

## **Communicating fundamental rights and the rule of law**

European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) Written contribution (18 July 2022)

1.

DG JUST is a major communicator on fundamental rights and the rule of law, be it through communication on the European Commission's own initiatives such as the Rule of Law Report, the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, or through communication towards citizens in thematic awareness-raising campaigns. Recent awareness-raising campaigns by DG JUST include #YourEUright, a campaign on consumer rights that ran in 2019 and 2020, and #RightHereRightNow, an awareness-raising campaign on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (the Charter), which is currently ongoing. These communication campaigns target strategically selected segments of the European population with the view of increasing their awareness on specific rights. In the elaboration and the dissemination of these campaigns, DG JUST involves stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, national human rights institutions, European Commission Representations in Member States, and local influencers. DG JUST also shares lessons learned on campaigns with a variety of partners, such as the informal group of human rights communicators convened by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Collaborative knowledge sharing in this group led to the publication of the guide "10 keys to effectively communicating human rights", which is available online and in all EU languages for communication practitioners (link below).

2.

DG JUST follows the techniques and methodology of strategic communication to plan and implement campaigns on fundamental rights and the rule of law. This starts with the definition of target audiences. With limited budgets for dissemination, for instance via paid ads on social media, and with the strategic priority to convey information to segments of the public who would benefit the most from it, awareness-raising campaigns of DG JUST are built for specific target audiences. These could be groups who have the lowest awareness on specific Charter rights, or population segments showing the highest interest in knowing more about their rights. On some issues, the targeting strategy could be focused on communicating messages to a "movable middle" who is not already convinced of the content of the campaign. For example, a recent social media campaign on Roma inclusion targeted specific groups of the EU population who do not have an opinion on, or tend to disagree with, the statement that Roma inclusion holds benefits for society. The target audiences are built based on available evidence, such as the EU-wide opinion surveys of the Eurobarometer. This approach allows to maximise the usefulness of the campaigns, as it would be of little benefit to direct the messages of a campaign to audiences who are already convinced of the importance of fundamental rights and the rule of law, or who already have sufficient information about specific rights.

3.

A major challenge in communicating fundamental rights and the rule of law is to find the balance between conveying messages that are comprehensive, concrete, and clear, and catching the attention of audiences in a hyper-saturated communication environment. On Facebook for

example, users spend on average 1.7 second with a piece of content on mobile. With such a limited amount of time, it is crucial to develop content with high levels of creative ambition to maximise the chances of the campaign standing out on the different communication channels. For #YourEUright, DG JUST partnered with a renowned film director to create a series of short humorous clips on specific consumer rights. For #RightHereRightNow, talented photographers from the campaign countries were recruited to develop a set of portraits that were used for the campaign assets. This approach allows target audiences to connect and relate with our messages on fundamental rights. For all its awareness-raising campaigns, DG JUST tests the different messages and visual elements in focus groups to ensure that the final campaign will resonate well with target audiences.

4.

While fundamental rights apply to all people in the EU and the rule of law is inherent in the European project, not all segments of the EU population are well informed about their rights, nor consider the rule of law important to them personally. The techniques and methodology of strategic communication contribute to conveying messages on fundamental rights and values to the audiences who would benefit the most. The results of each campaign determine whether the strategy and execution worked, for instance by triggering conversations and engagement on social media, and whether there were changes in awareness among the audiences who were exposed to the campaign. It is crucial to implement the different parameters of strategic communication when building awareness-raising campaigns, not just from the perspective of sound investment of resources, but also to gather benchmarks and lessons learned that may then be used to plan further campaigns or shared with the wider community of communicators on fundamental rights and the rule of law.

5.

Links and resources: [#YourEUright campaign on consumer rights](#) | [#RightHereRightNow campaign on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) | [FRA's 10 keys to effectively communicating human rights](#) | Sample illustrations of campaigns led by DG JUST (as below)

