

E Equinet
European network
of equality bodies



EQUINET HIGHLIGHTS

January 2014 - July 2015

www.equineteurope.org

EQUINET AT A GLANCE



Equinet is the **European Network of Equality Bodies**, a membership organisation bringing together 42 equality bodies from 32 European countries including all EU Member States.

Equinet promotes equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of national equality bodies. It supports equality bodies to be independent and effective as valuable catalysts for more equal societies.

National equality bodies are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and promoting equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.

Equinet aims to enhance the strategic capacity of its members and to develop the skills and competences of their staff. Equinet contributes to the European equality agenda by conveying an expert contribution from the experience of equality bodies, and enhance their recognition and strategic positioning in relation to all stakeholders at European level. Finally Equinet serves as a knowledge and communication hub on equal treatment.

To achieve its aims, Equinet:

- Organises regular **training events and seminars** for staff members of equality bodies, as well as **conferences** on key topics relevant to the European agenda on equality and non-discrimination;
- Supports research and exchange of information, data and expertise from and among equality bodies through:
 - » **Working Groups** structured around thematic work areas of relevance to equality bodies, such as *Equality Law, Strategy Development, Communication Strategies and Practices, Policy Formation and Gender Equality*;
 - » **Reports, policy perspectives and good practice guides** providing evidence-based contributions to relevant themes relating to the work of national equality bodies and developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination in Europe;
 - » **Communication channels** such as the Equinet website, social media profiles and groups, monthly newsletters and regular email updates.

The highest decision-making structure within Equinet is the General Assembly of Equinet Members. Every two years the Assembly elects an Executive Board responsible for the overall management and the strategic leadership of the network. The operational structure consists of Working Groups of equality bodies' experts and a Secretariat based in Brussels.

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January 2014 - July 2015

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EQUINET TIMELINE 2014 - JULY 2015

19 FEBRUARY 2014

High-Level Legal Seminar on Equality Law

01

17-18 JUNE 2014

Training on *LGBTI Issues*, hosted by the Equality Ombudsman (Sweden)

08

26 FEBRUARY 2014

Meeting of Working Group Gender Equality

02

27 FEBRUARY 2014

Meeting of Working Group Strategy Development on *strategic planning and planning cycles with equality bodies*

03

24 APRIL 2014

High-level Seminar on *Gender Equality in the access to goods and services*

04

09 MAY 2014

Meeting of Working Group Equality Law on *positive action measures and third-party interventions to the ECtHR*

05

15 MAY 2014

Meeting of Working Group Policy Formation on *institutional architecture for equality*

06

26 MAY 2014

Meeting of Working Group Communication Strategies and Practices on *using values in communication*

07

05 SEPTEMBER 2014

Meeting of Working Group Strategy Development on *strategic planning and planning cycles with equality bodies*

09

10 SEPTEMBER 2014

Roundtable at European Parliament on *Equality for all - National Equality Bodies and the European Parliament, engaging together to combat discrimination*

10

11-12 SEPTEMBER 2014

Meeting of Working Group Equality Law in Practice on *positive action measures and third-party interventions to the ECtHR*

11

23-24 SEPTEMBER 2014

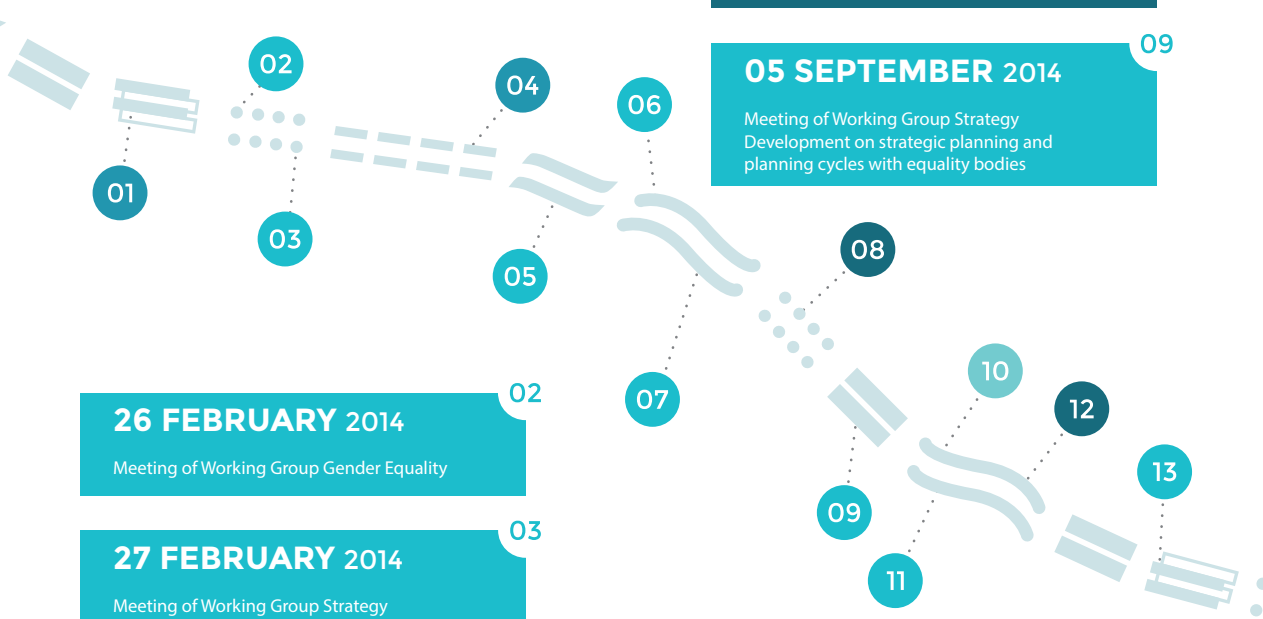
Training on Gender Equality focused on *combating harassment and sexual harassment*, hosted by the Human Rights Defender (Poland)

