

Equinet Executive Board Meeting II
27 March 2012
Brussels, Belgium

Venue:

Center for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism
Rue Royale/Koningsstraat 138
1000 Brussels
Belgium

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members:

Jozef De Witte (JDW) - Chair
Csaba Ferenc Asztalos (CA)
Evelyn Collins (ECo)
Domenica Ghidei (DG)
Elke Lujansky-Lammer (EL)
Julija Šartuch (JS)
Tena Šimonovic Einwalter (TE)
Néphèli Yatropoulos (NY)

Board Advisor:

Niall Crowley (NC)

Equinet Secretariat:

Anne Gaspard (AG), Executive Director
Tamás Kádár (TK), Policy Officer
Yannick Godin (YG), Administration Officer
Cosmin Popa (CP), Communications Assistant
Catharina Sahl (CS), Trainee – Policy Assistant

Moderator WG Communication: Libby Kinney (LK)
(first half hour of the meeting)

Apologies: Therese Spiteri (TS)

Chair of the meeting: Jozef De Witte (JDW)

Minutes: Yannick Godin (YG)

MINUTES

Tuesday 27 March 2012

1. Opening

Jozef De Witte (JDW) opened the Board Meeting at 09:30 and welcomed all Board Members and Equinet Secretariat team. The proposed agenda for the meeting was reviewed and agreed upon by all participants.

JDW presented an apology received from Therese Spiteri for not being able to take part in the meeting.

2. Announcements

JDW welcomed Catharina Sahl, the new intern who started traineeship work at the Equinet Secretariat for the period March to July 2012.

3. Minutes of last Equinet meetings

▪ **Minutes Board Meeting 23 January 2012**

DECISION: Minutes of the Board Meeting were adopted and can be uploaded on the website (Members section)

▪ **Draft Minutes of Equinet AGM 2011**

Suggestions for the work plan 2013 made by the discussion groups during the AGM 2011 will be considered and reviewed when developing a proposal of Work Plan 2013 (planned for the September Board meeting)

DECISION: Draft Minutes of the AGM 2011 were endorsed by the Board to be forwarded to Members for them to approve and vote upon at AGM 2012.

4. Priority Issues – Work Programme 2012

▪ **Moderator WG Equality Law in Practice**

Equinet will broaden its search for a new Moderator for this Working Group to wider prospects within and outside of the WG membership.

▪ **Moderator WG Strategy Development**

DECISION: Sandra Konstatzky (Equal Treatment Ombud, Austria) nominated by the Board as the new Moderator for the Working Group *Strategy Development*

▪ **Planning Equinet AGM 2012**

The Equinet AGM will be planned and organised on the fringe of the Equality Summit (22-23 November 2012 in Cyprus), with the support of the Member equality body in Cyprus.
Tentative dates for AGM: 20-21 November 2012.

- **Review Future Board elections procedure**

The Board should think of a way to amend the procedure in order to ensure that Board Members are elected with a minimum required number of votes. The proposals will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

5. Planning Issue – Equinet Work Programme 2012

- **Follow up work/perspective on Equality and Human Rights**

The possibility of organising a future joint meeting of the FRA both with Equality Bodies and NHRIs to address possible links between NEBs and NHRIs and their work was discussed and supported by the Board.

DECISION: Equinet Secretariat will discuss and address this possibility with FRA of a future joint meeting as a follow-up.

- **Equinet training on underreporting – Malta September 2012:**

Equinet will give priority and focus attention in 2012 to the issue of under-reporting (through working group activities, perspective, training theme...). The different channels of work on the topic should be linked and contribute to the design and content of the training. A priority first and foremost is to clearly define what under-reporting covers in the context.

The training programme could include a presentation of the FRA Report on Access to Justice (sociological study).

CA: would also be useful to have a discussion on possible minimum standards on data collection

- **WG Policy Formation:**

The Working Group will plan to hold a meeting in May and to start work of the preparation of the first Equinet Perspective on Difficulties experienced by equality bodies, with a survey questionnaire to Members.

