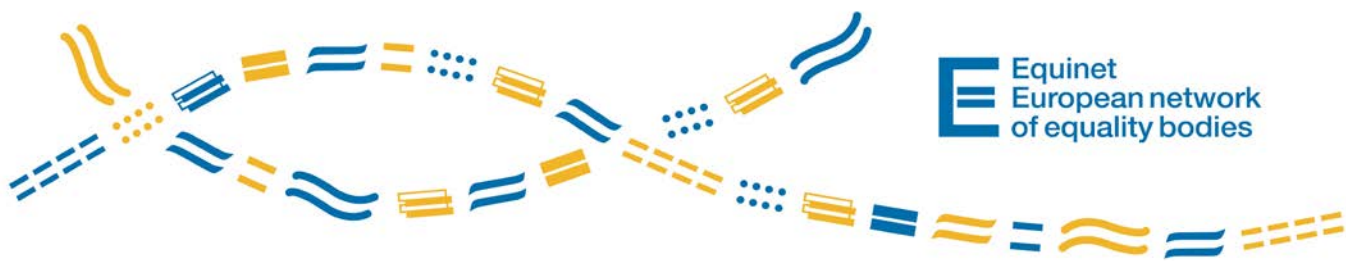


**EQUINET GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE ON
COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES FOR
NATIONAL EQUALITY BODIES**

2011



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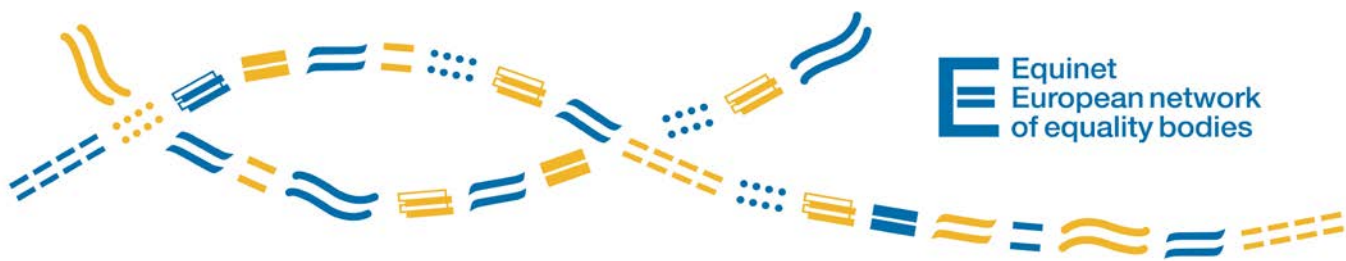
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INTRODUCTION

National equality bodies have a number of unique communication challenges.

We, as equality bodies, have a diverse range of audiences, some of whom will have strong views about our work and how we carry it out. Some of them will see themselves as unconnected to us or to our objectives.

At times, we must build a connection with these audiences that is strong enough to encourage changes in their attitudes or behaviours.

While this means that sometimes we seem to have the marketing imperative of a commercial giant, our budgets and communication resources tend to be limited.

But what we as equality bodies do have is a deep and meaningful knowledge of some of the real issues in people's lives.

This knowledge provides a very genuine and valuable exchange to offer our audiences and it is the focus on honest and truthful presentation of stories where we have most traction.

There are a vast number of communication guides, but none reflects the very particular circumstances of equality bodies' work. So this guide seeks to explore communication practices in the light of what has worked, and what hasn't, for practitioners in national equality bodies.

Thus, the first part of the guide is centred on four main communication principles, while the second part includes summaries of campaigns or communication initiatives from equality bodies that illustrate these principles to various degrees. These summaries are linked to dedicated webpages where more detailed information about each initiative can be found. Therefore, the guide is an interactive tool with an important web-based component that can be updated at any time.

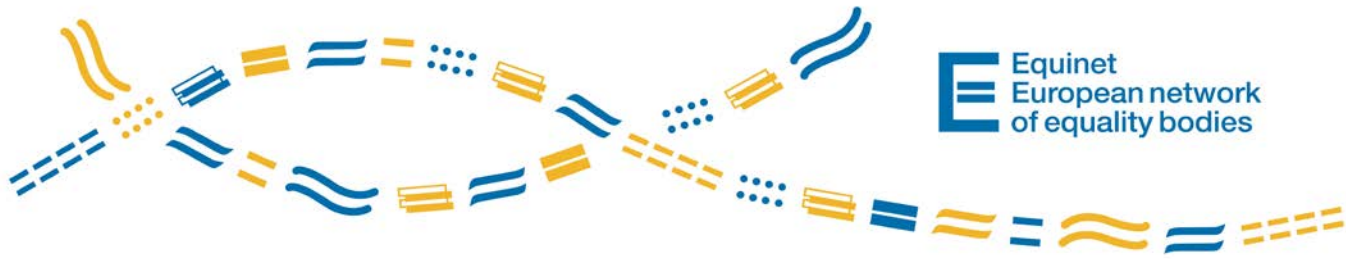
It reflects the high quality, creative and inspirational work of Equinet members. It is hoped that it will be an evolving resource and that members will continue to use it to share their expertise so that we as equality bodies can grow and shape our learning.