12

03 OCTOBER 2014

Meeting of Working Group Policy Formation on *disability*

13



07 OCTOBER 2014

Meeting of Working Group Gender Equality

14

16-17 OCTOBER 2014Equinet Legal Training on *Positive Action Measures*, hosted by the Commissioner for Protection of Equality (Serbia)

15

24 NOVEMBER 2014

Meeting of Working Group Communication Strategies and Practices

16

02 DECEMBER 2014

Annual General Meeting – Equinet welcomes:

- A new strategic plan for 2015-2018
- One new member: Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination (Albania)

17

09 DECEMBER 2014FRA-Equinet meeting on *combating Violence against Women*

18

23 MARCH 2015Conference on *Taking Action for Gender Equality*

19

24 MARCH 2015Meeting of Working Group Policy Formation on *religion and belief*

20

23 APRIL 2015Meeting of Working Group on Equality Law on *free movement and nationality-based discrimination*

21

29 APRIL 2015Meeting of Cluster on *Standards for Equality Bodies*, hosted by Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination (Spain)

22

26 MAY 2015Meeting of Working Group Communication Strategies and Practices on *Equinet's communication strategy*

23

28 MAY 2015

Meeting of Working Group Gender Equality

24

01 JUNE 2015

Meeting of Evaluation Lab

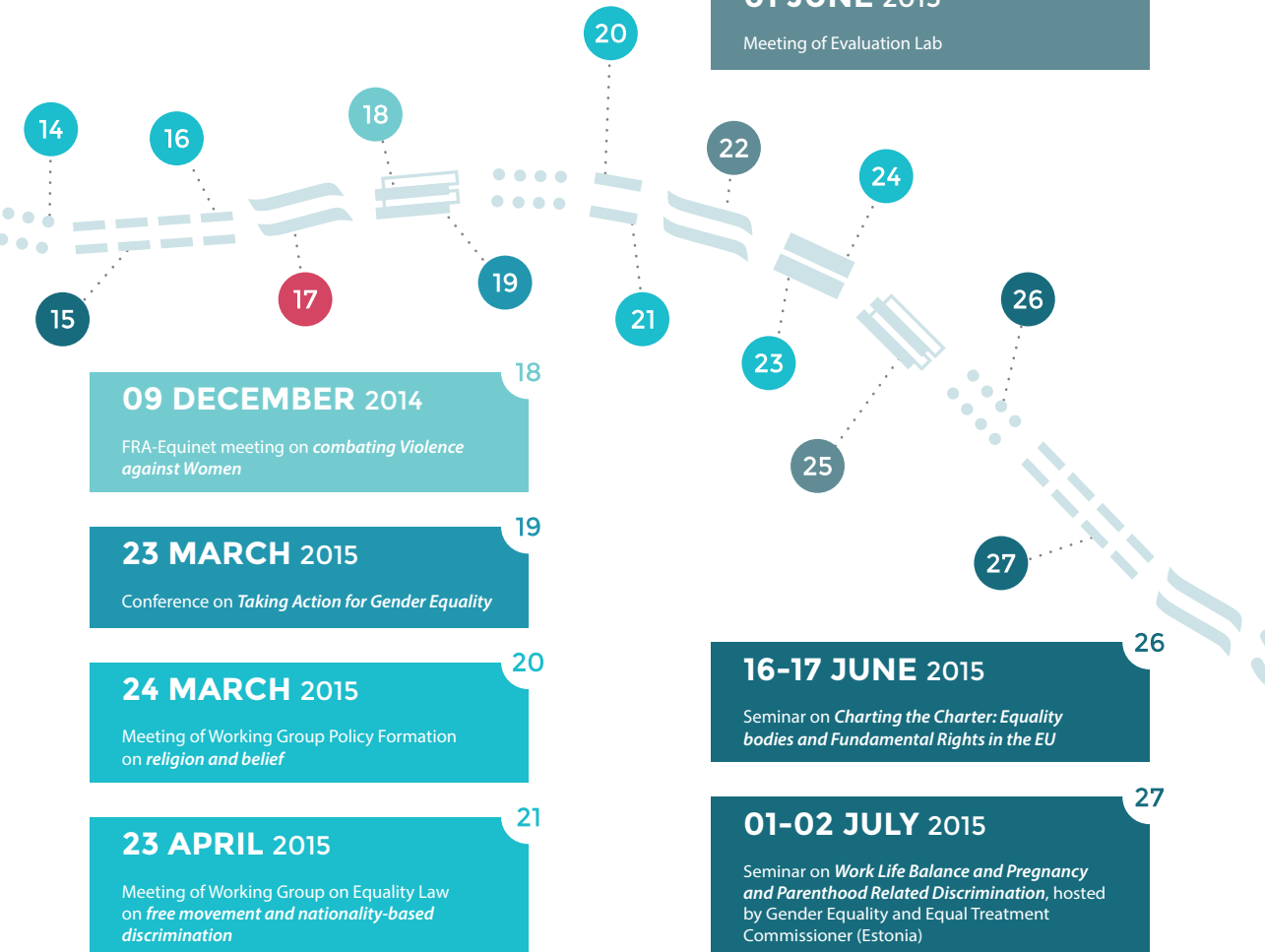
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16-17 JUNE 2015Seminar on *Charting the Charter: Equality bodies and Fundamental Rights in the EU*

