

Equinet
Work Plan

2014



With the support of the European Commission

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*In many ways 2014 will
be a landmark year for
Equinet*

INTRODUCTION

It will be the last year in the network's current four-year Strategic Plan. This period marked Equinet's growth and maturing from a young network of equality bodies to a consolidated and respected European actor in the field of equality and non-discrimination. Its membership has grown larger: there were 33 organisations in 2011 and there will be over 40 in 2014*. Members' staff involvement in Equinet activities has also diversified and grown, with evaluations of events and initiatives showing a high level of membership satisfaction. This highlights Equinet's key role in offering peer support to enhance staff and institutional development of equality bodies, as well as providing them with a means to analyse their work and share their learning and experience among peer members' colleagues and with external stakeholders.

In 2014 Equinet will develop its next Strategic Plan (full details on process can be found in the next section). The learning mentioned above will serve to chart the way forward for the organisation in the next four years in a way that takes into account current challenges and developments affecting equality bodies and the broader field of equality in Europe: the upcoming new funding regime at EU level that will replace the PROGRESS programme for the coming years, ongoing fiscal consolidation in numerous EU Member States, the need for standards for the work of equality bodies, greater linking of EU non-discrimination work with the EU2020 agenda which builds on gender work already done in this regard, the EU parliamentary elections, as well as cooperation and links with national human rights institutions and ombudsman institutions..

Equinet's work on gender will be further consolidated in 2014. 2013 was the first year following the incorporation of the work of the network of gender equality bodies into Equinet†. The gender focus in Equinet's work has been successfully integrated and enhanced, featuring the establishment of a new Working Group on *Gender Equality* with a strong membership representation; a well received and widely attended High-Level Seminar on *Gender Equality in the Labour Market and the Role of Equality Bodies*; and a Gender Equality Training on *Equal Pay* dedicated exclusively to equality bodies' staff members.

From a financial point of view, 2014 will be a bridge-year between the EU PROGRESS Programme (2007-2013) and its successor funding programme. Preparing for the introduction of the latter from 2015 onwards will entail the need to master any new financial regulatory and contractual framework in order to ensure the financial health and sustainability of the Equinet network in the long term.

Finally, in 2014 Equinet will remain fully dedicated to its mission of 'enabling equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential at Member State level by sustaining and developing a networking between, and a platform for, equality bodies at European level'. This mission has so far been realised through the active involvement and commitment of Equinet's members, Executive Board and Secretariat, and with the support of the European Commission and other external stakeholders. It is hoped that this commitment and support will continue to help Equinet, equality bodies and their objectives thrive in 2014.

Note: This Work Plan 2014 mirrors the structure of the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014. Each specific action in the Work Plan 2014 directly emanates from activities defined in the Strategic Plan 2011-2014. To clarify this relationship, each specific Work Plan action has been numbered in the following format: SPx.y (SPx is the strategy number as referenced in the Strategic Plan and y is the number of the activity among those foreseen under that strategy).

* Pending approval by the General Assembly of Equinet Members at their Annual General Meeting in November 2013

† Approved by the General Assembly of Equinet Members at their Annual General Meeting in December 2012

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW EQUINET STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

Guiding principles

The following principles will guide the *content* of the new strategic plan:

- The strategic plan will build on progress made under the existing Strategic Plan 2011-2014 and on achievements of Equinet to date, including the incorporation of the work of the network of gender equality bodies, with a view to further developing the potential of these, whilst also addressing new areas of interest and employing new working methods as required.
- The strategic plan will ensure that Equinet meets the needs of its members in terms of their diversity, their operations at Member State level, their commitment to networking with their peers and their ambitions at European Union level.
- The Strategic Plan will ensure that the work of Equinet is relevant to a context for equality bodies at European and Member State levels that is changing and challenging in many instances.

