

2016 EQUINET WORK PLAN

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 2016

| TOOLS FOR ACTION | | OUTPUTS |
|--|---|---|
| A. BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES | | |
| SEMINARS | Gender Equality and Education | 1 seminar + summary online + report (published in 2017) |
| | Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility | 1 seminar + summary online |
| | Race and Ethnicity: Focus on Roma & minority discrimination from a legal perspective | 1 seminar + summary online |
| TRAINING | Communicating Equality: Social media for equality bodies | 1 training session |
| CLUSTER | Quasi-judicial Bodies: Good-Practice Exchange Strategic litigation | 2 members-led clusters |
| PROJECT | Evaluation Lab | 2 meetings |
| WORKING GROUPS | Gender Equality | 2 meetings 1 report (on equal pay) |
| | Communication Strategies and Practices | 2 meetings 5 online library entries 1 training manual (on social media) |
| | Equality Law | 2 meetings 1 discussion paper (Race) ECtHR monitoring system |

B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| CONFERENCES | Gender equality: an intersectional perspective | 1 conference + summary online |
| | Strengthening European Equal Treatment Legislation and its Implementation | 1 conference + summary online |
| WORKING GROUP | Policy Formation | 2 meetings 1 Perspective (Age discrimination) 1 Discussion Paper (Intersectionality) |
| ENGAGEMENT | European institutions and stakeholders | Regular meetings and exchange Specific engagement on work-life balance |

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

| | | |
|---------------|--|----------------------|
| RESEARCH | Positive duties/Equality duties | 1 study commissioned |
| COMMUNICATION | 1 website (with updated Directory of Equality Bodies + members' area) 4 social media channels (Facebook & Twitter & LinkedIn & Picasa) <i>Newsbook</i> (monthly - external) and <i>Members' Bulletin</i> (bi-monthly - internal) | |

D. CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| ENGAGEMENT | Stakeholders from civil society & social partners | 1 annual meeting with each of the two groups of stakeholders |
| ENGAGEMENT | Focus on Equality and Human Rights – FRA, Council of Europe, ENNHRI | Regular meetings and exchanges |

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Annual General Meeting | 1 meeting |
| Board meetings | At least 4 meetings |

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).

A. BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES

SEMINAR 1: Gender Equality and Education

Equinet will organise a 1 ½ day capacity-building seminar for staff members of equality bodies on *Gender Equality and Education*. It will take stock of the work of equality bodies on gender equality and education. Topics touched upon could include the incorporation of gender equality training in education, the presence of sexism in school programmes, or the work to ensure equal treatment in education. The seminar will also explore possible ways in which equality bodies can promote gender equality in education. The seminar will build on Equinet's Perspective *The Persistence of Discrimination, Harassment and Inequality for Women* and *Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work Life Balance for All* (2015), and on the Equinet Reports on *Harassment on the basis of gender and sexual harassment* and on *Equality Bodies and the Gender Goods and Services Directive* (both 2014) as well as on Equinet events on the same topics. A report will be prepared based on the outcome of the event, due for publication in 2017.

Relevant good practices or cases will be presented for discussion by equality bodies during workshops.

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: **B2 C1 C3 C4**

SEMINAR 2: Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility

Equinet will organise a 1 ½ day capacity-building seminar for staff members of equality bodies on reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

The seminar will take stock of the experiences of equality bodies on reasonable accommodation and accessibility. It will build on Equinet's Perspective *Realising rights: Equality bodies and people with disabilities. Supporting the review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (2014) and the Equinet Good Practice Guide *Equality bodies supporting reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities* (2013).

The seminar could include topics such as the definition and the legal framework for reasonable accommodation and accessibility, the cooperation with duty bearers and other strategies equality bodies could use to promote reasonable accommodation and accessibility. It will focus on the use of

reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and will possibly look into other grounds of discrimination such as religion and belief.

Relevant good practices or cases will be presented for discussion by equality bodies during workshops.

