

Charting the Charter

Equality bodies and fundamental rights in the EU

Equinet Seminar – Agenda

VENUE	Crown Plaza Hotel, Rue Gineste 3, 1210 Brussels
DATE	16-17 June 2015

OBJECTIVES

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (the Charter) became binding primary EU legislation with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. EU institutions in all their actions and Member States, when they are acting within the scope of EU law, have a legal obligation to ensure respect for fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter.

The Court of Justice of the EU as well as national courts in their case law refer increasingly often to the Charter, illustrating its growing importance. However, to date the use of the Charter by equality bodies at the domestic level remains limited.

This Equinet seminar is dedicated to the role and importance of the Charter in safeguarding fundamental rights, ensuring equality and combating discrimination and it will have a particular focus on the practical use and benefits of the Charter for equality bodies.

The seminar will feature presentations by eminent external speakers and experts of equality bodies as well as interactive workshop sessions.

This seminar is designed to enable equality bodies' staff to:

- Discuss the legal nature of the Charter, and its relevance for practitioners and in particular equality bodies,
- Familiarise with the content of the Charter,
- Learn about the Charter's applicability at national level and its links with other human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights,
- Share their knowledge and experience during the sessions and during the breaks,
- Learn about good practice initiatives and projects by other equality bodies,
- Make better use of the Charter in their work at domestic level,
- Upon their return inform their colleagues about the lessons learned at the training

PARTICIPANTS

This Equinet seminar is dedicated to an audience of approximately 50 staff members of equality bodies with responsibilities in dealing with case work and legal strategy. The seminar programme is designed primarily for staff members with a **legal background**.

WORKSHOP FACILITATORS: Jayne Hardwick, Anna Mazurczak, Katrin Wladasch



Tuesday, 16 June

08.30 – 09.00 Registration

09.00-09.30 **Opening address and presentation of the European Commission's work on the Charter** **Chiara Adamo**
 Head of Unit, European Commission
 DG Justice, Unit C1 – Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child

09.30-09.45 **Welcome and opening by Equinet** **Evelyn Collins**
 Chair of Equinet, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

09.45 – 10.00 Exchange with Audience

10.00 – 10.30 Coffee Break

Session 1 – Introducing the Charter

Chair: Evelyn Collins, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

10.30-11.15 **Introducing the Charter** **Adam Bodnar**
 University of Warsaw and Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland

- The legal nature of the Charter
- The Charter's place in the human rights protection system of the EU
- Why and how is the Charter relevant at the national level for equality bodies?
- CJEU case law on the scope of application of the Charter

11.15-11.30 **Questions and answers**

Session 2 – Workshop

11.30-12.15 **Discussing situations and cases where the Charter applies or might apply**

12.15-13.30 Lunch

Session 3 – The content of the Charter

Chair: Mattias Falk, Equality Ombudsman, Sweden

13.30-14.10 **Structure and content of the Charter** **Katrin Wladasch**
 Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights

- The structure of the Charter
- Chapters relevant for Equality Bodies and related case law
- Other provisions relevant for equality bodies and related case law

14.10-15.40 **Case study applying the Charter – in small groups**

15.40-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-16.30 **Panel debate with the moderators of the discussion groups**

Session 4 – The experience of NHRIs and NGOs

Chair: Kathalijne Buitenweg, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

16.30-16.50	Presentation of cases and other work using the Charter – the experience of an equality body and NHRI	Clare Collier Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain
16.50-17.10	Presentation of cases from national and European level and other work using the Charter – the experience of an NGO	Nuala Mole AIRE Centre
17.10-17.30	Questions and answers	
19:30	Dinner & Social Event	

Wednesday, 17 June

Session 5 – Links with other human rights instruments and national law

Chair: Jayne Hardwick, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain

09.00-09.30	The Charter's links with other human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Links between the different instruments ▪ Possible effects of the EU's accession to the ECHR and the impact of the CJEU's opinion rejecting the draft accession agreement 	Vincent Depaigne European Commission, DG Justice
09.30-10.00	The Charter's links with national human rights law and its application at national level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of the Charter in cases at Member State level 	Mirosław Wroblewski Human Rights Defender Office, Poland
10.00-10.15	Questions and answers	
10.15-10.45	Coffee break	

Session 6 – Awareness raising and other ways of using the Charter

Chair: Anne Gaspard, Executive Director, Equinet

10.45-11.15	The work and experiences of the FRA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness-raising, including the Charterpedia 	Gabriel Toggenburg EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
11.15-11.45	Using the Charter as a lever for change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of the Charter in national policy-making 	John Morijn Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU
11.45-12.45	Discussing the use of the Charter outside case work, including awareness-raising, policy-making and recommendations to policy-makers – in small groups	
12.45-13.00	Closing – Anne Gaspard, Executive Director, Equinet	
13.00-14.00	Closing Lunch	