26

01-02 JULY 2015Seminar on *Work Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood Related Discrimination*, hosted by Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner (Estonia)

27



FOREWORD

This is the first Equinet report covering a period longer than one year. By extending the period to one year and a half this report allows us to review not only some of the key achievements of 2014 and the process leading up to the adoption of Equinet's new Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, but also to give a flavour of the first experiences of implementing this ambitious plan.

The adoption of our new Strategic Plan was preceded by a comprehensive and wide-ranging consultation process, both with our members and our key partners about their expectations and needs from Equinet. This also served as useful and much appreciated feedback showing that the work and services of Equinet are highly valued and indicating potential areas of further development. As a result, much of Equinet's future work will be centered on fine-tuning our existing training events, seminars and working groups to provide platforms for effective peer support and capacity-building amongst equality bodies. New and innovative projects, such as an Evaluation Lab assisting equality bodies to find the best ways of measuring the outcomes and impact of their work have also been put in place.

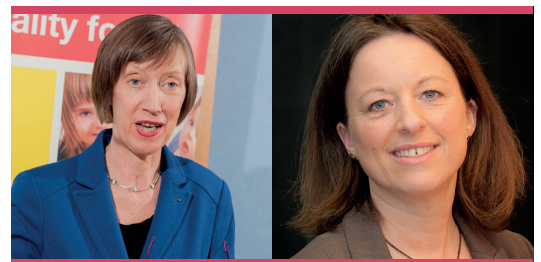
We will step up our activities to support the development of standards for and in the work of equality bodies, responding to a clear demand from our members but also to a number of recent reports and policy papers from international and European institutions and agencies recognising the important role of independent and effective equality bodies. This is all the more important with the prolonged period of economic and financial crises and austerity policies posing particular challenges for equality and equality bodies. In 2015 Equinet set up a thematic cluster, with the participation of high-level representatives of over 20 equality bodies, to discuss the rationale for standards, the topics they should address and the strategies to put such standards in place.

A wide range of other exciting new activities, structures and objectives have also been introduced – enough to ensure the further development of the network and to keep us busy for the coming years. The new Strategic Plan puts more emphasis than before on Equinet contributing to the European equality agenda

and serving as a knowledge and communication hub on equal treatment. This is both a response to a clear demand from Equinet's members and partners and an acknowledgment of the fact that, thanks to the unique experience and expertise of our members, over the years, Equinet has become an important actor and source of information in the field of equality in Europe. As such, Equinet has already commissioned research about the sanctions regime in discrimination cases and we are striving to further increase our engagement with all European institutions and stakeholders in the field of equality. We have also committed to improving our internal and external communication and are now providing three distinct types of newsletters: a Members' Bulletin, an Equinet Newsbook and a Spotlight on Equality Bodies.

Equinet continues to be a network for its members. Their expertise, dedication and insights together with our expert and dedicated staff in the Secretariat provide the foundations for all our achievements. We owe considerable gratitude to the members of the Equinet Executive Board for steering the network and the formulation of the new Strategic Plan with great energy, enthusiasm and professionalism.

Last, but not least, we highly appreciate the fruitful cooperation with all our stakeholders, including those who contributed to our conferences and training events over the period. We also wish to express our special gratitude to the European Commission for its support throughout the *PROGRESS* programme, its current successor the *Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme* and for its ongoing commitment to supporting the work of Equinet and equality bodies.



| Evelyn Collins
Chair of the Executive Board

| Anne Gaspard
Executive Director

OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1

BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT
OF EQUALITY BODIES

OBJECTIVE 2

CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN
EQUALITY AGENDA

OBJECTIVE 3

SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND
COMMUNICATION HUB ON EQUAL TREATMENT

OBJECTIVE 4

CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND
THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

OBJECTIVE

1

BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES

Areas for action:

