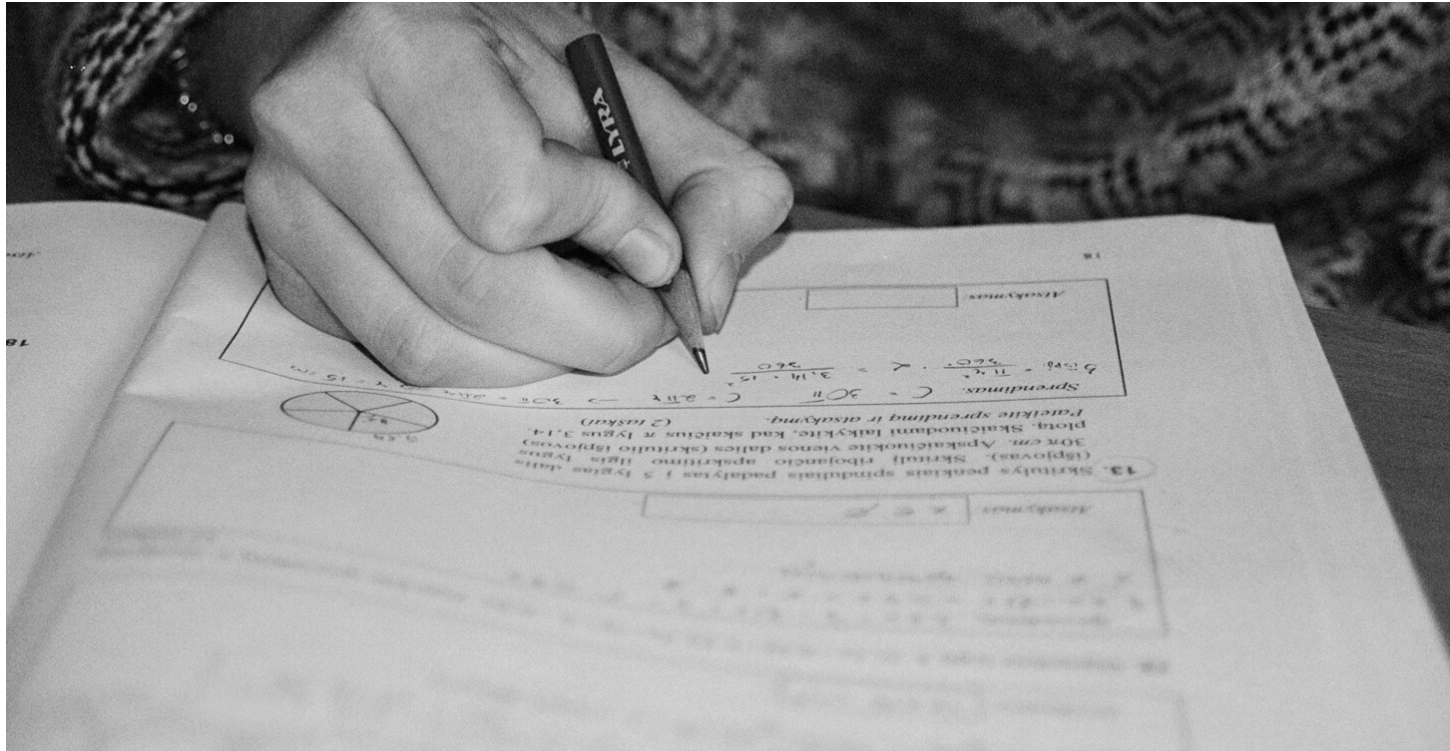




RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



INTRODUCTION

Project "NICE: Nobody Ignores the Charter of Europe" seeks to explore topic of European memory and history with special interest in EU perspective and fundamental rights. Project is created by 3 organizations from 3 European countries - Lithuania, Latvia and Italy.

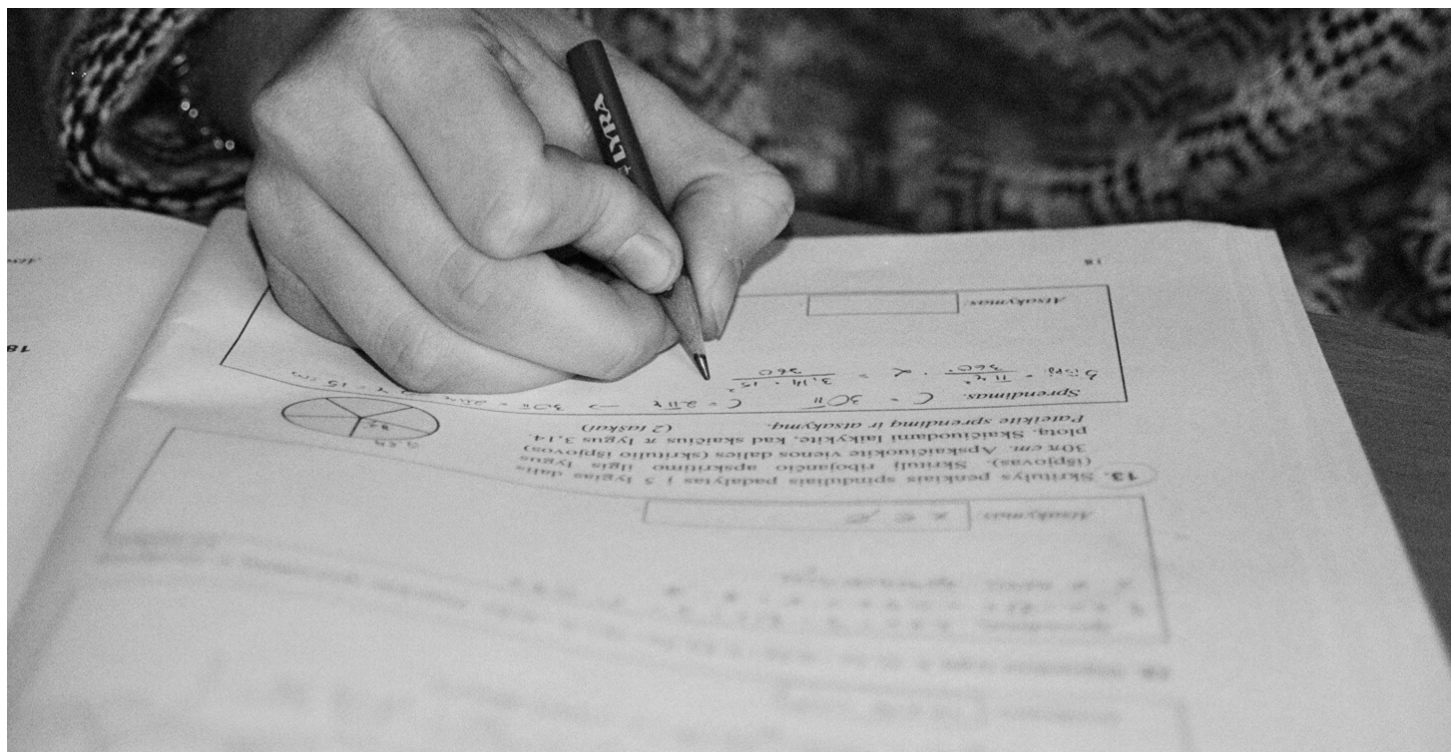
The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union brings together the most important personal freedoms and rights enjoyed by citizens of the EU into one legally binding document.