The following principles will guide the *process of preparing* the new strategic plan:

- The planning process will be participative and inclusive, especially involving member equality bodies and their staff from across the European Union.
- The planning process will secure and take into consideration the perspective of key stakeholders at European Union level.
- The planning process will be led by the Board of Equinet with the support of the Equinet Secretariat and will be discussed, finalized and ratified by the Equinet AGM (2014).

Process

- The development of the Strategic Plan will involve the secretariat conducting (1) a brief analysis of the context for the next four years and (2) an assessment of the end-of-year external evaluation reports of Equinet's activities from 2011 to 2013;
- This brief analysis and assessment will then inform a meeting by the Board to consider and set out a framework of ambitions for the period 2015- 2018;
- The process will continue with wide ranging consultation with members and key external stakeholders in order to collect their views on Equinet's future direction and objectives;
- The material from this consultation will be gathered and synthesised by the secretariat for consideration by the Board; and further dissemination to Members for comments and reaction;
- The Board will work with the Secretariat to prepare a draft Strategic Plan to be sent to Equinet Members for comments;
- The final draft Strategic Plan will be considered and agreed by members at their Annual General Meeting in late 2014.

ACTIVITIES IN 2014

TYPE OF ACTIVITY		OUTPUTS
Development of the Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018		1 strategic plan
STRATEGY 1 - ENHANCE STAFF DEVELOPMENT		
Working Group <i>Equality Law in Practice</i>		2 meetings 1 report
Training events for members	- legal	1 event
	- gender equality	1 event
	- LGBTI	1 event
European High Level Seminars	- legal	1 seminar
	- gender equality	1 seminar
Internal and external communication		12 e-newsletters 1 annual report 1 website, moderation of forum and social media channels
Supporting good practice on equality bodies making recommendations to policy-makers		1 guide
STRATEGY 2 - ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
Working Group <i>Strategy Development</i>		2 meetings 1 report
Working Group <i>Communication Strategies and Practices</i>		2 workshops 1 online media library
Working Group <i>Gender Equality</i>		2 meetings 2 reports
Ad-hoc initiative on selected theme		1 meeting
STRATEGY 3 - CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY FORMATION		
Working Group <i>Policy Formation</i>		2 meetings 2 perspectives
Paper on contribution of equality bodies to EU 2020		1 paper commissioned
STRATEGY 4 - GROWTH AND POSITIONING AS A NETWORK		
Directory of European Equality Bodies		1 online directory
MEP Information Kit		1 kit
Participation in stakeholders' events		Regular*
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
Annual General Meeting (AGM)		1 meeting
Board meetings		4 meetings (minimum)

* Throughout the year, Equinet will be invited to participate in relevant meetings and events organised by external stakeholders. At the time of writing, it is not possible to ascertain the actual number of meetings.

STRATEGY 1: PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE STAFF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN EQUALITY BODIES

Based on the rationale and the objectives set out for this strategy in the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, the following activities will be implemented:

SP 1.4.1 Working Group - Equality Law in Practice

The Working Group *Equality Law in Practice* is Equinet's platform for caseworkers/legal staff of equality bodies. Its aims are to exchange experience and to share expertise relating to EU equal treatment legislation and jurisprudence and thereby to work to improve the level of legal protection from discrimination in Europe. The working group focuses on the interpretation of complex legal problems and a comparative analysis of EU and national legislation and jurisprudence in the field of equality and anti-discrimination law.

In 2014 the working group will:

- Conduct an analysis of and issue a report on the question of positive action on the basis of the EU Equal Treatment Directives, identified as a crucial tool at European level in order to ensure full equality in practice. The report will discuss the complex legal issues relating to the application of positive action. It will take into account good practice examples as well as examples of problematic provisions provided by members of the working group. The report will contribute to a better understanding of the legal nature of positive action as well as of its boundaries as specified by European and national legislation and case law.
- Conduct an assessment of the potential of submitting a third party intervention to the European Court of Human Rights on a case of high relevance relating to Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Contribute to the preparation and organization of the High Level Legal Seminar (see SP 1.4.4a below) and the Legal Training (see SP 1.4.3a below).
- Provide a platform for case workers of equality bodies to request information and advice from each other relating to specific cases.
- Discuss priorities for the future work of the working group.

