



Annual Report
2011



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Foreword

Equinet continued to grow its contribution and membership as the European Network of Equality Bodies during 2011. The network now includes 37 equality bodies based in 30 different countries, including all EU Member States. Our strategic objectives of enhancing the skills of equality bodies' staff, supporting their strategic capacity, communicating the learning from their work and building recognition for Equinet and its members have all been effectively progressed.

Our core aim is to ensure that equality bodies are enabled and supported to realise their full potential. Equality bodies have in particular the capacity and potential to:

- Empower and assist individual people who experience discrimination.
- Enhance organisational performance in the public and private sectors through investment in effective equality and non-discrimination systems.
- Enhance policy and legislation through the inclusion of an appropriate equality and non-discrimination perspective.
- Stimulate a wider framework of institutions to engage in promoting equality and combating discrimination.
- Influence public attitudes towards a greater commitment to equality and non-discrimination.¹

This is a potential that is ever more relevant in these times of economic and financial crisis. The experience of our members shows that discrimination is on the increase in times of economic crisis whilst the capacity of equality bodies comes under threat in this same context. Research has demonstrated that equality contributes to societal well-being and reduced demand on public services. It stimulates innovation and positive growth in the economy, and enables more productive and creative businesses. Europe needs effective and efficient drivers for equality, including equality bodies, if it is to move out of its current crisis.

The potential of equality bodies is also relevant beyond the economic sphere by safeguarding and improving an enhanced system of fundamental rights protection in Europe after the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union has become legally binding and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the EU.² In this new framework the work and contribution of equality bodies has become ever more relevant.

During 2011, Equinet hosted a high level European event involving heads of equality bodies to examine the potential of these bodies and how this potential is to be realised and protected. The European Commission presented the findings of its recent *Study on Equality Bodies*. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe introduced his recent *Opinion on national structures*



for promoting equality. The need for standards to protect and promote independent and effective equality bodies was valuably emphasised in this debate.

Equinet's new Executive Board, elected in November 2011, takes up the challenge of steering Equinet in a way that enables and helps equality bodies to realise their potential. We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to my predecessor as Equinet Chair, Mandana Zarrehparvar, and her Board for their work and contribution to the success of Equinet over the past two years (2009-2011). The current Board has taken on their mandate ensuring continuity and building on the work of its predecessors with enthusiasm and skill. I wish to record my gratitude to them and to the excellent staff team at Equinet.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jozef De Witte". The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Jozef De Witte
Equinet Chair

¹ This potential was defined in the European Commission's *Study on Equality Bodies set up under Directives 2000/43/EC, 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC* – October 2010 Synthesis Report.

² In December 2009 and December 2010, respectively.

Introduction

Our current strategic plan (2011-2014) empowers Equinet with the core mission to 'enable equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential at Member State level by sustaining and developing a networking between and a platform for equality bodies at European level'. The year 2011 marked our first year of implementing this strategic plan and the results have been very positive.

The 2011 external annual evaluation of Equinet concluded that 'the year has again been successful for Equinet' and highlighted that 'overall most satisfaction ratings are slightly higher than for the previous year'.³ Members and staff of equality bodies reported learning new skills through their involvement in Equinet activities and trainings, and applying this learning in their workplace. In some cases, members noted how their involvement had influenced and positively supported the development of their organisations.

This annual report describes how Equinet has gone about achieving such positive outcomes. Thematic Working Groups that involve staff from member equality bodies are at the heart of this work. Four working groups were supported during the year with focus on 'equality law in practice', 'strategy development' by equality bodies, 'communication strategies and practices' of equality bodies and 'policy formation'. We are particularly grateful to the Moderators of these groups for their valuable contribution as well as the members for their active participation.

Equinet continued to offer opportunities to equality body staff to develop their knowledge and skills. Two training events were organised in 2011 for members, focusing respectively on legal casework by equality bodies in cases of conflicting rights, and on effective communication strategies for equality bodies. Furthermore, our annual legal seminar was well attended and focused on legal developments and concepts in the field of equality and non-discrimination in Europe and recent CJEU case law.

The work and experience of equality bodies hold important learning for policy formation at Member State and European level. Equinet continued its work to identify this learning and to communicate it through the publication of *perspectives* during the course of 2011. The first focused on 'Tackling Ageism and Discrimination' and sought to make a particular contribution to the European Year 2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations from the work of equality bodies on the ground of age. The second focused on 'Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions: Making the link to maximise impact' and seeks to contribute to policy and practice that is evolving in relation to combining these two mandates. The efforts of the members of this Working Group and membership surveys are central to the preparation of these *perspectives* and we are grateful to our members for their contribution to these.