- Develop knowledge and skills of staff members of equality bodies
- Develop strategic and organisational capacity of equality bodies
- Foster and promote innovative approaches in the work of equality bodies

I. EQUINET TRAINING: LGBTI ISSUES

17 – 18 JUNE 2014, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
 HOSTED BY THE EQUALITY OMBUDSMAN (SWEDEN)
 MAIN GROUNDS COVERED: SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY



The 2013 Equinet Perspective on *Equality Bodies promoting equality and non-discrimination for LGBTI people* identified key themes for **equality bodies' work on LGBTI issues**. Based on findings that are captured in the Perspective, this seminar for 63 staff members of equality

bodies addressed topics such as under-reporting of discrimination by LGBTI people, policies and law addressing issues of LGBTI people, good practice by employers and service providers, and internal challenges that equality bodies face in addressing discrimination of LGBTI people.

II. EQUINET SEMINAR: CHARTING THE CHARTER - EQUALITY BODIES AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE EU

16 – 17 JUNE 2015, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
 MAIN GROUNDS COVERED: HORIZONTAL, ACROSS ALL DISCRIMINATION GROUNDS

This Equinet seminar was dedicated to the **role and importance of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** in

ensuring
fundamental
rights,
ensuring

equality and combating discrimination. It focused particularly on the practical use and benefits of the Charter for equality bodies.

The seminar gathered an audience of 42 staff members of equality bodies who deal with case work and legal strategy.



III. EQUINET SEMINAR: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND PREGNANCY RELATED DISCRIMINATION

1 - 2 JULY 2015, TALLINN, ESTONIA

HOSTED BY THE GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUAL TREATMENT COMMISSIONER (ESTONIA)

MAIN GROUNDS COVERED: GENDER

The 2013 Equinet Perspective *Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work-Life Balance For All* provided a basis for this event's **exchange of knowledge and working experiences between equality bodies in relation to work-life balance and pregnancy/parenthood-related discrimination**. Furthermore, the 46 participants were able to discuss successful good practices as well as policy and legal challenges faced by equality bodies in this field. Thanks to key

contributions from the European Commission, participants were informed about current developments in the legislative and policy frameworks dealing with pregnancy-related discrimination, gender discrimination in the workplace and work-life balance at European level, particularly following the withdrawal of the proposed revision of the so-called Maternity Leave Directive.



IV. EQUINET GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE: ADVANCING EQUALITY BY MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

In 2014, Equinet published a **good practice guide which draws on the experience of equality bodies in making recommendations to policy makers/legislators on general issues of discrimination and equal treatment**. This was based on input from the Belgian Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities.

Making recommendations can be seen as an essential element contributing to the promotion of equal treatment, as foreseen in the EU equal treatment legislation. It is directly linked to the practice of independence by equality bodies and requires a proactive stance in order to eliminate discriminatory practices by making recommendations on how these practices can be challenged.



OBJECTIVE

2

CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

Areas for action:

- Contribute to equality policy and law at European level
- Convey an expert voice of equality bodies by sharing their expertise, experience and recommendations
- Inform and engage with policy makers and partners

I. EUROPEAN EQUAL TREATMENT LEGISLATION

The **Horizontal Directive** is the proposal for new EU anti-discrimination law that would protect victims of discrimination based on the ground of age, disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief outside the field of employment. It was initiated by the European Commission in 2008 and a resolution was adopted by the European Parliament supporting the Directive in 2009. However, the proposal **remains blocked in the Council** where the unanimous support of all 28 Member States is required.

The 2014 Equinet Annual General Meeting facilitated a platform for exchange on the need for this new Directive, as well as the challenges and obstacles related to the proposed Directive. The adoption of the Directive was considered a priority and it was suggested that Equinet act as a hub for facilitating sharing of information on the negotiations within the membership. Accordingly, the Equinet Secretariat has followed developments around the Directive at European level and circulated an information note to all members in February 2015.

On 26 June 2015, the German equality body Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA) organised a meeting in Berlin with Equinet's support, to raise public awareness on the Horizontal Directive and to call on the German Federal Government to take action towards unblocking the Directive's proposal in the EU Council. Following this meeting, a joint statement was initiated by FADA and Equinet and co-signed by more than 40 associations and NGOs from Germany and Europe.

On a regular basis, Equinet engages on this issue with **key EU institutions and stakeholders** such as the coalition of European NGOs "Equality for all" in order to support a process of swift adoption of the Directive.



II. POST 2015 GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

CONFERENCE: TAKING ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY

23 MARCH 2015, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

MAIN GROUNDS COVERED: GENDER

The European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 is coming to an end and the Commission launched a public consultation to assess its results with a view to developing the future vision for gender equality in Europe (closed in July 2015). The conference, based on the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality's Perspective on *The Persistence of Discrimination, Harassment and Inequality for Women*, aimed to **share equality**



bodies' expertise on gender equality with EU level stakeholders and facilitate discussions on future strategic priorities and tools in the field of gender equality amongst the 70 participants. The Perspective was finalised after the March conference, where we were honoured with a key speech by Commissioner Jourová, responsible for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, as well as listening to the visions of leading stakeholders for gender equality in Europe 2020.