The working group will meet twice during the year.

SP 1.4.2 Internal and external communication

Equinet will:

- 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.
- Maintain and moderate a *members-only forum* on its website to support communication, networking and experience sharing among member equality bodies and between Equinet and its members.
- Promote and operate *social media* channels to complement the website, raise awareness about its work and members and build a strong pool of followers.

- Issue regular *e-newsletters* to publicize the latest developments in the field of anti-discrimination in Europe and the latest news from Equinet, its members, European Institutions and other European stakeholders.
- Engage with the relevant stakeholders at EU level to encourage and enable them to communicate their initiatives in the field of equality and non-discrimination through the Equinet channels and to seek their support in communicating Equinet initiatives.
- 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.
- Design, publish and disseminate *reports* resulting from the work of the Equinet working groups and activities in English.
- Design, publish and disseminate Equinet *perspectives* (produced by working group *Policy Formation*). *Perspectives* will be published in English and French.
- 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.
- Publish an *Annual Report* covering the range of activities and initiatives undertaken by Equinet in 2013. The annual report will be published in English and French.
- 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).

SP 1.4.3a Legal Training (Belgrade, Serbia - 16-17 October 2014)

Equinet will organise a one-and-a-half day training for staff members of equality bodies on positive action measures. The training will build on the work done by the working group *Equality Law in Practice* and it will analyse the legal questions relating to the application of positive action on the basis of EU Equal Treatment Directives measures by discussing concrete cases and policies on different grounds of discrimination. Positive action measures in favour of women and Roma people as well as persons with disabilities will also be discussed. The training will take account of good practice examples as well as the effectiveness and impact of the existing legislation, policies and practices. This training will enable equality bodies' staff to better judge the legality and effectiveness of positive action measures and to provide more informed recommendations to decision-makers.

The training will feature presentations by eminent external speakers and experts of equality bodies as well as interactive workshop sessions. All member equality bodies will be encouraged to send representatives, with a target of 50 participants.

SP 1.4.3d Gender Equality Training (Warsaw, Poland – 23-24 September 2014)

Equinet will organise a one-and-a-half day training for staff members of equality bodies on the role of equality bodies in fighting against sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of gender. The training will build on the work done by the working group *Gender Equality* in 2013 and on the Equinet High Level Seminar 2013 on Gender Equality in the Labour Market: the Role of Equality Bodies. The training aims at improving the understanding of sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of gender and giving equality bodies tools for ensuring an effective support to victims of harassment, as well as for engaging with employers and other actors for the promotion of harassment-free workplaces in Europe.

The training will allow staff members of equality bodies to exchange good practices in relation to sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of gender and the experiences of equality bodies in supporting the implementation of the provisions on harassment and sexual harassment of the *Gender Recast Directive 2006/54/EC*. The training will take into account the issue of multiple discrimination and intersectionality.

The training will feature presentations by eminent external speakers and experts of equality bodies at EU and national level as well as interactive workshop sessions. It will be followed by a publication developed by the Working Group on Gender Equality on the same topic in order to ensure a correct interpretation of existing provisions as well as to ensure a wide dissemination of information and promotion of awareness. All member equality bodies will be encouraged to send representatives, with a target of 50 participants.

SP 1.4.3c Training on promoting equality for and combating discrimination against LGBTI persons (Stockholm, Sweden – 17-18 June 2014)

Equinet will organise a one and a half days training for staff members of equality bodies on effective work by equality bodies on LGBTI issues. The programme of the training will build on the perspective 'Equality Bodies Promoting Equality for and Combating Discrimination against LGBTI People' published by Equinet in autumn 2013. The training will take account of recent developments in advancing equality for LGBTI people at European and national levels. It will analyse the role of and challenges for equality bodies in addressing LGBTI issues. This will include good practice in responding to under-reporting, developing case work, supporting good practice by employers and service providers, taking account of the diversity of LGBTI persons, responding to multiple discrimination of LGBTI persons, influencing policy developments and building a viable strategy for LGBTI equality.