This is just a flavour of the work done during 2011, which offers insight into how networking can be key to equality bodies realising their full potential – no



matter how new or experienced they might be. The work is described in greater breadth and detail in this annual report 2011.

This extensive body of work is a result of the guidance and leadership of a professional Executive Board and the ongoing engagement and activities of our member equality bodies. It also depends on the endeavour, commitment and admirable capacity of the staff of the secretariat to whom appreciation and gratitude for another successful year in the life of Equinet are due.

Finally we wish to record our thanks to the European Commission for their support through the PROGRESS programme and for their interest in and commitment to the work of Equinet.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Anne Gaspard', written in a cursive style.

Anne Gaspard
Executive Director

³ External annual evaluation of Equinet for 2011, conducted by Amber Analysis – Monitoring and Evaluation (UK)

In the spotlight: Equinet's work on tackling age discrimination

In response to the situation of population ageing in Europe today with Europeans living longer and healthier lives than ever before, 2012 has been designated as the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. This gives all stakeholders, including national equality bodies, a valuable opportunity to focus their work and attention on ageism and discrimination on the ground of age, on equality for older people and on solidarity between the generations.

Equinet prepared and published in 2011 a *perspective* entitled "Tackling Ageism and Discrimination". A survey was conducted among Equinet members of their work on the age ground, and the Equinet Working Group on Policy Formation shaped and finalised the publication drawing on the results received from 23 equality bodies. This perspective sought to contribute the ideas and experiences of equality bodies to the agenda for the European Year and to mobilise and support their engagement in the European Year.

During the preparation of the *perspective*, two key practice themes emerged from the work of the equality bodies which could shape and inform the promotion of good practices by employers on the one hand and service providers on the other in relation to age equality:

- Proactively Managing Age Diversity (by employers);
- Age Friendly Service Provision (by service providers).

The **proactive management of age diversity** in the workplace benefits not only older employees but all employees as well as workplace morale. It is based on a planned and systematic approach to equality for older workers, and requires four elements:

- Commitment across the workplace, through the development and implementation of an equality policy with a focus on age diversity;
- Capacity-building, through the training of all staff on equality and diversity in order to support awareness of age diversity, to enable the staff to challenge ageism and to support management in proactively responding to age diversity;
- An action plan to advance equality for older workers, based on a review of workplace policies, procedures and practices, with responsibility accorded to a senior staff member for the implementation of the equality policy and action plan;
- Evidence based and participative decision making, enabled through analysis of age diversity, exchanges with older people and their organisations, and assessment of the impact of key decisions on older workers.

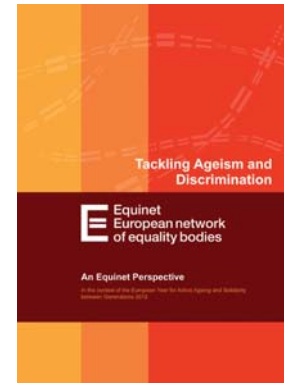
Age friendly service provision

benefits older customers as well as the business by attracting older customers, enhancing the image of the business and building customer loyalty. Several

elements may be required for age friendly service provision, depending on the nature and scale of the service including:

- Dialogue with older people, through consultation with older customers and organisations of older people;
- Staff capacity, through developing equality policies and building the skills, knowledge and awareness of staff;
- Service design for all, through auditing services and their delivery from the perspective of older people;
- Informed customers, through providing relevant information and advocacy support where needed;
- Coherence of commitment, through the employment of older workers.

The *perspective* suggests a number of priorities for equality bodies and Member States as well as the European Commission to be considered and addressed as part of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. It is available on the Equinet website (www.equineteurope.org) in the Publications section.



Implementing the first year of the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Equinet started 2011 with a clear roadmap: the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, that had been developed throughout 2010 by the Equinet Executive Board in close consultation with Equinet Members and that had just been adopted by the General Assembly of Equinet Members at the Annual General Meeting in November 2010.

The Strategic Plan⁴ sets out the strategies that constitute the four pillars of Equinet's work for the period 2011-2014:

- Strategy 1: A strategy for peer support to enhance staff development within equality bodies;
- Strategy 2: A strategy for peer support to enhance institutional development of equality bodies;
- Strategy 3: A strategy for contributing to policy formation at European Union level;
- Strategy 4: A strategy for growth and positioning as a network.

