

E Equinet
European network
of equality bodies



Annual **Report**

2013

www.equineteurope.org

EQUINET AT A GLANCE

Equinet European network of equality bodies

Equinet is the **European Network of Equality Bodies**, a membership organisation bringing together 41 equality bodies from 31 European countries including all EU Member States.

Equality bodies are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and promoting equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.

Equinet **aims** to enhance the strategic capacity of its members and to develop the skills and competences of their staff. Equinet also works to identify and communicate the learning from the work of equality bodies, and enhance their recognition and strategic positioning in relation to all stakeholders at European level.

To achieve its aims, Equinet:

- Organises regular **training events** for staff members of equality bodies, and **high-level seminars** on key topics relevant to the European agenda on equality and non-discrimination;
- Supports research and exchange of information, data and expertise from and among equality bodies through:
 - » **Working Groups** structured around thematic work areas of relevance to equality bodies, such as *Equality Law in Practice, Strategy Development, Communication Strategies and Practices, Policy Formation, and Gender Equality*;
 - » **Reports, policy perspectives, and good practice guides** on relevant themes relating to the work of equality bodies and developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination in Europe;
 - » **Communication channels** such as the Equinet website, online members' forum, social media profiles and groups, monthly newsletters and regular email updates.

The highest decision-making structure within Equinet is the General Assembly of Equinet Members. Every two years the Assembly elects an Executive Board responsible for the overall management and the strategic leadership of the network. The operational structure consists of Working Groups of equality bodies' experts, and a Secretariat based in Brussels.



Annual Report

2013



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EQUINET TIMELINE OF 2013

01 MARCH

Meeting of Working Group Equality Law in Practice on *Equinet contribution to Race and General Framework Directives review*

26 MARCH

Meeting of Working Group Communication Strategies and Practices on *developing and shaping positive public profiles for equality bodies*

19 APRIL

Kick-off meeting of Equinet's newly established Working Group on Gender Equality

16 MAY

Legal Seminar on the application of the Race Equality and General Framework Directives

10 SEPTEMBER

Meeting of Working Group Policy Formation on *equality bodies supporting work-life balance*

20 SEPTEMBER

Meeting of Working Group Gender Equality on *equality bodies' work on equal pay*

01 OCTOBER

Meeting of Working Group Equality Law in Practice on *positive action*

24-25 OCTOBER

Training Event for Equality Bodies on Engaging and Working with Duty Bearers, hosted by Croatia's Office of the Ombudswoman

28 NOVEMBER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - EQUINET WELCOMES:

A newly elected Executive Board for the period 2013-2015 (see page 17)

Three new members: Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (Croatia), National Equality Councillor (Italy), National Commission for Persons with Disability (Malta)

18-19 MARCH

Legal Training Event for Equality Bodies, hosted by Germany's Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

11 APRIL

Meeting of Working Group Policy Formation on *equality bodies' work supporting LGBTI people*

30 APRIL

Meeting of Working Group Strategy Development on *how equality bodies work with duty bearers*

27 JUNE

Seminar on Gender Equality in the Labour Market: the role of Equality Bodies

18-19 SEPTEMBER

Training Event for Equality Bodies on Equal Pay, hosted by Portugal's Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) and Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)

24 SEPTEMBER

Annual Meeting with Equality and Non-Discrimination Stakeholders

23 OCTOBER

Meeting of Working Group Strategy Development on *how equality bodies work with duty bearers*

30 OCTOBER

Meeting of Working Group Communication Strategies and Practices on *developing and shaping positive public profiles for equality bodies*

FOREWORD

2013 has been an important year in the work of Equinet. It marked a renewed effort to highlight the need for European standards to protect and promote the independence and effectiveness of equality bodies. This work drew from the documented challenges facing equality bodies in a time of economic crisis. We contributed to this debate on standards with new research on processes and indicators to assess the impact of the work of equality bodies. We have been concerned to explore the implications of the new institutional architectures for equality bodies, and in particular the links that need to be developed between equality bodies, human rights bodies and ombudsman offices to strengthen the position and protection of rights in these times of economic crisis.

We offered a strong European platform for equality bodies and were pleased to welcome three new members during the year. Our membership now stands at 41 equality bodies from 31 countries (including all EU Member States). 2013 marked an important further step in the consolidation of Equinet as the European Network of Equality Bodies, as we successfully integrated the work of the former network of gender equality bodies previously coordinated by the European Commission and implemented a range of new activities on gender equality. This development has contributed to the advancement and deepening of our work on gender equality issues in addition to our work across the full range of equality grounds addressed by equality bodies.

We ensured that relevant learning from the work of member equality bodies at national level was highlighted and communicated at a European level. This was evident in the contribution made by Equinet to the review of the implementation of the Race and General Framework Directives, in the context of the European Commission's joint report on these Directives. It was also evident in highlighting the work of equality bodies promoting equality and non-discrimination for LGBTI people in our perspective on this issue. This contribution was achieved through surveys of our members and the analysis of this evidence, and was communicated through the perspectives and publications prepared by each of our thematic working groups. This body of literature supports our members in their work and provides a valued

input to policymakers at EU level.