DECISION: Survey questionnaire will be disseminated to members as soon as design and preparation work on this has been completed and approved by the Working Group.

- **WG Communication:**

DECISION: The approach proposed by the communication Officer (input from the WG communication for the design of the training on under-reporting) is endorsed by the Board

6. Future funding perspective

AG presented the strategy for liaising with and engaging the support of relevant Members of the European Parliament to the need for the budget for Equality work (including amongst many other aspects Equinet funding) to be guaranteed in the new Financial Framework of the European Commission 2014-2020 (MAFF) under the proposed *Rights & Citizenship Programme*.

DECISION: Approach approved by the Board and Secretariat to proceed accordingly.

7. Update on Completion work programme 2011

- **WG Communication:** WG Moderator LK introduced the final version of the *Good Practice Guide on Communication Principles for NEBs*. Members will be encouraged to disseminate the guide to their communication staff and will be publicly available on the Equinet website.

DECISION: An electronic copy – as well as hard copies – of the Good Practice Guide on Communication Principles to be sent to Members.

- **External Evaluation Report 2011:** Some of the quotes are problematic in the sense that they give a wrong impression of the reality. Recommendations in the report will be reviewed at the September Board meeting for the preparation of the Work Plan 2013.

DECISION: Secretariat to convey Board comments and points raised during the discussion to Amber Analysis for evaluation to review and consider appropriate amendments to the text of the report accordingly.

8. Relevant EU and European stakeholders initiatives

Cooperation with European Commission

NC: EC Disability Unit committed in their work plan to producing a guideline on reasonable accommodation, as was recommended in Equinet perspective. We should follow it up closely.

AG: The EC is potentially considering asking Equinet to get engaged in the future in taking over the organization of regular meetings of the Gender Equality Bodies organized so far by the EC (network of gender equality bodies – meetings twice a year). The EC may approach Equinet soon to have a discussion on this possible development.

DECISION: Equinet should adopt a positive attitude to the possible EC proposal regarding the regular meetings / network of Gender Equality Bodies while addressing the need for extra resources and funding in considering any additional work or tasks to be able to carry these out in future.

Cooperation with EIGE

EIGE is looking for a platform to reach out to Equality Bodies on gender issues.

DECISION: Equinet has to present itself as the platform EIGE needs to contact to reach out to Equality Bodies on gender issues.

9. Equinet Membership

Romania

CA: Istvan Haller's 5-year mandate is to be renewed as a member of the steering Board of the National Council for Combating Discrimination of Romania. The support letter from Equinet in relation to nomination of Board Members was welcome in this respect.

Slovenia

As of 1 April 2012, the Office for Equal Opportunities - Equality Body Slovenia - will be merged into the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Board will be informed of the potential implications of this structural change and merger as appropriate and in due course by the NEB contact person/representative.

10. Finances

DECISION: proposed measures to cover for the work during the planned absence of AG (Maternity/Parental Leave) endorsed by the Board.

DECISION: Given the absence of the Equinet Treasurer at the meeting, the note on the different roles in the financial management will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

DECISION: Accounts 2011 as presented to the Board are endorsed by the Board. A final version (the final one audited and presented to the EC) will be presented to the Board at its next Board Meeting.

DECISION: Hungarian Equality Authority to be contacted to enquire on their budgetary situation to assess their possibility of paying the Equinet Membership Fee.

DECISION: Members that have not yet paid their Membership fee will be sent a reminder.

11. A.O.B.

TE: the Croatian Office of the Ombudsman is willing to host one of the Equinet trainings in 2013.

12. Next Meeting(s)

23-24 May 2012: Equinet legal Training (Vilnius)

24 May (pm) & 25 May (am) 2012: Equinet Board Meeting (Vilnius)

26-27 September 2012: Equinet Training on under-reporting (Malta)

27 Sept (pm) & 28 Sept (am) 2012: Equinet Board Meeting (Malta)

20/21 November 2012 (tentative): Equinet AGM (Cyprus)

The Chair Jozef De Witte (JDW) closed the Board Meeting at 16:00.