

# 2015 EQUINET WORK PLAN

Approved and adopted by Equinet Members

(November 2014)



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.

National Equality bodies are public institutions established by law to promote equality and combat discrimination, on grounds including gender and gender identity, racial or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and other grounds.

The Equinet Network promotes equality in Europe through 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.

**EQUINET, THE  
EUROPEAN  
NETWORK OF  
EQUALITY BODIES**

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# Equinet's Strategic Goals

## A. BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES

**A1** Develop knowledge and skills of staff members of NEBs

**A2** Develop strategic and organisational capacity of NEBs

**A3** Foster and promote innovative approaches in the work of equality bodies

## B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

**B1** Contribute to equality policy and law at European level

**B2** Convey an expert voice of equality bodies by sharing their expertise, experience and recommendations

**B3** Inform and engage with policy makers and partners

## C. SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB ON EQUAL TREATMENT

**C1** Inform and engage equality bodies on relevant European developments

**C2** Provide information on equality bodies to external audiences

**C3** Facilitate exchange of information and networking among members

**C4** Generate, collect and communicate knowledge on equal treatment

## D. CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

**D1** Support the development of standards for and in the work of equality bodies

**D2** Strengthen the standing of equality bodies in a changing context

**D3** Enhance cooperation with stakeholders

**D4** Ensure the sustainable development of the network and its capacity to respond to the diverse needs of members

# Overview of planned Activities and Outputs 2015

TOOLS FOR ACTION		OUTPUTS
A. BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES		
SEMINARS	Work-life balance and pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination	1 seminar + summary online
	A question of faith, Religion and belief in the work of equality bodies	1 seminar + summary online
	Charting the Charter: Equality bodies and fundamental rights in the European Union	1 seminar + summary online
TRAINING	Applying for and using EU funds	1 training module 1 training session
CLUSTER	Strategic litigation	1 thematic cluster
PROJECT	Evaluation Lab	1 meeting 1 teleconference
WORKING GROUPS	Gender Equality	2 meetings 1 perspective <sup>1</sup>
	Communications	2 meetings 10 media library entries
	Equality Law	2 meetings 1 discussion paper <sup>2</sup> ECtHR monitoring system
B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA		
CONFERENCES	A new strategy for gender equality: lessons from the work of equality bodies	1 conference + summary online
	Equality bodies and the new Freedom of Movement Directive, Challenge or Opportunity?	1 conference + summary online

<sup>1</sup> On the topic of a new Gender Equality Strategy for the European Union

<sup>2</sup> On the topic of freedom of movement for workers and nationality-based discrimination

WORKING GROUP	Policy Formation	2 meetings 2 perspectives <sup>3</sup>
ENGAGEMENT	Stakeholders from civil society & social partners	1 annual meeting with each of the two groups of stakeholders

### C. SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB ON EQUAL TREATMENT

ENGAGEMENT	European institutions and stakeholders	Regular meetings and exchange
RESEARCH	Sanctions regime in discrimination cases and its effects	1 study commissioned
COMMUNICATIONS	1 website (with Directory of Equality Bodies + members' forum) 2 social media channels (Facebook & Twitter) <i>Newsbook and Members' Bulletin</i> (monthly) <i>Spotlight on Equality Bodies</i> (quarterly)	

### D. CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

CLUSTER	Standards for Equality Bodies	1 thematic cluster 1 report
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### MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Annual General Meeting	1 meeting
Board meetings	At least 4 meetings

<sup>3</sup> One on the topic of the contribution of Equality Bodies to the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and another on the ground of religion and belief

# Activities

## UNDERSTANDING HOW WE ORGANISED THE ACTIVITIES

Each activity below is guided by and grouped according to the four broad strategic goals of Equinet proposed under its Strategic Plan 2015-2018. However, given the nature of our work, most activities would contribute to some extent to the achievement of some or all the other objectives. This is specified for each activity using colour coding and references matching the overview table of Equinet strategic goals (see previous page).

It should also be noted that on the operational side, the description of each recurring core activity (e.g. how working groups function) is kept to a minimum in this Work Plan. More details on these core activities can be found in Equinet's Strategic Plan 2015-2018 (under section Tools for action).

In order to better meet the diverse needs within its membership, Equinet will be applying a theme-based approach to some new types of activities, including, for example, thematic clusters (groups of high-level experts working on an important strategic issue) and projects (such as the Evaluation Lab).