AIMS of the project:

1. to raise awareness of citizens about an important historical event in 2000 – Proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which ensured economic, political and social rights for EU citizens and residents.
2. to promote cross-sectoral cooperation by involving into project libraries, municipalities, universities, schools, (youth) NGOs, youth centers and in this way ensure visibility and success for the project.
3. to create network between Southern and Eastern European countries in order to work together for the benefits of EU and disseminate its values.

RESEARCH REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

To implement the aims of the project, one of project's activities was in-depth interview research of the citizens of European Union and their point of view regarding their human rights in European Union.

Research tasks:

- To find out how do the respondents evaluate their human rights being the EU citizens;
- To identify which rights and freedoms are the most important and most frequently mentioned by respondents;
- To find out what are the main concerns of the respondents in their personal life regarding their fundamental human rights and freedoms;
- To explore how fundamental human rights and freedoms are evident in each respondent's life;
- To find out if the opinions vary in different countries;
- To find out if the opinions differ depending on age.



METHODOLOGY

The research of the project used in-depth interview with both non-experts and experts involved and their opinions and stories collected.

The research sample included citizens of three countries involved in the project - Lithuania, Latvia and Italy.

The sample selected due to stratified sampling. Respondents were selected randomly from different groups according to gender, age, education, occupation.

Interview research took place from January till July of 2022.

In the results, 58 in-depth interviews were conducted: 25 Lithuanians, 16 Latvians and 17 Italians. 28 males and 30 females.

Respondents age range varied from 20 till 84 years.

In-depth interview length varied from 23 min to 1 h 10 min.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The research instrument consisted of attentively developed questions:

1. What EU means to you?
2. What basic human rights do you think you have? Which ones are the ones that are the most important for you?
3. Can you recall a moment in your life related to human rights protection or violation cases?
4. What documents do you know that protect your rights and freedoms?
5. How is it visible or evident in your life?
6. What do you think about human rights protection in Europe?
7. How do you feel about your rights and freedoms in relation to Covid?
8. Human rights in relation to war in Ukraine.

Disclaimer. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



RESEARCH REPORT

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EU to informants mostly associated with geopolitical situation (map), and overall freedom as and freedom to travel and work, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom of speech, defense, military, good economy, strong finance, better legislation, common currency, unity, community, common values, common beliefs, respect to human dignity, democracy, equality, belonging Schengen zone, better quality of life, more opportunities and opportunities to business development.

Few respondents associated EU with their identity and that EU values goes in line with their personal ones. It is noticeable that "identity" was mostly stressed by 30-40 y.o. participants, not depending on their nationality and the fact that some of them were already grown up when their country joined the EU.

INTERVIEWS

<...As a citizen I am part of union... I feel like my country can be protected if it needs to be, that my rights can be protected. By being in the EU, I feel like I can live with more freedom. And with more freedom I feel like we live in democratic society where there is rights, where there is voting, where there is a freedom of choice as well. So probably this is what EU means to me and my country.. > LT21, female, 29 y.o.)

<...I start with the natural right. I have to be recognized as a person, then I have to be recognized as a woman, then I have to be recognized as a worker, then I have to be recognized as a citizen. Basically I have been recognized as a person... I have the right to express my word, my thought, I have the right to a dignified life, to freedom of movement, I have the right to express my opinion, always and everywhere with respect for those in front of me, I have the right for my religious faith. In my opinion these are the fundamental rights ...> (IT2, female, 56 y.o)

<... I think that European Union helped to achieve some of the very basic human rights in Lithuania and their protection. However, such rights as such issues as domestic violence, or violation of human rights of some social groups, is still a very huge problem. <...> not every country of European Union is very good with human rights. And EU also has a lot of place and space to improve with the human rights....> (LT3, female, 25 y.o.).



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Talking about EU meaning for informants in different countries were noticed that informants from Lithuania mentioned more defence and safety, informants from Italy mentioned freedom of religion, and informants from Latvia mentioned that EU meaning associates more with geopolitical map.

Latvian respondents very often mentioned benefits formulated as "free trade", while only couple Lithuanian and Italian respondents identified "movement of goods".

Being inclusive and EU motto "United in diversity" also revealed and were evident in respondents' statements.

Analysing EU meaning informants mentioned also some problems but mostly informants demonstrated positive attitudes and listed benefits towards being in EU.

INTERVIEWS

<... when you say European Union, the first thing that comes to my mind is some sort of political map, maybe a geopolitical map. And, I mean, I see it as an agreement between the several countries in the continent of Europe <...> it's an agreement on cooperation in trade and movement of labor, and financial help to each other, basically. <...> And also there are some common rules that we are following, basically, and some values that we implement in the in local Governments...> (LV13, male, 35 y.o.).

Informant IT1 (male, 58 y.o.) told that "European Union is the home where we can find our personal rights fully achieved, as a reflection of more general human rights concerning political ideas, freedom of movement, freedom of religion and of the press, we have to really understand that that the European Union is not only for the convenience to freely movement or common currency <...> but that is time to build a common understanding of the economical, political, social, and religious context in which we live, letting everybody to express his own thinking freely".

<...I think that the European Union is a collective of mostly democratic countries <...> I think that Europe is a pretty inclusive region. Because for some reason I think it is European to be inclusive...> (LV15, male, 31 y.o.)