PRINCIPLE I: DEFINE – SETTING THE COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Writing a communication strategy can feel like a circular exercise. All of the essential components – objectives, audiences, platforms and activities and the evaluation are interdependent. In reality the objectives are both the beginning and the endpoint – just as these push the strategy forward and so they also let us look back to see if everything really worked.

It is important to recognise that thinking on the strategy rarely flows in a linear way and that as you work your way through the principles you will probably wish to review and amend previous sections.

It is also of great importance to recognise the temptation at the start to focus on activities (what we might do – should we have an event, can we place advertising, what's our slogan), but to do so will inevitably lead to a communication that we love but is irrelevant to the audience.



So, we must focus first on the organisation's corporate objectives and from there assess how a communications strategy can assist this.

The identification of what the communication effort needs to achieve will result in the clear identification of the communication objectives.

An example

It may be that your organisation is prioritising making workplaces free from discrimination. It may have a range of tools it can use to achieve this, from enforcement powers to a range of helpful resources to encourage good practice.

In considering if the communications should seek to focus on the enforcement or the encouragement aspects of the organisation, there should be an analysis of the resources of the organisation to reach and connect meaningfully with the target audience.

What would success look like for a workplace campaign? Would you like to see an increase in contact with your organisation from employers – by phone, website or at training – this could result in a campaign that is focused on employers and possibly require minimal advertising spend but high input from expert staff.

Would you prefer to see an increase in contact from individuals seeking advice or assistance from your organisation on a discrimination issue at work? This target audience will be more difficult to connect with and may require a greater advertising input – do you have the budget to achieve this?

Perhaps your budget and staffing resources would be more effectively deployed in an engagement type campaign and your objective may be to develop partner networks on a geographical or other basis. In looking at what we hope these networks might achieve – for example positive media coverage at a regional level or events that involve employers or employees – can you provide the resources to assist in setting up, branding and directing the networks these objectives require?

As a general rule, objectives that focus on an action as a result of the communication tend to be the easiest to evaluate. Objectives that require no action but are more passive in nature – for example increasing awareness or creating a shared attitude – tend to be difficult and expensive to measure.

Calls to action can range from a simple push to increase usage of the website or services to more complex chains of actions - for example, establish a policy or update services. The more levels of action required, the greater the need for resources, which include phasing or increasing the length of the campaign, increasing in staff or marketing spending.

Whichever direction is set, it is important to be specific about the objectives, to be assured that you can measure their success and that you have the budget to cover the cost attached.

It may be useful to consider the time period for the objectives to be achieved in and if this requires a phased campaign with activity bursts.

PRINCIPLE II: DEVELOP – IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCES

Considering the communication objectives, which audiences are key to its success? There are many definitions of audience types but initially it can be useful to break them into three types.

Key audiences

Key audiences are those who you must communicate with and with whom you probably already have a relationship – and this may be negative or positive in tone. This group will include (potential) staff, partners, supporters or advocates, as well as opinion formers and commentators. Communication channels are usually already in place for this group, with activities likely to be personalised.

Target audiences

Target audiences are those with whom you wish to establish a new/better relationship.

At the outset of your communications project this group is not part of your key audiences, but it may be part of your objectives to convert all or a percentage into becoming a key audience.

Depending on the nature and complexity of this grouping you may need to consider if you need to use marketing resources including advertising to reach and connect with them.

Connectors

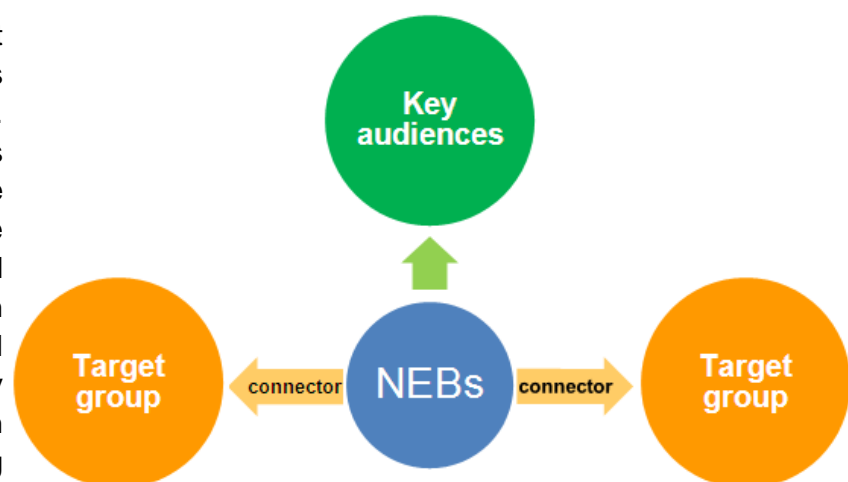
These are individuals or groups who can play a role in connecting you to your target group or who can relay your message to them. This group will have a relationship of trust with your target group. It may be that connector networks will provide a cost-effective way to reach your target audience. The connector networks can be used alongside or sometimes instead of other communication channels.

