**
Dear Equinet Members,**

This Members’ Bulletin gathers **the main Equinet internal updates, with a view to provide you with a clearer overview of Equinet activities**. 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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### **PART 1: EQUINET UPDATES**

# Equinet Seminar on Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation: registration openDeadline: Thursday 10th March

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On 4th and 5th April 2016, Equinet and the [Austrian Disability Ombudsman](http://www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at/) are organising the seminar **"Accessibility and reasonable accommodation"** in Vienna, Austria. The seminar will take stock of the experiences of equality bodies on accessibility and reasonable accommodation. It will also build their capacity in understanding, promoting and ensuring reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

This Equinet seminar is dedicated to an audience of approximately **45 equality bodies’ staff members** with responsibilities in dealing with accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues on the ground of disability and beyond. The seminar agenda allows for participation with different professional backgrounds, including communication and policy experts.

More information about the seminar, as well as the draft agenda, are available on the [Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equinet-Seminar-Accessibility-and).

**Register to the seminar by Thursday 10th March by using** [**this link**](https://form.jotform.com/60542399453966)**.**

# Equinet Training Session on Social Media: Open call for expert support to develop a training module on social media use for equality bodiesDeadline: Friday 26th February

Equinet will hold a training session for its members **in May 2016** regarding advanced **social media use**. This call for trainers welcomes **offers from experts to apply to develop a training module and deliver this to our members**.

The terms of reference as well as more information about the objectives of the event, expectations and needs from Equinet members, training module and contractors’ duties are available on the [Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/Open-call-to-develop-a-training).

**We would appreciate if you could disseminate this open call to your relevant contacts.** Should you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Equinet Communication Officer (Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org / 0032 2 212 31 84).

**NB:** please note that the registration process for this event will be open in the coming weeks.

# New Equinet Perspective: Equality bodies contributing to the protection, respect and fulfillment of economic and social rights

Economic, social and cultural rights are those human rights relating to the **workplace, social security, family life, participation in cultural life, and access to housing, food, water, health care and education**. They cover workers’ rights, the right to social security and social protection, protection of and assistance to the family, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to health, the right to education, and cultural rights.

This perspective acknowledges **the particular mandate that equality bodies have**. It is based on the reality that the implementation of this mandate has a particular, additional, and unique contribution to make to the protection and fulfilment of economic and social rights.

It aims to:

* Explore the specific nature of the contribution that can be made by equality bodies to protecting and fulfilling economic and social rights.
* Establish the contribution being made by equality bodies to the enjoyment of economic and social rights without discrimination.
* Identify how this contribution might be further reinforced.

The Perspective and its summary are available on [the Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equality-Bodies-contributing-to).

# Updates: Cooperation Platforms involving Equinet - Council of Europe – ENNHRI – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

In October 2013, Equinet, the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) took the decision to establish [common platforms for cooperation](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Thematic-Platforms-for-Cooperation-) on four pressing topics.

1. **COOPERATION PLATFORM ON ADVANCING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

The Platform had its **second meeting** in Strasbourg on 28 January 2016, hosted by the Council of Europe. Several national equality bodies and human rights institutions attended, **confirming commitment to advancing social and economic rights in Europe today**. Equinet presented its newest perspective, detailing the experience of national equality bodies in protecting, respecting and fulfilling social and economic rights (see below for more details). Improving prevention of violations (monitoring and impact assessments), as well as effective justiciability once violations have taken place, were debated. The partners committed to increase **information exchange** and explore the possibility of **common capacity building**, as well as promoting greater visibility for the need to respect social and economic rights in an era when such rights are under increased pressure.

**Equinet contact person:** Katrine Steinfeld, Equinet Policy Officer (katrine.steinfeld@equineteurope.org).

1. **COOPERATION PLATFORM ON RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

The **second meeting** of the Asylum and Migration Cooperation Platform was held in Vienna on 15th and 16th February 2016.