<...maybe borders are just in human minds <...> European Union represent a perfectly the idea of united in diversity...> (IT6, male, 22 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

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Rarely mentioned but still noted that EU contributes to preservation of heritage in each of the countries.

Noting differences in attitudes by informants age could be said the younger interview informants appreciated more the freedom of movement, while senior informants see mostly economic benefits and democratic values. Also they are keen on comparing it to the country history and talks positively about EU.

Legislative point of view naturally revealed more from respondents with topic related background.

To summarise the answers of the informants to the first question, it can be said that EU meaning main concepts are freedoms, democratic and human values, geopolitical situation, reliable economy, defence and human rights.

INTERVIEWS

<...Preserving, being able to preserve much more culture, In Latvia, in Latvian territory, how because it's been recognized in EU...> (LV6, female, 21 y.o.)

<...very often associates, first of all, with freedom. With respect for human dignity, with democracy, with equality. EU is all about leadership, equating with what I want to be. Because these are united countries, especially those that already have long-standing democratic roots, both culturally and in every way as developed...> (LT9, female, 59 y.o.)

<...it's your community there is not much difference for me anymore. <...> I don't want to say that we are all the same, but for sure it can be a safe harbour for everyone. <...> Europe is an opportunity for everyone ...> (IT16, male, 34 y.o.)

<...this opportunity, just having one ID card or passport to travel everywhere. It just helps for people to be more open minded...> (LT5, female, 26 y.o.)

<...the geography of course, it is a collection of states. But the first thing besides that probably comes to mind is trade...> (LV15, male, 31 y.o.)

I<... think about a complex mechanisms of states that try to collaborate together in order to establish and to have a common ground, a common floor...> (IT11, male, 34 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



WHAT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE?

INTERVIEW INFORMANTS TRIED TO IDENTIFY BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS THEY HAVE:

The main points of rights described as self-expression, freedom and separate rights.

- Self – expression was mentioned by social networks, clothes, style, behavior, political opinion and parties.
- Freedom was described as speech freedom, freedom of movement, freedom to choose an occupation.
- Each country's respondents aspected freedom of speech.
- Informants from Italy aspected *religion freedom, women rights, minority rights, data protection*.
- Informants from Latvia mentioned *democracy, equality, freedom of expression, dignity*.
- Education, labour rights, property and business rights, access media information.

INTERVIEWS

<... Definitely freedom of speech. Also that I can vote <...> Basically, we can take huge decisions as a nation. <...> that we can stand for our country. So that we can talk freely... > (LT5, female, 26 y.o.);

<...Perhaps the most obvious is the freedom of speech, that I can express my opinion and that anyone can express their opinion, whatever it may be. And everyone boldly expresses their own opinion, we are no longer afraid to say what we think. It is a great freedom. <...> It's a freedom to choose a lifestyle, the freedom to express oneself through a profession or sub-culture. <...> . Freedom of expression, freedom to express oneself through free speech, through clothing, through ... After all, through belonging to different political parties. Freedom to different being, to individual being and to self-expression are perhaps the most associated with freedom for me....> (LT2, male, 28 y.o.).

<for sure the right to health, and to see up to accessible medical treatment, the right to self determination, in a very broad sense. Choosing where you want to be what you want to do, who you want to be...> (IT7, female, 22 y.o.)

<...I think that many human rights for me are invisible in a way because being an educated woman who is straight <...> I have, like all whole sets of human rights, including hopefully, the justice, fair trial, and then I have a right to protest and I have right to the freedom of speech...> (LV3, female, 47 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



WHAT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NOTICED THE MAIN RIGHTS AS:

- Rights for women, elderly, minorities, children rights, LGBT community rights.
- Rights to life and health services.
- Right to cultural, religious, linguistic diversity; right to have identity.
- Political rights - to vote, to protest, to petition; right to stand as a candidate, right to recognition, right to elections; right to gathering for political purpose.
- Right to marry. It was also mentioned by several female respondents, that homosexuals don't have right to marry in EU.
- Safety (ensured by institutions and legislation) and protection by the law (including GDPR).
- Right to fair trial, right to justice, right to dignity.

INTERVIEWS

<...Dignity is a value in itself, given free speech to be heard, be able to participate, not to be held accountable for beliefs or reward...so I have never been afraid of being public about my opinions...> (LV9, male, 41 y.o.).

<... We can prove our truth. When you do something <<illegal>> you can have a lawyer and save your dignity and maybe if you have incorrect charges you can have a lawyer and save yourself from prison...> (LT18, female, 22 y.o.)

<...The most important for me are moral and legal equality, right to education and justice, right to the protection of all work and workers. I think that this could be the pillars on which we can build, share the perspective of human rights in Europe...> (IT1, male, 58 y.o.)

<... in terms of the basic human rights, I have all of them, I've been very lucky to have all of them <...> the most important ones would definitely be to live in a democratic state to participate in elections, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech...> (LV2, female, 21 y.o.)

<...I have a right to privacy. Others have to respect my privacy, my private estate, my family. And also personal... data protection is under certain laws...> (LT8, female, 79 y.o.)

<...ensembles of your attitudes, your costumes, is the way you express yourself...> (IT16, male, 34 y.o.)

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WHAT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE?

Prohibition of slavery was mentioned rarely but still mentioned by few male respondents.

Noting similarities of respondents it was surprising that right to fair trial and personal privacy, incl. data protection was of equally important both for men and women of any age.

One of the most exclusive mentions was bodily autonomy. Although it is closely related to mandatory vaccination cases in further chapters, it was mentioned so exceptionally and in different context only once.

Regardless of mentioning a lot of different human rights which are important for respondents the term "invisible" or "invisible rights" occurred which was accompanied with very frequent commemoration of "privilege" and "being privileged" which summarises the feeling of being in EU.

INTERVIEWS

<...What comes to my mind is employees rights. That we shall not be enslaved and should have some rest...> (LV1, male, 34 y.o.)

<...The first one is the freedom of speech and the entitlement of expressing even a discordant opinion. Why it matters so much, because all our progress, all our social progress happened thanks to revolutions centuries ago, which started after a very controversial, but necessary debate about our future...> (IT14, male, 33 y.o.)

<...I have a right to privacy... others have to respect my privacy, my private estate <...> personal data protection is under certain laws ..> (LT8, female, 79 y.o.)

