA survey on gender-based violence](#).

The lockdowns may hit women's escape routes and support networks, such as hotlines and shelters. Tackling the crisis will also require efforts to handle and support victims of domestic violence.

The virus is also endangering people whose living conditions are already dire, lacking sanitation and hygiene – migrants, asylum seekers, exploited workers or Roma.

Living in overcrowded camps, with limited access to healthcare and no possibility to practice physical and social distancing, migrants and asylum seekers are extremely vulnerable to the virus. Among them, thousands of unaccompanied children are exposed too.

Migrant workers are also severely exploited across the EU. They are forced to work for endless hours with little or no pay, without safety equipment and no access to running water. With the outbreak, they face high risks of contracting the disease.

FRA's [report on severe labour exploitation](#) shows that there is an urgent need for governments to do more to tackle such exploitation across the EU.

The Roma community also faces an uphill battle. As FRA's [research on Roma discrimination](#) shows, 30% of Roma are in households with no tap water. Nearly 50% have no indoor toilet, shower or bathroom. As the coronavirus spreads, no access to running water becomes an even more pressing problem for staying healthy.

Another worrying issue is the rise in discrimination. [Discrimination, hate crime and hate speech is already a problem](#) across large swathes of Europe, as FRA research shows.

Since the Coronavirus pandemic spread across Europe, there are media reports of discrimination and hate crimes targeting people of Asian descent.

The Coronavirus has a far-reaching impact on everyone. It is not only an issue of public health, but it affects people's rights too.

FRA is currently [collecting information across all EU Member States](#). It will publish a focus report in early April to highlight some of the main fundamental rights concerns emerging from the crisis.

It stands ready to support EU institutions and EU governments with robust evidence and expertise to respond to the critical needs of policymakers.