Anne Gaspard (left), Věra Jourová (middle), Evelyn Collins (right)

III. ENGAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN DISABILITY STRATEGY 2010 -2020

Equinet contributed to the review and renewal of the implementing actions of the European Commission's European Disability Strategy by publishing a Perspective *Realising Rights: Equality*

Bodies and People with Disabilities. Supporting the Review of the European Union Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020. This Perspective was developed on the basis of a survey of

Equinet members about their work with people with disabilities. It seeks to capture the focus and strategy of the work of equality bodies across different Member States and to **communicate learning** from this that would be relevant for **the further evolution of the European Disability Strategy**. The Perspective is also particularly timely and useful in view of the examination by the UN Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of the EU's actions to implement its obligations under the Convention in 2015.



IV. APPLICATION OF THE GENDER GOODS AND SERVICES DIRECTIVE

HIGH LEVEL SEMINAR: GENDER EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES - THE ROLE OF EQUALITY BODIES

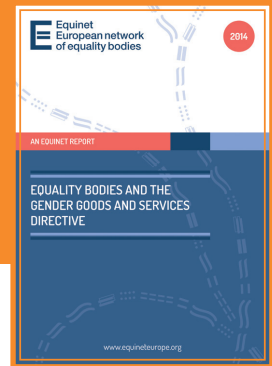
24 APRIL 2014, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

MAIN GROUNDS COVERED: GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY

The High Level Seminar on *gender equality in the access to goods and services* aimed at sharing experiences and expertise coming from equality bodies' work on the **application of Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services** with 80 EU level stakeholders and equality body members.

The Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality presented their 2014 Report *Equality Bodies and the Gender Goods and Services Directive* during the meeting and received useful contributions for the

finalisation of the report. This Equinet publication then fed into the **European Commission's report** on the application of Council Directive 2004/113/EC which **acknowledged that equality bodies are essential to move from «the law on paper to the law in practice» and to ensure that the legal rights are actually applied on the ground.** The Commission's report also committed to explore ways of clarifying the requirements concerning equality bodies under the Directive, particularly the key concepts of independence and effectiveness.

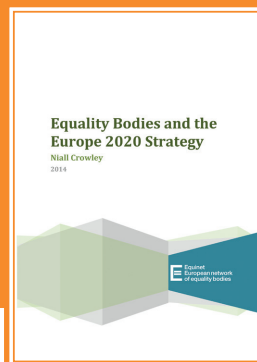


V. EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

In 2014, Equinet published a **discussion paper on the contribution to and engagement of equality bodies with the Europe 2020 Strategy** and linked to this process, contributed to the Commission's review of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The discussion paper seeks to document and inform the contribution of equality bodies to achieving the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy, enable

Equinet to support the contribution of equality bodies, and inform Equinet's contribution to the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy. It reflects Equinet's recognition that the work of equality bodies contributes to the field of economic policy and of economic outcomes and it is based on an understanding of the role of equality, diversity and non-discrimination in economic progress and wellbeing.



OBJECTIVE

3

SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB ON EQUAL TREATMENT

Areas for action:

- Inform and engage equality bodies on relevant European development
- Provide information on equality bodies to external audiences
- Facilitate exchange of information and networking among members
- Generate, collect and communicate knowledge on equal treatment

I. COMMUNICATING ON EQUAL TREATMENT

Equinet serves as a hub for generating, gathering, communicating and sharing information using a values-based approach, between and within the European and the national levels. It plays an important role within the overall European equality architecture and works as a **connector between equality bodies and the full spectrum of relevant European level policy makers and stakeholders**.

In order to **convey information from and about equality bodies to policy-makers and stakeholders at European and international level**, Equinet produces a number of reports and perspectives throughout the year on relevant themes relating to the work of equality bodies and developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination across Europe. It promotes these,

as well as other news and useful information via its [website](#), regular [e-newsletters](#) and social media posts.

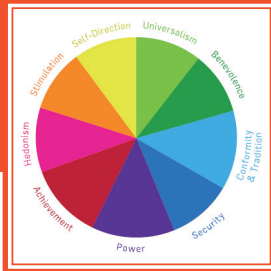
A facilitated **horizontal flow of information between equality bodies in different Member States** also supports their effectiveness. This flow of information is at the heart of peer support, allowing for immediate learning from one equality body to another and supporting joint problem solving where the necessary learning is not available. It further ensures that equality bodies are kept up to date with the latest developments and trends in the work of their peers. Equinet facilitates this information flow through Working Groups, regular internal bulletins as well as a members' area on the Equinet website.



II. VALUING EQUALITY: HOW EQUALITY BODIES CAN USE VALUES TO CREATE A MORE EQUAL AND ACCEPTING EUROPE

The motivation to treat other people with care and respect is built on a certain set of values: values we all share, which can be engaged and strengthened. The Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices prepared a survey on the values that their organisations express in their work, and based on this and additional research, the Public Interest Research Centre published a commissioned report in 2014 that mapped out how European equality bodies express values in their communication and their potential impacts.