## NEW USAGE OF TERMS

Some terms in the list of activities below are used differently than what Equinet members have been used to in the past, so as to better reflect the actual format and purpose of relevant events. **The main idea is that, while pursuing similar concept and format as in previous years, the former seminars will be called “conferences” and the “training events” will be called “seminars”.** In this process, a new type of more intensive activity called **training** will be introduced. It will aim to immerse equality bodies' experts in a particular topic, as part of smaller groups of participants, with a view to substantially support the development of a specific skill or expertise.

This evolution in terms will help convey more accurately the work of the network, as well as clarify the target audience and the objectives for the different Equinet activities.

## A. BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES

### **SEMINAR 1: “Work Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood Related Discrimination”**

Equinet will host a one and a half day seminar for staff members of equality bodies on *Work Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood Related Discrimination*.

It will analyse the role of and challenges for equality bodies in addressing the underlying causes for pregnancy and parenthood-related discrimination. These include gendered structural inequalities in the labour market and in parenting patterns, and gender stereotypes on the role of men and women workers and parents. It will also focus on the discrimination of pregnant workers and workers on maternity, paternity, parental leave and other forms of statutory leave. The seminar will also explore possible ways in which equality bodies can promote work life balance.

The seminar will build on Equinet’s perspective on *Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work Life Balance for All*, as well as on the Equinet Seminar on Gender Equality in the Labour Market held in 2013.

#### Expected outputs:

1. 45 staff members of equality bodies will participate at this seminar from more than 20 countries.
2. A summary of the seminar will be uploaded on the Equinet website.

#### Further objectives met: C1 C3

### **SEMINAR 2: “A question of faith. Religion and belief in the work of equality bodies”**

Equinet will organise a one and a half day seminar for staff members of equality bodies on supporting equality and combating discrimination on the basis of religion and belief. The seminar will take stock of legal and political developments and remaining challenges in ensuring freedom of religion and combating religious or faith-based discrimination at European and national levels. It will analyse the role of and challenges for equality bodies in addressing issues of religion and belief by discussing good practices in the use of their legal, research, communication and promotional functions.

The seminar will build on previous work by Equinet in this field, notably on publications by its legal and policy formation working groups.

#### Expected outputs:

1. 45 staff members of equality bodies will participate at this seminar from more than 20 countries.
2. At least 5 relevant good practices or cases by equality bodies will be presented and discussed during workshops.

3. A summary of the seminar will be uploaded on the Equinet website.

[Further objectives met:](#) C1 C3

### **SEMINAR 3: “Charting the Charter: Equality bodies and fundamental rights in the European Union”**

Equinet will organise a one-day seminar dedicated to the role and importance of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU in safeguarding fundamental rights, ensuring equality and combating discrimination. The seminar will bring together equality bodies with relevant European stakeholders to analyse the influence of the Charter on fundamental rights protection in Europe, with a focus on equality and non-discrimination.

Participants will discuss the legal nature and content of the Charter, its relevance for practitioners, its applicability at national level and its links with other human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights. The seminar will put a special emphasis on the relevance of the Charter for equality bodies.

#### Expected outputs:

1. 45 staff members of equality bodies will participate at this seminar from more than 20 countries.
2. At least 5 relevant good practices or cases by equality bodies will be presented and discussed during workshops.
3. A summary of the seminar will be uploaded on the Equinet website.

[Further objectives met:](#) C1 C2 D2

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### **TRAINING: equality bodies to apply for and use EU funds**

In collaboration with experts from the EU institutions and/or from other stakeholders, Equinet will develop a two-day training module identifying possible sources and areas of EU funds for projects that would advance the work of Equality Bodies. It will assess the relevance of such funds in enabling equality bodies to achieve their potential and the most effective approaches for applying to relevant funds. It will also review the main characteristics linked to the implementation of the projects and the reporting that they entail.

The module will then be made available to Equinet Members and at least one training session for a group of around 15 participants will be organised during the year for interested Members.

IT solutions (webinars or videos) will also be explored to ensure the widest dissemination possible of the module.

#### Expected outputs:

1. A comprehensive training module on EU funds that can be used for future training sessions.

2. At least one training session with approximately 15 participants trained in relation to accessing and using EU funds.
3. The training module will be made available to Equinet members on the Equinet website and its popularity will be monitored (an evaluation questionnaire will be added to the module file in order for people who download it to be able to assess the module quality and to make suggestions for its improvements).