Sometimes there is a tension between appreciating that the work of national equality bodies has an impact on and relevance to everyone in society and accepting that no organisation has the resources to build a personal relationship with individual members of society.

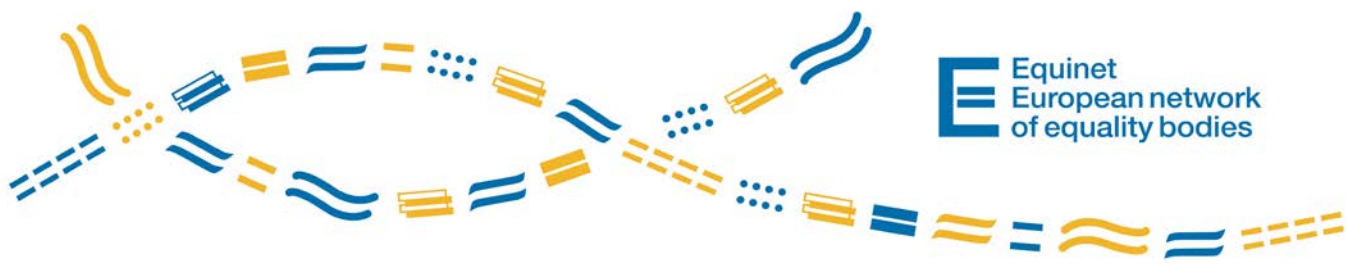
Within each of the relevant descriptors of audiences above, it is important to further segment and prioritise. Using any relevant research, including your own organisation's data, consider if geography, social factors or demographic factors can help with this segmentation. It is also helpful to consider segmenting by interest groups.

The narrower and more focused the segmentation the higher the chances of communication success. The target audience of 'general public' is too broad to be a useful concept.

This approach does not limit communications, but in fact is more likely to increase impact. The more effective a message is in connecting with its audience the more likely it is that the message is to be shared and carried more broadly – this can be seen most clearly when digital materials go 'viral' (i.e. they spread very fast) or when traditional media generate strong word of mouth (secondary) commentary.



Principle II (illustration)



Once the range of audiences has been defined it is vital to consider the possible communication blocks and enablers. What is known about their attitudes to equality/your organisation; why is your communication of benefit to them; what are their communication preferences?

This mapping process is required before moving to the next stage of considering communication platforms, channels and activities.

PRINCIPLE III: DELIVER – CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCES

So you know your key and target audiences and have identified their connector groups. The next stage is to consider what the win-win is in communication terms.

Using our research we need to move ourselves into the mind of our audiences. What is our proposition to them that will mean they have to listen to us? Are they likely to be more motivated by fear or reward?

As our work is based on legislation it is likely that we will wish to use the power of this – this can result in communications that are strongly judgemental and negative in tone and frequently include a ‘Don’t’ (be racist, sexist, ageist etc). Such communications can run the risk of creating a disconnect with an audience.

If we wish to encourage and persuade can we identify a more powerful motivating factor that the audience will identify with? Can we create an easy path for them to follow?

Examples

In the UK, the government ran a series of campaigns over a number of decades to make drivers and their passengers wear seat-belts. These had limited success until they highlighted that passengers not wearing seat-belts could kill or injure others during an impact. Fear of prosecution was not the prime motivation of most drivers and neither was the fear that they might crash (because they believed they were good drivers) but the fear of the uncontrolled risk of an unsecured passenger was a strong motivator.

Similarly a campaign to increase the use of smoke alarms had limited success yet research showed that most people thought they were a good idea. The campaign shifted focus to working with partners to increase distribution at a discounted price. When the partnership network widened to include dairies so that alarm was included in milk deliveries the take-up in use dramatically rose. The behaviour block was not a lack of support, but a lack of energy or motivation to acquire the alarm.

In both cases, once a behaviour was established, attitudes to safety followed, with advocates emerging over fairly short periods of time.