The training will feature presentations by eminent external speakers and experts of equality bodies as well as interactive workshop sessions. All member equality bodies will be encouraged to send representatives, with a target of 50 participants.

SP 1.4.4a Equinet High Level Legal Seminar (Brussels, Belgium - 19 February 2014)

Equinet will organise a one day expert legal seminar in 2014 for staff of equality bodies and for external stakeholders, which will focus on raising awareness, disseminating information and discussing recent developments in anti-discrimination legislation and jurisprudence at European level with a relevance for equality bodies.

Equinet will invite eminent speakers to take stock of the implications for equality bodies of pending proposals and/or recently adopted EU law as well as recent case law of the European Courts relating to non-discrimination. The seminar will analyse developments pertaining to the free movement of workers and nationality-based discrimination, the persistent segregation of Roma pupils and procedural questions relating to the shift of the burden of proof.

All equality bodies will be encouraged to send representatives with a high level of legal expertise and a target of 70 participants has been set, which will include representatives from external stakeholders.

SP 1.4.4b Equinet High Level Seminar on Gender Equality (Brussels, Belgium - 24 April 2014)

Equinet will organise a one day expert seminar on gender equality in 2014, which will aim at promoting the debate on key concepts, recent developments and challenges in gender equality law and policies.

Equinet will invite eminent speakers to assess the application of the *Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services*. Good practices and existing challenges will be identified and the event will also support networking, exchange of experiences and cooperation amongst equality bodies and with key EU stakeholders. The interaction between gender inequality and discrimination on other grounds in this field will be assessed.

All equality bodies will be encouraged to send representatives with a high level of expertise on gender equality and a target of 70 participants has been set, which will include representatives from EU level key external stakeholders.

SP 1.4.5 Guidance for equality bodies on advancing equality and supporting good practice by making recommendations to policy-makers

Equinet will produce a good practice guide on effective approaches applied by equality bodies in advancing equality by making recommendations to policy makers and legislators on issues relating to discrimination. The guide will build on examples of equality bodies effectively influencing and enhancing the quality of policy-making and legislation with their fact- and experience-based recommendations.

One Equinet member organisation with effective action in this field will lead the work on the drafting of this case study, taking into account and referencing other good practice examples as appropriate and available.

The case study will be published on the Equinet website.

STRATEGY 2: PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EQUALITY BODIES

Based on the rationale and the objectives set out for this strategy in the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, the following activities will be implemented:

SP 2.3.1 Working Group - Strategy Development

The Working Group *Strategy Development* is Equinet's platform for staff members of equality bodies that are concerned with strategic issues and planning within their equality body to exchange experience and share expertise. It aims to contribute to the effective implementation of equality bodies' mandates through analysing and evaluating the most strategic use of the diverse powers and resources available to equality bodies.

In 2014 the working group will discuss equality bodies' experiences with strategic planning and it will compile a report pointing to good practice examples in this field. The relative scarcity of comprehensive strategic plans, litigation strategies and strategies to address specific areas or grounds of work among equality bodies was pointed out in a number of Equinet publications. The reports underlined that the absence of strategies leaves the initiatives taken by the equality body in a vacuum, actions will be isolated and mainly reactive, the impact of the actions diminished. The work will take into account the paper on impact indicators published by Equinet in 2013. By compiling and analysing good practice examples in this field, the working group will enhance equality bodies' capacity to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups and to contribute to better implementation of EU antidiscrimination legislation and policies.

The working group will meet twice during the year.