If funding allows, a supplementary training session for a second group of participants might be envisaged.

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## **CLUSTER** on Strategic Litigation

Equinet will assist the setting up of a members-led thematic cluster which will bring together equality bodies' legal experts with an interest in strategic litigation in discrimination cases. Strategic litigation is already used by some equality bodies, while others currently consider experimenting the use of this tool to take up cases that can result in important clarifications of the applicable law and positive changes going beyond the merits of the particular case. This thematic cluster will provide a space for interested equality bodies as part of an expert group to:

- i. discuss the advantages, disadvantages and challenges of strategic litigation,
- ii. share and discuss criteria for strategic litigation and
- iii. analyse successful examples of court cases where strategic litigation brought about positive results and developments in the law.

[Further objectives met:](#) **B1** **C3**

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## **PROJECT:** Evaluation Lab

The paper on *Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies*, commissioned by Equinet in 2013, provides recommendations on what equality bodies could do in terms of measuring the impact of their work by developing and using effective processes, indicators and systems of evaluation. The paper also explored the state of play within equality bodies when it comes to measuring their impact.

The "Evaluation Lab", foreseen to be a two-year project (2015-2016), aims to build on this experience and provide a platform for expert staff members of equality bodies interested and experienced in the topic to:

- discuss the findings and proposals of the 2013 paper, as well as their own approaches to doing evaluation work for their equality bodies
- test out or pilot the implementation of some of the recommendations and evaluation methods proposed in the paper (or other methods devised by the Lab)



- share the insights and results of the testing with the other colleagues in the Lab, as well as with the wider network

The Evaluation Lab will be open to equality bodies' staff members who can commit to the testing component of the project, as well as the meetings and teleconferences listed below. The budget for the project will limit the Lab's membership to a maximum of 10 member experts.

The final aim of the project is twofold:

- To equip equality bodies with better knowledge and tools to evaluate their work, improve their effectiveness and the way they communicate about their impact.
- To pave the way for further developing the evaluation work being done by equality bodies.

[Further objectives met:](#) C3 C4 D2

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. The members of the Lab will meet in person for the project's kick-off meeting, with at least 7 of the maximum 10 members in attendance.
2. The members of the lab will convene through teleconferences (at least one by the end of 2015) to share updates, refine testing projects and discuss possible challenges.
3. The work done in the Lab will be shared with Equinet members.

### **ENGAGEMENT: "Equality Bodies and the EU2020 Strategy: contributions and potential"**

The Europe 2020 strategy is currently under review and the renewed strategy will be implemented from 2015 onwards. In 2014, Equinet published a *strategy document on the contribution to and engagement of equality bodies with the Europe 2020 Strategy* and linked to this process, has contributed to the review of the Europe 2020 strategy. As a follow-up to this work, Equinet will continue to exchange with staff members of equality bodies and relevant stakeholders on the Europe 2020 strategy, the contribution to be made by equality bodies to the Europe 2020 Strategy, the rationale and the entry points for equality bodies to engage with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In particular, in 2015 Equinet will build on this work by (i) seeking to progress recommendations and future perspectives emerging from the Equinet strategy document on the topic, (ii) ensuring the dissemination of this strategy document and (iii) supporting and developing future equality bodies' engagement with the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy at Member State level.

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. Wide dissemination and use of the Equinet *strategy document on the contribution to and engagement of equality bodies with the Europe 2020 Strategy*.
2. Engagement and discussion with Members, policy-makers and stakeholders on the implications, recommendations and follow-up of the Equinet strategy document.

[Further objectives met:](#) C1 C3

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## **WORKING GROUP (1) on Gender Equality**

In 2015 the Working Group will:

- Discuss the experience of equality bodies working on gender equality and how their learning could inform a new Gender Equality Strategy for the EU. The Working Group will conduct an analysis of the experience of equality bodies working on the ground of gender and related grounds and produce a perspective on the basis of its deliberations.
- Contribute to the preparation and organization of the Equinet conference on a new gender equality strategy for the EU.
- Discuss the experience of equality bodies in relation to work life balance and pregnancy and parenthood-related discrimination and contribute to the preparation and organization of the Equinet Seminar on this topic.
- Discuss the experience of equality bodies in building cases on equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

[Further objectives met:](#) **B2-3** **C3 C4** **D2**

### Expected outputs:

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2015 with around 20 members present.
2. Equinet will organise a networking session for participants at each meeting.
3. The Working Group will prepare a perspective for the Equinet conference on a new Gender Equality Strategy.