<...Bioethics, while we spoke about bodily autonomy and that the rights that I think I want to be one of the most fundamental ones because we are basically bodies and if our bodies are not protected and free then a lot of things stop right there...> (LV10, female, 33 y.o.)

<...which is the most fundamental right, ever, that European context should support today or today and for the future? <...> the right to his or her own identity...> (IT12, male, 52 y.o.)

<...we are the most acutely aware of our freedoms or rights in the moments when they are the most endangered. And since you have certain privileges, then those become invisible rights because they are taken for granted and endangered...> (LV11, male, 28 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CAN YOU RECALL A MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION OR VIOLATION CASES?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS SHARED PERSONAL STORIES RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF THE FREEDOMS, THE RIGHTS OR PROBLEMS WHAT THEY HAVE MET IN THEIR LIFE.

Informants mentioned situations or moments related to their rights:

- Informants LT4, male, 24 y.o. and IT16, male, 34 y.o. mentioned *strong passport occasion*. That helps to look for a job in Europe with no visa issues.
- Research participants LV2, female, 21 y.o., LV3, female, 47 y.o., LV16, female, 20 y.o. and LV8, female, 41 y.o. mentioned freedom to protest, freedom of expression and freedom of arts.

More often informants mentioned negative experiences:

- Research participant LT18, female, 22 y.o. and LT11, female, 30 y.o. mentioned gender inequality problem when woman career is hampered by manager's perception about maternity leave and this kind of stereotyping.

INTERVIEWS

<“...Now, when all the protests at the Russian embassy have been going on, I have always been safe. People are allowed to gather there and protest. And also, even as we see that Russia is not only oppressing human rights, domestically, but they also wanted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to remove this poster of Putin looking like, <...> skeleton thing. And they said no, because we have freedom of expression and freedom of art. So yeah, that that also made me quite aware of how good it is for us”...> (LV2, female, 21 y.o.)

<“...I feel that in my field of work my human rights are not respected. Because we have special rules to cover and to try to have a good work activity,, to have food during the day, vacation <...> sometimes the owner, don't respect and try to wipe out the rules, <...> to find a way to manage these things and don't give you what you have to do to receive...> (IT17, male, 29 y.o.)

<“...I think there is discrimination against sex. Well, I feel at least as being a woman. It's not very intense as it might seem but... all visible....> (LT13, female, 28 y.o.)

<“...they're scared when they go to work interviews to tell that, you know, in two years, we are planning to have a baby, because nobody wants to hire you...> (LT11, female, 30 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CAN YOU RECALL A MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION OR VIOLATION CASES?

- Informant LT3, female, 25 y.o. mentioned gender inequality through stereotyping. Informant LT24, female, 25 y.o. and LT8, female, 79 y.o. also mentioned gender inequality problem caused by salary differences between genders. It is noticeable that gender equality issues are more often mentioned by female participants, by male participants this issue is rarely identified.
- Informant LT17, female, 58 y.o. mentioned discrimination due to age while looking for a job.
- Informant LT7, female, 23 y.o. noticed labor law violation from her experience, informant IT17, male, 29 y.o. also mentioned unfair behaviour in work place which labor law seeks to prevent. Informant LT2, male, 28 y.o. as well noticed labor law violation when the part of salary was paid unofficially, and vacation money accounted incorrectly.

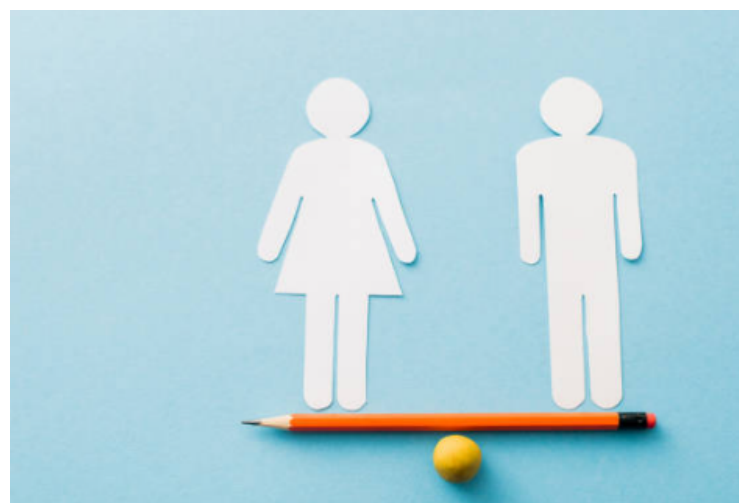
INTERVIEWS

<...long since put down my disappointments with gender equality, which isn't great here at all because I feel like there is not much I can do or want to anyway...> (LV10, female, 33 y.o.)

<...I wanted to get a job and I had a phone call and employer immediately told me, "but your voice is not a student voice." She heard that the voice was of an older human, simply said, our employment meeting, did not even took place...> (LT17, female, 58 y.o.)

<...just being a woman in society, at times, like you can feel, in some situations that by society norms <...> the whole patriarchy system from a long time ago...> (LT21, female, 29 y.o.)

<... Personally, I don't have situations where my rights are being neglected but there are people who face this problem. > (LT12, male, 72 y.o.)





RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CAN YOU RECALL A MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION OR VIOLATION CASES?

- Informant LT21, female, 29 y.o. noticed race discrimination, when a taxi driver from Egypt was told by his client go to his home country.

Ability to protest is more often identified by respondents from Baltic countries, assumably due to former restrictions and occupation period.

Although identifying some problems, significant part of respondents mentioned that they have never faced any human rights issues. Such words as "privileged" are repeated in this question as well, accompanied with "being lucky" to live in EU.

Summarizing the analysis of this question could be said that the positive aspects recalled are freedom to protest and strong EU passport. As problems faced were identified gender inequality, discrimination due to age, race, labor law issues.

INTERVIEWS

<...Well, I am a white privileged woman so I think it's pretty easy for me to live in this world...> (LT1, female, 23 y.o.)

<...I'm not sure I have a specific episode about myself related to the freedom of speech, because luckily, nobody never told me not to say something...> (IT15, female, 22 y.o.)

<...I've been really lucky in that sense that I haven't really encountered any serious violations of my rights...> (LV7, male, 31 y.o.)