The report enables a **deeper understanding of the way values work and how equality issues might be affected by appealing to different values**. It provides advice on ways to put an understanding of values and message framing into practice and offers indicators for good and bad practice in this area. The aim of this research is therefore to inform equality bodies and other organisations on ways to align their communications with the societal values that will ensure that people across Europe are motivated to live in acceptance of one another, free from discrimination.



III. INFORMATION KIT ON EQUALITY BODIES AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ROUNDTABLE EVENT



Following the 2014 European Parliament Elections, Equinet published an **information kit on equality bodies for Members of the European Parliament**.

This tool aims to raise awareness on the role and challenges faced by equality bodies at national and EU level, but also, on the way they can cooperate and

bring added value to the role of the European Parliament in its daily work.

The information kit was officially launched on the occasion of the **Roundtable Equality for all? National Equality Bodies and the**

European Parliament, engaging together to

combat discrimination organised at the European Parliament on 10 September 2014. The event was co-hosted by MEP Claude Moraes (S&D), Chair of LIBE Committee, and Iraxte Garcia Perez (S&D), Chair of FEMM Committee. The Vice-President of the European Parliament Ulrike Lunacek (Greens) also delivered an opening address and MEPs from other political groups participated in the discussions. The event provided a platform for a constructive exchange between high-level representatives of national equality bodies and Members of the European Parliament on policy priorities in the area of equality and non-discrimination, and on the learning from the work of equality bodies in implementing equal treatment legislation at national level.



OBJECTIVE

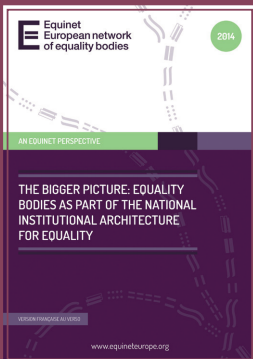
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CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

Areas for action:

- Support the development of standards for and in the work of equality bodies
- Strengthen the standing of equality bodies in a changing context
- Enhance cooperation with stakeholders
- Ensure the sustainable development of the network and its capacity to respond to the diverse needs of members

I. STANDARDS FOR MORE EQUAL SOCIETIES



The Perspective *The bigger picture: Equality bodies as part of national institutional architecture for equality*, prepared by the Policy Formation Working Group in 2014, explores and assesses the **national institutional architecture** that equality bodies form

part of, as they implement their mandates to promote equality and combat discrimination. This Perspective analyses the place, role and contribution of equality bodies in relation to the two key functions of this institutional architecture. The first key function is a reactive one, providing a pathway to justice for

those who have experienced discrimination. The second key function is to fulfil a proactive role, assembling a range of different bodies to advance equality and prevent discrimination.

This Perspective contributes to a body of work being done by Equinet to promote and inform the development of **European standards for equality bodies**. Such standards would provide a necessary guarantee for the independence and effectiveness of equality bodies. In 2015, Equinet set up a thematic cluster to provide a platform to examine more concretely the case for the development of standards and identify the areas that such standards need to address. After a first meeting in April 2015 which outlined current international standards and their relevance to the diverse situations of equality bodies, the cluster continues its work and will aim to produce a report on the need for standards by the end of the year.



II. ENGAGEMENT WITH EU INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Equinet continues to regularly engage with European institutions and key external stakeholders in the field of equality and non-discrimination and in other policy fields related to the mandates of equality bodies. This enables equality bodies to engage effectively with developments in equality and non-discrimination both in terms of contributing to their implementation and impact, and in terms of benefiting in their work from the potential and influence of these European level policies and activities.

Apart from the specific engagement with the European Parliament mentioned above, we also attended key meetings of the Parliament's Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and on Employment and Social Affairs. We sustain our role as Observer to the Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and attend meetings regularly.

Equinet continues to support initiatives with the cooperative framework established with the European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights, the Council of Europe and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. Since 2014, four cooperation platforms have been set up between these organisations to deal with asylum and migration, Roma, economic and social rights as well as hate speech and hate crime. Furthermore, communication experts from these organisations and their members have come together in May in 2014 and 2015 to exchange on common communication obstacles and challenges faced by equality bodies, as well as sharing good practices and experiences in the field.

Equinet and equality bodies also support and engage with the work of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and that of the Commissioner for Human Rights, *Nils Muižnieks*.

III. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION FOR EQUALITY BODIES

The Strategy Development Working Group was Equinet's platform for staff members of equality bodies concerned with strategic issues and interested in exchanging experiences and expertise. It aimed to contribute to the effective implementation of equality bodies' mandates through analysing and evaluating the most strategic use of the diverse powers available to equality bodies.

The Working Group completed its work at the end of 2014 with a survey of Equinet members to collect information about practices relating to strategic planning. A report was published that outlines the benefits and potential challenges of strategic plans for equality bodies as well as the processes necessary to develop a successful strategic plan and how to evaluate it.

