

Equinet Executive Board Meeting V 15 October 2014 Belgrade, Serbia

Venue: Hotel Zira, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

ATTENDANCE

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<p><u>Board Members</u> Anna Błaszczak (AB) Kosana Beker (KB) Michiel Bonte (MB) Evelyn Collins (ECo) István Haller (IH) Sandra Ribeiro (SR) (by Skype) Mari-Liis Sepper (MLS) (by Skype) Tena Simonovic-Einwalter (TSE) Nepheli Yatropoulos (NY) (by Skype)</p>	<p><u>Equinet Secretariat</u> Marina Gachmova (MG), Assistant (trainee) Anne Gaspard (AG), Executive Director Yannick Godin (YG), Administration & Finance Officer Tamás Kádár (TK), Senior Policy Officer Martina Meneghetti (MM), Assistant (trainee) Cosmin Popa (CP), Communications Officer Ilaria Volpe (IV), Policy Officer - Gender Equality</p>

Chair of the meeting: Evelyn Collins (ECo)

Apologies: *Board Advisor* - Niall Crowley (NC); *Treasurer* - Therese Spiteri (TS)

Minutes: Yannick Godin (YG), Marina Gachmova (MG)

MINUTES

OPENING OF THE EQUINET BOARD MEETING

ECo opened the Board Meeting on Wednesday 15 October at 14.45 and welcomed all Board Members and the Equinet Secretariat team. The proposed agenda was agreed on by all Board Members present.

ECo also thanked Kosana Beker and all her colleagues in the Commissioner for Protection of Equality for the very positive cooperation and coordination in respect of the Board meeting and the Equinet Legal Training on Positive action measures hosted in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AG announced that Cosmin Popa will be leaving Equinet from the beginning of December and that a recruitment process for a new Communications Officer has been launched.

MINUTES OF LAST EQUINET MEETINGS

The Board reviewed the draft Minutes of the last Equinet Board Meeting (held on 22 September 2014 in Warsaw).

DECISION: Minutes of Equinet Board Meeting IV (22 September 2014) are approved.

TOWARDS EQUINET STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2015

- Draft Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018

The Board reviewed the last draft of the Equinet Strategic Plan 2015-2018. Minor changes and suggestions for improvement were communicated to the Secretariat.

DECISION: The Secretariat will update the document according to the Board's review. The final draft of the document will be forwarded to Equinet Members as soon as possible, in view of the Members' Networking Meeting (Rome, 6 November) where it will be discussed. The document will be open to written amendment proposals from Members prior to being voted upon at the AGM on 4 December in Brussels.

- Draft Work Programme 2015

The Board reviewed the latest draft of the Equinet Work Plan 2015. Minor changes and suggestions for improvement were communicated to the Secretariat.

DECISION: The Secretariat will update the document according to the Board's review. The final draft of the document will be forwarded to Equinet Members as soon as possible, as it will need to be voted upon by Members for approval prior to the submission of Equinet grant application 2015 to EC (deadline 21 November). The document will be open to written amendment proposals from Members prior to being voted upon by email.

- Equinet Networking Meeting of Members, Rome, 6 November 2014

The Board Members reviewed the proposed structure for the Equinet Rome side event / Members Networking Meeting. **AG** confirmed that an invitation had been sent to all Members and that registrations will be closely followed up and non-registered Members will be encouraged.

DECISION: Invitation to Equinet Networking meeting (6 November) to be followed up with Members and Equinet Secretariat to plan and organise the appropriate voting system for ratification of the Work Plan 2015 by Members by email by mid-November.

- Planning Equinet AGM, Brussels, 4 December 2014

Board Members reviewed and discussed a preliminary outline proposal introduced by AG for the Equinet AGM on 4 December in Brussels. Invitations to potential keynote speakers and heads of NEBs / Members will be sent out as soon as possible. An engagement with high-level representatives of key EU institutions – EU Commission (Commissioners, Vice President, Director), MEPs (Vice-Presidents, Committee Chair/s) would be of great value to the exchange and should be pursued.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Proposal on Equinet third-party interventions before the ECtHR

Board Members discussed the opportunity to introduce this proposal for discussion at the AGM as well as the option to put the proposal to the vote of Members at the AGM. Given the short amount of time left before the AGM, it was considered better to put forward the proposal for discussion at the AGM, for input by members and with a view to piloting the approach through 2015.

DECISION: Proposal on Equinet third-party interventions before the ECtHR to be put as one of the topics for the discussion groups during session 2 of the AGM. Based on the results of the AGM discussions and overall Board support, this proposal will be piloted during the course of 2015

EQUINET MEMBERSHIP

AG – The equality bodies in Georgia and Moldova have expressed interest in membership, but due to geographic requirements and in line with previous Board discussions and decisions, they cannot be currently invited as formal members, but could be involved informally as observers on appropriate occasions.

- Membership Application: National Discrimination Tribunal, Finland

There have been some discussions with the Finnish bodies that are members of Equinet concerning the application of the National Discrimination Tribunal, Finland. It is also known that there are future amendments to the legislation pending likely to bring institutional changes in the country concerning the architecture of the Tribunal and various bodies.

DECISION: The Board will observe the ongoing institutional changes and will ask for more information from the National Discrimination Tribunal, Finland, before taking any decision.

- Membership Application: Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Albania

TK – This is a strong application, the law clearly mentions all 6 grounds of discrimination and is very closely aligned to the EU Directives. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination has an independent budget and is acting as an independent body, its competences include all mentioned in the EU directives plus additional ones – representation in court, consultation of civil society (quasi-judicial and promotional powers).

AG – The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Albania, has been expressing interest for joining Equinet for a few years since their establishment.

The Board reviewed and commented on the formal membership application documents submitted by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination in Albania.

DECISION: The membership application of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Albania, is supported by the Board and it will be put on the agenda of the AGM on 4 December for ratification by the General Assembly.

EQUINET SECRETARIAT ADMINISTRATION

CP informed the Equinet Board that he will be leaving Equinet at the end of November to take up a new position in Brussels from December on. He thanked the Board and colleagues for the continuous support provided throughout his time at Equinet. The Chair thanked CP for his important and valuable contribution to the work of Equinet over his time as Communications Officer and wished him every success with his new opportunity.

The recruitment process and job advertisement for the position of Equinet Communications Officer have been launched on three major EU affairs-focused websites. The selection process will be managed by Equinet Secretariat, and interviews of shortlisted candidates are foreseen to take place on 13 and 14 November. The new Communications Officer will be expected to start as soon as possible end 2014 or early 2015.

There will be another recruitment process launched during November for the addition position (full time staff member) to reinforce the Equinet Secretariat team in line with 2015 work programme and enhanced resources. The profile considered is that of a Project Officer, who would take charge of certain parts of the policy and communication related tasks foreseen under the Work Plan 2015 and future Equinet activities.

The Board meeting was closed at 18.15 by the Chair **ECo**