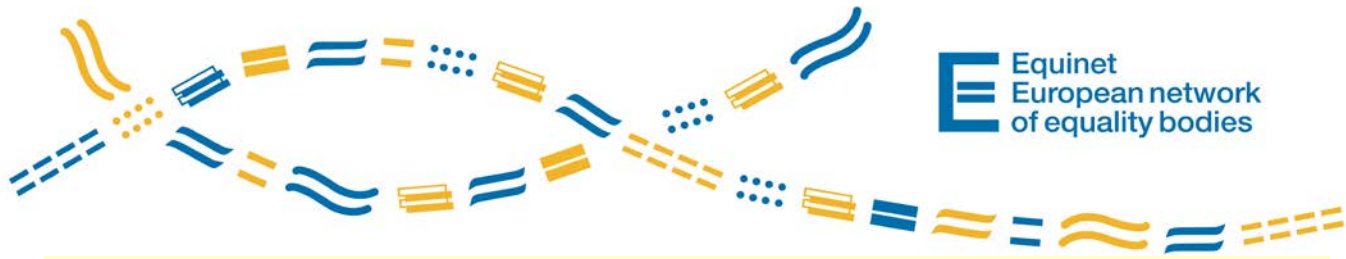
Other good practice examples from the UK’s *Equality and Human Rights Commission*

Use of real life examples

Case studies, interviews and real life examples can be effective to get people’s attention. This technique has been employed by the EHRC in the context of its Disability Harassment Inquiry and the launch of the related report. Video clips produced by the EHRC can be found [here](#).

Using statistics

For instance, the EHRC Sex and Power publication shows the position of women in society, and their under-representation in high-powered jobs/positions (see photo above). Combining statistics with case



studies can also create greater interest. Read more information about the Sex and Power Project [here](#).

Consideration of the needs of the audience, in line with your communication objectives, will result in the development of key messages.

It can be helpful to consider if you can identify one driving message – the call to action – which should inform any sub messages. Do your sub messages need to change in line with your audiences to increase connection?

What is the tone of your message – is it positive, persuading and encouraging or should it be negative, directional, enforcing?

In choosing your channels to deliver your message analyse both your audience usage and the channel's ability to carry the message effectively.

Owned channels

Each organisation will have its own communication channels. These may include emails, electronic bulletins, websites, events, publications and social networking sites.

For some communication projects these channels are both adequate and effective enough to deliver the communication objective.

Indeed, these are the only channels that can be used in isolation, unlike earned and paid for channels.

We frequently spend a lot of time crafting press releases and features for use in mainstream media but neglect to put the same effort into our website or publications content. Reconsidering these as a communication opportunity, using journalistic techniques, can lift usage and relevance.

Our contact through these channels is direct and unfiltered by others and can be developed to become two-way channels – providing opportunities to test ideas and concepts with target audiences rather than simply providing them with information in our organisational language and in formats we like but they don't.

It is important to consider how we can build and shape these communication networks to assist in current and future projects.

Earned channels

Earned channels are those where our communications are carried free of charge, because they have a value to the readers, listeners or viewers of the channel. They include traditional and new media as well as partner and stakeholder networks.

Content offered to these channels has to be editorially strong. This is because, for the information to be newsworthy to the channel's users, it must be evidence-based and tell a story that they can relate to.

Of all of the channels used these are the most impactful – they are trusted by the users – but there is a risk of interpretation and comment by the channel users.

These channels are used most effectively when driving audiences to direct contact with your organisation – to your owned channels.

Channels that are paid for

Sometimes advertising channels – television, radio, billboards, online – can seem to be the easiest option for smaller teams or those that have a lack of experience in developing campaigns.

Agencies will develop the concept and devise the marketing mix. This is very helpful when there is a complex mix of audiences and a desire to create an impact within a required timeline. Equality bodies may tend to find that resourcing of campaigns comes in funding bursts, for example in line with changes in legislation, which makes the use of agencies very attractive.

But it is crucial that campaigns do not rely on the advertising elements alone. This will result in a campaign that has little resonance and will quickly fizzle out.

Practitioners also need to be aware of some reputational risks which may include, especially in these difficult economic times, appearing to spend public money in a profligate fashion. At times agencies can also stereotype equality issues and misjudge the impact on our key audiences.

To avoid these risks it is wise to consider pre-testing any campaign creatives with your key audiences and to ensure that advertising is only used as part of an integrated campaign – that is, it must be fully supported by both owned and earned channels to ensure a positive impact.

PRINCIPLE IV: EVALUATE – COLLECTING DATA AND EVIDENCE

And so we return to the beginning – our objectives.

An analysis of evidence may take place at the end of the campaign, but to work properly, the evaluation process must be the first communications activity to be put in place.

Frequently our objectives will seek to see increases or decreases in stated behaviours – visits to websites, telephone contact etc – this requires the establishment of baselines which must be done before any promotional work begins.

If the call to action focuses on our owned channels then evaluation can be free or low cost.

Systems like Google Analytics are a very useful and free tool to track and measure website contact, although it is important to accurately tag content before posting.

Telephone services can also be used to conduct mini polls about where the caller heard about your organisation. These mini polls also give useful information on their interest in your work.

Social media can be assessed using tools like igoogle, klout and netvibes.