<...Luckily for me, just because <...> we live in the EU, and the level of legal care is very high. But we are sort of privileged compared with the rest of the world <...>. So I never see myself being in danger. I never see my rights being in danger in the European Union...> (IT12, male, 52 y.o.)

<...the moments when you become the most acutely aware of your own human rights is when you see them limited for someone else and for other minority groups. And that's the moment when you more acutely are aware of your own set of privilege in a way...> (LV3, female, 47 y.o.)

<...We don't really know how lucky we are until it comes to moment when you realise it. So personally, personally, I always feel felt lucky about that. ...> (IT16, male, 34 y.o.)

<...In these last decades, I have never felt insecure, actually, really, it's been, it's been a privilege to be okay...> (LV9, male, 41 y.o.)

RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



WHAT DOCUMENTS DO YOU KNOW THAT PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NOTICED DOCUMENTS, THAT PROTECT OUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS:

- The Constitution,
- The EU Passport,
- The European Charter,
- The EU Charter of Fundamental rights
- The Human Rights Declaration,
- The Law (Labor, gender equality, law protecting motherhood and the family, law preventing domestic violence),
- The Convention of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms,
- The Convention Regarding Child Rights,
- The Convention Regarding People with Disabilities,
- The European Health Insurance card,
- The Treaties

Mainly research participants mentioned Constitution.

INTERVIEWS

<... at the national level, we have our Constitution, which is the basic basis for our rights as Italian citizens. The Constitution itself says that the international rights are regarded more important than our laws. So I know that we have the Geneva constitution convention and, of course, the EU Charter of Rights...> (IT6, male, 22 y.o.)

"<...I think passport. <...> It's a document you have you can prove that you are yourself...> (LV16, female, 20 y.o.)

<...Labour Code, the employment contract includes parts of this code. Constitution. These two are the main ones. ...> (LT2, male, 28 y.o.)

<...We are lucky, because at least on paper we can enjoy all the human rights recognized by the constitution, the European charter of rights as well as the world one, we are lucky to feel protected...> (IT2, female, 56 y.o.)

<...Constitution of Lithuania <...> Job contract, job law. <...> I think every democratic country has constitution and law for every kind of situation...> (LT20, male, 39 y.o.)

<...It's about any kind of treaties, or any kind of legislation or constitutions to whom I belong. So there are the treaties, there is the Constitution, there is the law. First, there are the institutions that are making sure that these things will really be protected. ...> (IT16, male, 34 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



WHAT DOCUMENTS DO YOU KNOW THAT PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS?

Many documents being identified, it is noticeable, that part of participants did not mention any of the documents. Talking further it revealed, that each respondent was aware of at least national Constitution just it did not come to mind while initially asked about "documents".

Answers differed regarding previous experiences and background of respondents. Participants who had previous issues in workplace either are already active in labor market identified labor code as one of important documents protecting their rights. Participants with less law-related background looked into question with more simplified manner and identified mostly Constitution and even passport. While respondents with law-related background expanded more on EU Charter of Fundamental rights and other international documents.

INTERVIEWS

<...legally speaking, Italian Constitution is the first document that comes to my mind, followed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union. culturally speaking, the British RBS corpus and the following bill of rights to me are two of the most important documents of this kind. ..> (IT5, male, 23 y.o.)

<...the Charter is a guideline that conserve the relationship that we want to have with the other countries also at European level...> (IT10, male, 74 y.o.)

<...we should also not forget that the European Charter is a sort of summary of the freedoms which national constitutions already knew, some of them even since decades, and some simply try to make a sum of all of them to formalize them at the European level...> (IT12, male, 52 y.o.)

<...the Latvian passport includes this small paragraph that the owner of his passport is a citizen of Latvia. And then the ways in which the Latvian states will protect you, almost as if almost as if they own you, but in a good way <...> you don't realize when that means you don't realize what citizenship means. <...> Everybody gets a passport, but not everyone realizes we're getting a passport means that it means that you are in a circumstance under the protection that the country or country can demand that another country release its nationals...> (LV15, male, 31 y.o.)

<...to be honest, I don't know <...> I'm not sure documents can protect you...> (LV13, male, 35 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



WHAT DOCUMENTS DO YOU KNOW THAT PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS?

Noticing the differences between countries, Italian respondents demonstrated more developed knowledge regarding European Union legislation. Although having mentioned, that they see lack of education and were not taught at schools regarding this matter, almost all of them identified EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or other. It seemed that Italian respondents had overall slightly stronger background in law field, but comparing to the lawyers from Lithuania and Latvia, their performance was still stronger.

The Treaties were identified only by interviewees with superficial knowledge and advanced background in law.

Summarizing, natural distribution regarding legislative knowledge between respondents was identified. Overall the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was frequently mentioned by research participants.

INTERVIEWS

<...European citizens we rely on the legislation that formed our fundamental law even if it's not appropriate constitutions that are the EU treaties. And of course, in the EU treaties related to the treaty is a part of the EU treaties I would say there are the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights that is an annex to the EU treaties that is a legally binding document at the same level of the EU treaties. And this document is a sort of Bill of Rights view of the European Union...> (IT13, male, 36 y.o.)



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RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBED THE EVIDENCE OF DOCUMENTS PROTECTING THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN THEIR LIFE.

- *Women rights.* Informant LT14, male, 21 y.o. mentioned women rights as positive aspect in EU. Informant LT3, female, 25 y.o. also mentioned women rights.
- *Freedom to study in European Universities.* Informant LT24, female, 25 y.o. mentioned opportunity to get PhD in European university, choose studying programmes.
- *Elderly rights.* Informants LT8, female, 79 y.o. and LT6, female, 84 y.o. noticed elderly rights: third-century universities, various events, opportunities to participate in public life. It is noticeable that elderly rights were naturally more aspected by seniors, as these rights are most relevant for them.

INTERVIEWS

<... In my personal life, I think women rights are my rights. So it personally affects me all the situations, which are related to violation of human rights, so of course, domestic violence cases, some discrimination in workplace, class ceiling, and also victim blaming, which is very popular in our society and social media. And so I personally would say those rights...> (LT3, female, 25 y.o.)