## **WORKING GROUP (2) on Communications**

In 2015 the Working Group will:

- Explore the practical application of the learning from the recent project and report on *Valuing Equality – How Equality Bodies can use values to create a more equal and accepting Europe*. Each working group meeting will contain a session featuring a mixture of expert speakers, practical exercises and discussions led by participants. After each session participants will agree on “homework” informed by the values approach, such as running a workshop inside their equality body, practising a new skill or writing a new communications strategy. Between the meetings, participants will also be able to communicate through teleconferences or webinars to help solve problems or challenges they are experiencing in their work.
- Use sessions during the meetings, but also webinars or teleconferences, to address communications challenges such as communicating equality effectively to the private sector, the use of social media in conditions of limited resources, effective messaging to hard-to-reach

vulnerable groups, etc. These sessions will be given either by communication managers from equality bodies with expertise on these topics or by external consultants.

- Continue to develop an interactive online media library of equality bodies' communication tools, projects, messages, campaigns and initiatives that will serve as a resource for equality bodies in their work on raising awareness of anti-discrimination legislation, promoting equality and communicating about their work.

Further objectives met: C3 C4 D2

Expected outputs:

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2015 with at least 15 members present.
2. Each of the two meetings will feature
  - A networking session for participants on the occasion of each meeting.
  - A session and at least one follow-up "home-work" agreed on in relation to the *Valuing Equality* project.
  - A session on a communications challenge and sharing of experiences relevant to addressing it.
3. Add at least 10 entries to the online media library.

**WORKING GROUP (3) on Equality Law**

In 2015 the Working Group will:

- Conduct an analysis of the (potential) contribution and work of equality bodies in the field of freedom of movement for workers and nationality-based discrimination in the context of the EU Directive 2014/54/EU. The Working Group will compare the legal provisions and case law relating to nationality-based discrimination in the different countries and it will discuss good practice in the field. The Working Group will produce a discussion paper on the basis of its deliberations.
- Monitor cases communicated by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the European Court of Justice (CJEU) to identify those that are directly relevant for equality and non-discrimination and the work of equality bodies. Subject to the adoption of internal procedures for this by the Equinet General Assembly and according to its rules, the Working Group will contribute to preparing third party interventions to the ECtHR on cases of high relevance relating to equality and non-discrimination.
- Contribute to the preparation and organization of Equinet conferences and seminars with a legal focus.
- Provide a platform for case workers of equality bodies to request information and advice from each other relating to specific cases.

[Further objectives met:](#) **D2**

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2015 with at least 15 members present.
2. A networking session for participants on the occasion of each meeting.
3. Preparation of a discussion paper for the Equinet conference “Equality bodies and the new Freedom of Movement Directive. Challenge or chance?”
4. A functioning system of monitoring relevant cases communicated by the ECtHR.
5. Contribution to the drafting of any third-party interventions to the ECtHR.

## B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

### **CONFERENCE 1: “A new strategy for gender equality: lessons from the work of equality bodies”**

Equinet will organise a one-day conference on the work of equality bodies in supporting gender equality, addressing persisting challenges and identifying possible future priorities. This event will gather Equinet member equality bodies and key European stakeholders. Participants will share their expertise and experience on key gender equality issues, priorities identified as key for the upcoming years and the possible role equality bodies could play.

The European Commission’s Gender Equality Strategy is coming to an end in 2015. This five-year strategy recognises the essential role of equality bodies in assisting victims, promoting rights and developing research on gender-based discrimination. This event will create a momentum to assess achievements made possible by the Strategy and remaining challenges from the perspective of equality bodies.

This conference will also contribute to positioning equality bodies as key actors in supporting and promoting gender equality, and will enable them to share their experience on gender equality with key European stakeholders.

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. 45 members of equality bodies will participate at this conference from more than 20 countries.
2. At least 30 representatives from other stakeholders will participate in this conference.
3. A summary of the conference will be uploaded on the Equinet website.

[Further objectives met:](#) **A1** **C1 C2** **D2**

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## **CONFERENCE 2: “Equality bodies and the new Freedom of Movement Directive. Challenge or Opportunity?”**

Equinet will hold a one-day conference dedicated to the role of equality bodies in combating nationality-based discrimination in the framework of the implementation of the new Freedom of Movement Directive. The conference will bring together equality bodies and relevant European stakeholders to analyse the role and potential challenges for equality bodies in addressing nationality-based discrimination.