Surveys of audiences to test the success of the campaign (pre and post campaign activity) can vary from customised (expensive) quantitative and qualitative research. These are usually undertaken where the audience is considered to need the extra resourcing of an integrated campaign. Generally this research accounts for around 10% of the total marketing spend.

If you have access to a database for your audience – either held within your organisation or through your partner networks, you may find that you can use systems like Survey Monkey which can help create some broad insights fairly cheaply.

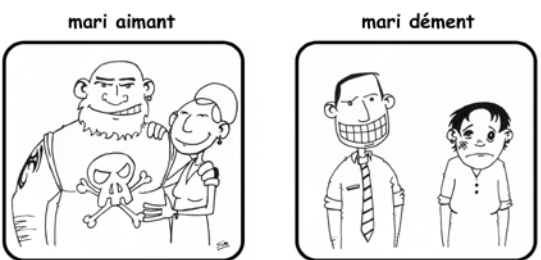
Omnibus surveys, which are regular surveys carried out by research companies that allow you to buy questions to add to their questionnaire, can also be a cost-effective way of gathering information.

MINI CASE STUDIES FROM NATIONAL EQUALITY BODIES

1. “Dare to say no to violence against women” campaign (Belgium)

Organised by the [Institute for the Equality of Women and Men](#)

Summary: to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2010, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men distributed environmentally-friendly free t-shirts to the staff members of federal civil services and minister’s advisers. The action attempted to allow a maximum number of civil servants to show their involvement in combating violence against women.



Au delà des apparences, luttons contre la violence à l’égard des femmes

The main objective of the campaign was to encourage victims to report acts of violence, press charges or contact support/aid groups.

The main message of the campaign was “Dare to say no to violence against women”.

The underlying messages were as follows: (1) acts of violence harm personal integrity of victims and are a violation of basic human rights; (2) intimate partner violence is a social phenomenon affecting the population as a whole, across all socio-economic categories; (3) men can also be victims, and women can also be perpetrators. However, the studies show that the majority of the victims of serious or very serious cases of violence in the private sphere are women; (4) the physical, psychological and social consequences are dramatic.

These facts should not remain hidden in the private sphere and violence should not be considered a taboo: being a victim is not a disgrace.

Read more about the campaign [here](#).

2. “Does it matter to you if we’re not equal?” campaign (Belgium)

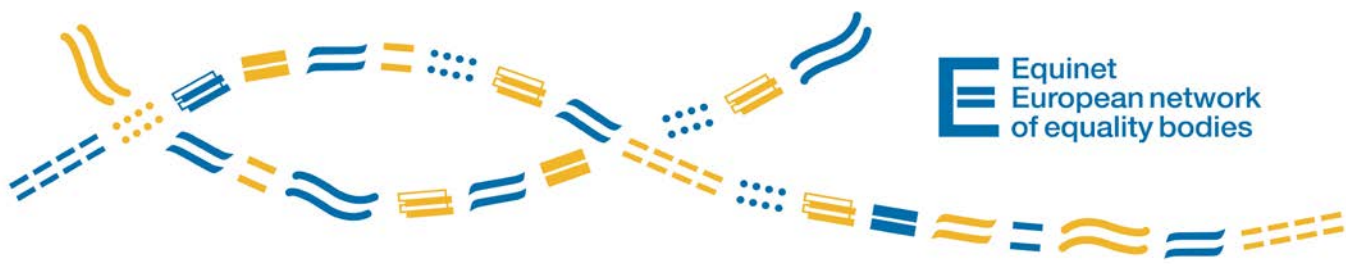
Organised by the [Institute for the Equality of Women and Men](#)

Summary: in accordance with its mission, the institute launched a campaign in 2010 to raise public awareness with respect to people’s daily behaviour that can reinforce gender inequality and gender-based discrimination.

The campaign was articulated around 4 themes: (1) intimate partner violence; (2) sexist stereotypes; (3) the gender pay gap; (4) discrimination against pregnant women.

The campaign was aimed at: (1) raising awareness about





behaviour and attitudes that can at first glance seem innocent but can lead to gender-based discrimination, and (2) reminding the Belgian population that the institute is the body to turn to in cases of discrimination based on gender via its toll free number (0800 12 800).

The campaign made use of different channels of communication: billboards, website, advertising, etc.

Read more about the campaign [here](#).

3. 2009-2010 integrated anti-discrimination campaign (Cyprus)

Organised by the [Office of the Commissioner for Administration](#) (Ombudsman)

Summary: the Office of the Ombudsman in Cyprus orchestrated an integrated campaign for one year that involved several actions and targeted a wide range of audiences.

Among the targeted audiences there were trade unions, employers, and public authorities.

The campaign tackled issues such as discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation, xenophobia, and racism.