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 C4

SEMINAR 3: Race and Ethnicity

Equinet will organise a 1 ½ day capacity-building seminar for staff members of equality bodies on discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity. It will take stock of the experiences of equality bodies on this ground in various strands of their work and it will build on Equinet's *perspective* 'Equality bodies combating discrimination on the ground of racial or ethnic origin'.

Among other topics the seminar will have sessions focusing specifically on legal work and on work done to combat discrimination against Roma people, making use of the paper to be prepared by the Working Group Equality Law on this issue.

Relevant good practices or cases will be presented for discussion by equality bodies during workshops.

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 C4

TRAINING: Communicating Equality: Social media for equality bodies

Equinet will organise a 1 ½ day training session that offers social media training for those working in communication. It will provide expert advice that improves social media use in general and give practical examples and evaluations of social media campaigns carried out by our members. The training session will also address how to deal with online hate speech on social media.

Expected outputs:

1. 15 members of equality bodies will participate at this training session
2. A training manual will be produced that will be made available to all members.

CLUSTER on Quasi-Judicial Equality Bodies: Good-Practice Exchange

Equinet will set up a members-led thematic cluster bringing together staff members of quasi-judicial equality bodies to discuss shared issues of concerns in their work.

Quasi-judicial equality bodies spend the bulk of their time and resources on hearing, investigating and deciding on individual instances of discrimination brought before them. While some can and do take on certain promotional functions alongside these activities, this specific focus on deciding individual cases distinguishes them from predominantly promotion or legal support-type equality bodies.

This thematic cluster will provide a space for interested equality bodies to:

- discuss the specific challenges of a quasi-judicial function,
- share and discuss good practices in addressing such challenges
- discuss their role in ensuring adequate sanctions in discrimination cases, taking into account the findings of the research commissioned by Equinet in 2015

The Cluster will prepare and publish a report in 2017 summarising their discussions.

Expected outputs:

- The Cluster will meet twice during 2016.
- 15 staff members will participate in this cluster.

CLUSTER on Strategic Litigation

Equinet will sustain a members-led thematic cluster bringing together equality bodies' legal experts with an interest in strategic litigation in discrimination cases. Equinet set up this thematic cluster in 2015 with the consideration that strategic litigation is already used by some equality bodies, while others currently consider experimenting with 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 the expert group to:

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

The Cluster will produce a final report in 2016, summarising its deliberations. The final report will provide an insight into good strategic litigation practices and to encourage and assist more equality bodies adopting such strategic litigation practices.

Expected outputs:

1. The Cluster will meet twice during 2016.
2. Production of a final report

Further objectives met: B1 C1 C3 C4

PROJECT: Evaluation Lab

The Evaluation Lab is a two-year project that was launched in June 2015. 11 equality bodies are currently members of the project. It builds on the paper on Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies (2013), which 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 “Evaluation Lab” (2015-2016) aims to build on this paper 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 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.

Expected outputs:

1. The members of the Lab will participate in two meetings
2. The members of the lab will share updates, refine testing projects and discuss possible challenges throughout the year.
3. The work done in the Lab will be shared with Equinet members through the Equinet Members’ Area and other regular internal communications channels.

Further objectives met: C3 C4

WORKING GROUP (1) on Gender Equality

In 2016 the Working Group will:

- Discuss the best strategies to deal with equal pay complaints, and publish a handbook on how to build a case on equal pay
- Outline the experience of equality bodies in relation to gender equality and education, and contribute to the preparation and organization of the Seminar ‘Gender Equality and Education’
- Assist the Working Group Policy Formation in preparing a paper on intersectionality with a focus on gender
- Relay the experience of equality bodies and contribute to the preparation and organization of the Equinet conference on ‘Gender equality: an intersectional perspective’.

Expected outputs:

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2016 with around 20 members present.
2. The Working Group will prepare a Handbook on how to build a case on equal pay.