The *Directive 2014/54/EU on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers* has been adopted on 16 April 2014. Its article 4-1 states that “each Member State shall designate one or more structures or bodies (...) for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of Union workers and members of their family without discrimination on grounds of nationality (...) and shall make the necessary arrangements for the proper functioning of such bodies”. The competences of these bodies are very similar to competences of equality bodies under EU equal treatment legislation. Whereas some Equinet members have already the mandate to deal with nationality-based discrimination, this Directive could potentially give new competences to other equality bodies.

This conference will build on an internal survey conducted in 2014 among Equinet members assessing the potential and importance of this Directive for equality bodies. This conference will contribute to positioning equality bodies as key actors in combating nationality-based discrimination. Equality bodies will have the occasion to share their experience and expertise with other Equinet members and European stakeholders, and will be better informed about the Directive 2014/54/EU and further enabled to endorse a potential new mandate.

### Expected outputs:

1. 45 members of equality bodies will participate at this conference from more than 20 countries.
2. At least 30 representatives from other relevant stakeholders will participate in the conference.
3. A summary of the conference will be uploaded on the Equinet website.

Further objectives met: **A1** **C1 C2** **D2**

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## **WORKING GROUP (4) on Policy Formation**

In 2015 the Working Group will:

- Discuss and produce a perspective on the contribution of equality bodies to the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. This topic has gained more relevance in the context of austerity measures aggravating violations of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly with respect to groups that are more vulnerable to discrimination (migrants, older

persons, disabled persons, Roma etc.). The perspective will take account of the work done by equality bodies in the field and their use of international instruments such as the European Social Charter or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

- Discuss and produce a perspective on the work done by equality bodies in order to advance equality and counter discrimination on the ground of religion and belief. The perspective will take account of the practices of equality bodies applying their legal, promotional, research and promotional functions as well as the political context they operate in. The perspective will inform the agenda of the Equinet seminar on the grounds of religion and belief. The work will contribute to the Council of Europe, FRA, ENNHRI and Equinet platform on economic, social and cultural rights.
- Support dissemination, follow-up and use of previously published Equinet perspectives including the particular contribution of equality bodies to the review of the Disability Strategy at EU level.

[Further objectives met:](#) **A1** **C3 C4** **D2**

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2015 with at least 15 members present.
2. Dissemination and use of the Equinet perspective contributing to the review of the Disability Strategy at EU level
3. Preparation of a perspective on the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.
4. Preparation of a perspective on equality bodies' work on the grounds of religion and belief.

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## **ENGAGEMENT** Meetings with stakeholders from European civil society and social partners

Equinet will convene an annual meeting with stakeholders from civil society and the social partner organisations at European level, with a view to share priorities and information on ongoing or planned activities, and explore areas for potential useful linkages and cooperation.

[Further objectives met:](#) **C2** **D3**

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. One meeting with at least five stakeholders from civil society and social partners platform
2. Share priorities and information on activities, and explore potential for cooperation

## C. SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB ON EQUAL TREATMENT

### **RESEARCH** on the sanctions regime in discrimination cases and its effects

Equinet will commission a study on the sanctions applied in discrimination cases in Europe and their effects. The study will build on previous research in the field and it will, as a starting point, examine and compare relevant sources of EU and international law and their provisions on sanctions and remedies. This will be complemented by an analysis of trends and good practices in leading case law from international, EU and national courts and national equality bodies. The study will conclude with observations on the effects of the sanctions currently applied in discrimination cases and it will put forward ways in which equality bodies and other actors can contribute to making those sanctions more effective.

[Further objectives met:](#) **B1** **D2**

[Expected output:](#) the publication of a study on the sanctions applied in discrimination cases in Europe and their effects

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### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Equinet communications work and initiatives will be guided by a Communications Strategy revised in line with Equinet's new Strategic Plan 2015-2018 while taking into account the latest relevant developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination. The following key activities will be pursued as part of Equinet communications work:

1. Promote and operate its [website](#) as the key source of information about European equality bodies and as the main platform for interaction between Equinet and its members and between Equinet and external organisations/general public.
2. Continue the development of the [European Directory of Equality Bodies](#) on the Equinet website.
3. Maintain a [members-only forum](#) on its website to support communication, networking and experience sharing among member equality bodies.
4. Promote and operate [social media channels](#) to complement the website, raise awareness about its work and members and build a strong pool of followers.
5. Issue regular [e-newsletters](#) to publicize relevant developments in the field of equality in Europe and latest news from Equinet, its members, European Institutions and other European stakeholders.