Equinet continued to provide important peer support and capacity-building to enhance the work of our members and their staff in their mission as statutory bodies established under equal treatment legislation to promote equality and combat discrimination across Europe. This was achieved through training events, participation in thematic working groups with experts from other equality bodies, specialised seminars and participation in the members' forum exchange of our website.

The achievements of Equinet during 2013 are the result of the participation and insights of our members. These would also not be possible without our expert and dedicated staff team to whom we are most grateful. Equinet's new Executive Board, elected in November 2013, takes up the challenges ahead with great enthusiasm. It will be steering Equinet through the final year of its current Strategic Plan and laying the foundations for the future of the network with a new strategic plan. We owe considerable gratitude to Jozef De Witte, former Equinet Chair, and to the outgoing Board members for their work and contribution to Equinet over the past two years.

Finally, we are grateful to the European Commission for its support throughout the PROGRESS programme and for its ongoing commitment to the work of Equinet and equality bodies, and to our stakeholders for the fruitful cooperation in our common goal towards greater equality.



Evelyn Collins
Chair of the Executive Board

Anne Gaspard
Executive Director

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

1. INCREASED FOCUS ON GENDER IN THE WORK OF EQUINET

The year 2013 seals an important moment in the life of Equinet with an enhanced focus on gender equality brought into the work of Equinet following the incorporation of the work of the former Network of Gender Equality Bodies (previously led and facilitated by the European Commission).

Equinet was thus able to increase its range of activities with an annual seminar and a training event on gender equality. A new Working Group on Gender Equality was also created and added to Equinet's existing four thematic groups, providing a dedicated platform for exchange and collaboration on the topic for over 24 experts from gender equality bodies in 20 European countries. Finally, the Equinet Secretariat was also able to expand and welcome a new Policy Officer to support this increased focus on gender equality.

Under the guidance of the Equinet Board, staff members of equality bodies working on gender equality discussed topics relating to their everyday work and challenges during the two Working Group meetings which took place in Paris and Lisbon. These were hosted by the French Defender of Rights and the Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, respectively.

The common thread of work focus throughout 2013 has been gender equality in the field of employment. During Equinet's first well-attended and successful High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality, key EU level stakeholders and equality bodies discussed the important role of the equality bodies in ensuring gender equality in the labour market. The debates related in particular to topics including pregnancy-related



discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, and equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

This last topic of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value was also the focus of the first Equinet Training Event on Gender Equality for expert staff within equality bodies. The event introduced legal, policy and strategic tools for enhancing the work of equality bodies addressing pay inequalities.

The discussions from this training event laid the groundwork for Equinet's first report produced by the Working Group on Gender Equality, entitled *Equal Pay for Equal Work and Work of Equal Value: the Experience of Equality Bodies*. This showcased experiences and projects organised or supported by equality bodies on the ground for the effective implementation of the principle of equal pay, in order to share experiences and provide practical ideas on how to tackle the gender pay gap.

Equinet is proud of the success and achievements of this year's work on gender equality and looks forward to the continuation of this journey with enhanced support to equality bodies by sustaining a dedicated platform for peer support and cooperation in their work to tackle gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

2. EQUINET AND THE REVIEW OF THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION DIRECTIVES

The EU Equality Directives require the European Commission to prepare a report every five years with a view to assess the level of implementation, workings and impact of the legislation on the ground. In 2013 the Commission reviewed the implementation of the Race Directive (2000/43/EC) and the General Framework Directive (2000/78/EC), summarising its findings in a joint report. Equinet and equality bodies submitted important and well acknowledged contributions to this review process.

Equinet's *perspective on Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination on the Ground of Racial or Ethnic Origin* published in late 2012 outlines a number of key issues and difficulties with the implementation of the legislation.

Subsequently, Equinet's Working Group on Equality Law in Practice prepared a *Report on the Implementation of the Race and General Framework Directives* on the basis of the experiences of the equality bodies pointing to areas which could usefully be strengthened or interpreted in the directives or which presented particular difficulties. This report was introduced and discussed on the occasion of the *Equinet High-Level Legal Seminar* and informed the Commission's work in preparing its joint report.



THE REPORT RAISED THE FOLLOWING ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

1. Parity between the Directives:

the Race Directive prohibits discrimination in a much wider variety of areas and it introduces a requirement for all Member States to set up an equality body. The hierarchy of protection at EU level can cause problems in practice.

2. Equality bodies:

The existence of various difficulties and challenges faced by equality bodies in their work suggests that there is a need for stronger standards for equality bodies to guarantee their independence and effectiveness in practice.

3. Definitions:

The meaning of some provisions in the Directives could be further interpreted and defined by the courts to ensure a clear and uniform understanding of the terms, for example the definition of disability and discrimination by association.

4. Sanctions:

Although both Directives require sanctions for discrimination that are effective, proportionate and dissuasive, the definition of these terms is unclear and there are wide variances in the sanctions applied in discrimination cases among Member States.

5 Possible new provisions:

The report suggests that consideration is given to amending the Directives to ensure specific protection against multiple discrimination and to protect volunteers against discrimination.

The Commission published its joint report in January 2014, underlining that strengthening the role of the national equality bodies as watchdogs for equality, allowing them to reach their full potential and enhancing their effectiveness can go a long way towards promoting equal treatment.

OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE STAFF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN EQUALITY BODIES

Objective 2

PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EQUALITY BODIES

Objective 3

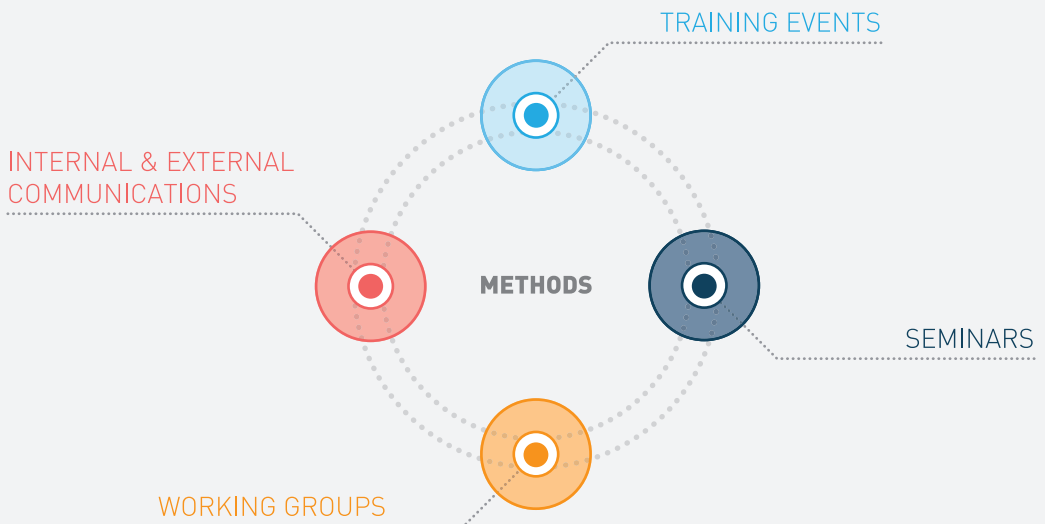
CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY FORMATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Objective 4

GROWTH AND POSITIONING AS A NETWORK

THE MAIN METHODS WE USE TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES

Each method has a color code that you can follow in the next pages.



OBJECTIVE 1

PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE STAFF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN EQUALITY BODIES



I. WORKING GROUP: EQUALITY LAW IN PRACTICE

Equinet's Working Group on Equality Law in Practice brings together legal experts working within equality bodies. They analyse how European and national equality legislation is implemented and interpreted and share experiences related to case work, in order to contribute to effective legal work and uniform protection from discrimination across Europe.

In 2013, the group prepared a Report on the Implementation of the Race and General Framework Directives on the basis of the experiences of equality bodies. The report points to areas which could usefully be strengthened,

defined or interpreted in the Directives or which presented particular difficulties. The report was introduced at the Equinet High-Level Legal Seminar and it informed the Commission's work in preparing its joint report by providing a unique contribution and overview of the experience of equality bodies.

The group of staff experts also started its discussions on the use and content of positive action measures and will publish a report on this topic in 2014.

II. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- **Members' only information board and annual calendar:** all meetings, events, updates, requests, invitations and deadlines are highlighted on the homepage of the members-only area of the Equinet website;
- **Dedicated subsections for each Working Group in the members-only area of the Equinet website:** each Working Group has its own subsection with the latest updates, contacts lists and outputs;



- **Easy-to-use members' forum with specialized discussion categories:** staff members of equality bodies can exchange information relevant to their work and to the work of Equinet;
- **Better dissemination of information:** in addition to regular mass-mailings of Equinet reports and perspectives to equality bodies and key national and European organisations and experts, 2013 also saw important growth in the number of subscribers to monthly e-newsletters and followers on social media.

III. EQUINET LEGAL TRAINING EVENT

Equinet organised its annual Legal Training event in Berlin, hosted by the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. The event was open for caseworkers from all equality bodies and provided participants with the opportunity to enhance their skills and develop their expertise through two days of learning, networking and information exchange.



The presentations and interactive workshops explored:

- the horizontal issue of evidence in discrimination cases and the shifting of the burden of proof, with an emphasis on situation testing,
- the potential role for equality bodies in bringing a case before the European courts, and
- discrimination on the ground of disability.

IV. EQUINET GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING EVENT ON EQUAL PAY

Equinet's first Gender Equality Training event took place in Lisbon. Staff members working on gender equality from almost forty equality bodies in Europe discussed, over a day and a half, how to strengthen their work aimed at ensuring equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. The event focused on legal, policy and strategic work: how to implement methodologies for the evaluation of jobs, how to build a case and how to ensure strong linkages and cooperation with other relevant key actors.

The event was co-hosted by the Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment and the Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality.



V. EQUINET TRAINING EVENT ON ENGAGING AND WORKING WITH DUTY BEARERS

The Office of the Croatian Ombudswoman hosted an Equinet training event in Zagreb, to share experiences and explore effective approaches and activities equality bodies can introduce and implement to encourage and support duty bearers such as employers, service providers, and public authorities in implementing good equality practices and to support a wider culture

of rights. Participants, including some guest companies and public authorities, discussed the guiding principles of engaging with duty bearers, the range of potential tools equality bodies can use when engaging and working with them and good practice examples of projects by equality bodies in this field.