In 2011, Equinet has started implementing each strategy by carrying out a range of activities, among which:

Strategy 1: peer support to enhance staff development

- The Working Group 'Equality Law in Practice' continued to foster an exchange of knowledge and expertise among staff of equality

bodies by involving its participants in a comparative analysis of EU and national legislation and jurisprudence based on the study of actual discrimination cases. The report of the Working Group on its findings in 2011 has been published and is available on the Equinet website.

- Two training events were held for staff of member equality bodies, one exploring "Effective Communication Strategies for National Equality Bodies" (Copenhagen, May 2011) and the other one addressing the possible "Conflicts between the right to equal treatment and other fundamental rights" (Vienna, September 2011).
- One High-Level Legal Seminar was held which principally focused on discrimination in the insurance sector in Europe (Brussels, March 2011). This was open to external participants.
- Updating Members on the latest developments in Europe in the field of equality and non-discrimination by using the Equinet website and the Equinet e-newsletter.
- Guidance was published to assist equality body staff in their work of supporting policy makers, employers and social partners in achieving good equality practice in the workplace.



⁴ For more information, please refer to the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, downloadable on Equinet's website.



Strategy 2: peer support to enhance institutional development

- The Working Group ‘*Strategy Development*’ focused on identifying the best strategic approaches for equality bodies in providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination. The results of this work have been published in the report “Providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination”.
- The Working Group ‘*Communication Strategies and Practices*’ was launched in 2011 due to the needs expressed by member bodies for more support and guidance on communication issues. It contributed to the design of the training event on communication issues. It produced a “Good Practice Guide on Communication Principles for National Equality Bodies”.

- Two ad-hoc initiatives focusing on Roma people and transgender people were continued. A factsheet on the potential and role of equality bodies in protecting the rights of Roma people was produced to encourage and inform the participation of equality bodies in the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategies in their Member States.

Strategy 3: contributing to policy formation at EU-level

- The Working Group ‘*Policy Formation*’ produced two perspectives drawing from the work of equality bodies on two different aspects of discrimination in Europe and aimed at informing policy making at the European level: “Tackling ageism and discrimination”, in the context of the *European Year 2012 on active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations* and “Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions: Making the link to maximise impact”.
- Equinet organised a very successful High-Level Meeting between heads of National Equality Bodies, high representatives of European and international organisations (European Commission, Council of Europe, etc.) and of European NGOs.

- Equinet was invited to attend and intervene in numerous meetings and events organised by the European Institutions, agencies and international organisations as well as civil society to exchange views and ideas on improving the situation of equality in Europe.

Strategy 4: growth and positioning as a network

- Equinet continued to contribute to debates on the European scene by convening and participating in different meetings and events with other European stakeholders including social partners and civil society organisations.
- Equinet continued to grow as four new equality bodies were accepted as members at the Annual General Meeting 2011 (see section on Governance for more details).



Contributing to the development of national equality bodies through capacity building

Equinet's main task and responsibility is to strengthen the capacity both of its member organisations and of their staff by providing opportunities for learning, networking, good practice exchange and strategy development. These central goals underpin all activities of the network and are reflected markedly in our training events, seminars and working groups.

Training events

Training events constitute an essential part of Equinet's activities, enhancing the skills of staff members of national equality bodies, enabling them to exchange knowledge, and good practice, and providing insights into new methods and tools that could assist them in their daily work of promoting equality and fighting discrimination. In 2011 Equinet organised two training events, focusing respectively on communication and on legal issues.

The first training event, *Communicating Equality: Effective Communication Strategies for Equality Bodies*, took place in May 2011, hosted by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in Copenhagen. The event was attended by representatives of equality bodies with a mandate and interest in communication strategies and it focused on good practices in devising communication strategies for equality bodies as well as emphasising the importance of

collaborating with other stakeholders with a view to reach all vulnerable groups.

Participants at the training event identified a number of key learning points, pointing for example to the importance of:

- Taking a strategic approach in communication;
- Internal communication;
- Using the right language;
- Reaching out to the target groups of equality bodies;
- Developing good working relationships with stakeholders and the media.

The second training event, *Conflicts between the right to equal treatment and other fundamental rights*, took place in September 2011, hosted by the Austrian Ombud for Equal Treatment in Vienna. The event targeted staff members of equality bodies responsible for handling discrimination complaints and cases and it dealt with potential conflicts between the right to equality and other fundamental rights, focusing on conflicts with the freedom of religion and the freedom of expression.

