**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 – European Commission - Public consultation on the mid-term review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (Deadline: 18th March 2016)

The [European Disability Strategy (2010-2020)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52010DC0636) lays out a strategy to empower people with disabilities so that they can fully enjoy their rights and participate in society and the economy on an equal basis with others.

It identifies eight main areas of actions at EU level:

* accessibility
* participation
* equality
* employment
* education and training
* social protection
* health
* external action

The purpose of the consultation is to gather views on the challenges faced by all persons with disabilities in the European Union and on the impact so far of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

Opened for contribution to all citizens, organisations and public authorities, this consultation closes on **18 March 2016**. The questionnaire is available [here](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/c29a28c8-9a4b-cada-17ba-f81c55580c51) in the 24 EU languages.

We strongly encourage you to contribute to the consultation in order to make sure that **equality bodies are taken into account** in the mid-term review of the Strategy and 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).

Read more about the **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020** [here](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52010DC0636), [here](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:em0047) and [here](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010SC1324&qid=1447776887209).
Read more about the **public consultation** [here](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=699&langId=en&consultId=19&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes).
Read **Equinet Perspective** ["Realising Rights: Equality Bodies and People with Disabilities. Supporting the review of the European Union Disability Strategy 2010-2020"](file:///%5C%5C10.252.26.12%5Cequinet%5CCommunications%5CNewsletters%5CMembers%27%20Bulletins%5CEU%20Developments%20%281st%29%5CJanuary%202016%5CEquinet%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 – Reminder: European Commission - Public Consultation on Work-Life Balance (Deadline: 17th February 2016)

As explained in our [previous Member’s Bulletin](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Members-Bulletins-), the European Commission has launched **a public consultation on possible action addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers**. Contributions from all citizens, public authorities and organisations are still welcome until **17th February 2015**.

We strongly encourage you to contribute to the consultation, which 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). **Please let us know if you are planning to send a contribution and** 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

**The Netherlands takes up Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

**The Netherlands takes up** **Presidency of the EU** from 1 January to 30 June 2016, replacing the Luxembourg presidency and preceding Slovakia for the second semester of 2016. The country has explained that it wants a Union that focuses on the essentials, creates growth and jobs through innovation, and connects with civil society.

The country has notably published [the programme](http://english.eu2016.nl/documents/publications/2016/01/07/programme-of-the-netherlands-presidency-of-the-council-of-the) for its presidency. The publication – available in four languages – takes an in-depth look at the priorities of the Presidency for the coming six months.

The Dutch Presidency notably explain that they will focus on ‘*gender equality and economic independence, (…), the European Accessibility Act, the ‘pillar of social rights’ and the Directive on gender equality in other settings than the workplace’*.

**The official website of the Presidency of the EU is available** [**here**](http://english.eu2016.nl/)**.**

**European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – New Director Professor Michael O’Flaherty takes up office**

On 16th December 2015, the new Director of the FRA, Professor Michael O’Flaherty, took up office. On that occasion, he published a video message in which he underlines the essential role of the FRA in a challenging time for fundamental rights.

*"I firmly believe in the importance of building alliances and working closely with FRA’s many partners and networks. Together we must build a culture of human rights that is embedded in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the other European and international human rights obligations. On this basis and in respect for our various competencies, we all working together will ensure societies that are open and inclusive and that promote, respect and protect all human rights for all.”*

**Read more information and watch the video** [**here**](http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2015/fras-new-director-takes-reins?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=12)**.**

# Publications, funding opportunities and events

## General information

**PUBLICATION** **– European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** (**FRA) – Survey**: [Do travelers to the EU trust fingerprinting?](http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2015/do-travellers-eu-trust-fingerprinting?_cldee=amVzc2ljYS5tYWNoYWNvdmFAZXF1aW5ldGV1cm9wZS5vcmc%3d&urlid=13)

Almost 60% of respondents are comfortable with providing their fingerprints when crossing borders.