VI. EQUINET HIGH-LEVEL LEGAL SEMINAR ON THE APPLICATION OF THE RACE EQUALITY DIRECTIVE AND THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE



Equinet’s annual High-Level Legal Seminar was organised in Brussels, focusing on the implementation of the Race and the General Framework Directives and presenting the relevant findings of Equinet’s Working Group Equality Law in Practice in this field.

This event represented one of Equinet’s key contributions to the consultation leading up to the adoption of the Commission’s report on the application of the Directives. The seminar presented equality bodies’ experiences with the application of the Directives; provided a platform for a wide range of legal experts to discuss and compare their experiences; and discussed potential areas and directions of future development of the legislation.



Mr. Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Equality (DG Justice, European Commission), speaking at the legal seminar



VII. EQUINET HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET: THE ROLE OF EQUALITY BODIES

Equinet organised its first High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality, positioning equality bodies and Equinet as key actors in the field of gender equality at European Union level. Key speakers, including the Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Gender Equality MEP Mikael Gustafsson and European Commission Director for Equality Mr. Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, underlined the importance of the work of equality bodies for achieving gender equality

in the labour market. Discussions addressed existing work by equality bodies on the fight against pregnancy-based discrimination and sexual harassment, and key partners such as the European Women’s Lobby, the European Confederation of Trade Unions and the European Commission exchanged with representatives of equality bodies on their role in tackling the gender pay gap.



“In my view gender equality bodies are one the most important key players in ensuring and promoting women’s rights at different levels of society. I am already looking forward to future events for dialogue and exchange of information, experiences and expertise between representatives from national equality bodies and EU institutions.”

MEP Mikael Gustafsson, Chair of the Committee for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) in the European Parliament



OBJECTIVE 2

PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EQUALITY BODIES



I. WORKING GROUP: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Equinet's Working Group on *Strategy Development* involves staff members of equality bodies concerned with planning and strategy development. They conduct discussions and collect good practices in order to support equality bodies to use their mandates and powers in a strategic and effective manner.

In 2013, the group finalised its report on engaging and working with duty bearers (employers, service providers, public authorities) recognising the importance of cooperation between equality bodies and duty bearers in combatting discrimination and ensuring a more equal society. Expert members of the group collected and analysed good practice examples and followed the

development of promising projects that can be used as inspiration for all stakeholders working towards ensuring equality.

Group members provided an important contribution to the planning and realisation of the Equinet Training event on duty bearers which, in turn, was a good opportunity for them to introduce their conclusions to other equality bodies concerning good practices, guidelines and useful tools in the field.



II. WORKING GROUP: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

The Working Group on *Communication Strategies and Practices* involves 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 2013, the group examined communication practices by equality bodies in terms of effective strategies to frame and shape their profile to affect positive change through their communications about their work. This served as a basis for a comparative analysis of such communication practices in different European countries in the report entitled "The Public Profile of Equality Bodies: Challenges and Opportunities".



III. WORKING GROUP: GENDER EQUALITY

The Working Group on Gender Equality was established in 2013 as Equinet's new platform for staff members of equality bodies working on gender issues. The Working Group aims to enable mutual learning, exchange of good practices, discussion, reflection, and cooperation among staff members of equality bodies, as well as action by equality bodies on promoting gender equality and combating gender discrimination.

In 2013, the expert group compared the key areas of work on gender equality of their organisations

by means of a survey. The outcomes of this assessment together with expert advice from Working Group members informed the Equinet High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality in the Labour Market and the Equinet Gender Equality Training event on Equal Pay.

The Working Group also authored a report on equal pay and the experiences of equality bodies with projects and tools for the achievement of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

OBJECTIVE 3

CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY FORMATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL



WORKING GROUP: POLICY FORMATION

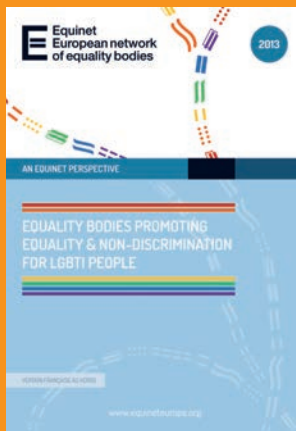
The Working Group on *Policy Formation* involves staff members of equality bodies concerned with issues of public policy. During 2013, the expert group produced two perspectives:

EQUALITY BODIES PROMOTING EQUALITY & NON-DISCRIMINATION FOR LGBTI PEOPLE

This perspective explored the legal work, policy initiatives, communication activities, good practice support and research work by equality bodies on LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) issues.

An equality body self-assessment checklist in this area was identified to include: action to address all members of LGBTI communities; secure a public profile for LGBTI issues; build a knowledge base on LGBTI issues; create institutional links with LGBTI people; establish specific objectives for their work on LGBTI issues; mainstream a focus on LGBTI issues alongside targeted initiatives; address under-reporting;

promote policy positions on LGBTI issues; track the experience and situation of LGBTI people; and develop procedures to sustain their focus on LGBTI issues.



Steps were identified that could be taken by policy makers, including to: ensure protection from discrimination for LGBTI people in all fields; prepare national strategies for equality and non-discrimination for LGBTI people; establish statutory duties on public sector institutions to have due regard to equality; name trans people and intersex people in equal treatment legislation; and ensure EU

funding to equality bodies for work on LGBTI issues.