Participants of this training had the chance to learn and discuss:

- Potential areas of conflicts between the right to equality and other fundamental rights;



- Relevant international standards and the case law of national courts and the European Court of Human Rights;
- Approaches taken by equality bodies, with a special focus on tackling cyber hate.

High-level legal seminar

The annual Equinet high-level legal seminar '*Legal developments and concepts in the field of equality and non-discrimination in Europe*' was organised in March 2011 in Brussels. The seminar targeted senior legal experts, exploring recent developments in legislation and international case law in the field of equal treatment.

The event was open to all stakeholders active in the field of equality and more than 80 legal experts participated, including staff members of equality bodies but also European Institutions and agencies, international organisations, NGOs, social partners and academics.

At the seminar, legal experts had the opportunity to discuss:

- The Test-Achats judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU (C-236/09) and the issue of using insurance risks linked to discrimination grounds in calculating insurance premiums;
- The protection of volunteers under the Employment Framework Directive 2000/78/EC;
- The recently released FRA-ECHR Handbook on European case-law on non-discrimination;
- The issue of data collection on discrimination complaints.

Working groups

Equinet working groups play a key role in and provide the core structures for ongoing exchange and cooperation between members of the network. There are four working groups which bring together equality bodies' staff from different fields:

- Working group **Equality Law in Practice** provides a platform for legal staff of equality bodies to share information on and discuss developments in legislation and case law taking a comparative perspective. In 2011 this working group produced a report exploring the content and the limits of freedom of religion and discrimination based on religion and belief;
- Working group **Strategy Development** was established to share information on and develop understanding of the strategic approaches and the tools equality bodies need to employ in order to make the most of their mandate and possibilities. The working group published a report in 2011 on one of the most important tasks of equality bodies – providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination;
- Working group **Communication Strategies and Practices** started its work in 2011, focusing on the need for developing effective communication strategies and practices for equality bodies. In 2011 the working group published a web-based interactive good practice guide on communication principles for national equality bodies;
- Working group **Policy Formation** prepares and publishes regular perspectives on current policy developments at European level, based on the experience and work of equality bodies with implementing equal treatment legislation at Member State level. The working group produced two perspectives in 2011: one on age discrimination and one on the links between equality bodies and national human rights institutions.



Strengthening the policy dialogue with EU institutions and stakeholders

Equality bodies occupy a unique position in public administration as independent statutory bodies. They are independent of government as well as from civil society. They are the guardians of the equal treatment legislation at Member State level, fulfilling their statutory mandate of promoting equality and combating discrimination. This unique position and role mean that the experience and work of equality bodies has a particular and valuable contribution to make to effective and successful policy-making and legislation in the field of equal treatment and to the effective introduction of an equality and non-discrimination perspective in all legislation at national and European level.

Publications

In order to extract the key lessons and learning from the work of equality bodies, Equinet, through its working group on Policy Formation, publishes regular 'perspectives' focusing on topical issues in the field of equality and non-discrimination. As described earlier in this report, in 2011 one of these perspectives focused on tackling ageism and age discrimination, representing one of Equinet's contributions to the European Year 2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Another perspective explored the topic of *'Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions – Making the link to maximise impact'*. Based on a survey of twenty five Equinet members, a dialogue with the

European Group of National Human Rights Institutions, and the discussions at the Equinet High-level Meeting with Heads of National Equality Bodies, this perspective takes stock of the different experiences in making links between equality bodies and human rights institutions and of the potential and risks in these links. It establishes a useful typology for these links involving:

- Linking by way of mutual exchange;
- Linking by way of joint action;
- Linking by way of joint planning;
- Linking by way of merger.

The perspective points to factors for the success of these links including a coherent legal basis for equality and human rights, adequacy of resources, parity in resourcing equality work and human rights work, support from stakeholders, the development of a strategic approach in making links, devising an appropriate institutional structure for any links and building multi-disciplinary competence among staff. It warns against linkages that are not well prepared by policy discussions and legislative reform or that are solely prompted by the demand to cut public expenditure. It highlights the need for more conceptual work on linking human rights and equality issues.