**PUBLICATION** **– European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – Report:** [FRA report on 2015 national stakeholders meeting](http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2016/fra-national-stakeholder-meeting-report-now-available)

An **Equinet request to the FRA to provide an opinion on minimum standards for equality bodies** is notably underlined in the report (p 9).

## Gender Equality

**PUBLICATION** – **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** **– Report:** [Gender Equality in Power and Decision Making](http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-power-and-decision-making-report)

**EVENT**– **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) - Conference:** [Restorative Justice and Domestic Violence. Challenges for Implementation](http://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/events-calendar/event/6087) *(26 January 2016, Brussels)*

## Race/Ethnic Origin

**CONSULTATION** – **ENAR consultation on the consequences of security measures following Paris attacks (Deadline: 17th January 2016)**

[ENAR – the European Network against Racism](http://www.enar-eu.org/) sent us the following request:

“The Paris terror attacks have led to heightened security fears across Europe. One alarming aspect of these measures is the disproportionate impact they are likely to have on ethnic and religious minorities in Europe, as well as refugees coming to seek safety in Europe – in particular Muslims and those perceived as such.

To ensure we can provide evidence-based information for our EU advocacy and influence positively future developments, **ENAR needs your support to monitor breach of fundamental rights or disproportionate consequences of security and counter-terrorism measures on ethnic and religious minorities, including on Muslims, Roma, People of African Descent, Jews, migrants, etc**.

We would be grateful if you could send us:

1. **Any evidence of abusive and discriminatory acts by law-enforcement or by individuals reported following the November Paris attacks** *(E.g. racial profiling at airports, borders, public spaces; unjustified violence during perquisitions; damaging of properties; hate crimes; etc.)*
2. **Any information about security/counter-terrorism/counter-"radicalisation" measures that have been adopted or that have been proposed by politicans and/or governments, following the November attacks in Paris?** Please include positive measures as well and **specify if and how these measures have had a negative/positive impact** on minority communities. (*E.g. mass surveillance legislation; state of emergency; counter-"radicalisation" programmes/funds; criminalisation of foreign fighters; etc.)*

Please ensure that your reports are referenced (media clipping, articles, interviews, NGO data, etc.). Information on any group or any human rights violation would be welcomed at this stage. **Deadline for answering to this consultation is 17/01/2016.**

Feel free to contact us should you have any questions. **We will keep you informed about the EU advocacy work we will be undertaking, to ensure you can be actively involved as much as possible.”**

**Please send your contributions by Sunday 17th January to Julie Pascoët, ENAR Policy Officer** (julie@enar-eu.org).

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

**PUBLICATION** – **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** **(FRA) - Report:** [Protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the EU – Comparative legal analysis – Update 2015](http://links.fra.europa.eu/l/965d4004974a47fc8c7c0c2c82e48ebf/5B376978/122015)

## Age

**PUBLICATION** – **European Youth Forum – Report:** [Multiple Discrimination and Young People in Europe](http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2015/10/Multiple-discrimination-and-young-people-in-Europe.pdf)

# Recent case-law

## European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

* **Fábián v. Hungary (application no. 78117/13) – 15 December 2015**

“The case concerned a pensioner’s complaint that, following an amendment to the Pension Act, his old-age pension was suspended because he had taken up post-retirement employment as a civil servant. The new rule under the Pension Act notably targeted certain categories of pensioners such as Mr Fábián, the applicant, who benefitted from two incomes at the same time paid by the State. Those working in the private sector were not affected by the rule.

The Court found in particular that the difference in treatment between publicly and privately employed retirees on the one hand, and between various categories of civil servants on the other hand (namely, pensioners working as government ministers or mayors were exempt from the new rule), as regards their continued entitlement to receive an old-age pension, had not been objectively and reasonably justified.).

The European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been a **violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights in conjunction with Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property)** to the Convention.”

**This judgement can be downloaded** [**here**](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf?library=ECHR&id=003-5255480-6524391&filename=Judgment%20F%E1bi%E1n%20v.%20Hungary%20-%20discrimination%20in%20payment%20of%20pensions.pdf)**.**