EQUALITY BODIES PROMOTING A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR ALL

This perspective found that equality bodies have worked to eliminate pregnancy related discrimination, challenge gender stereotypes, support access by men to flexible working arrangements and statutory leave, and promote workplace flexibilities. They have also sought a 'reasonable accommodation' in terms of the workplace flexibilities needed across the six discrimination grounds.

In this work, equality bodies have sought to decrease discrimination; increase access to the labour market for those with caring responsibilities; change employer attitudes and practices; reduce gender stereotyping; prompt a redistribution of paid and unpaid work; and advance gender equality.

Equality bodies need to further develop their focus on these issues. Policy makers could establish legal duties on employers to consider or make accommodations for reconciliation of work and family life and work-life balance. Policies to support reconciliation and work-life balance could be further developed.

“Equinet’s Working Group on Policy Formation is one of the most valuable sources for sharing of best practices, lessons learned and experiences of equality bodies’ representatives from participating countries. Contributing to the European anti-discrimination public policies and strengthening national human rights and equality bodies to fight all forms of human and minority rights violations are key objectives in our work.”

Emila Spasojević, WG member and Head of Division for Research, Analysis and Reporting, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality of the Republic of Serbia

OBJECTIVE 4

GROWTH AND POSITIONING AS A NETWORK

I. COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN STAKEHOLDERS

Equinet has through the years become a well-established network at European level in the field of equality and non-discrimination, collecting and conveying the unique experience of equality bodies to policy-makers, legislators, civil society and other interested stakeholders. Equinet is indebted to the European Commission, in particular the Directorate for Equality in DG Justice, for its continued support to the network that has made this possible.

We are grateful for the excellent cooperation and positive relationships with our external partners and the support they provide to equality bodies and the network. A growing number of European and indeed national authorities and organisations seek contacts and engagement with Equinet, testifying to the importance of creating and sustaining links between equality bodies and stakeholders in the field of equality. These links are also important in reinforcing the external legitimacy, status and standing of equality bodies as they operate in a volatile and on occasion unsupportive environment, where such collaboration and alliances are ever more important. Equinet convened in 2013 its annual

meeting with its partners from civil society networks at European level. This provided a valuable opportunity to share and discuss our respective plans, priorities and concerns for the coming period.

Equinet was privileged to welcome representatives of the European Institutions, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), social partners, civil society, anti-discrimination and equality think-tanks, academics as well as legal professionals, as speakers and participants at its various events throughout 2013.

Equinet continued to develop a mutually fruitful link and collaboration with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions and its newly set up Permanent Secretariat, building on the Equinet perspective focusing on the links between equality bodies and national human rights institutions.

Members of the Executive Board and staff members of the Equinet Secretariat were also invited to contribute to a large number of events, conferences and workshops organised at national, European Union, United Nations and Council of Europe level.



Raül Romeva I Rueda MEP, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the European Parliament, speaking at the Annual General Meeting of Equinet in November 2013

II. EQUINET MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



At the 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Equinet members unanimously accepted the membership applications presented by three national equality bodies:

- Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (Croatia):** mandated among others to receive complaints regarding discrimination in the area of gender equality, provide assistance to complainants, investigate individual complaints, and conduct mediation and discrimination-related research.

More information on: www.prs.hr

- National Equality Councillor (Italy):** works with all the public authorities in the area of female employment, work-life balance, social security and social welfare, as well as combating gender discrimination in the workplace. It can also conduct mediation or, if this fails, bring legal action on behalf of female workers or intervene in support of the complainant in legal proceedings started independently by women workers.

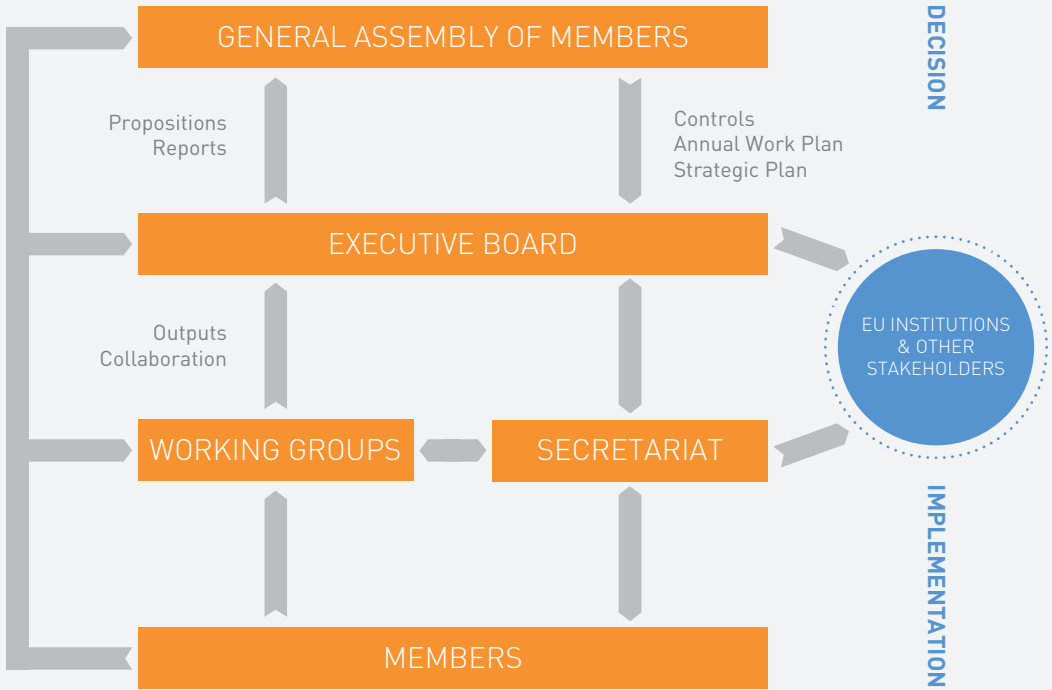
More information on: www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/