Further objectives met: B1 B2 C1 C3 C4 D2 D3

WORKING GROUP (2) on Communication Strategies and Practices

In 2016 the Working Group will:

- Organise thematic meetings on topical communication challenges that are presented by an expert (internal or external depending on the topic). The group will get to ask questions, identify the values-based messages and work together to develop responses to the challenges. Challenges could include: how to impart the correct information about complicated topics, how to measure the impact of the chosen communication initiative or how to communicate on topics in a not-so favourable climate.
- Contribute to the organisation and preparation of the Training session *Communicating Equality: Social media for equality bodies*
- Continue to develop the Project Library (formerly known as Media Library) internally and externally so as to provide members with concrete examples of how to develop communication actions, as well as promoting the members’ actions to a wider audience.

Expected outputs:

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2016 with around 15 members present.
2. Each of the two meetings will feature:
 - A session on a communications challenge and sharing of experiences relevant to addressing it, that mainstreams values within the meeting
3. The Working Group will contribute to the training manual on *Communicating Equality: Social media for equality bodies*

4. Add at least 5 entries to the online library.

[Further objectives met:](#) C3 C4 D2 D4

WORKING GROUP (3) on Equality Law

In 2016 the Working Group will:

- Discuss the work of equality bodies on discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity and multiple discrimination where race and ethnicity intersect with other grounds such as gender, religion or belief. The discussions will cover discrimination in all fields of life. The Working Group will produce a paper on some of the key challenges identified, including a focus on work done to combat discrimination against Roma people.
- Monitor cases communicated by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to identify those that are directly relevant for equality and non-discrimination and the work of equality bodies. The Working Group will also contribute to preparing any 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.

[Expected outputs:](#)

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2016 with around 15 members present.
2. Preparation of a paper on key legal challenges for equality bodies in the field of racial and ethnic discrimination
3. Monitor relevant cases communicated by the ECtHR and contribution to the drafting of any third-party interventions to the ECtHR.

Further objectives met: B1 B2 B3 C3 C4

B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

CONFERENCE 1: “Gender equality: an intersectional perspective”

Equinet will organise a one-day conference on the work of equality bodies supporting gender equality from an intersectional perspective.

While literature on multiple and intersectional discrimination, affecting the ground of gender as well as other grounds, is rich, much less has been written on promoting equality on an intersectional basis. This Equinet conference will bring together all interested stakeholders to discuss the challenges of applying an intersectional approach to promoting equality. It will use the background paper on intersectionality with a focus on gender to be prepared by the Working Group Policy Formation as a basis for the discussions.

The conference will aim to address different combinations of discrimination grounds but the focus will be on gender as a ground and its intersections with various other grounds.

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 C3 C4** **D3**

CONFERENCE 2: “Supporting Better Implementation and Consolidation of European Equal Treatment Legislation”

Equinet will organise a one day conference to discuss present achievements, gaps, challenges and solutions in the European legal and policy framework for equality and non-discrimination. The European Union and the Council of Europe have already adopted wide-ranging and strong policies and laws to ensure equality and combat discrimination in Europe. However, adequate implementation of the existing measures remains an ongoing challenge and there are also some areas where there appears to be a need for more instruments to be adopted, such as in the field of work-life balance or discrimination outside employment on various grounds.

Building on previous Equinet Perspectives and reports, the conference will bring together stakeholders and equality bodies to assess progress achieved and still to be made, with specific

attention to the role of equality bodies in better regulation and implementation. The specific challenge of creating the conditions for equality bodies to fulfill their potential will be also discussed, using the results of the Equinet Cluster on Standards for equality bodies.

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 C3 C4 D1 D2 D3

WORKING GROUP (4) on Policy Formation

In 2016 the Working Group will:

- Discuss and produce a Perspective on age discrimination against young people, taking into account their particular situation and challenges. The Perspective will address intersectional discrimination and it will build on the experiences and case work of equality bodies. It will take into account the learnings from relevant previous Equinet Perspectives, notably *Tackling Ageism and Discrimination*.
- Produce a discussion paper on intersectionality and develop this topic with a focus on gender, in consultation with the Working Group on Gender Equality. The paper will discuss addressing intersectional discrimination and promoting equality on an intersectional basis. It will serve as a basis for the Equinet conference *Gender equality: an intersectional perspective*.
- Contribute to the preparation and organization of the Equinet conference *Gender equality: an intersectional perspective*.
- Support dissemination, follow-up and use of previously published Equinet Perspectives including on the work done by equality bodies in order to advance equality and counter discrimination on the ground of religion and belief.