The general objectives of the campaign were: (1) to raise awareness and sensitize the general public on issues of discrimination; (2) to inform selected stakeholders on issues of discrimination; (3) to identify – for policy making purposes – the needs of certain vulnerable groups; (4) to promote some good practices in combating discrimination.

To convey these key messages, the Office of the Ombudsman developed numerous communication channels such as a website, publications and booklets, events, sponsoring of a theatre play, a media campaign on TV, radio and newspapers.

Read more about the campaign [here](#).

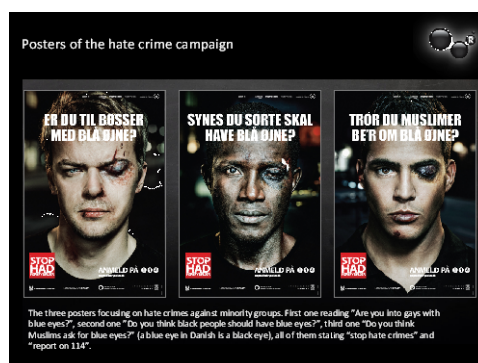


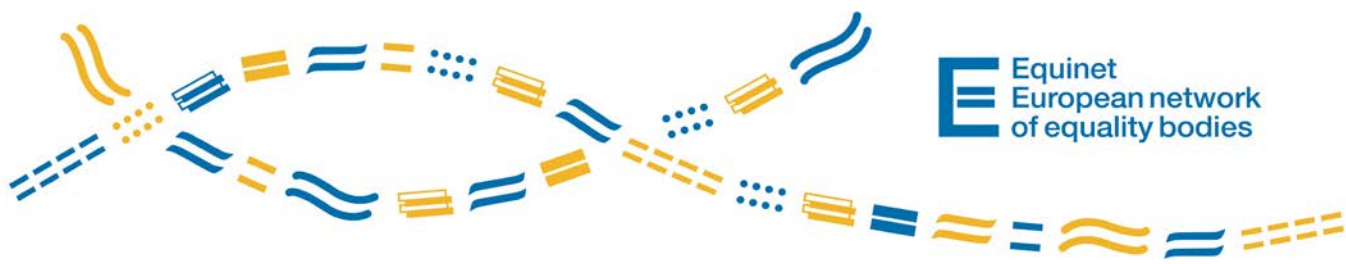
4. “Stop Hate Crimes” campaign (Denmark)

Organised by the [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#)

Summary: in response to the under-reporting of hate crimes to the police in Denmark, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Copenhagen Police Department, the City of Copenhagen, and the City of Frederiksberg joined forces to develop and run a campaign in Copenhagen to stop hate crimes. Most hate crimes are committed in Copenhagen at night by young people.

The aims of the campaign were: (1) to get victims and witnesses of hate crimes to report them to the police; (2) to





prevent and combat hate crimes; (3) to increase the general public's understanding of hate crimes; (4) to let people know where victims of hate crimes can get help.

Hate crime is a complex phenomenon, so to eradicate this problem a long-term approach is required. The campaign 'Stop Hate Crimes' is part of a more comprehensive and long-term program of initiatives to be held over the next five years.

The primary target groups of the campaign 'Stop hate crimes' were offenders and victims, aged between 15 to 30 years old. Within this group the campaign mainly focused on the minorities, who according to the Danish Criminal Code can be victims of hate crimes: persons of another race, belief, or sexual orientation.

Read more about the campaign [here](#).

5. Communication activities under the "Iris Project" (Greece)

Organised by the [Greek Ombudsman](#)

Summary: the Iris Project is funded by the EU PROGRESS Programme, managed by the *General Directorate for Youth* within the Labour Ministry, and benefits from the expertise of the Ombudsman, the Directorate itself and several NGOs specialised on youth. All parties are involved in the implementation of anti-discrimination activities.

In 2010 the Greek Ombudsman was responsible for the production of information material about the national equality body through youth press, the organisation of public information days on anti-discrimination legislation, the development of communication activities promoting the integration of Roma people and raising awareness of their rights.

Read more about the activities and the project [here](#).



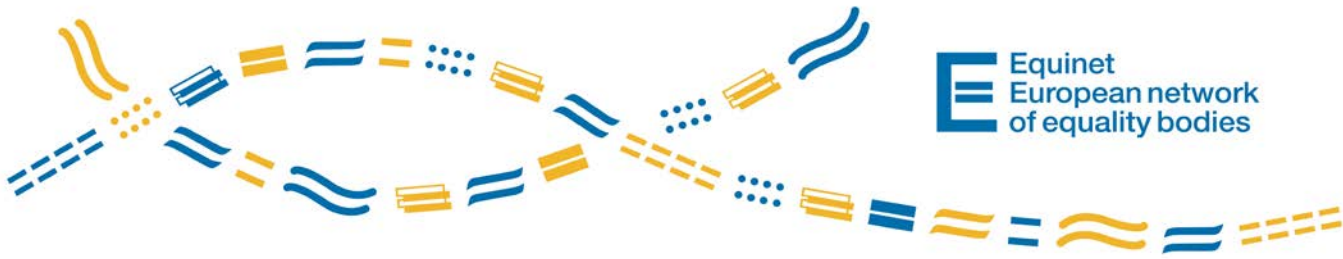
6. Focusing on the issue of accessibility by producing a brochure in Braille (Greece)

Organised by the [Greek Ombudsman](#)

Summary: for some years now, following requests from blind activists, the Greek Ombudsman has sought to make its internet material accessible to the blind and visually impaired people. With the help of its specialised IT staff this became a reality to a significant extent.

