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**Dear Equinet Members,**This Members’ Bulletin gathers **the latest European Union (EU) and international developments**. It aims to give you an **overview of relevant policy and legal developments**, as well as latest calls for interest, funding opportunities and upcoming events. We very much hope this members’ bulletin will be useful in your day-to-day work and we would be grateful if you could **disseminate it among your colleagues**. Your feedback is also greatly appreciated. Should you have any comments or further questions, **please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Machacova, Equinet Project Officer** ([Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org](mailto:Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org) / 0032 2 212 31 80).

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# Highlight 1: The Gender Goods and Services Directive

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Report on the implementation of the ‘Gender Goods and Services Directive’

The European Commission has issued [a report](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/law_reviews/directive_2004_113_report_en.pdf) on the implementation of the **‘Gender Goods and Services Directive’** (Directive 2004/113/EC) following a consultation with the EU Member States and other stakeholders, including national equality bodies and Equinet. In this report, the European Commission makes an important reference to the role of equality bodies in implementing the Directive.

Read Equinet’s article about the report [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/European-Commission-on-the).

## Equinet and the Gender Goods and Services Directive

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|  | **Equinet Report:** Equality Bodies and the Gender Goods and Services Directive (2014) (available [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equality-Bodies-and-the-Gender)) |  | **Summary of Equinet High-Level Seminar on Gender Equality** in the Access to Goods and Services (24th April 2014, Brussels) (available [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equinet-High-Level-Seminar-on)) |

# Highlight 2: Funding Opportunity

**European Commission: call for projects to support activities on anti-discrimination and Roma integration (Deadline: 07 July 2015)**

The European Commission has launched [a call](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/calls/just_2014_rdis_ag_disc_en.htm) for funding projects to support activities on non-discrimination and Roma integration. The call is open to national authorities, public and private organisations. Deadline for submission of proposal is **7 July 2015**.

# Thematic Policy Developments

## General information

* **The European Commission publishes its Better Regulation Strategy Agenda**

On 19 May 2015, the European Commission published its [Better Regulation Agenda](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better_regulation/key_docs_en.htm), a new package of reforms for EU decision-making. The Agenda includes a renewed [Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better_regulation/documents/swd_2015_110_en.pdf) (REFIT) to review existing and proposed legislation. In the field of Justice, the REFIT also evaluates Directives that are relevant to the issue of gender equality: the 1979 directive on Equal Treatment in Social Services but also the proposals for directives on Women on company boards and Maternity Leave.

* **European Semester: the European Commission adopts 2015 Country-specific Recommendations**

On 13 May 2015, the European Commission adopted country-specific economic policy recommendations for 2015 and 2016 asking for national action to create jobs and stimulate growth. The Commission is making recommendations for 26 countries and for the euro area as a whole, based on detailed analysis of each national situation and reflecting current EU policy priorities. These priorities include; “*improving employment policy and social protection to enable, support and protect people throughout their lives and to ensure stronger social cohesion as a key component of sustainable economic growth*”.

More information and detailed country-specific recommendations are available [here](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4975_en.htm).

* **The European Ombudsman publishes guidelines to ensure consistency of the EU cohesion policy with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

In May 2014, the European Ombudsman opened an own-initiative inquiry concerning “how the European Commission ensures that the fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union are complied with when EU cohesion policy is implemented by Member States”. The own-initiative inquiry has involved the European Commission, national ombudsmen and representatives of civil society. As a result, the Ombudsman has produced eight guidelines for improvement to support the Commission as it supervises the Member States in this area.

More information about the inquiry and full guidelines are available [here](http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/decision.faces/en/59836/html.bookmark).

## Gender Equality

* **The European Parliament adopts a resolution calling on the European Commission to push the adoption of the Maternity Leave Directive**

In May 2015, the European Parliament adopted [a resolution](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B8-2015-0453&language=EN) urging Member States to resume negotiations on the [proposal of Maternity Leave Directive](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0373&language=EN) which have been blocked for four years (see [Members’ Bulletin #6](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Members-Bulletins-)). In the resolution, the European Parliament also calls on the European Commission to immediately propose a new legislation in case of withdrawal of the proposal.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

* **EU Commissioner Vera Jourova commits to LGBTI Action Plan in 2015**

The EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality committed to [prepare a LGBTI Action Plan or Roadmap in the course of 2015](http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/commissioner-jourova-committed-to-lgbti-action-plan-in-2015/). This announcement comes in response to demands from civil society organisations and the European Parliament, which adopted in 2014 [a non-binding recommendation](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2014-0062&language=EN&ring=A7-2014-0009) for a future EU roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

## Religion and Belief

* **Publication of the draft agenda of the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights (1 and 2 October 2015, Brussels)**

The draft programme of the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights [has been published](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/index_en.htm). The Colloquium is organised by the European Commission and will take place on 1st and 2nd October 2015 in Brussels. It will address discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief, as well as anti-Semitism and islamophobia.