SP 2.3.2a Working Group - Communication Strategies and Practices

The Working Group *Communication Strategies and Practices* is Equinet's platform for staff members of equality bodies that are working on communications strategies and activities or have a strong interest in this area. It aims to enable discussion, reflection and action on the effective development of communication strategies and activities by equality bodies and to contribute to the work of members in raising awareness of equality, rights and obligations among the general public, the groups experiencing discrimination and particular sectors of society.

In 2014 the working group will:

- Build 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.
- Participate in two workshops on 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 workshops will be given either by communication managers with expertise on these topics working in equality bodies, or by external consultants.
- Assess the follow-up to the project *Enabling Equality Bodies to Explore a Values Base to their Communication Work*, implemented by the Public Interest Research Centre and Equinet in the second half of 2013.

SP 2.3.3 Working Group – Gender Equality

The Working Group *Gender Equality* is Equinet's platform for staff members of equality bodies that are working on gender issues. It aims to enable mutual learning, exchange of good practices, discussion, reflection, cooperation between staff members of equality bodies and action on the effective promotion of gender equality and to combat gender discrimination by equality bodies.

In 2014 the working group will ensure policy and legal analysis on key topics relating to gender equality, building on their everyday role in defending victims of discrimination on the gender ground. In its work a particular attention to multiple discriminations and intersectionality will be ensured.

In particular the working group will:

- Publish a report on the current situation in relation to gender equality in the access to goods and services and the experiences of equality bodies in supporting the implementation of the *Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services*. The working group will identify key challenges and good practices in the application of the Directive, assess its effectiveness and impact, and suggest recommendations.
- Publish a report, based on the Equinet training on sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of gender on the current situation and the experiences of equality bodies in supporting the implementation of the provisions on sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of gender of the *Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)*. The working group will identify key challenges and good practices in the application of relevant provisions of the Directive, assess their effectiveness and impact, and suggest recommendations.

SP 2.3.4a Ad-hoc member networking initiative on violence against women

Equinet will facilitate an ad hoc initiative on violence against women aiming to enable interested members with expertise and needs in the field to convene, exchange knowledge and expertise and network. Equinet will facilitate the exchanges between equality bodies on their possible role for the eradication of violence against women and the examination of the implications of violence against women for the work of equality bodies on the ground of gender. This will include a focus on the European Commission Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 and on other international instruments on violence against women. Equinet will organise a meeting for the participants of the ad hoc initiative and will facilitate continued online exchanges on the topic.

SP 2.3.5 Tackling under-reporting

The Equinet trainings on LGBTI persons and on harassment and sexual harassment will have a specific focus on the challenges relating to the under-reporting of incidents of discrimination in order to ensure that equality bodies are better able to promote and protect the interests of the relevant groups at risk of discrimination.

Furthermore, Equinet will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders in exploring new ways to address the issue of under-reporting of discrimination and informing the focus of its members on this issue. Equinet will host a roundtable discussion with representatives of EU level NGOs to ensure cooperation on making equal treatment legislation work for people who experience discrimination.

SP 2.3.6 Development of standards for equality bodies

Equinet will continue to work with relevant stakeholders to explore and assist in the development of standards for the establishment and operation of equality bodies and to build a broader debate about the need for and content of such standards.

The perspective on the different types of institutional architecture for equality bodies in Europe that will be developed by the Working Group on *Policy Formation* will be disseminated and it will inform the debate on and development of future standards for equality bodies.

Equinet will also closely follow the legislative proposals relevant for the situation of equality bodies currently in front of the EU Institutions and will contribute to the process with fact-based learning from equality bodies as appropriate.

