

Equinet Executive Board Meeting II
15 May 2013
Brussels, Belgium

Venue:

Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (Salle Royale)
138 Rue Royale, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

ATTENDANCE:

<p>Board Members: Jozef De Witte (JDW) - Chair Evelyn Collins (ECo) Domenica Ghidei (DG) Therese Spiteri (TS) Tena Simonovic-Einwalter (TSE) Elke Lujansky-Lammer (ELL) Néphéli Yatropoulos (NY)</p>	<p>Equinet Secretariat: Anne Gaspard (AG), Executive Director Tamás Kádár (TK), Senior Policy Officer Yannick Godin (YG), Finance & Administration Officer Cosmin Popa (CP), Communications Officer Ilaria Volpe (IV), Policy Officer (Gender) Vassiliki Gkesouli (VG), Trainee</p>
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Apologies:

Csaba Ferenc Asztalos (CA)
Julija Sartuch (JS)
Niall Crowley (NC) (Board Advisor)

Chair of the meeting: Jozef De Witte (JDW)

Minutes: Tamás Kádár (TK)

DRAFT MINUTES

15 May 2013

1. Opening

Jozef De Witte (JDW) opened the Board Meeting on Wednesday 15 May at 09:30 and welcomed all Board Members present and the Equinet Secretariat team. The proposed agenda for the meeting was agreed upon by all participants.

JDW presented apologies received from Csaba Ferenc Asztalos, Julija Sartuch and the Board Advisor, Niall Crowley (however joining the meeting by telephone for Agenda *item 6 – Report/paper on indicators for measuring the impact of NEBs*).

2. Announcements

DG: The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights is organising a conference in June 2013 commemorating the 150th anniversary of abolishing slavery.

TK: Jayne Hardwick (Moderator of WG Equality Law in Practice) and TK have a preparatory and consultation meeting in view of the Legal Seminar the next day, in the late afternoon of the board meeting / 15 May with Andreas Stein of the EC (DG JUST).

ELL: The regional offices of the Austrian Ombud will move into new premises, exact arrangements including how to best guarantee easy access for **complainants** are under negotiation. The Ombud has organised a seminar on the question of burden of proof.

TSE: The new Ombudswoman, Lora Vidović has taken office on 1 March 2013. TSE is a candidate for the position of deputy ombudswoman responsible for equality and non-discrimination.

NY: The Defender of Rights has published a report on the expulsion of Roma people. A new equality body is to be set up in Morocco and NY (together with representatives of the NEBs from the Netherlands and Belgium) has recently attended an event in the country in relation to this.

NY has already indicated that she will not be able to attend the Board meeting in September 2013.

JDW: The process of transformation of the Centre is ongoing, changes are expected to take effect indicatively from 1 January 2014.

3. Minutes of last Equinet Board Meeting (19-20 March 2013)

DECISION: the Minutes of the Equinet Board Meeting held on 19-20 March 2013 are adopted by the Board and can be uploaded on the Equinet website's Members section.

4. Strategic Issues

- **Standards for Equality Bodies**

The Board discussed and commented on the latest draft agenda of the joint meeting on 7-8 October in Vienna organised by the FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency), CoE (Council of Europe), ENNHRI (European group/Network of NHRIs) and Equinet. The general structure and aims of the agenda were supported with minor comments.

ECo reported back from conference organised in Dublin by the Irish Presidency where she spoke representing Equinet. There was a good representation of NEBs at the conference. ECo underlined in her intervention the potential of NEBs and the need for standards on NEBs. Paul Nemitz, Director for Fundamental Rights was speaking representing the EC (DG Justice) at the conference. The Irish Presidency seems to be keen to promote a debate on the rule of law and on relevant institutions, including standards.

The consistency of messages relating to standards conveyed by NEBs at relevant events was considered by the Board as important.

DECISION: A note on key messages relating to standards for NEBs will be prepared by the Secretariat and sent to all Equinet members speaking at the ECRI seminar with NEBs taking place in Strasbourg on 30-31 May.

- **Links and cooperation EBs – NHRIs**

TK reported from the meeting of the European Group of NHRIs that took place on the fringe of ICC-26 in Geneva on 7 May. Equinet was invited to contribute to this meeting with a short presentation of its current work and priorities.

DECISION: The Board also discussed the future steps and priorities concerning the links and cooperation between NEBs and NHRIs. The topic should inter alia:

- **form an important part of the next Strategic Plan**
- **form an important part of the discussions at the joint meeting in Vienna on 7-8 October 2013**
- **be revisited following the publication of the European Group of NHRIs' paper in response to the Equinet perspective 'Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions - Making the Link to Maximise Impact'**
- **be considered as the basis for a potential training or conference (possibly co-organised with ENNHRI) in the coming years.**

- **Planning Equinet AGM 2013 and Executive Board elections**

DECISION: Board members discussed and agreed the proposed call for nominations of candidates for the Equinet Executive Board election and the process for dissemination.