6. Pilot live-feeds and video recordings for certain events and topics
7. Circulate email alerts on an ad-hoc basis to notify member equality bodies of important and topical issues and requests originating from members and external stakeholders.
8. Design, publish and disseminate publications (reports, policy perspectives, briefs, factsheets, guides, etc.) resulting from the work of the network in English and French if necessary.
9. Keep the Equinet Membership Handbook up to date and disseminate it as appropriate to members and potential members to provide up-to-date accurate information on the different Equinet administrative procedures in place.
10. Publish an Annual Report covering the range of activities and initiatives undertaken by Equinet in 2014, in English and French if necessary.
11. The dissemination of Equinet publications will be planned so as to ensure a wide reach over the year (with at least two bulks of mailing).

#### Expected outputs:

1. A user-friendly, accessible and up-to-date Equinet website, with an aim to reach an average of at least 2000 users<sup>4</sup>/month
2. A well developed and up-to-date European Directory of Equality Bodies, and increased website traffic for the Directory as a result of a specific promotional campaign by email and social media relating to the Directory.
3. Use of an effective and accessible Members-only Forum on the Equinet website (including ensuring that members are notified about each forum post and that exchanges are properly tagged and searchable according to subject matter).
4. Substantial increase of the number of followers on Facebook and Twitter (e.g. by at least a third).
5. Regular issue of the following newsletters: *Newsbook*<sup>5</sup> – monthly; *Spotlight on Equality Bodies*<sup>6</sup> – quarterly; *Members' Bulletin*<sup>7</sup> – monthly.

Further objectives met: **A1** **B3**

## **ENGAGEMENT** on Equality and Human Rights

Equinet will continue to support initiatives within the cooperative framework established with the European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights, the Council of Europe and the European Network of

<sup>4</sup> As per Google Analytics: “users that have had at least one session within the selected date range (this includes both new and returning users)”

<sup>5</sup> External-oriented newsletter with information on Equinet’s work and relevant European developments

<sup>6</sup> External-oriented newsletter with information on equality bodies’ work

<sup>7</sup> Newsletter sent only to members on relevant developments at EU level and important internal deadlines or requests related to the life of the network



National Human Rights Institutions. Equinet will contribute in particular by engaging with the current focus on economic, social and cultural rights and by exploring further avenues for this cooperation to pursue.

Equinet will continue to link with the working group of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions that is focusing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Additionally, Equinet will also contribute an equality bodies' perspective at European level to the work relating to the UN Convention.

Equinet will open discussions with the relevant institutions at European level to explore the potential of equality bodies that combine an equality and an ombudsperson mandate.

[Further objectives met:](#) **B3** **D3**

#### Expected outputs:

1. Sustained debate about the links between equality and human rights and the best means of realising the potential of these links for the mandates of equality bodies.
2. Strong and supportive relationships between relevant institutions in the fields of equality and human rights that can underpin further progress on these issues. In particular, by following and participating in the various relevant cooperation platforms established between FRA-ENNHRI-Council of Europe-Equinet.
3. Deepen the understanding and appreciation of the potential of equality bodies that also hold other mandates and of how best to realise this potential.

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### **ENGAGEMENT** on external representation and cooperation with European Institutions and stakeholders

Equinet will continue to engage directly with the European Commission, specifically the Equality Directorate and its non-discrimination Unit as well as other units and directorates responsible for equality issues. Equinet will also engage with relevant expert groups and networks of the European Commission. In particular, Equinet will sustain an engagement in its role as Observer to the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

Equinet will continue to support key initiatives taken by the European Institutions to advance the equality agenda. Equinet will participate in European level events, make links with other non-discrimination structures established by the European Commission, support the agenda to progress the horizontal Directive dealing with discrimination outside the labour market, and engage with new equality strategies being developed by the Commission.

Equinet will engage with the European Parliament (EP), in particular with the EP Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and relevant Members of the European Parliament interested in the work of equality bodies and in topics relating to equality, antidiscrimination and gender equality.

Equinet will further strengthen its engagement and cooperation with relevant European Union Institutions and agencies, in particular the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Equinet will also engage with other relevant international organisations (European Network of NHRIs, European Ombudsman...).