Equinet also published a factsheet on *'Equinet's work for the rights of Roma people'*. This was done in the context of the EU Framework for National



Roma Integration Strategies. This factsheet points out the unique potential and capacity of national equality bodies in tackling the discrimination and social exclusion experienced by many Roma people and it emphasises that equality bodies can play major roles in the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategies by:

- Taking up an advisory role;
- Building a knowledge base;
- Taking up a monitoring role.



High-level meeting with Heads of National Equality Bodies

Equinet organised this meeting with a view to offering a platform for discussion and debate among the leadership in equality bodies on topical policy issues at European level. The meeting took place in the context of a number of equality bodies experiencing serious challenges in terms of their budget levels, effectiveness and independence. It focused on:

- The potential of equality bodies in promoting equality and the need for clear standards for equality bodies, and;
- The links between equality work and work on wider human rights issues.

The high-level meeting brought together heads of equality bodies and high-level representatives of, among others, the European Commission, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Ombudsman and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. There was a particular focus on standards for equality bodies that would offer protection to the effectiveness and independence of equality bodies and ensure the full realisation of their potential.



Policy exchanges

Equinet has developed as a valued reference point in the field of equality. This is seen in the high and steadily increasing demand for Equinet publications. It is evident in the number of invitations to contribute to events organised by members, external stakeholders and European and international organisations. Equinet has used these opportunities throughout the year to enrich the European policy debate with the facts and experience-based perspective of equality bodies.

Equinet has also organised regular meetings with the European Institutions and agencies, representatives of the social partners and representatives of civil society. These meetings enable more in-depth and structured policy discussions and exchanges and allow possible synergies to be identified.

A platform for networking and information exchange

Equinet's role is to address the needs of national equality bodies through enhanced cooperation, networking and information sharing at the European level. Communication is essential in this. Equinet progressed its communication capacity on a number of fronts including by continuing to implement and develop the communications strategy and activities initiated in 2010.

Thus, the **Equinet website** has continued to be an important tool for collecting, disseminating, and sharing information and for publicising events and activities initiated by the network and its members. It offers increased visibility to member organisations by making their organisational profile and contact details publicly available in a dedicated section. The website also provides up-to-date information about European policy and legal developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination. Figures clearly illustrate the value of the website: the homepage was visited 19270 times during 2011. The website also contains a successful and user-friendly **forum**, dedicated to staff members of equality bodies. This acts as a useful platform for the exchange of expertise and experience on legal, policy and communication issues. While remaining a timely and relevant communication tool, the website successfully reflects the interests and concerns of diverse players involved in tackling discrimination and promoting equality.

Throughout 2011 Equinet published 9 issues of its **electronic newsletter**. These newsletters are aimed across

the spectrum of Equinet's stakeholders, including staff members within equality bodies, EU institutions and agencies, policymakers, academics, think tanks, social partners, civil society, professionals and students, as well as the general public who have subscribed through the website. The newsletter has proven to be an effective and informative tool for reporting relevant developments and activities related to equality taking place at European and national level. By the end of 2011, nearly 700 subscribers with a common interest in non-discrimination were receiving the Equinet e-newsletter (75% more compared with the same period in 2010).

In addition to the e-newsletter, Equinet also circulates **email alerts** to focal points within member organisations to notify them of key events, surveys initiated by organisations or fellow member organisations that require input from equality bodies.

It can also be noted that 2011 was the first year of activity of Equinet's **Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices**. The group is mandated to explore how national equality bodies can share information on and enhance their strategic approach to communication activities and build capacity in this area. Thus, the group published a web-based interactive good practice guide which explored communication practices in the light of what has worked, and what has not, for practitioners in equality bodies. It further provided these practitioners with strategic communication principles that can

guide them in their campaigns and daily work. Whilst the work of the Working Group primarily intends to improve the communication capacity of equality bodies, it also serves as a useful tool for communication and networking amongst equality bodies' practitioners in this area.