- National Commission for Persons with Disability (Malta):** monitors the implementation of Malta's Equal Opportunities Act and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, investigates cases of discrimination, coordinates work in the disability sector, and raises awareness about disability issues.

More information on: www.knpd.org

EQUINET GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



The main decisions concerning the general steering of Equinet are taken by the **General Assembly of Members (GA)** that is made up of all the current members of the network, and is convened at least once a year for an **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**. The GA:

- ratifies new members into the network
- elects representatives on the Executive Board every two years
- takes decisions on the strategic direction of the network by participating in the development, reviewing and voting on the annual Work Plan for the next year prepared and proposed by the Executive Board
- is entitled to amend the statutes of the organisation and to approve budgets and accounts.

During the course of the year, the GA delegates the management and the administration of the network to the **Executive Board**. The latter devises the strategy for implementing the work plan for the year, ensures that the means are in place to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the network and acts in the best interest of the network and its members throughout the year. All of the Executive Board members, the Board Advisor and the Equinet Treasurer execute their tasks pro bono.

On the occasion of the Equinet Annual General Meeting 2013, Members were called upon to renew the Executive Board for a new, two-year mandate. Four members of the previous board who submitted candidacies for a new term were re-elected and five new members made their entry.

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2013-2015

- **Evelyn Collins (Chair)**, Chief Executive, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland
 - **Anna Błaszczak**, Deputy Director of the Constitutional and International Law Department, Human Rights Defender, Poland
 - **Michiel Bonte**, Head of Service - Discrimination Department, Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, Belgium
 - **István Haller**, Member of the Steering Board, National Council for Combating Discrimination, Romania
 - **Sandra Ribeiro**, President, Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, Portugal
 - **Mari-Liis Sepper**, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, Estonia
 - **Tena Šimonović Einwalter**, Deputy Ombudswoman, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia
 - **Therese Spiteri (Treasurer)**, Manager, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta
 - **Néphèli Yatropoulos**, Advisor to the Defender on European and International Affairs, Defender of Rights, France
- Board Advisor:** Niall Crowley, Independent Expert



2013-2015 Equinet Board members from left to right: Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Evelyn Collins (Chair), Michiel Bonte, Therese Spiteri, Néphèli Yatropoulos, Sandra Ribeiro, István Haller, Mari-Liis Sepper, Anna Błaszczak

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2011-2013

Jozef De Witte (Chair), Executive Director, Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium;

Csaba Ferenc Asztalos, President, National Council for Combating Discrimination, Romania;

Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland;

Domenica Ghidei, Commissioner, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, The Netherlands;

Elke Lujansky-Lammer, Head of the Regional Office for Styria, Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria;

Julija Šartuch, Adviser on international cooperation and project activities, Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania;

Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Coordinator for the Area of Non-discrimination, Office of the Ombudsman, Croatia;

Therese Spiteri (Treasurer), Manager, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta;

Néphèli Yatropoulos, Advisor to the Defender on European and International Affairs, Defender of Rights, France.

WORKING GROUPS

The Equinet **Working Groups** are essential parts of the inner functioning of the network. Composed solely of staff experts from member organisations, they are the central platforms for effective cooperation and sharing of expertise amongst member equality bodies and their staff, alongside the Equinet training events and seminars. Each group is headed by a Moderator from a national equality body who, assisted by the Equinet Secretariat, is responsible for the organisation and the implementation of the work as planned in the annual Work Plans.

In 2013, a new Working Group on Gender Equality was established, bringing a total number of five active Equinet Working Groups, focusing on the following main themes:

- **Equality Law in Practice – supporting equality bodies in their legal work**
Moderator: Jayne Hardwick, Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom, Great Britain
- **Strategy Development – supporting the strategic use of equality bodies' powers**
Moderator: Sandra Konstatzky, Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria
- **Gender Equality**
Moderator: Sandra Ribeiro, Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, Portugal
- **Communication Strategies and Practices – supporting equality bodies in their communication work**
Moderator: Thekla Demetriadou, Office of the Commissioner for Administration, Cyprus
- **Policy Formation – supporting a dialogue on the learning from the work of equality bodies**
Moderator: for the duration of 2013, Evelyn Collins from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland. From 2014, the group will be moderated by **Tena Šimonović Einwalter** from the Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia.

SECRETARIAT

The **Secretariat** assists the Executive Board in implementing the annual work plan of the organisation. It is responsible for organising and managing the daily activities of the network and assists individual members and stakeholders with their requests. It supports and coordinates the work of the Equinet thematic Working Groups. The Secretariat regularly reports on the status of its activities to the Executive Board throughout the year.