## Disability

* **European Parliament’s resolution on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**

On May 21 2015, the European Parliament adopted [a resolution](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0208+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN) to express strong support to the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The resolution holds that the European Parliament should engage fully in the monitoring and implementation of the UNCRPD. It mentions the upcoming UN-review of the EU by the UNCRPD committee, and asserts the EP’s support of the adoption of two key pieces of legislation, namely the European Accessibility Act and the Horizontal Directive.

The adoption of this resolution provides momentum for the EP to strategically implement the UNCRPD within its own structures by finalizing the creation of a ‘Cross-Committee Network on the implementation of the CRPD’. This network could become a strong tool to enable strong and efficient political coordination with other EU institutions.

## Age

* **Council of Europe: Children are not sufficiently protected against corporal punishment in four Member States**

The Council of Europe’s European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) [concluded](http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/corporal-punishment-of-childr-1) that corporal punishment of children is not sufficiently protected under legislation or case-law in Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Ireland. These countries are therefore in breach of the European Social Charter. Read about the Council of Europe’s campaign against corporal punishment of children [here](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/corporalpunishment/Presentation_en.asp).

# Latest publications, funding opportunities and calls for proposals

## General information

* **European Commission: Booklet ‘Know your rights!’**

The European Commission has published [a booklet](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/discrimination/news/150512_en.htm)  that provides information to EU citizens about their rights under EU equal treatment legislation and aims to offer guidelines to victims of discrimination. The booklet also gives information about equality bodies and Equinet.

* **European Commission: Report on the implementation of the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU**

The European Commission has published its 2014 [Report on the Implication of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/fundamental-rights/news/150508_en.htm). The report gives an overview of the application of the Charter by and to the EU institutions and Member States. The report identifies the rise of EU courts’ rulings that were referring to the Charter.

* **EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): Report on severe labour exploitation**

The Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA) has published [a report](http://fra.europa.eu/en/media/press-packs/severe-labour-exploitation-eu) that looks at criminal labour exploitation of workers moving within or to the EU. The report includes recommendations to the Members States and to the EU institutions on how to protect the rights of migrant workers and how to tackle labour exploitation.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

* **European Commission: Report ‘Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in EU’**

The Commission’s Justice and Consumers DG published a thematic [report ‘Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in EU’](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/sexual_orientation_en.pdf) which gives a detailed view on the existing application of the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78) on the ground of sexual orientation. The report includes a subchapter dedicated to the role of equality bodies.

* **EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): Focus paper on the rights of intersex people**

According to a new focus paper published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), “often the fundamental rights of intersex people are not respected as they remain largely unrecognised in European societies”. The paper points to “the need to review laws and practices across the EU that can result in discrimination, and violations to the physical and psychological integrity of intersex people especially when young”. The focus paper is available [here](http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2015/rights-intersex-people-are-too-often-overlooked).

* **Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: Issue paper “Human Rights and Intersex People”**

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, has published an [Issue paper ‘Human Rights and intersex people’](https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2755111&SecMode=1&DocId=2274364&Usage=2) that addresses legal, medical and administrative obstacles which prevent intersex people from fully enjoying their human rights. The paper gives recommendations to governments and practitioners on important measures which need to be taken in order to improve the situation for intersex people. Read the press release [here](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2321167&Site=DC&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE).

## Disability

* **EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): Focus paper on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**

The Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA) issued a [Focus paper](http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2015/un-disability-convention-driver-eu-change) showing an overview of the implementation reforms that took place in Member States after ratifying the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

# Recent case-law

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## European Court of Justice (ECJ)

* **Judgment in Case C-579/13 - P and S v Commissie Sociale Zekerheid Breda, College van Burgemeester en Wethouders van de Gemeente Amstelveen**

Member States may require third-country nationals with long-term resident status to pass a civic integration examination. However, the means of implementing that obligation must not jeopardise the achievement of the objectives pursued by the directive on long-term residents.

The judgement is available [here](http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/P_159354/).

* **Opinion of the Advocate General in Case C-299/14 - Vestische Arbeit Jobcenter Kreis Recklinghausen v Jovanna García-Nieto, Joel Peña Cuevas, Jovanlis Peña García, Joel Luis Peña Cruz**

According to Advocate General Wathelet, EU citizens who move to a Member State of which they are not nationals may be excluded from entitlement to certain social benefits during the first three months. However, they may not be excluded during that period from entitlement to benefits intended to facilitate access to the labour market without being given the opportunity to prove the existence of a genuine link with the labour market in the host Member State.

The opinion is available [here](http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/P_159482/).

## European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

* **Identoba and others v. Georgia (12.05.2015, application no. 73235/12)**

In the case of Identoba and Others v. Georgia, the European Court of Human Rights held:

By majority, that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) taken in conjunction **with Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and unanimously, that there had been a **violation of Article 11** (freedom of assembly and association) in conjunction **with Article 14**.

The case concerned a peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi in May 2012 to mark the International Day against Homophobia, which was violently disrupted by counter-demonstrators outnumbering the marchers.

The Court considered in particular that the authorities knew or ought to have known of the risks surrounding the demonstration. They had therefore been under an obligation – but had failed – to provide adequate protection so that it could be held peacefully.

The case is available [here](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-154400#{"itemid":["001-154400"]}).