<...You just can see it. When you look you can see everything. Like the children are going to school. They're having their right to be educated. Some people are going to hospitals or they're having their medical care. ...> (LV16, female, 20 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



- *Right to vote* and elect political parties by their programmes (LT9, female, 59 y.o.).
- *Health care availability.* Informant LT11, female, 30 y.o. noticed health care availability in all Europe, as and the emergency help, what is paid by insurance.
- Freedom to travel (LT10, male, 23 y.o.)
- Right to protest. EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was mentioned as document for right to protest (LT10, male, 23 y.o.).
- Right to petition (LV2, female, 21 y.o.).
- Data protection (IT4, female, 25 y.o.).
- Solidarity with Ukrainian people (LV3, female, 47 y.o.).
- Safety and security, at home country and while travelling abroad (IT8, male, 22 y.o.)

Having mentioned several aspects according to which human rights protection is visible and evident in respondents' life, term "privilege" once again occurred in answers.

INTERVIEWS

<... the reason why traveling is important to me - it's not only lying on the beach for a week, or having fresh pictures of Eiffel tower. It's a very much about broadening my insights, broadening my imagination, like accepting different cultures ...> (LT10, male, 23 y.o.)

<...Speaking as an Italian citizen going to another European state, it certainly gives me security. I've been to various states in Europe and I've always felt safe and like at home...> (IT8, male, 22 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



Several informants formed the idea that you start thinking about rights you have and their presence only when some problematic issue occurs. Otherwise it is taken for granted, like a common sense we are born this way. We do not notice it, we do not see it in a positive manner.

To summarise the results of this question could be said that fundamental rights and freedoms protection visible by women, elderly rights, rights to vote and elect political parties by their programs, rights to protest and rights to petition, right to health care; freedom to study in every European University, freedom to travel, freedom to choose every EU country as residence country, freedom for solidarity with Ukrainian people. However, protection has become so common that it is not felt or thought about daily and sometimes even taken for granted.

INTERVIEWS

<...it's something that is taken for granted. Like I cannot see myself in any other different condition. Like not being free or not being respected for my dignity. So how do I see this evidence everyday? Everyday? I don't see them. This is the funny part. I don't see them every day, but I have them every day but I don't see. So the question is, how do I see, so I don't see...> (IT16, male, 34 y.o.)

<...weird to think about rights because we never really do until they are violated you kind of use them <...> and unless something goes wrong, you don't really notice them. ...> (LV10, female, 33 y.o.)

,<...often we don't feel the threat to it because it's common sense and people don't try to threaten your rights because we do have them...> (LT14, male, 21 y.o.)

<...Because these things are often something that if our rights or freedoms are protected, we don't necessarily reflect on it much. We just we do take it for granted. And that is the privilege, right?...> (LV13, male, 35 y.o.)

<...I guess it's just for my generation <...> so common, and we were just born that way. So we don't think about it that much...> (LT5, female, 26 y.o.)

<...we are enjoying, sometimes, we don't know, as citizens, we do not recognize and realize it, but we are enjoying a multi layered protection...> (IT14, male, 33 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TOLD THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE.

- Significant part of respondents recognises, human rights protection standard in EU is very high, but there are also problems.
- Research participant LT20, male, 39 y.o. mentioned law system disadvantages, when penalty depends on the amount one is able to pay to the lawyer.
- Health protection issues were mentioned when waiting in line to see a doctor takes months or even half a year (LT20, male, 39 y.o., LV16, female, 20 y.o.). Informant LT8, female, 79 y.o. noticed that does not get information about free medical programmes which applies for seniors. Differently informant LT4, male, 24 y.o. saw benefits of health system in EU, compared to USA when payment for health care, emergency is covered by insurance.

INTERVIEWS

<...we have the highest standard of protection related to human rights, then with the execution and with the enactment of this right, we also have some problems especially in countries that have a recent history, as a EU members, when we can see how this human rights are not always respected as the standard that we expect for <...> we have some issues with the respect of the minorities, with the respect of the principle of non-discrimination....> (IT13, male, 36 y.o.)

<...civil rights and human rights in general, I think Europe has reached an incredible result with that. and European Union in particular <...> I can think about also like the LGBTQ plus community, and their protection, this is something that's a big issue in Europe right now <...> the awareness around this is increasing...> (IT7, female, 22 y.o.)

<...We have some freedoms, which are very well supported in the European Union, other freedoms, other rights, which could maybe deserve much more attention from the European institutions, I'm thinking of migrations, for instance...> (IT12, male, 52 y.o.)

<...the base level how human rights are protected in Europe is probably set. It's probably a good level you cannot murder anybody on the street <...> But there are certain situations where a person can be vulnerable, because he or she is poor...> (LV15, male, 31 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE?

- Informant LT12, male, 72 y.o. said that social security payment system should be stricter.
- Informant LT6, female, 84 y.o. noticed human rights problems of domestic violence. Informant LT3, female, 25 y.o. also mentioned gender inequality problem.
- Informant LT17, female, 58 y.o. mentioned children deprivation problem from Lithuanian families following Scandinavian countries.
- Several informants identified LGBT rights protection problems, including their right to marry. LGBT community's issues were raised both by female and male respondents. Attitudes of informants varied by age. Younger informants were more positive and supporting while middle-aged and senior respondents claimed that the society is not yet ready for their full acceptance or were against.

INTERVIEWS

<....member of the low strength crew had health problems, he fell ill in Spain, in Castellón de la Plana <...> Fortunately for him, the ship was in Europe, so the medical services for this man were immediate...> (IT8, male, 22 y.o.)

<... I think that some people shouldn't get social security. The point is that, some people are lazy and they are not working and because of that they are getting social security payment from the government...> (LT12, male, 72 y.o.)

< ...if we talk about gender gap index, we can see that some of the countries are more way more advanced than the others. And Lithuania, for example, is at the end of the list, while Sweden and Denmark and the Netherlands are at the top of the list...>. (LT3, female, 25 y.o.)

<....It was blindly followed some kind of enforceable directives and completely uncommon to our country...> (LT17, female, 58 y.o.)

<...I don't know what the European Union and the other countries that belong to it do for the elderly, but I think that today more should be done...> (IT9, female, 78 y.o.)

<... But I think as a citizen I want that every group in my country would have the same rights as me. So if I can marry a guy that I love, why can't my friend marry her partner or his partner? ...>. (LT11, female, 30 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE?