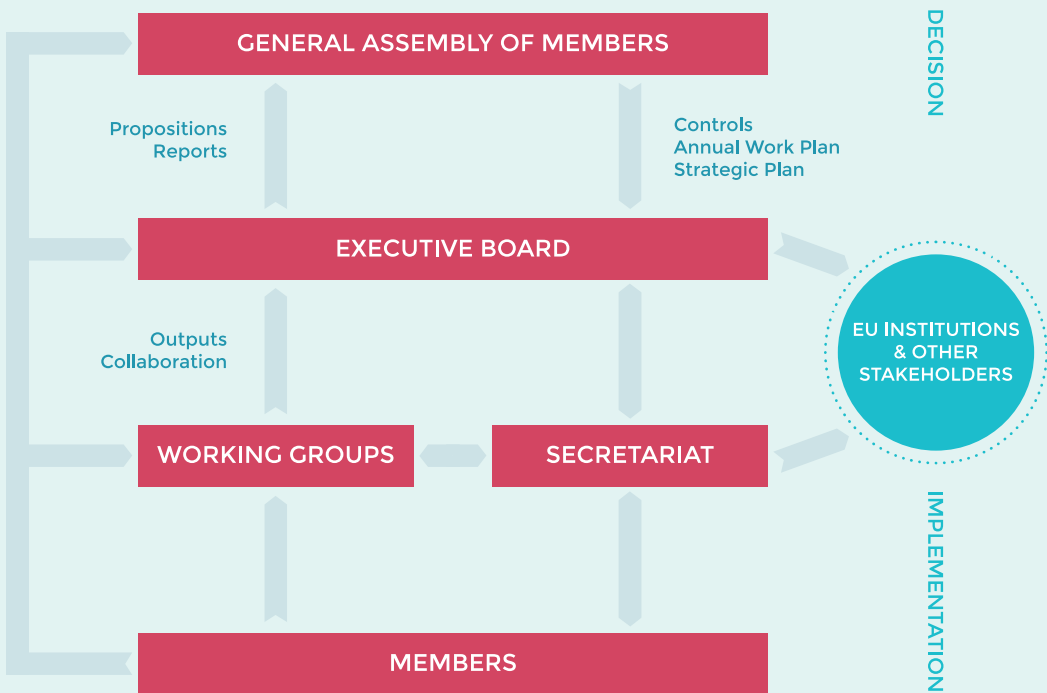
This work is also linked to Equinet's 2013 paper on *Processes and Indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies*, acknowledging that a well-designed strategic plan is necessary to evaluate the impact of equality bodies' work. In 2015

Equinet launched an Evaluation lab with selected equality bodies to discuss the challenges of such measurements and good practices in the field.



EQUINET GOVERNANCE

Governance Structure



The main decisions concerning the general steering of Equinet are taken by the General Assembly of Members that is made up of all the current members of the network, and is convened at least once a year for an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The General Assembly:

- ratifies new members into the network
- elects representatives on the Executive Board every two years.
- takes decisions on the strategic direction of the network by participating in the development, reviewing and voting on the annual Work Plan for the next year prepared and proposed by the Executive Board.
- is entitled to amend the statutes of the organisation and to approve budgets and accounts.

During the course of the year, the General Assembly delegates the management and the administration of the network to the **Executive Board**. The latter devises the strategy for implementing the work plan for the year, 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. Executive Board members, the Board Advisor and the Equinet Treasurer execute their tasks pro bono.

On the occasion of the Equinet Annual General Meeting 2014, members were called upon to vote on the Strategic Plan 2015-2018, which was unanimously approved. Moreover, it accepted the application from the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination (Albania), which was welcomed as Equinet's 42nd member.

Executive Board 2013 - 2015

- **Evelyn Collins (Chair)**, Chief Executive, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)
 - **Kosana Beker**, Assistant to the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (Serbia)
 - **Anna Błaszczak**, Deputy Director, Department of Equal Treatment and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Human Rights Defender (Poland)
 - **Michiel Bonte**, Head of Service, Discrimination Department, Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Belgium, until April 2015)
 - **István Haller**, Member of the Steering Board, National Council for Combating Discrimination (Romania)
 - **Sandra Ribeiro**, President, Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (Portugal, until January 2015)
 - **Mari-Liis Sepper**, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner (Estonia)
 - **Tena Šimonović Einwalter**, Deputy Ombudswoman, Office of the Ombudswoman (Croatia)
 - **Néphéli Yatropoulos**, Advisor to the Defender on European and International Affairs, Defender of Rights (France)
- Board Advisor:** Niall Crowley, Independent Expert
- Equinet Treasurer:** Therese Spiteri, Manager, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (Malta)



Equinet Board: Back (from left to right): Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Michiel Bonte, István Haller, Mari-Liis Sepper; Front (from left to right): Evelyn Collins, Therese Spiteri, Néphéli Yatropoulos, Sandra Ribeiro, Anna Błaszczak



Equinet Secretariat staff members (from left to right): Tamás Kádár, Anne Gaspard, Ilaria Volpe, Yannick Godin, Jessica Machacova, Sarah Cooke O'Dowd

Working Groups

The **Equinet Working Groups** are essential parts of the inner functioning of the network. Composed solely of staff experts from member organisations, they are the central platforms for effective cooperation and sharing of expertise amongst member equality bodies and their staff, alongside the Equinet training events and seminars. Each group is headed by a Moderator from a national equality body who, assisted by the Equinet Secretariat, is responsible for the organisation and the implementation of the work as planned in the annual Work Plans.