In 2013 the Secretariat team included:

- **Anne Gaspard** - Executive Director
- **Yannick Godin** - Administration & Finance Officer
- **Tamás Kádár** - Senior Policy Officer
- **Cosmin Popa** - Communications Officer
- **Ilaria Volpe** - Policy Officer (gender equality)
- **Vasiliki Gkesouli** - Assistant Trainee (February – July 2013)
- **Charalambos Stergiou** - Assistant Trainee (September 2013 – February 2014)



From left to right: Tamás, Anne, Yannick, Cosmin, Ilaria, Charalambos

EQUINET FINANCES 2013

EXPENSES 2013	Actuals	Budget for year	Balance	% Budget spent
STAFF COSTS	380.705,61	389.089,91	8.384,30	97,85%
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	198.180,00	191.700,00	-6.480,00	103,38%
SERVICES	183.107,72	204.090,00	20.982,28	89,72%
ADMINISTRATION	16.819,94	14.761,80	-2.058,14	113,94%
MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS	165.434,88	151.764,39	-13.670,49	109,01%
TOTAL	944.248,15	951.406,10	7.157,95	99,25%

INCOME 2013	Actuals	Budgeted	Balance	% Difference projections/ actuals
EC GRANT 2013	733.114,26	738.641,71	-5.527,45	99,25%
MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS	165.434,88	151.764,39	13.670,49	109,01%
MEMBERSHIP FEES 2013	62.000,00	61.000,00	1.000,00	1,64%
TOTAL	960.549,14	951.406,10	9.143,04	100,96%

BALANCE 2013

TOTAL EXPENDITURES 2013	944.248,15
TOTAL INCOME 2013	960.549,14
BALANCE 2013	16.300,99

Equinet once again managed its finances well for the year and delivered its activities within budget.

About the budget headings:

Staff costs: covers the salary costs of the five staff in the secretariat and two traineeships (6 months each) per year.

Travel and Subsistence: covers travels on behalf of Equinet (staff, Board members and participants in Equinet events).

Services: covers service providers (translators, printers...) that Equinet contracts in order to accomplish its mission.

Administration: covers the running costs of the Secretariat.

Equinet has three key sources of income:

- The core income comes from the grant of the European Commission under PROGRESS. This amounted to **€733.114,26** in 2013.
- Membership fees provide a valuable part of the matching funding required and came to **€62,000** in 2013.
- The remainder of the matching funding is made up of the salary cost for the working time dedicated by the staff of the equality bodies to Equinet. This came to a value of **€165.434,88** in 2013 (reported as income and expenditure at the same time, since they have been contributed to Equinet and "spent" by Equinet).

The Executive Board will continue to maintain its strict oversight of Equinet's financial health so that members can continue receiving the best value for money possible, and guaranteeing that the European Commission continues to see that the financial commitment it is making in Equinet is worthwhile.

EQUINET MEMBER EQUALITY BODIES

AUSTRIA

Ombud for Equal Treatment

www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at

BELGIUM

Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities

www.diversiteit.be and www.diversiteit.be

BELGIUM

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men

<http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be>

BULGARIA

Commission for Protection against Discrimination

www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com

CROATIA

Office of the Ombudsman

www.ombudsman.hr

CROATIA

Ombudsman for Gender Equality

www.prs.hr

CYPRUS

Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)