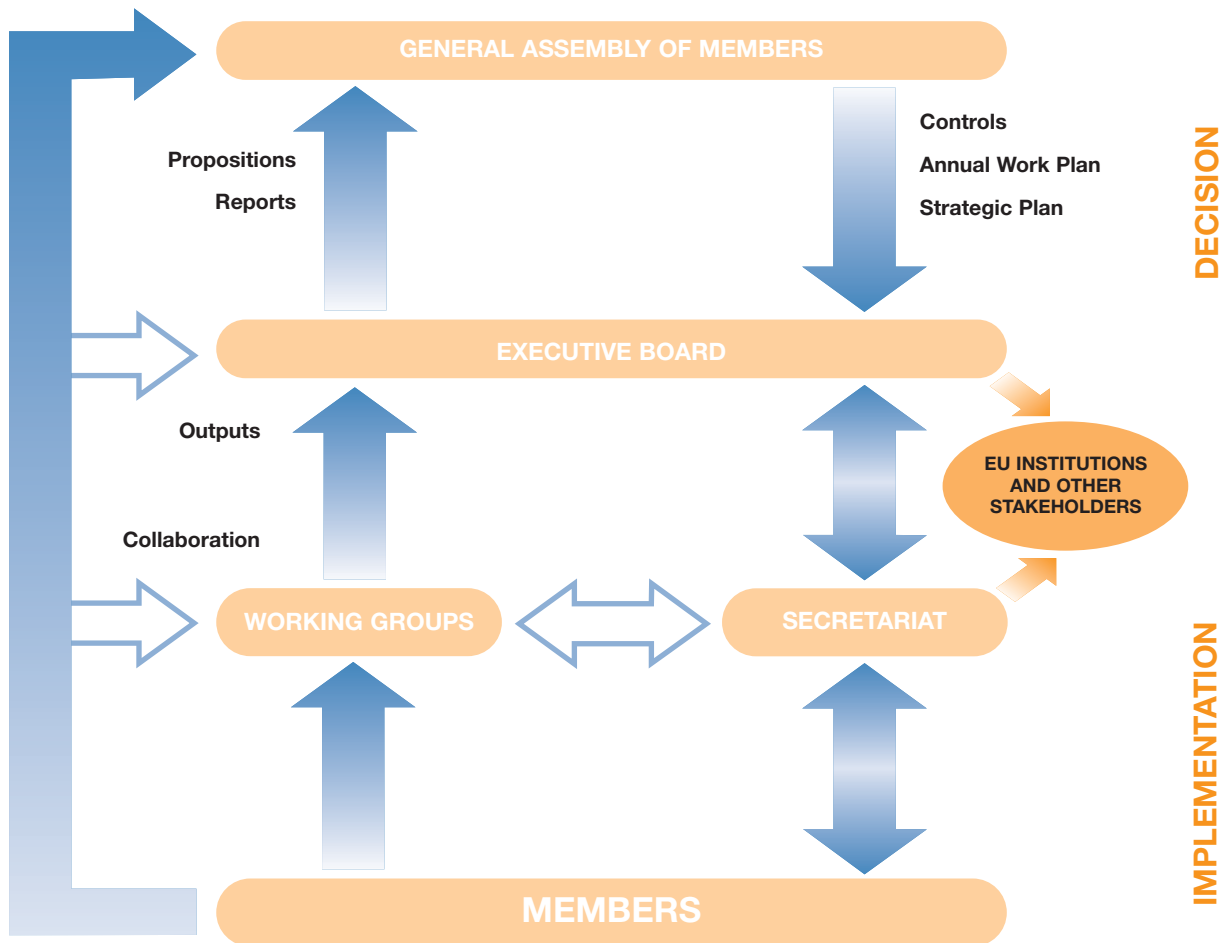
These steps towards effective communication both between and with members and stakeholders were successful and promising.

Communication efforts initiated in 2011 will be further developed in the coming years as Equinet will continue to explore innovative and efficient ways to optimise its communication practices and approach.



Equinet governance

Equinet is a network of national equality bodies. The main decisions concerning the general direction of the network are taken by the **General Assembly of Members**. This assembly is made up of all the members of the network and is convened at least once a year for an **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**. The General Assembly has the power, amongst others, to approve new members and, following a nomination process by members, to vote for representatives on the Executive Board. It takes decisions on the strategic direction of the network, is entitled to amend the statutes of the organisation and approves the annual work programmes, budgets and accounts.



During the course of the year management and administration of the network is delegated to the **Executive Board**. This Board is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the AGM's decisions, as well as the management and administration of the network throughout the year. The Board devises the strategy for implementing the strategic plan and the work plan of the network, ensures that the means are in place to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the network and acts in the best interest of the network and its members throughout the year. All of the Executive Board members, the Board advisor and the treasurer execute their tasks pro bono.

For the most part of 2011 the Equinet Executive Board consisted of six⁵ members including a Chairperson.