The Working Groups focused on the following main themes:

- **Equality Law in Practice – supporting equality bodies in their legal work**
Moderator: Jayne Hardwick, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain, United Kingdom)
- **Strategy Development – supporting the strategic use of equality bodies’ powers**
Moderator: Sandra Konstatzky, Ombud for Equal Treatment (Austria) (until end of 2014)
- **Gender Equality**
Moderator: Sandra Ribeiro, Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (Portugal); replaced by **Theresa Hammer**, Ombud for Equal Treatment (Austria)
- **Communication Strategies and Practices – supporting equality bodies in their communication work**
Moderator: Thekla Demetriadou, Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Cyprus) (until end of 2014)
- **Policy Formation – supporting a dialogue on the learning from the work of equality bodies**
Moderator: Tena Šimonović Einwalter from the Office of the Ombudswoman (Croatia)

Secretariat

The **Secretariat** assists the Executive Board in implementing the annual work plan of the network. It is responsible for organising and managing the daily work and activities of Equinet and assists individual members and stakeholders with their requests. It supports and coordinates the work of the Equinet thematic Working Groups. The Secretariat regularly reports on the status of its activities to the Executive Board.

In 2014-5, the Secretariat team included:

- **Anne Gaspard** - Executive Director
- **Tamás Kádár** - Senior Policy Officer
- **Sarah Cooke O’Dowd** – Communication Officer (since January 2015); replacing Cosmin Popa (until November 2014)
- **Jessica Machacova** – Project Officer (since February 2015); Assistant Trainee (March 2014 – September 2014)
- **Yannick Godin** - Administration & Finance Officer
- **Ilaria Volpe** - Policy Officer (gender equality)

Equinet Traineeships

Marina Gachmova (September 2014 – February 2015); Martina Meneghetti (September 2014 – February 2015); Mihael Topolovec (March 2015 – August 2015); Tamiack van Vuuren (March 2015 – June 2015)

EQUINET HIGHLIGHTS IN PICTURES



High Level Seminar on *Gender Equality*, European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, April 2014



Roundtable *Equality for all? National Equality Bodies and the European Parliament, engaging together to combat discrimination*, European Parliament, Brussels, September 2014



Training on *Gender Equality*, Warsaw, September 2014

Legal Training on *Positive Action Measures*, Belgrade, October 2014



Equinet *Annual General Meeting 2014*, Brussels, December 2014



Conference *Taking Action for Gender Equality*, Brussels, March 2015

Conference *Taking Action for Gender Equality*, Brussels, March 2015



Seminar *Charting the Charter: Equality Bodies and Fundamental Rights in the EU*, Brussels, June 2015

Seminar *Work-Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood related Discrimination*, Tallinn, July 2015



EQUINET MEMBER EQUALITY BODIES

ALBANIA

Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination
www.kmd.al

AUSTRIA

Ombud for Equal Treatment
www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at

BELGIUM

Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities
www.diversite.be and www.diversiteit.be

BELGIUM

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men
www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be

BULGARIA

Commission for Protection against Discrimination
www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com

CROATIA

Office of the Ombudsman
www.ombudsman.hr

CROATIA

Ombudsperson for Gender Equality
www.prs.hr

CYPRUS

Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)
www.ombudsman.gov.cy

CZECH REPUBLIC

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.syrjinta.fi

FINLAND

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
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

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
www.equality.ie

ITALY

National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR
www.unar.it

ITALY

National Equality Councilor
www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale

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

(FYRO) MACEDONIA

Commission for the Protection against Discrimination
www.kzd.mk

MALTA

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
www.equality.gov.mt

MALTA

National Commission for Persons with Disability
www.knpd.org

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights
www.mensenrechten.nl

NORWAY

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud
www.ido.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 Migration
www.acm.gov.pt

ROMANIA

National Council for Combating Discrimination
www.cncd.org.ro

SERBIA

Commissioner for Protection of Equality
www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs

SLOVAKIA

National Centre for Human Rights
www.snslp.sk

SLOVENIA

Advocate of the Principle of Equality
www.zagovornik.net

SPAIN

Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination
www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.msssi.es

SWEDEN

Equality Ombudsman
www.do.se

UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN

Equality and Human Rights Commission
www.equalityhumanrights.com

UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
www.equalityni.org





EQUINET

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Equinet is an International Not-for-Profit Association (AISBL)

ISBN 978-92-95067-90-5
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This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Equinet, European network of equality bodies and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

www.equineteurope.org

Artwork & Design: www.vertige.org

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Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union 2014-2020