www.ombudsman.gov.cy

CZECH REPUBLIC

Office of the Public Defender of Rights

www.ochrance.cz

DENMARK

Board of Equal Treatment

www.ast.dk

DENMARK

Danish Institute for Human Rights

www.humanrights.dk

ESTONIA

Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner

www.svv.ee

FINLAND

Ombudsman for Equality

www.tasa-arvo.fi

FINLAND

Ombudsman for Minorities

www.ofm.fi

FRANCE

Defender of Rights

www.defenseurdesdroits.fr

GERMANY

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de

GREECE

Greek Ombudsman

www.synigoros.gr

HUNGARY

Equal Treatment Authority

www.egyenlobanasmod.hu

HUNGARY

Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights

www.ajbh.hu

IRELAND

Equality Authority

www.equality.ie

ITALY

National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR

www.unar.it

ITALY

National Equality Councillor

www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/

LATVIA

Office of the Ombudsman

www.tiesibsargs.lv

LITHUANIA

Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson

www.lygybe.lt

LUXEMBOURG

Centre for Equal Treatment

www.cet.lu

(FYRO) MACEDONIA

Commission for the Protection against Discrimination

www.kzd.mk/mk/

MALTA

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

www.equality.gov.mt

MALTA

National Commission for Persons with Disability

www.knpd.org

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

www.mensenrechten.nl

NORWAY

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud

www.ldo.no

POLAND

Human Rights Defender

www.rpo.gov.pl

PORTUGAL

Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

www.cig.gov.pt

PORTUGAL

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment

www.cite.gov.pt

PORTUGAL

High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue

www.acidi.gov.pt

ROMANIA

National Council for Combating Discrimination

www.cncd.org.ro

SERBIA

Commission for the Protection of Equality

www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs

SLOVAKIA

National Centre for Human Rights

www.snslp.sk

SLOVENIA

Advocate of the Principle of Equality

www.zagovornik.net

SPAIN

Spanish Race and Ethnic Equality Council

www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.org

SWEDEN

Equality Ombudsman

www.do.se

UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN

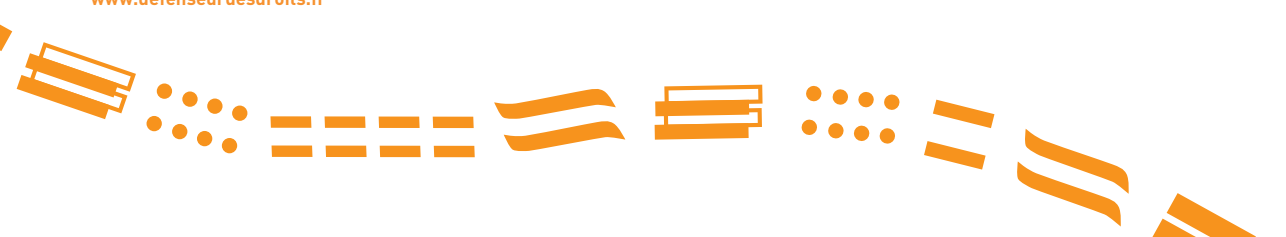
Equality and Human Rights Commission

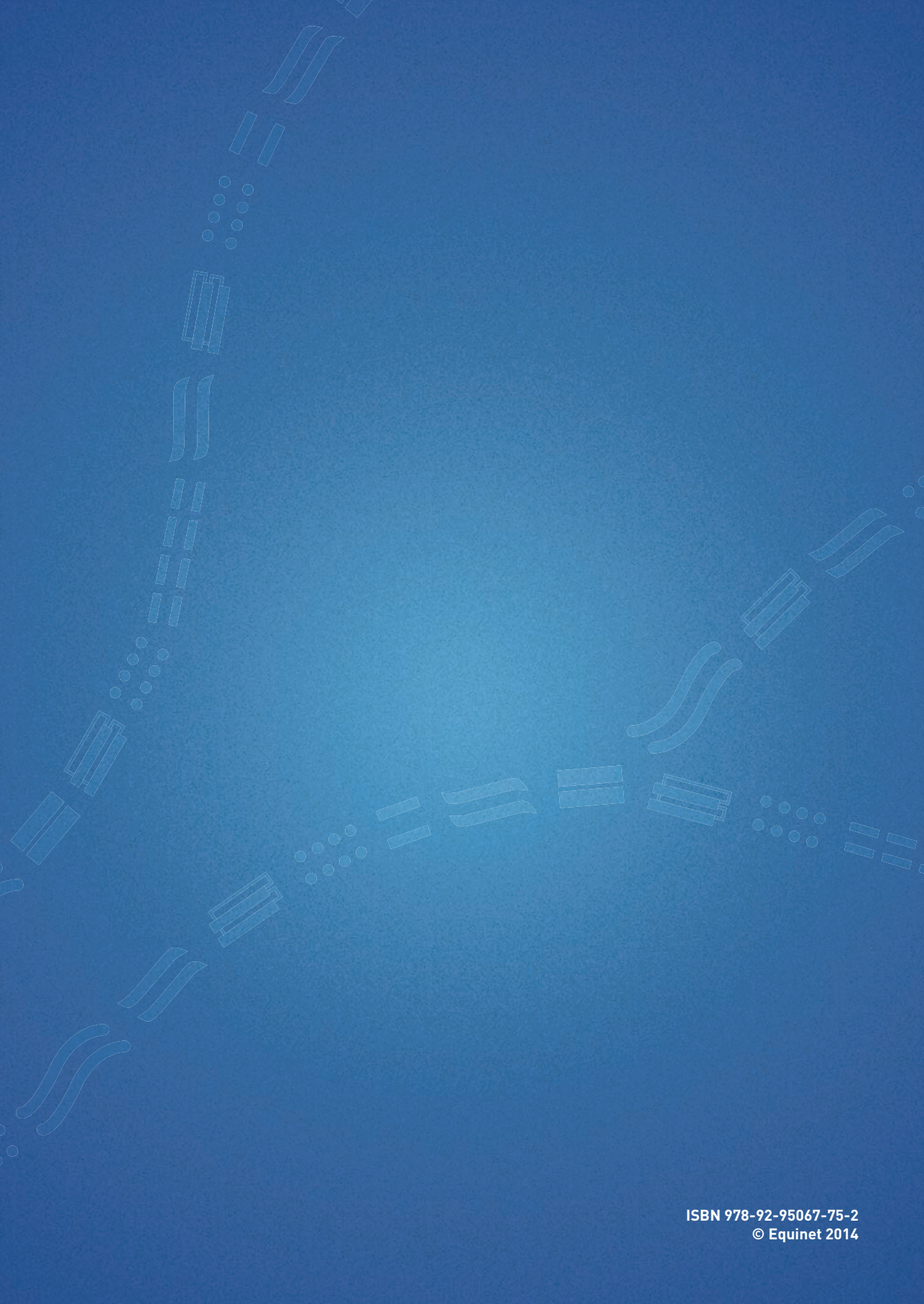
www.equalityhumanrights.com

UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

www.equalityni.org





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www.equineteurope.org

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