SP 2.3.7 Linkage between equality and human rights

Equinet will follow up and build on the results of the meeting on cooperation between FRA, the Council of Europe, Equality Bodies, National Human Rights Institutions and Ombudsperson institutions held in 2013. Equinet will in particular aim to sustain the contacts established to date and to stimulate the continuation of a constructive debate about effective and mutually beneficial links between the different types of organisations. Equinet will also continue linking with the working group of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions which is focusing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

STRATEGY 3: CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY FORMATION AT EUROPEAN UNION LEVEL

Based on the rationale and the objectives set out in this strategy in the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, the following activities will be implemented:

SP 3.3.1 Working Group - Policy Formation

The Working Group *Policy Formation* is Equinet's platform for enabling a constructive dialogue with EU institutions and it supports policy formation at EU level to effectively promote equality, value diversity and tackle discrimination. The working group supports the dialogue between Equinet and the EU institutions through the preparation of Equinet *perspectives*. These *perspectives* seek to inform current policy development within the EU institutions in the area of equality and non-discrimination and to contribute an equality dimension to policy being developed on other issues. Equinet *perspectives* are fact-based, developed from the work and experience of equality bodies at Member State level.

In 2014 the working group will develop a perspective on the different types of institutional architecture for equality bodies in Europe. The perspective will contribute to a better understanding of the different institutional arrangements in the Member States to implement the equal treatment legislation in Europe and to secure access to justice in cases of discrimination. It will explore the respective strengths and weaknesses of these different institutional arrangements in the Member States. The analysis will also help to assess the influence of the institutional architecture on the effectiveness and impact of equality legislation and the equality bodies.

It is suggested that the working group will prepare a second *perspective*, possibly on the topic of discrimination based on the ground of religion and belief.

The working group will meet twice during the year.

SP 3.3.2 Data collection using the Equinet template

Equinet will continue to regularly update the membership profiles featuring, among others, the number of equality bodies' complaints and cases.

SP 3.3.3 Dissemination of Equinet publications to Member State national authorities

Equinet will encourage its member organizations to raise the attention of their national authorities to the publications launched by the network, and support their further dissemination as appropriate.

SP 3.3.4 Commissioning and conducting studies

Equinet will commission a paper on the contribution being made and to be made by equality bodies to the EU 2020 process and its headline targets. The paper will also explore the role and contribution of equality and diversity in reaching the targets set by EU 2020.

STRATEGY 4: GROWTH AND POSITIONING AS A NETWORK

Based on the rationale and the objectives set out for this strategy in the Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014, the following activities will be implemented:

SP 4.3.1 Mapping of national equality bodies in Europe

Equinet will maintain and publish on its website up to date profiles of member equality bodies and will create a *Directory of European Equality Bodies* as an interactive online tool available on the Equinet website.

Equinet will also monitor further developments in relation to new and existing equality bodies.

SP 4.3.2 Facilitate communication and networking between members

Equinet will continue to facilitate cooperation between its members. This will include encouraging networking possibilities between equality bodies that share specific functions or focus and bilateral networking or staff exchange processes between equality bodies to share experience and mutually reinforce their capacities.

SP 4.3.3 Communication and relationships with European stakeholders

Equinet will continue to engage directly with the European Commission, in particular its Equality Directorate and units responsible for equality and non-discrimination issues.

In view of the upcoming elections for the European Parliament, Equinet will prepare an information kit which will be distributed to elected MEPs after summer 2014 and contain information on the role, work and challenges of equality bodies and Equinet.

Equinet will also engage with expert groups and networks of the European Commission, relevant European Union Institutions and agencies including EIGE and FRA, other relevant international organisations and European level stakeholders as appropriate.

Equinet will convene an annual meeting with stakeholders from civil society and the social partner organisations at European level and develop cooperation with them as appropriate.

SP 4.3.4 Recognition of equality bodies and their work at EU and Member State level

Equinet will strive to promote its website (in particular the sections with members' profiles and news from members) as a key source of information about equality bodies and their work.

Equinet will take steps to support equality bodies that find their independence or effectiveness threatened upon members' request whenever this is required and appropriate.

SP 4.3.5 Financial stability and development of the network

Equinet will continue to ensure the financial stability of the network securing adequate funding.