- Informant LT16, male, 23 y.o. noticed that food regulation is better in EU than in USA, especially GMO regulations.
- Informant LV3, female, 47 y.o. mentioned, that there is too much bureaucracy in order to protest effectively, make demonstrations.
- Informant LT1, female, 23 y.o. mentioned racial inequality, when African students get troubles with renting a flat. Differently informant LT24, female, 25 y.o. noticed, that minorities rights in Lithuania are respected, there are Polish schools, communities, children can learn Polish language in schools.
- Informant LT16, male, 23 y.o. noticed that the right to asylum is very strong in EU, people from Ukraine can go to Europe and has possibility to run away from the war.

INTERVIEWS

<...when we see that immigrants are flowing from Ukraine to Europe, I think it's really beautiful to see that the European countries open their walls to allow these refugees to take safe haven from the war and all the cruelty is happening in there...> (LT16, male, 23 y.o.)

<...Apparently the European population is guaranteed in all its fundamental rights, but in fact the European Union does not protect the people who pass through its territory and leaves the individual states alone to manage the whole problem of immigration...> (IT2, female, 56 y.o.)

<...I think that on one hand is obviously much more advanced than many other parts of the world, even the US. But I think I see two problems. <...> So I think then, that's the situation in which European Union often fails to protect people who come from the outside, and then different member states decide how to treat them...> (LV8, female, 41 y.o.)

- Informants LT16, male, 23 y.o. and LT5, female, 26 y.o. mentioned fake news problem when freedom of speech might be allowed too much.
- Several informants identified issues regarding immigration and protection of migrants rights.



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE?

Informants more than once identified health care system and its undeniable advantage over the one in the USA.

Noting differences between countries was identified, that informants from Italy are more likely to stress high standard of protection for EU citizens and are the most concerned regarding immigrants for whom this protection seems lacking. Also noting human rights protection differences between Western and Eastern European countries, old and newcomer European Union countries.

Informants from Lithuania are more concerned regarding health protection, mentioning both positive aspects and the ones to improve., Informants from Latvia and Lithuania were frequently noting gender inequality and discrimination issues.

INTERVIEWS

<...My impression is this is the best place to be rights and protection in comparison to any other place on earth....> (LV10, female, 33 y.o.)

<...we can say that we have met all the standards and that human rights are like worldwide or Europe wide, protected and taken into consideration. But I think where is more of a feeling - there is more of understanding about human rights, about what are human rights, how to protect them...> (IT4, female, 25 y.o.)

<...there is this general willingness to do more. And that's okay...> (LV9, male, 41 y.o.)

<...I think that the human rights protection in Europe is good <...> don't see what more European Union could do like to be honest <...> it's more like a soft power...> (LV14, female, 30 y.o.)

<...(European Union) is necessary, is absolutely necessary for many, many, many reasons. One of the reasons why European Union is so important for truth, is about the protection that it ensures to the European citizens and this society as a whole. So the European Union grants these rights for the European citizens, and one of these rights is the right to be protected from any kind of external threat. In the current international environment, we see, unfortunately, many authoritarian regimes which are trying to expanding their influences, and therefore we need a stronger protection and this kind of protection can just come from a supranational institution such as the European Union...> (IT14, male, 33 y.o.)



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EUROPE?

CONCLUDING THIS QUESTION ANALYSES RESULTS COULD BE SAID, THAT PARTICIPANTS MENTIONED POSITIVE AND PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF HUMAN PROTECTION IN EU.

- *Core positive aspects:* health system covered by insurance; strict food regulation, especially GMO products; respecting minorities rights; the right to asylum; military protection. Overall human rights protection in Europe in European Union is evaluated positively, especially if compared to other regions and even rest of the world.
- *Core problematic aspects:* health care; immigration; gender inequality, including domestic violence; family and children rights; LGBT problems; racial inequality; discrimination; fake news problem.



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN RELATION TO COVID?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TOLD THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS TOPIC IN RELATION TO COVID.

- Informant LT9, female, 59 y.o. noted that wearing masks is a matter of human awareness.
- Informant LT15, female, 35 y.o. noticed the restrictions were too strict and might have violated some of human rights.
- Informant LT5, female, 26 y.o. noted the issue of vaccination, in EU it was right to choose to be vaccinated or not. Informant LT2, male, 28 y.o. felt strange when restrictions were dependable on vaccination. As well it caused informational war, fake news, bans and other information dissemination issues.
- Several informants mentioned that actions of governments were understandable in situation of global health crisis.
- Informant LT10, male, 23 y.o. felt protected as government gave opportunity to vaccinate.

INTERVIEWS

<... I think it's understandable because it's global pandemic. It's a global problem, not some minor one... > (:T14, male, 21 y.o.)

<...I didn't feel threatened at that stage because Italy as well as other countries found themselves in a situation that nobody expected. So for me the lock-down was the best idea that could be implemented...> (IT8, male, 22 y.o.)

<...Those measures that every state has taken to protect people, I think, was not violations. Wearing the same masks is a matter of human awareness...>. (LT9, female, 59 y.o.)

<... In the beginning of this pandemic, human rights were neglected. Because people were being captured in open streets for not wearing masks. They had to pay fines...> (L:T15, female, 35 y.o.).

< ...I felt really protected by the EU when the vaccines started to be given to people in our continent...> (LT10, male, 23 y.o.)

<...you're free to do whatever you want, as long as it does not cause any harm to another. And I think that by not getting vaccinated by ignoring, ignoring of no health specialists, you cause a lot of harm for people that you can protect...> (LT16, male, 23 y.o.)

RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN RELATION TO COVID?

- Informant LT12, male, 72 y.o. agreed on Covid tests when travelling, noticed its necessity.
- Informant LV16, female, 20 y.o. disagreed with restriction to forbid sports clubs and fitness clubs but understood the logic behind.
- Informant IT2, female, 56 y.o. noticed problems as children could not get to school, elderly could not access to social protection service, as well noticed the issue of violence against women, which in this period has seen a doubling of the number of cases.
- Informant LV3, female, 47 y.o. noticed that there were too many restrictions for people who do not have digital skills, could not print QR code to enter shop, etc.
- Informant IT7, female, 22 y.o. provided point of view, that restrictions revealed social gap and created barriers for people with fewer opportunities to access to education.

INTERVIEWS

<...I have had no difficulties shrinking my own freedoms for the sake of other people's safety. I think that's reasonable steps to make during a global health crisis <...> The fact that you have to curtail your personal freedoms, tiny little bit, just so that other people wouldn't die, ..> (LV10, female, 33 y.o.)