Furthermore the network and its members will dedicate particular attention and collaboration on the specific topic of promoting equality and non-discrimination for Roma people, particularly through linking with the work and activities of a main European stakeholder in the field, the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), engaging with equality bodies in this area.

Within this engagement with these institutions and organisations, Equinet will, as appropriate and possible:

- Represent equality bodies and the network's work at relevant events and meetings of these institutions and organisations. This will be done either directly through the Secretariat or through the Executive Board, or by identifying suitable member equality bodies.
- Participate in joint ventures that coincide with the aims and objectives of Equinet.
- Provide support for initiatives that coincide with the aims and objectives of Equinet.

[Further objectives met:](#) **B3** **D3**

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. Strong, supportive and mutually beneficial relationships with the European Commission, the European institutions and agencies, relevant international institutions, and European level stakeholders.
2. Shared understanding of and appreciation for the potential, the situation and the learning from the experience of equality bodies among these institutions and organisations.
3. Strengthened engagement with and commitment to shared issues and concerns across these institutions and organisations.

## D. CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

### **CLUSTER** on Standards for Equality Bodies

Equinet will launch a thematic cluster providing a platform of work and engagement among a group of equality bodies' experts with an interest in advancing the development of European standards for equality bodies. This thematic cluster will be closely linked to the work of the Equinet Board, and it shall be composed of equality body staff members with strategic and senior level responsibilities within their respective organisation.

Equinet has for some years advanced the need for up-to-date European standards specifically on the establishment and operation of equality bodies. The absence of such standards leaves equality bodies in various instances vulnerable to having their potential inappropriately limited or restricts the

ambition of equality bodies in realising their full potential. Equinet has developed a body of published work that could assist the development of such standards.

The equality bodies' experts involved in this cluster will:

- i. Examine current international standards produced at United Nations and Council of Europe levels to identify the relevance of these to the diverse situations of equality bodies and to establish the gaps that exist.
- ii. Examine the case for the development of standards specifically for equality bodies and identify the areas that such standards need to address.
- iii. Review the published work of Equinet to identify the learning that should inform and shape the content of these standards.

[Further objectives met:](#) A2 A3 B2

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. A report on the need for standards for equality bodies, the issues that such standards need to address and the potential contribution from Equinet's published work to their content.
2. An evolving consensus among equality bodies on the need for standards and on the nature of the standards required.
3. A deeper understanding among policy makers of the need for standards for equality bodies and of how best to respond to this need.

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### **Facilitation of member-to-member **STUDY VISITS****

Equinet will facilitate the organisation of study visits among staff members of Equinet member equality bodies. This will consist of identifying the organisations interested and able to receive study visitors, assisting them in their conceptualisation of the visit programme, and putting them in contact with organisations interested to send staff members to study visits for follow-up and implementation.

[Further objectives met:](#) A1 C3

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# Management and Administration

In 2015, Equinet will continue to be a network managed by its Members and for its Members.

The **Equinet Executive Board**, the managerial body composed of and representing Members, will be charged with the practical implementation of this Work Plan. Its daily implementation will be the direct responsibility of the Brussels-based **Equinet Secretariat**, under the supervision of the Board. Given the increased number of activities foreseen under the Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018, it is planned to hire an additional staff of the Secretariat in order to reinforce its capacity from the beginning of the year onwards.

At least four **Board meetings** will be held at key points during the year when the Equinet Secretariat will report on the state of affairs and Board Members will take decisions in order to ensure the optimal implementation of the work plan.

The Equinet Executive Board will continue to manage the development of the Network and will pay particular attention to striking the right balance between the possible further expansion of the Network and the limited capacities it has at its disposal.

Securing an adequate level of funding will be one of the priorities of the Board. In this context, Equinet will continue to engage with the planning and effective roll out of the European Union's Rights and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020), the successor programme to PROGRESS.

An **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will be organised in 2015 where Equinet Members will be invited to vote on the work plan developed for 2016 as well as on other items pertaining to the general direction and strategy of the Network. The two-year mandate (2013-2015) of the current Executive Board will come to an end at this Annual General Meeting 2015, where an election will be held to renew the Members of the Equinet Board for the next two-year Board mandate (2015-2017).

## Evaluating the impact of our work

As a professional European network, the credibility of Equinet's work rests both on (i) the effective implementation of the foreseen activities as well as on (ii) its ability as an organisation to show meaningful results brought by the implementation of the activities. As it has done each year, Equinet will commission in 2015 an **external technical evaluation** of its activities (and an external financial review), offering valuable insights, learning and evaluation outcomes of relevance for the Board to steer the action of the network into the future. For activities under each strategic goal, a range of **indicators** have been devised that will help with assessing success, based on objectives that were set for each activity in this work plan and in line with Equinet's Strategic Plan.

