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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 / 0032 2 212 31 80).

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# Highlights

## HIGHLIGHT 1 – The European Commission releases proposal of European Accessibility Act

On the occasion of the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp/default.asp?id=111), the European Commission released **a proposal of European Accessibility Act** (*Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services*). The proposal will define common accessibility requirements for certain products and services.

The proposal targets ATMs and banking services, PCs, telephones and TV equipment, telephony and audiovisual services, transport, e-books and e-commerce.

According to the European Commission’s press release, “the proposal for a Directive aims to improve the functioning of the internal market, making it easier for companies to provide accessible products and services across borders”. It would guarantee that persons with disabilities can access goods and services across the European Union on an equal basis with other citizens.

Read the **press release** and the **proposal of European Accessibility Act** [here](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6147_en.htm).
Read **Equinet Perspective** ["Realising Rights: Equality Bodies and People with Disabilities. Supporting the review of the European Union Disability Strategy 2010-2020"](Equinet%20Perspective%20%22Realising%20Rights%3A%20Equality%20Bodies%20and%20People%20with%20Disabilities.%20Supporting%20the%20review%20of%20the%20European%20Union%20Disability%20Strategy%202010-2020%22).

## HIGHLIGHT 2 – The European Commission launches public consultation on work life balance (Deadline: 17 February)


In November 2015, the European Commission launched **a public consultation on possible action addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers**. The consultation is available in the 23 European languages. Contributions from all citizens, public authorities and organisations are welcome until **17 February 2015**.

The consultation is linked to the [European Commission Roadmap on Work Life Balance](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2015_just_012_new_initiative_replacing_maternity_leave_directive_en.pdf), which has been issued following the withdrawn of the proposal of EU Maternity Leave Directive in February 2015 (more information is available on Equinet’s website).

We strongly encourage you to contribute to the consultation in order to make sure that **equality bodies are taken into account** in any future actions which could be planned by the European Commission.

**Please let us know if you are planning to send a contribution.** We would be also very happy to receive your draft contribution or, if written in your national language, a summary of the key messages you conveyed to the European Commission. In any case, the Equinet Secretariat remains at your disposal in case you need assistance and more information. Please contact Jessica Machacova, Equinet Project Officer (Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org / 0032 212 31 80).

The **public consultation** is available [here](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/opinion/1511_roadmap_reconciliation_en.htm).
Read **Equinet** **Perspective** [“Equality bodies promoting a better work life balance for all”](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equality-Bodies-promoting-a-better)

# Thematic Policy Developments

## General information

* **10th December is Human Rights Day**

Since 1950, the United Nations’ countries observe 10th December each year as **Human Rights Day**. This year, it will mark the launch of the one-year UN campaign on the 50th anniversary of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**.

**More information about Human Rights Day is available** [**here**](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/)**.**

On this occasion, the No Hate Speech Movement is organising a **European Action Day for Human Rights Online**. A set of 6 actions is proposed on the Movement’s website, including signing a petition to make 22nd July a European Day commemorating victims of hate crime and reporting hate speech case to their Hate Speech Watch.

**The list of actions is available** [**here**](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/)**.**

* **The EU Victims’ Rights Directive entered into force on 16th November 2015**

Three years after its adoption, the [**EU Victims’ Rights Directive**](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1421925131614&uri=CELEX:32012L0029) entered into force on 16th November, date until which EU Member States had to transpose it into their national laws.

The European Commission is currently monitoring the implementation of the Directive and will take further steps if the provisions are not transposed correctly.

**More information is available** [**here**](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6095_en.htm)**.**

## Gender Equality

* **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25th November 2015**

*The European Commission publishes joint statement of EU Commissioners* **Frans Timmermans**, First Vice-President, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, **Neven Mimica**, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, **Christos Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, and **Věra Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality published a joint statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In the statement, they recall the commitment of the European Commission to fight violence against women and girls through the new Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 for EU external relations and various funds.

**The statement is available** [**here**](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-6149_en.htm)**.**

*EIGE invites EU citizens to take action against violence against women*

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) invited EU citizens to take action and join the 16 Days of Activism and the White Ribbon campaigns in cooperation with the Luxembourgish Ministry of Equal Opportunities. Both campaigns aim to raise awareness and encourage decision makers to take action against violence against women.

**More information is available** [**here**](http://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/16-days-activism-we-invite-you-join-us)**.**

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

* **The European Commission publishes list of actions to advance LGBTI equality**

On 9th December 2015, the European Commission released a list of actions to advance LGBTI equality in the EU. According to the European Commission, even if this document is not nor a roadmap neither a strategy, it is to be seen as a follow-up to the [European Parliament's demand for an EU Roadmap against homophobia](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0062+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN) adopted in February 2014.

The list outlines six actions:

1. **Improving rights and ensuring legal protection of LGBTI** people and their families in key areas of EU competence
2. **Strong monitoring and enforcement of existing rights** of LGBTI people and their families under EU law
3. **Reaching citizens**, fostering diversity and non-discrimination
4. **Supporting key actors** responsible to promote and advance equal rights for LGBTI people in the EU
5. **Figures and facts for policy makers on LGBTI challenges at the EU**: Data collection and research activities
6. **External action:** LGBTI issues in Enlargement, Neighbourhood and Third countries

Equality bodies are mentioned under the action n°2 as key actors to enforce and monitor the transposition and implementation of EU law.