Three sessions were organised:

1. **Inclusion/integration of migrants:** Participants highlighted several priorities such as integration efforts and living conditions in reception centres and the need for exchanges of good practices and experiences.
2. **Ensuring the rights of migrant children:** the session was introduced by Marc Dullaert, Chair of the European Network of the Commissioners and Ombudsmen for Children. How to reach out to migrant children was one of the main obstacles mentioned by the participants during the working groups.
3. **The role of NHRBs and the Platform in the current migration situation – plan of activities for 2016:** proposals of actions were discussed by participants. A draft work plan will be discussed in the coming weeks.

**Equinet contact person:** Jessica Machacova, Equinet Project Officer (Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org).

1. **COOPERATION PLATFORM ON ROMA EQUALITY**

**Background:** The first and second meetings of the Operational Platform on Roma Equality (OPRE) took place on 30 January and 3-4 December 2015, organised by the CoE Special Representative on Roma. Following the first meeting, Equinet applied for and was accepted as an obeserver in the CAHROM, the CoE's Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues.

**Next** **meeting of this platform:** provisionally scheduled in Sofia on 25-26 April 2016, preceding the CAHROM meeting scheduled for 26-29 April.

**Equinet contact person:** Tamás Kádár, Head of Legal and Policy (tamas.kadar@equineteurope.org).

1. **COOPERATION PLATEFORM ON HATE CRIME**

**Background:** FRA organised a meeting for this platform in Riga in March 2015, for which a summary is available. The meeting addressed hate crime and hate speech issues and the role of NHRIs, equality bodies and ombudsmen in combatting hate speech and offering victim support. It also featured a joint meeting with the FRA Working Party on Hate Crime.

**Next meeting of this platform:** no meeting currently scheduled

**Equinet contact person:** Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer (Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org).

# Save the date! Next Equinet Meetings

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Working Groups** | **Tuesday 1st March** | WG Communication *(Nicosia, Cyprus)* |
| **Tuesday 22nd March** | WG Equality Law *(Brussels, Belgium)* |
| **Thursday 21st April** | WG Gender Equality *(Brussels, Belgium)* |
| **Capacity-building events** | **Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th April** | Seminar on Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation *(Vienna, Austria)* |
| **Governance** **Meetings** | **Friday 4th March** | Board meeting *(Brussels, Belgium)* |
| **Other meetings and events** | **Wednesday 20th April** | Equinet-EHRC Roundtable on Work-Life Balance *(European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium)* |

### **PART 2: EQUINET MEMBERS**

# Updates and new initiatives

* **Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium – Campaign on stereotypes on LGBT people**

On 1st February, the Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men launched a new campaign aiming at tackling homophobia and transphobia.

The campaign specifically targets young people from 12 to 25 years old and educational staff at school and in sport and youth activities. The campaign is run in cooperation the other equality body UNIA/Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities and various administrative entities.

**More information about the campaign is available** [**here**](http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/actualite/communique_de_presse_et_toi_tes_case_e_gay_lesbienne_bi_trans_dis_stop_aux_cliches)**.**

* **UNIA/Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, Belgium – New name and logo**

On 22nd February, the Belgian Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities officially announced its new name and revealed its new logo. From now on, the Interfederal Centre will be called Unia.

On the same occasion, Unia launched a social media campaign **#EgauxEnBelgique** (Equal in Belgium) in order to raise awareness about inequalities and non-discrimination in Belgium.

**More information is available on** [**Unia’s website**](http://unia.be/en)**.**

* **Danish Human Rights Institute, Denmark – Project report: Gold Indicators on the UNCRPD**



The Danish Institute for Human Rights, in cooperation with Danish disability organisations and national ministries, developed a range of indicators aiming at evaluating the implementation of the UNCRPD in Denmark. The final report of the project is available on the [Institute’s website](http://www.humanrights.dk/publications/gold-indicators).

### **PART 3 – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS’** **REQUESTS**

# Reminder: European Commission - Public consultation on the mid-term review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020Deadline: 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](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=699&langId=en&consultId=19&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes) 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** [**here**](http://www.equineteurope.org/Realising-Rights-Equality-Bodies)**.**