Equinet will continue to engage with the planning and roll out of the European Union's *Rights and Citizenship Programme* (2014-2020), the successor programme to PROGRESS.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

During 2014, the Equinet Board (the composition of which will be determined for a two-year mandate by the results of the Board elections to be held at the Equinet Annual General Meeting in November 2013) will continue to manage the Network through regular interactions with the Secretariat and by holding four Board Meetings throughout the year (with the possibility of further meetings if deemed necessary), to ensure the effective implementation of this Work Programme and the preparation and effective delivery of the new Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

The Equinet Board and Secretariat will monitor the quality of the services Equinet provides to its Members by assessing throughout the year quantitative and qualitative feedback data coming from Members (e.g. review of training and seminar evaluation forms). It will also commission an external evaluation of the work of Equinet in the final quarter of the year. This evaluation will assess the extent to which activities are meeting the needs of Equinet Members and achieving the objectives set for Equinet. Alongside the general evaluation there will be an additional module evaluating a specific focus to be decided on by the Board.

The Equinet Board will also monitor that both gender equality and diversity are mainstreamed in all activities and that Equinet operations respect the commitment to environmental sustainability.

In the context of the development of the new Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018, the Board will lead a wide consultation of Equinet Members, as part of a process explained on page 4 of this document. It will also proceed to a review of the procedures and processes currently in place at Equinet, with input from the Secretariat. With a view to improving the functioning of the Secretariat and of the Network, it will adapt and amend these procedures and processes as may be deemed appropriate.

The Secretariat will ensure that Equinet meets all its accountability duties towards the European Commission and its Members, notably by producing a final activity and financial report for the Commission and by regularly communicating with its representatives on Equinet activities. An Annual General Meeting of Equinet Members is foreseen to be convened in the last quarter of 2014 where Members will be asked, among other statutory duties, to vote on the proposed Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and the proposed Work Plan 2015.

The management of the Equinet Secretariat will strive to ensure that the highest possible professional management standards and practices are continued to be applied, notably with staff members receiving a timely formal appraisal of their work and being given the possibility to develop their skills and knowledge as much as is possible and appropriate.

INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES 2014

KEY ACTIVITY	PERIOD OF THE YEAR
Board meeting 1	28 January (Brussels)
Launch of good practice guide project preparation on making recommendations to policy-makers	First quarter
Commission paper on contribution of equality bodies to EU 2020	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 workshop WG Communications Strategies and Practices	First quarter
First meeting WG Strategy Development	First quarter
Equinet High Level Legal Seminar	19 February (Brussels)
Board meeting 2	23 April (Brussels)
Equinet High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality	24 April (Brussels)
Production/dissemination of report on the implementation of the Gender Goods and Services Directive developed by WG Gender Equality	Second quarter
Production/dissemination of Annual Report 2013	Second quarter
LGBTI training	17-18 June (Stockholm)
Board meeting 3	19 June (Stockholm)
Production and dissemination of the perspective on types of institutional architecture for equality bodies developed by WG Policy Formation	Third quarter
Production/dissemination of MEP information kit	Third quarter
Second meeting WG Strategy Development	Third quarter
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
Board meeting 4	22 September (Warsaw)
Gender equality training	23-24 September (Warsaw)
Legal training	16-17 October 2014 (Belgrade)
Production/dissemination of the second perspective developed by WG Policy Formation	Fourth quarter
Production/dissemination of report based on the Equinet training on harassment and sexual harassment and developed by WG Gender Equality	Fourth quarter
Production/dissemination of report on making recommendations to policy-makers	Fourth quarter
Production/dissemination of report on equality bodies' experiences with strategic planning developed by WG Strategy Development	Fourth quarter
Production/dissemination of report on the question of positive action developed by WG Equality Law in Practice	
Launch of the online media library developed by WG Communication Strategies and Practices	Fourth quarter
Launch of the online Directory of European Equality Bodies	Fourth quarter
Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)	2 December 2014 (Brussels)
Production and dissemination of Strategic Plan 2015-2018	December 2014