However, an initiative to translate any of its printed material into Braille has never been undertaken or even explored up to now. The anti-discrimination team, starting from scratch, decided to seek advice from blind support groups as to the best suitable methods of printed communication with this group.

Following a few e-mails and a productive meeting with the representative of a well-established education institute for the blind, the anti-discrimination team has received enough information to make decisions and go ahead with the publication. In parallel, they received suggestions for a



similar pattern of approach to this issue from the Northern Ireland Equality Commission, following a query which was placed on the Equinet forum.

Read more about the initiative [here](#).



7. Say No to Ageism Week (Ireland)

Organised by the [Equality Authority](#)

Summary: the "Say No to Ageism Week" is an initiative developed by the Equality Authority and the Health Service Executive with the support of the Office for Older People, the public transport sector and older people's organisations. It has been run annually since 2004.

The aim of the week is to promote new awareness and understanding of ageism and of how ageism excludes older people from participating in and contributing to society.

The *Say No to Ageism Week* comprises two complementary strands: a public information campaign and a series of sector-based actions that are designed to enhance age-friendly service provision.

Currently, the working framework for *Say No to Ageism Week* comprises a balance between awareness raising and actions, namely: (1) a launch event; (2) a conference with a *Say No to Ageism* theme; (3) an advertising and media campaign; (4) action plans developed by different sectors in association with the Equality Authority to support the initiative in the year ahead.

2011 was the eighth year of the initiative, co-funded in 2011 by the European Union under the PROGRESS Programme 2007-2013.

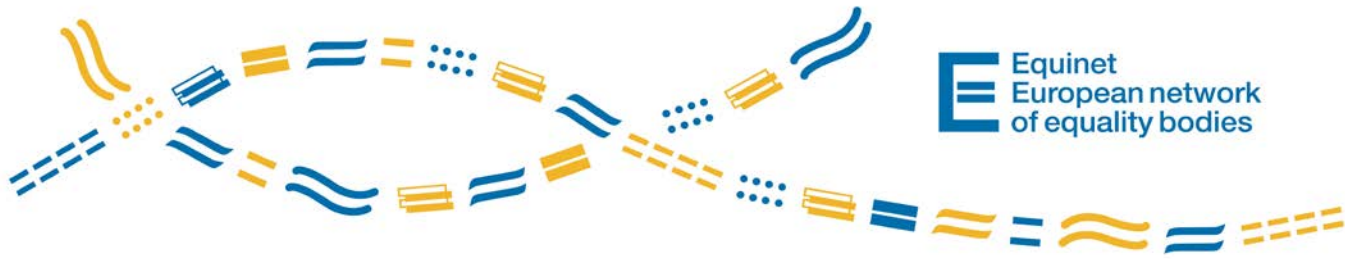
Read more about the initiative [here](#).



8. Focusing on the development of a website (Spain)

Developed by the [Council for the Promotion of Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination of People on the Grounds of Ethnic and Racial Origin](#)

Summary: to reach vulnerable groups and earn public trust, the newly established Spanish Race and Ethnic Equality Council focused its strategy on building an effective channel of communication. This implied going digital and developing local partnerships with NGOs.



As part of this approach, the Spanish equality body decided to develop and launch a website (www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.org).

A thorough assessment of their users' needs, the stakeholders, the website's purpose, key messages, and structure of the website enabled the equality body to develop a tool that is user-friendly, informative and appropriate to the different needs of the target audiences.

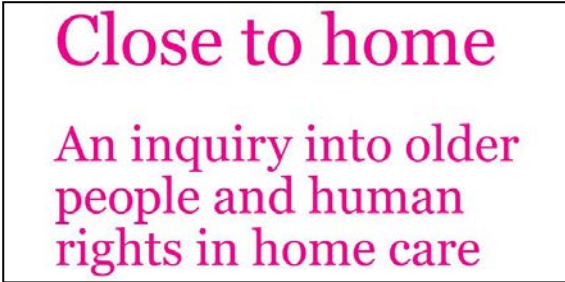


Read more about the process undertaken to develop the website [here](#).