Expected outputs:

1. The Working Group will meet twice during 2016 with around 15 members present.
2. Preparation of a perspective on age discrimination against young people.
3. Preparation of a discussion paper on intersectionality with a focus on gender.

Further objectives met: A1 C1 C3 C4 D2

ENGAGEMENT: “Equality Bodies and Work Life Balance: contributions to new EU initiatives”

Equinet has worked extensively on the situation of women in the labour market. It focused in particular on Work Life Balance, including by (1) hosting a Seminar on *Work Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood Related Discrimination* in 2015, (2) publishing a Perspective on *Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work Life Balance for All* in 2013, (3) focusing on work-life balance and pregnancy-related discrimination in the Perspective *The Persistence of Discrimination, Harassment and Inequality for Women*.

This rich evidence-base from the work of equality bodies could valuably inform the work of EU institutions and partners, following the withdrawal of the Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 92/85/EEC (so-called new Maternity Directive) and the publication of the European Commission’s Roadmap for the initiative *New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families*

Expected outputs:

1. Engagement and discussion with Members, policy-makers and stakeholders on the implications, recommendations and follow-up of the Equinet work on the subject.
2. Support to members-led initiatives to discuss, including in the European institutions and agencies, the work done by equality bodies and Equinet on work-life balance.

Further objectives met: **C1 C4 D3**

ENGAGEMENT with European Institutions and stakeholders

In order to contribute to the European equality agenda from the perspective of equality bodies, Equinet will strive to engage all relevant European institutions and stakeholders and will continue to support key initiatives taken by the European Institutions. This engagement will cover all equality grounds and fields with a focus on topical policy and legislative issues such as:

- Horizontal Directive
- Women on Boards Directive
- Work-Life Balance and pregnancy-related discrimination
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU
- Strategy for Gender Equality
- European Disability Strategy and the UN CRPD
- Policies for LGBTI equality
- Policies for Roma equality
- Equality data collection
- Under-reporting of discrimination
- Europe 2020

Equinet will continue to engage directly with the **European Commission**, specifically the Equality Directorate as well as other directorates responsible for equality and fundamental rights 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 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, as well as relevant EP Intergroups and 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 organisations at European level such as the Council of Europe and its bodies, the OSCE, the European Network of NHRIs, and the European Ombudsman.

Equinet will:

- Participate in European level events on equality, representing equality bodies and the network's activities
- Make links with other non-discrimination structures established by the European Commission
- Engage with new equality strategies being developed by the Commission
- 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

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.

Further objectives met: **C1 C2 C4 D2 D3**

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

RESEARCH on Positive Duties/Equality Duties

Equinet will commission a study on the use of positive duties and equality duties in promoting equality.

The use of positive duties (such as compulsory pay audits or equality plans) and equality duties (such as a duty on all public sector organisations to have due regard to equality in all their functions) has gained prominence in recent years. They offer a novel approach to securing more equal societies by going beyond the reactive anti-discrimination model, yet introducing binding requirements on duty bearers.

The Equinet study will build on existing research on the topic and it will examine the advantages, challenges and possible shortcomings of positive duties and equality duties. This will be complemented by an analysis of good practices and comparisons between the different existing systems.

The study will conclude with recommendations offering ideas for equality bodies to use and spread the use of these tools.

Expected output:

1. Publication of a study on positive duties and equality duties

Further objectives met: **A1 A3 B1 B2 D2**

COMMUNICATION

Equinet communication work and initiatives are guided by a Communication 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. In this sense, Equinet aims to inform about national and EU developments on equality in an accessible manner, thus building the capacity of equality bodies and contributing to the European equality agenda. We promote the work of Equinet and our members and engage with our members and other stakeholders to successfully consolidate the network and position its members strategically. We commit to using a values-based approach in our communication.