The Equinet Board 2009-2011

- **Mandana Zarrehparvar (Chair)**
Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark.
- **Jozef De Witte**
Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium.
- **Domenica Ghidei**
Equal Treatment Commission, The Netherlands.
- **Kalliopi Lykovardi**
Greek Ombudsman, Greece.
- **Ingrid Nikolay-Leitner**
Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria.
- **Néphèli Yatropoulos**
Defender of Rights, France.

Board Advisor: Niall Crowley, independent expert.

Equinet Treasurer: François van Regemortel, Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium.



Equinet 2009-2011 Board members from left to right: Katri Linna, Jozef De Witte, Néphèli Yatropoulos, Mandana Zarrehparvar, Ingrid Nikolay-Leitner, Kalliopi Lykovardi and Domenica Ghidei.

⁵ The seventh member, Ms. Katri Linna, Ombudsman of the Diskrimineringsombudsmannen (DO) of Sweden, stepped down in February 2011.



Equinet 2011-2013 Board members from left to right: Domenica Ghidei, Therese Spiteri, Csaba Ferenc Asztalos, Evelyn Collins, Julija Šartuch, Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Jozef De Witte, Elke Lujansky-Lammer, and Néphéli Yatropoulos.

The Equinet Board 2011-2013

A new Board of nine Members was elected at the AGM of 29-30 November 2011 (following a decision by the General Assembly of Members at the AGM 2010 to increase the number of Members sitting at the Board from seven to nine) and is mandated to serve until the 2013 AGM. Therefore, the current elected members of the Equinet Board are:

- **Jozef De Witte (Chair)**
Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium;
- **Csaba Ferenc Asztalos**
National Council for Combating Discrimination, Romania;
- **Evelyn Collins**
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland;
- **Domenica Ghidei**
Equal Treatment Commission, Netherlands;
- **Elke Lujansky-Lammer**
Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria;
- **Julija Šartuch**
Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania;
- **Tena Šimonović Einwalter**
Office of the Ombudsman, Croatia;
- **Therese Spiteri (Treasurer)**
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta;
- **Néphéli Yatropoulos**
Defender of Rights, France.

Board Advisor: Niall Crowley,
independent expert

Working Groups

Working groups are essential parts of the working of the Equinet network. They are composed of staff persons from member organisations and headed by a moderator. They are, along with the training events and the legal seminar, the place where the sharing of expertise and the cooperation between different member bodies happens. There are four Equinet Working Groups and the moderator for each Working Group is responsible for the organisation of the plan and activities within the Working Group, with the assistance of the Secretariat.

The four Equinet Working Groups in 2011 were:

Equality Law in Practice – supporting equality bodies in their legal work
Moderator: Peter Reading, Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom, Great Britain.

Strategy Development – supporting the strategic use of equality bodies' powers
Moderator: John Stauffer, Equality Ombudsman, Sweden.

Communication Strategies and Practices – supporting equality bodies in their communication work
Moderator: Libby Kinney, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland.

Policy Formation – supporting a dialogue on the learning from the work of equality bodies
Moderator: Mandana Zarrehparvar, Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark.

Members

At the AGM of 29 and 30 November 2011, Equinet Members welcomed four new organisations among their ranks.

They are:

- **Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE)**, Portugal;
- **High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI)**, Portugal;
- **Office of the Human Rights Defender**, Poland;
- **Office for Equal Opportunities**, Slovenia.

This has brought the total number of Equinet member organisations to **37** statutory equality bodies (established on the basis of the EU equal treatment Directives) coming from **30** European countries.

The EU PROGRESS programme has enabled Equinet to accept equality bodies from certain countries outside the European Union and we are pleased to count equality bodies from Croatia, Norway and Serbia among our members.

The Secretariat

The **Secretariat** reports to the Executive Board and implements the annual work plan of the organisation. It is responsible for the daily activities of the network and assists individual members with their requests. It assists and coordinates the work of the Working Groups. In 2011 the secretariat consisted of:

Anne Gaspard, Executive Director;

Tamás Kádár, Policy Officer;

Caroline Nsenda, Communications Officer;

Yannick Godin, Administration & Finance Officer.

From 1 March 2012, Cosmin Popa was appointed Equinet's new Communications Officer, as a successor to Caroline Nsenda.

2011 Traineeships

Jennifer Pearson, Policy and Communications Assistant Trainee (January 2011 – June 2011).

Cosmin Popa, Communications Assistant Trainee (September 2011 – February 2012).



The Secretariat from left to right: Cosmin Popa, Caroline Nsenda, Yannick Godin, Tamás Kádár and Anne Gaspard.