9. Home Care Inquiry campaign (United Kingdom – Great Britain)

Organised by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

Summary: communication work undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the *Home Care Inquiry* is ongoing. The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness of the inquiry to older people, their families and carers, encouraging people to download the call for evidence questionnaires.



To target its audiences, the EHRC segmented groups by location, by age, and by protected characteristic.

A mixture of online and offline distribution has been preferred for this campaign. Collaboration with third party organisations has been useful as it allowed the EHRC to save cost of distribution and to reach people who do not have internet access. For instance, the EHRC used credible and trustworthy brands like AGE UK who older people are familiar with.

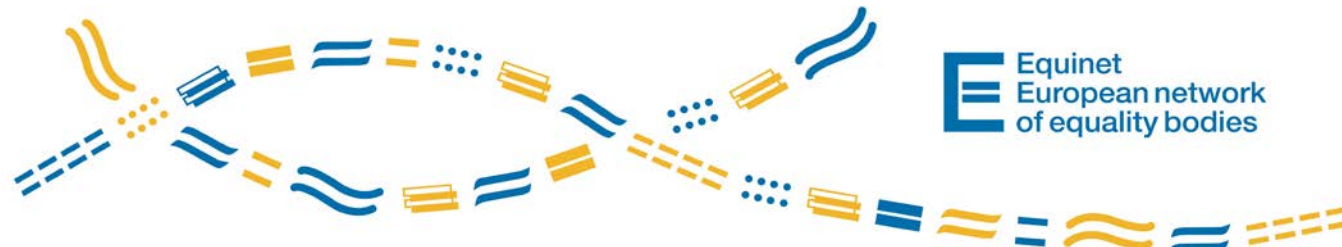
To evaluate the campaign, the EHRC assessed the number of questionnaires successfully completed, the suitable spread across the United Kingdom, as well as the diversity of responders according to the protected characteristic.

To read more about the lessons learned by the Commission in conducting this campaign, click [here](#).

10. “Access for All – It’s the Law” campaign (United Kingdom – Northern Ireland)

Organised by the [Equality Commission for Northern Ireland](#)

Summary: the Equality Commission’s *Business Plan 2011-2012* states at objective 1.1 “To continue to build the commission’s profile and image by delivery of three promotional campaigns reflecting corporate priorities”.



A refresher campaign for 'Access for All' was developed in support of the launch of the Code of Practice for Disability Discrimination (Transport Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) in June 2011.

The small weight campaign capitalised on the existing creative, first seen in January 2010 when the Regulations were introduced.

The campaign had a tighter focus on target audiences with the primary focus on people with disabilities. Consideration of the audience resulted in a further segmentation with older people and carers being identified.

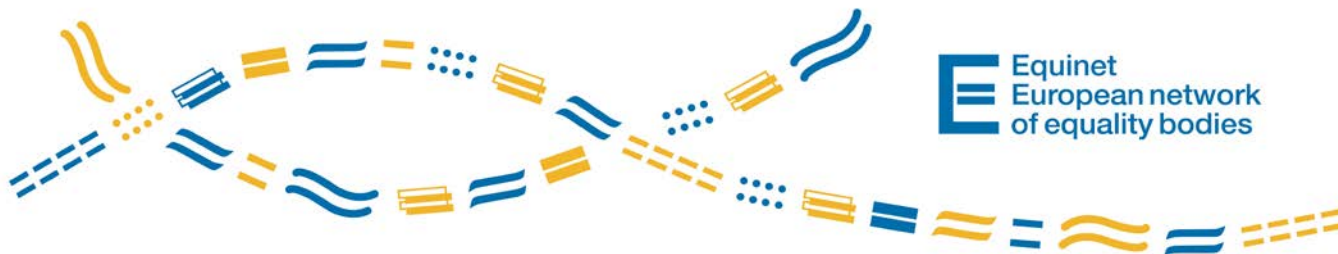
One in five of the population are limited in their daily activities because of some form of disability, with 48% over 55 years of age and around half are in the social grade of DE. Around half of all disabled people are very active users of the internet but the other half are not active at all. Nearly two-thirds watch more than two hours of television per day and over half are readers of the daily press.

A secondary audience type was identified as service providers, professional and representative groups. These groups were not a focus of the advertising elements but rather had a range of activities designed to increase their capacity to comply with the regulations. These activities included meetings, training sessions and engagement events.

A multi-channel mix of television, radio, outdoor and online advertising was developed, supported by extensive media promotion and a series of roadshows in shopping centres and other public spaces.

Read more about the campaign [here](#).





Equinet's Good Practice Guide on Communications Principles for National Equality Bodies is published by Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies.

Equinet brings together 37 organizations from 30 European countries which are empowered to counteract discrimination as national equality bodies across the range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Equinet works to enable national equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential by sustaining and developing a network and a platform at European level.

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ISBN 978-92-95067-59-2

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This publication is supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS (2007-2013).

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.

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