The following key activities will be pursued as part of Equinet communication work:

- *Website:* 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 other stakeholders.

- *European Online Directory of Equality Bodies*: Continue the development of the European Online Directory of Equality Bodies on the Equinet website in order to clearly highlight each of our members and the work that they do.
- *Members-only Forum*: Maintain a members-only forum on its website to support communication among member equality bodies.
- *Social media channels*: Promote and operate social media channels to complement the website, raise awareness about its work and members and build a strong pool of followers. Include social media live-feeds for certain events and topics.
- *E-newsletters*: Issue regular e-newsletters, both internally and externally, to publicise relevant developments in the field of equality in Europe and latest news from Equinet, its members, European Institutions and other European stakeholders.
- *Email alerts*: 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.
- *Publications*: 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). 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).
- *Equinet Promotional Brochure*: An Equinet Promotional Brochure is due to be finished by the end of 2015. This should then be promoted amongst all members and other stakeholders, together with the Equinet Highlights for January 2014 – July 2015.
- *Equinet Annual Report*: We will prepare an Annual review that will be printed at the beginning of 2017. This will continue to consolidate the work of the Network and provide a succinct overview of our work, linked to Equinet’s strategic goals. This short document will be presented in an attractive, accessible and easy to read manner, with values-based messages throughout the document.

Expected outputs:

1. A user-friendly, accessible and up-to-date Equinet website, with an aim to reach an average of at least 2000 users¹/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 section on the Equinet website, which will include internal documents relating to the governance of Equinet as well as meeting minutes,

¹ As per Google Analytics: “users that have had at least one session within the selected date range (this includes both new and returning users)”.

working groups' updates, internal and external newsletters and other Equinet news and requests.

4. Continued increase of the number of followers and interactions on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as regularly updating Picassa with event photographs.
5. Regular issue of the following newsletters: *Newsbook*² – monthly; *Members' Bulletin*³ – bi-monthly.

[Further objectives met:](#) A1 B2 B3 D3

² External-oriented newsletter with information on Equinet's work and relevant European developments, including a spotlight on equality bodies every month.

³ Newsletters sent only to members. One is on relevant developments at EU and international level, while the other highlights important internal deadlines or requests related to the life of the network.

D. CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

ENGAGEMENT on Equality and Human Rights

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

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.

Further objectives met: **B3** **C2** **C3**

ENGAGEMENT on Standards for equality bodies

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. As pointed out in recent documents and reports from the European Commission, this potential also includes contributing to the better implementation of EU legislation and equality bodies acting as watchdogs for equal treatment.

Equinet has developed a body of published work that could assist the development of such standards, including the final report from its Cluster on Standards for Equality Bodies that convened twice in 2015 to discuss the issue with heads and senior level representatives of equality bodies.

Equinet will continue discussions with equality bodies on this issue as well as engaging external stakeholders calling for standards for equality bodies, making use of all existing resources produced by Equinet and other stakeholders. The issue of standards will also be put on the agenda of the conference “Supporting Better Implementation and Consolidation of European Equal Treatment Legislation”.

Expected outputs:

1. Wide dissemination of the report on the need for standards for equality bodies and the issues that such standards need to address.
2. Bringing up the issue of standards at meetings with relevant stakeholders and asking for action in the field.
3. An evolving consensus among equality bodies on the need for standards and on the nature of the standards required.

Further objectives met: **B3**

ENGAGEMENT Meetings with stakeholders from European institutions, civil society and social partners

In order to represent the specific experience and expertise of equality bodies, Equinet will cooperate with all relevant stakeholders working in the field of equality and non-discrimination, including European institutions and agencies, other international organisations, 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.

Expected outputs:

1. One meeting with at least five stakeholders from civil society and social partners platform

Further objectives met: **B3 C2 C4**

Management and Administration

Three different entities are involved in management of the Equinet Network as a whole.