<...we have to relate in such a way individual rights with the rights of being part of a community, these two aspects were difficult to relate one another <...> because of the pandemic, our individual rights, in such a way, have to be restricted, in order to prevent the virus...> (IT13, male, 36 y.o.)

<...in times of crisis, it can be reasonable to temporarily suspend certain rights...> (LV7, male, 31 y.o.)

<...I'm still convinced that institutions were trying, you know, to act in a way just to provide possible remedies in a situation <...> the remedies that the institutions were providing in the first place were the correct ones...> (IT12, male, 52 y.o.)

<...I'm not sure how to evaluate a legal a legal document that seems to make a lot of sense in times of peace with when a crisis occurs. And then suddenly, you're forced to isolate you're forced to take a vaccine and you're required by law to work then. But on the other hand, it was a matter of life and death in countries so that is a thing. That it's it has to be balanced out somehow. ..> (LV15, male, 31 y.o.)

RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN RELATION TO COVID?

Research informants mentioned different aspects which revealed during COVID pandemics. The common direction of answers was, that despite some backside and issues, restrictions were reasonable and needed for the well-being of society. It was not interpreted as human rights violation. Health of society naturally is more important than individual freedoms.

Female respondents were more concentrating on social issues while male participants were analysing question more from legislative point of view. Core issues identified were penalties for not wearing a mask; informational war and fake news;; social problems: schoolchildren could not go to school, elderly could not reach medical care services, women felt higher level of domestic violence; people who do not have digital skills or equipment, were more restricted and lost access to education or social services.

As well aspects as protection, possibility to choose to be vaccinated or not, Covid tests while traveling, were evaluated positively by research participants.

There were not identified tendencies or differences between answers regarding different age groups or respondent countries.



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)



RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NOTED THAT RUSSIA, PUTIN HAS VIOLATED ALL HUMAN RIGHTS. THE WAR IS SCARY, SHOCKING.

- Informant LT7, female, 23 y.o. noted that Lithuanian people and organizations are doing more for Ukraine than some EU countries.
- Informant LT21, female, 29 y.o. noticed that Ukraine should faster become EU member and EU should fasten this process.
- Also research participants noticed that EU doing a lot for refugees of Ukraine - they get help, homes, they can work, so get support (LT23, male, 29 y.o., LT24, female, 25 y.o.)
- Informant LT13, female, 28 y.o. noted problem of Ukrainian women trafficking.
- Informant LV9, male, 41 y.o. confirmed that Russia is a terrorist state.
- Respondents from Lithuania and Latvia mentioned and talked about war in Ukraine issues more than informants from Italy.

INTERVIEWS

Informant LT24, female, 25 y.o. mentioned <...we have a right to live but when you think that in Ukraine people are just killed by Russia...>.

Informant LT17, female, 59 y.o. said: <... I pray for Ukraine, for peace more precisely, because I believe in the power of prayer. In other ways, some donation was done, I supported Ukraine financially a bit. I know that a lot of people help with places to live for Ukrainians these days. Solidarity is felt in the world, but also great hysteria. Clearly, this situation is not simple, quite depressing. I don't know what else we can do. There is never too much of solidarity and unity....>.

<...This war is on all of Europe. So, I think EU definitely could be doing more... I've also signed petitions against the war in Ukraine and against Russia... I guess it could all be always doing something more...> (LT21, female, 29 y.o.)

I<...The war just helped me to realize that how free we are right now...> (LT15, female, 26 y.o.)

<...Russians don't see democracy and don't see the European values...> (IT5, male, 23 y.o.)

Informants commonly agreed that Russia's invasion to Ukraine is rough violation of human rights.



RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CONCLUSIONS



The research results showed how do the research participants evaluate their human rights being the EU citizens. Research participants mentioned positive and problematic aspects of human protection in EU. Positive aspects – health system covered by insurance; strict food regulation, especially GMO products; respecting minorities rights; the right to asylum; military protection. Problematic aspects: law system; health care; social security payment; domestic violence, gender equality, family and children rights, LTGB problems, human dignity violation, racial inequality, fake news problem, bureaucratic problems while defending human rights in court.



The research results showed what are the main concerns of the respondents in their personal life regarding their fundamental human rights and freedoms. The positive aspects noticed as freedom to protest, freedom of expression and freedom of arts, as well strong EU passport occasion, that can help look for a job in the all Europe, with no visa issues. Human rights problems were identified as gender inequality, discrimination due to age, labor law violation, discrimination due race.





RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CONCLUSIONS



Research results showed how the opinions vary in different countries. Talking about EU meaning for informants in different countries were noticed that informants from Lithuania mentioned more defence and safety aspects, informants from Italy mentioned freedom of religion and informants from Latvia had associations with geopolitical map. Talking about basic human rights research participants aspected freedom of speech. Informants from Italy as well aspected religion freedom, women rights, minority rights, digital data protection. Informants from Latvia mentioned democracy, equality, freedom of expression, dignity.



Research results let to explore how fundamental human rights and freedoms are evident in each respondent's life. Fundamental rights and freedoms protection visible by women rights, elderly rights; rights to vote and elect political parties by their programs, rights to protest and rights to petition; right to health care; freedom to study in every European University, freedom to travel, freedom to choose every EU country as residence country, freedom for solidarity with Ukrainian people. As well mentioned LGBT members' issues and as and data protection issue.





RESEARCH REPORT

Lithuania, Latvia, Italy (2021 - 2022)

CONCLUSIONS



The research results identify which rights and freedoms are the most important and most frequently mentioned by respondents. The main points of rights described as self-expression, freedom and separate rights. Self – expression was mentioned by social networks, clothes, style, behavior, political opinion and parties. Freedom was described as speech freedom, freedom of movement, freedom to choose an occupation. Research participants noticed the main rights as: education, labour rights, property and business rights, access media information; rights for women, elderly, minorities, children rights, LGBT community rights; rights to life and health (access to health services); right to have identity; right to cultural, religious and linguistic difference between countries; political rights - to vote, to protest, to petition; right to stand as a candidate, right to recognition, right to elections; right to gathering for political purpose; safety (ensured by institutions and legislation; eg. Weapons legislation) and protection by the law (personal data protection, protection of minorities, privacy); right to fair trial, right to justice, right to dignity; right to marry.



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