### Output Indicators:

These will be assessed each year in the evaluation of the annual work plan. They will vary from year to year depending on the detail of the actions to be pursued under the work plan.

Objective A: Building capacity of and peer support for equality bodies.

1. The number of staff members of different equality bodies engaged with in the capacity building activities.
2. The number of specific innovations promoted for the work of equality bodies.

Objective B: Contributing to the European equality agenda.

3. The number of contributions made to European level policy-making and activity in the field of non-discrimination and equality.
4. The number of European level policy-makers and stakeholders engaged with on issues of equality and non-discrimination.

Objective C: Serving as a knowledge and equal treatment hub on equal treatment.

5. Number of e-newsletters published.
6. Number of research and reports published.
7. Number of meetings and interactions with stakeholders.

Objective D: Consolidating the network and the position of its members.

8. Number of meetings with stakeholders that enable coherence and cooperation on shared concerns.
9. Number of initiatives to explore and deepen understanding of links between equality, human rights and ombudsman mandates.

**Impact Indicators:**

These will be assessed each year in the evaluation of the annual work plan.

Objective: Building capacity of and peer support for equality bodies.

1. The number of staff members of equality bodies making use in their work of the knowledge, skills and learning gained as a result of their participation in Equinet activities.
2. The number of equality bodies making use in their work of the knowledge, skills and learning gained as a result of Equinet activities.

Objective: Contributing to the European equality agenda.

3. Evidence of influence by Equinet contributions in policy and legal documents published by European institutions and international organisations.

Objective: Serving as a knowledge hub on equal treatment.

4. Number of unique visitors and other relevant website analytics (e.g. average time spent per page).
5. Number of followers and other relevant social media analytics.
6. Number of opens and clicks in disseminated Equinet newsletters.
7. The number of equality bodies and stakeholders making use in their work of the research publications.

Objective: Consolidating the network and the position of its members.

8. Perceptions of equality bodies that their work has been supported and enhanced by the work of Equinet.

**EXPENSES 2015**

Salaries	484,500
Travel Secretariat / Management	14,700
Events and Meetings (all costs)	321,000
Board meetings (all costs)	16,830
Interpretation	1,000
Dissemination of Equinet outputs	10,000
Bookkeeping	10,800
Financial auditing	1,500
Reporting (technical evaluation)	7,500
Publications production (design and publishing)	30,000
Website maintenance and enhancement	5,000
Research project on sanctions by equality Bodies	20,000
Photographer at events	3,500
Expert support for WG perspectives	8,710
New office material (laptops, desks...)	5,000
Rent	57,960
Running of the office	17,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,015,000</b>

**INCOME 2015**

EC Grant	950,000
Membership fees	65,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,015,000</b>

**BUDGET 2015 SUMMARY**

<b>Max EC Co-funding: 95%</b>	
Total Income	1,015,000
Total Expenses	1,015,000
<b>Balance</b>	<b>0</b>

## Indicative calendar of activities in 2015

KEY ACTIVITY	PERIOD OF THE YEAR
<b>Board meeting 1</b>	<b>January</b>
First meeting of the Evaluation Lab	First half of February
Commission research on sanctions	First quarter
First meeting WG Equality Law in Practice	First quarter
First meeting WG Policy Formation	First quarter
First meeting WG Gender Equality	First quarter
First meeting WG Communication Strategies and Practices	First quarter
<b>Conference on Gender Equality Strategy</b>	<b>March</b>
<b>First meeting Cluster on Standards</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>Board meeting 2</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>EU funds training session</b>	<b>early May</b>
<b>Charter Seminar</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>Work-life balance seminar</b>	<b>July</b>
Second meeting WG Policy Formation	Third quarter
Second workshop WG Communication Strategies and Practices	Third quarter
Second meeting WG Gender Equality	Third quarter
Second meeting WG Equality Law in Practice	Third quarter
<b>Second meeting Cluster on Standards</b>	<b>September</b>
<b>Board meeting 3</b>	<b>September</b>
<b>Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Religion and belief seminar</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>Conference on the freedom of movement Directive</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>Board Meeting 4 (if necessary)</b>	<b>December</b>