The **General Assembly of Equinet Members** is composed of all current Members of Equinet. It is the main decision body of the network and it decides on matters pertaining to the strategic direction and the general management of the network. For instance, it approves annual Work Plans and multi-year Strategic Plans. It also votes on granting Equinet membership to applying organisations.

The General Assembly of Equinet Members will gather once in 2016 for an **Annual General Meeting** (AGM), to discuss priority work topics of relevance to Equality Bodies at EU level as well as (mainly) internal matters related to the network, including voting on certain items (accounts for the previous year, minutes of AGM 2015, work plan for the next year, possible membership applications...).

The **Equinet Executive Board** is the managerial body of the network. It is composed of a maximum of nine representatives of Equinet Members elected for a mandate of two years by the general Assembly of Members and is presided by a Chair. It works to best support the work of Equinet members and their positioning at European level and is responsible for the development and implementation of Work Plans. It also works on the development of strategic visions aimed at ensuring the strength, growth and sustainability of the network. To that end, it develops proposals for multi-annual Strategic Plans that are submitted in due course to the General Assembly of Equinet Members for approval. It also supervises the work of the Equinet Secretariat. 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. Board Members will take decisions in order to ensure the optimal implementation of the work plan and provide guidance on emerging strategic priorities for Equality Bodies.

The Brussels-based **Equinet Secretariat** is a structure that works towards the daily delivery and effective implementation of the Work Plans proposed by the Board and endorsed by the Members of the network. Under the direct supervision of the Board, it is responsible for the organisation and delivery of all activities planned for the year. It also works towards ensuring the representation, positioning and sustainability of the network. It acts as a point of contact for external stakeholders, funders and other parties working with or interested in cooperating with Equinet and Equality Bodies.

2016 will be a year of consolidation for the Equinet Secretariat. An internal review of current financial and operational procedures and systems will be undertaken in order to identify areas for improvements and propose steps accordingly, whilst taking into account the limited capacity of the Secretariat. The Board will be informed of the results of this review process and will guide the Secretariat in identifying the best solutions available.

Evaluating the impact of our work (Team)

As a professional European network, the credibility of Equinet's work rests both on (i) the effective implementation of the planned activities as well as (ii) its ability, as an organisation, to show the meaningful impact of its activities. As it has done each year, Equinet will commission in 2016 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. While the indicators will be measured every year, they will be mainly focused on successfully evaluating the Strategic Plan over the 2015-2018 period.

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 innovative methodologies used by Equinet during the year

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.
5. The number of Equinet publications.

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

6. Number of e-newsletters published.

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

7. Number of meetings with stakeholders that enable coherence and cooperation on shared concerns.
8. 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 A: 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 B: 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 C: 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 D: 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.

Equinet planned Calendar of activities in 2016

| KEY ACTIVITY | PERIOD OF THE YEAR |
|---|--|
| Seminar 'Gender Equality and Education' | Q2 (following a WG discussion) |
| Seminar 'Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility' | Q1 (no previous work needed) |
| Seminar 'Race and Ethnicity' | Q3/Q4 |
| Conference 'Intersectionality with a focus on gender equality' | Q3 (based on WG Policy Formation paper) |
| Conference 'Strengthening European Equal Treatment Legislation' | Q1/Q2 (based on Standards cluster and horizontal directive work) |
| Training 'Communicating Equality' | Q1 or Q2 (following a WG discussion) |
| Cluster 'Quasi-judicial Bodies: Good-Practice Exchange' | |
| Cluster 'Strategic litigation' | |
| Round table 'Equality Bodies and Work-Life Balance: contributing to new EU initiatives' | |
| Project 'Evaluation Lab' | 1 st meeting in January Second meeting: Q3/Q4 |
| Research 'Positive duties/Equality duties' | |
| Working Group on Gender Equality | Q1/Q3 |
| Working Group on Equality Law | Q1/Q3 |
| Working Group on Communications | Q1/Q3 |
| Working Group on Policy Formation | Q1/Q3 |