The Board discussed and agreed an initial draft concept for the programme of the Equinet AGM 2013. In this context, the importance of conducting discussions at the AGM (in small discussion groups) addressing and setting a relevant background to the directions Equinet could be pursuing in the course of the next years was underlined.

5. Equinet Communications Strategy

CP presented the Communications Strategy developed for Equinet. The Board discussed and gave feedback on the strategy.

In particular, ECo underlined the clarity and consistency of messages.

NY noted that conceptualising the way we communicate gives clarity.

DG suggested sharing this strategy with communications experts within the NEBs

DECISION: In the context of dissemination of Equinet outputs, several Board Members expressed the need to receive more copies (i.e. not just one) of each Equinet report or *Perspective*, to be used for further dissemination purposes.

6. Report/Paper on indicators for measuring the impact of NEBs

Niall Crowley, the contracted expert for this report/paper, introduced the scope, approach, methodology and provisional timetable for the project, followed by a discussion with Board members.

ECo: It is an important challenge to make sure that the paper is generic (i.e. relevant for all NEBs) and at the same time specific enough for it to be applicable in practice. It is critical to look at four different levels and the links between them: inputs – outputs – outcome – impact. It is a challenge how to make the links between these different levels. It is useful to note that NEBs often evaluate on the basis of objectives in their Strategic Plans.

JDW: In general one can measure attitude, behaviour and participation in society.

NY: It is notable that the evaluation culture is much less developed on the continent and therefore an Equinet training on evaluation could be useful.

ELL: It is of utmost importance that the introduction defines and clarifies well the concepts used in the paper.

NC: For measurement it is crucial to find repeated and reliable data sources at EU and at national level. This seems easier to achieve in the labour market. It appears that impacts as such might be very hard to achieve directly, thus it seems a good solution to aim for reaching outcomes that point towards impacts.

7. Planning issues – Equinet Work Programme 2013

- **Equinet high-level Seminar on Gender-related issues**

DECISION: The Board discussed and **endorsed the draft programme for the seminar** and the main messages that Equinet representatives should convey during the seminar.

- **Good practice guide on reasonable accommodation**

DECISION: The Board agrees to **launch another communication and call to Equinet Members** inviting them to inform the Secretariat of specific experience or projects relating to the field of the planned Equinet Good Practice Guide and to express interest in providing lead expertise and drafting for this work on reasonable accommodation.

- **Equinet training on gender-related issues**

The Board discussed and commented on the draft programme of the training. In particular, they agreed that the programme is very ambitious and they suggested that in the present form the training could target staff members with different backgrounds and expertise (e.g. legal and communication).

- **Equinet training on supporting duty bearers**

The Board discussed and commented on the draft programme of the training.

JDW: duty bearers should be given a specific role in the training Day 1 as well.

TSE: It would be important to clarify in the programme and objectives what is meant by the term duty bearers. The title should contain a reference to non-discrimination and equality.

- **Update Equinet Working Groups**

ECo, as Moderator of the Equinet Working Group Policy Formation, invited Board members' views on the selection of the topic for the WG's second Perspective for 2013 (following the one under preparation on NEBs' work in support of LGBTI people). The two pending proposals are: (i) work-life balance (in the context of 2014 potentially designated as European Year for Reconciling Work and Family life); and (ii) the different institutional architectures of NEBs, their pros and cons.

DECISION: Board members support a focus on work-life balance (subject to that being designated European Year 2014) and proposed to address the other issue of institutional architecture as part of the Working Group as a Perspective for 2014.

8. Equinet Membership

- **Membership application(s) to be submitted to the AGM on 28 November for ratification vote:**

- Italy – *Consigliera Nazionale di Parità* (National Advisor for Equality) – application reviewed and approved at Board meeting on 19-20 March

- **Indication of further potential membership applications (still to be received):**

- Croatia – Ombudsman for Gender Equality
- Malta – National Commission Persons with Disability

9. Finances and Administration

The Equinet Secretariat (YG) gave an update on the financial situation concerning 2013.

An external audit firm will conduct an official audit of Equinet's finances concerning the year 2011. The audit is commissioned by the EC and it will take place within Equinet premises during period 21-24 May 2013.

==== *The Chair JDW closed the Board Meeting at 17:00 on Wednesday 15 May* ====