

This time it will be different?

Covid-19 requires that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights now be respected and promoted by all EU Institutions

Covid-19 is a tragedy for Europe. Already, the economic fallout is transforming Member State and European Union institutions. After we cope with this human tragedy, any recovery will require significant Member State and EU aid, bailouts, and other measures – some of which will be new.

The question is whether, this time, State and EU aid will be granted to corporations without embedding human rights in any European recovery programmes.

Now that the solidarity of the Union itself is at stake, EU institutions must now apply the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in their economic governance and financial supervision framework. The Charter has been part of Treaty law for ten years.

Housing is a fundamental right and need, on which so many other rights depend, such as health, safety, privacy and home life, as Covid-19 has so clearly shown. Access to adequate and affordable housing, for all, is becoming a key test of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Union. This is a major political issue in many Member States. Indeed, even before the pandemic, housing in many European cities had become the “wobbly pillar” of EU banking stability. This will be exacerbated following Covid-19.

The EU institutional response after 2009, to protect European bank, corporate, and other assets, imposing austerity on peripheral EU Member States, did not respect, observe or promote the human or housing rights set out in the EU Charter.

As we recover from this tragedy, it is perhaps a good time to hold up a human rights mirror to our EU institutions. Business as usual is no longer good enough for EU citizens. Maintaining the legitimacy of all our EU institutions is now a vital part of the recovery. To do this, we all need to see a real human and housing rights-based reboot.

These 3 new Briefing Papers (funded by Open Society Foundations) provide vital information on how this can be achieved.

[Download the Summary and Briefing Papers, or see the attached PDFs.](#)

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