**The list of actions is available** [**here**](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti_actionlist_en.pdf)**.**

* **20th November marks the Transgender Day of Remembrance #TDOR**

The Transgender Day of Remembrance aims to pay tribute to victims of transphobic murders. According to Transgender Europe, since 2008, 104 transgender persons have been murdered in Europe.

**More information is available** [**here**](http://tgeu.org/)**.**

## Religion and Belief

* **The European Commission appoints two Coordinators on combating antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred**

In the context of the follow up of the first [Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equality-bodies-and-the-Annual) (1st and 2nd October 2015, Brussels), the European Commission announced the name of the two new EC Coordinators on combating antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred:

* **Katharina von Schnurbein** is appointed **Coordinator on combating antisemitism**.
According to the European Commission’s press release: “A German national, she has been coordinating the Commission's dialogue with Churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations and was part of former Commission President José Manuel Barroso's advisory team. Before that she was the Commission's spokesperson for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities (2004-2010) and press officer at the Delegation of the European Commission to the Czech Republic (2002-2004).”
* **David Friggieri** is appointed **Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.**
“A Maltese national, Mr Friggieri has, since 2012, been working within the Commission's Justice Directorate-General on anti-racism policies and fundamental rights and is the longest-standing member of the team working on the implementation of the EU's Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia. Previously, and since 2003, he held legal and policy officer posts within the Commission dealing with European citizenship and free movement and lectured European law at the University of Malta.”

**Read the European Commission’s press release** [**here**](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/fundamental-rights/news/151201_en.htm)**.**

## Age

* **The UN General Assembly adopts resolution on measures to promote the rights and dignity of older persons**

On 25th November 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution entitled “Measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons”. The resolution encourages Member States to take action to ensure that the rights of older persons are respected and the exchange of good practices.

Read the full text of the resolution [here](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/C.3/70/L.50/Rev.1).

# Publications, funding opportunities and events

## General information

**SURVEY** - **FRA Focus Papers -** [Stakeholder feedback](http://fra.europa.eu/surveys/index.php/472548/lang-en?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=0)(Deadline: 16th December 2015)

**PUBLICATION** – **EUROFOUND** - [6th survey of labour conditions](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1568en.pdf)

According to the report, almost one in six workers (16%) reports having been subject to adverse social behaviour – such as acts of violence, harassment and unwanted sexual attention.

## Gender Equality

**PUBLICATION** – **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** – [Attitudes towards violence against women in the EU](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/151125_attitudes_enege_report_en.pdf) - Enrique Gracia & Marisol Lila, University of Valencia

## Race/ethnic origin

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS** – **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** - [Action grants to support transnational projects to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/calls/2015_action_grants/just_2015_rrac_ag_en.htm) (Deadline: 18th February 2015)

**NEWSLETTERS** – **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** – [“For Roma, with Roma”](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/media/pdf/newsletter_en.pdf)

## Disability

**PUBLICATION** - **EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA)** - [Violence against children with disabilities: legislation, policies and programmes in the European Union](http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/children-disabilities-violence?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=0)

**PUBLICATION** - **COUNCIL OF EUROPE** - [Implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: Improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015- Abridged evaluation report](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/Disability/Source/2015_Disability_conference/Abridged_Evaluation_Report_en.pdf)

## Age

**PUBLICATION** - **EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA)** - [Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child](http://links.fra.europa.eu/l/1ce15da06e824a2f8949a4e8f35978e3/73EFBBC/112015)

**PUBLICATION** - **EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA)** - [Guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the European Union](http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=22)

## Other

**PUBLICATION** - **EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA) -** [Cost of exclusion from healthcare – The case of migrants in an irregular situation](http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/cost-exclusion-healthcare-case-migrants-irregular-situation?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=23)

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# Recent case-law

## European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

* **Ebrahimian v. France (application no. 64846/11) – 26th November 2015**

In its judgment in the case of Ebrahimian v. France (application no. 64846/11) regarding the non-renewal of a French social worker’s contract, who refused to remove her veil, the European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been no violation of Article 9 (right to freedom of religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

**The judgement can be downloaded** [**here**](https://t.co/ERyEq24SPC)**.
A longer analysis of the case is available** [**here**](http://www.humanrightseurope.org/2015/11/france-court-judgement-in-religious-veil-human-rights-row/)**.**

* **Judgment Annen v. Germany - prohibition from distributing anti-abortion leaflets (application no. 3690/10) – 26th November 2015**

The case of Annen v. Germany (application no. 3690/10) concerned a civil injunction by the German courts which prohibited an activist from continuing to distribute anti-abortion leaflets in the vicinity of a day clinic which performed abortions, and from continuing to list on his website the names of the doctors running the clinic.

In today’s Chamber judgment in the case, the European Court of Human Rights held, by a majority, that there had been:

A violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on Human Rights, on account of the order to stop distributing the leaflets in question, and a violation of Article 10 in its procedural aspect, on account of the order to stop listing the names of the doctors on the website in question.

The Court found that the German courts had failed to strike a fair balance between Mr Annen’s right to freedom of expression and the doctor’s personality rights. In particular, in the leaflets it was made clear that the abortions performed in the clinic were not subject to criminal liability. Moreover, while the leaflets included a reference to the Holocaust, they did not compare the doctors’ professional activities to the Nazi regime and did not explicitly equate abortions with the Holocaust.

**Download the full press release and the judgement** [**here**](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press?i=003-5236493-6495449#{"itemid":["003-5236493-6495449"]})**.**