Equinet financial statement 2011

Expenses 2011

	Actuals	Budget for year	Balance	% Budget spent
Staff Costs	302,835	297,849	-4,986	101.67%
Travel and Subsistence	116,321	155,940	39,619	74.59%
Services	91,543	77,004	-14,539	118.88%
Administration	86,967	72,557	-14,410	119.86%
Members' time contributions (equivalent in €)	128,816	125,408	-3,408	102.72%
Total	726,483	728,758	2,275	99.69%

Income 2011

EC Grant 2011	543,286
Members' time contributions (equivalent in €)	128,816
Membership fees 2011	54,380
Total Income 2011	726,483

Balance 2011

Total Expenditures 2011	726,483
Total Income 2011	726,483
Balance 2011	0

Equinet ended 2011 with a balanced budget.

About the budget headings:

Staff costs: covers the salary costs of the four staff in the Secretariat and two trainees per year.

Travel and Subsistence: covers travels on behalf of Equinet (staff, Board members and participants in Equinet events).

Services: covers service providers (translators, printers...) that Equinet contracts in order to accomplish its missions.

Administration: covers the running costs of the Secretariat.

Equinet has three key sources of income:

- The core income comes from the grant of the European Commission under PROGRESS. This amounted to **€543,286** in 2011;
- Membership fees provide a valuable part of the matching funding required and came to **€54,380** in 2011;
- The remainder of the matching funding is made up of the time given to the work of Equinet by staff of the equality bodies translated into a cash equivalent. This came to a value of **€128,816** in 2011 (reported as income and expenditure at the same time, since they have been contributed to Equinet and "spent" by Equinet).

Thanks to its careful management of finances, Equinet was able to close 2011 within budget while ensuring the full implementation of the planned activities for the year.

The Equinet Board will continue to maintain its strict oversight of Equinet's financial health so that members can continue receiving the best value for money possible; therefore guaranteeing that the European Commission continues to see that the financial commitment it is making in Equinet is worthwhile.

In this context, Equinet accounts are subject to an external financial audit on an annual basis. The reported figures above were audited using the commonly accepted audit rules by the external auditor *Saskia Luteijn bedrijfsrevisor (Hoogstraat 2d, 1730 Asse, Belgium)*.

Equinet member organisations

Country	Member
Austria	Ombud for Equal Treatment www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at
Belgium	Centre for Equal Opportunities & Opposition to Racism www.diversite.be and www.diversiteit.be
Belgium	Institute for the Equality of Women and Men http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/en
Bulgaria	Commission for Protection against Discrimination www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com
Croatia	Office of the Ombudsman www.ombudsman.hr
Cyprus	Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) www.ombudsman.gov.cy
Czech Republic	Office of the Public Defender of Rights www.ochrance.cz
Denmark	Board of Equal Treatment www.ast.dk
Denmark	Danish Institute for Human Rights www.humanrights.dk
Estonia	Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner www.svv.ee
Finland	Ombudsman for Equality www.tasa-arvo.fi
Finland	Ombudsman for Minorities www.ofm.fi
France	Defender of Rights www.defenseurdesdroits.fr
Germany	Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de
Greece	Greek Ombudsman www.synigoros.gr
Hungary	Equal Treatment Authority www.egyenlobanasmod.hu
Hungary	Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights www.ajbh.hu
Ireland	Equality Authority www.equality.ie
Italy	National Office against Racial Discrimination www.unar.it

Country	Member
Latvia	Office of the Ombudsman www.tiesibsargs.lv
Lithuania	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson www.lygybe.lt
Luxemburg	Centre for Equal Treatment www.cet.lu
Malta	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality www.equality.gov.mt
Netherlands	Dutch Equal Treatment Commission www.cgb.nl
Norway	Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud www.ldo.no
Poland	Human Rights Defender www.rpo.gov.pl
Portugal	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality www.cig.gov.pt
Portugal	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment www.cite.gov.pt
Portugal	High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue www.acidi.gov.pt
Romania	National Council for Combating Discrimination www.cncd.org.ro
Serbia	Commission for the Protection of Equality www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs
Slovakia	National Centre for Human Rights www.snsnp.sk
Slovenia	Office for Equal Opportunities www.uem.si
Spain	Spanish Race and Ethnic Equality Council www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.org
Sweden	Equality Ombudsman www.do.se
UK – Great Britain	Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
UK – Northern Ireland	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland www.equalityni.org

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The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission

