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**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 Membership and Policy Officer** (Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org / 0032 2 212 31 80).

**Equinet Members’ Bulletin on Internal Network Updates – Table of contents**

***(Ctrl + Click to follow the link)***

**EQUINET UPDATES**

* **Register to the Equinet Annual General Meeting** (29th – 30th September 2016, Brussels, Belgium)
* **Joint press release** - Equinet, ENNHRI, FRA, OSCE/ODIHR and OHCHR call on stopping evictions of Roma and Travellers
* **Equinet Working Paper on Standards** - Dissemination and call for translation
* **Survey on Social Media use for Equality Bodies** (Deadline: 12th August 2016)
* **Equinet Seminar on Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation** (4th and 5th April 2016, Vienna, Austria) - Summary available
* **Updates: Cooperation Platforms** involving Equinet - Council of Europe – ENNHRI – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
* **Save the date!** Next Equinet Meetings

**EQUINET MEMBERS**

* **Equinet members’ requests**
* **Updates from Equinet members**

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS’ REQUESTS**

* **Stakeholder consultation on FRA programmatic focus 2018 (Deadline: Saturday 30th July 2016**)
* **European Journalism Award on Diversity – for EU28** (Deadline: Sunday 31st July 2016)
* **Request from the European Commission** – Survey on pregnancy/maternity leave-related discrimination (Deadline: Monday 29th August)
* **Invitation – ERIO 5th Workshop with Equality Bodies** - “Ending school discrimination of Roma: the Role of Equality Bodies” Brussels, 13 October 2016 (Deadline for Registration: Friday 23rd September)

### **PART 1: EQUINET UPDATES**

# Register to the Equinet Annual General Meeting29th – 30th September 2016, Brussels, BelgiumDeadline: Monday 29th August 2016

We are pleased to announce that registration for the **Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)** is now open. It will take place on **Thursday 29th September afternoon and Friday 30th September morning in Brussels** (Thon Hotel EU - Rue de la Loi 75 - B-1040 Brussels, Belgium).

In observance of the Equinet Statutes, the Chair of the Equinet Executive Board is calling upon all Members of Equinet to **nominate their representative(s) to the AGM**, the highest decision-making forum of the network. The meeting will be conducted in **English**. A **maximum of two representatives** from each member organisation, including the head or senior representative of the equality body, are invited to participate in the AGM.

The following items will be submitted to the **vote** of the General Assembly:

* Equinet draft Work Plan 2017
* Proposal of reviewed Board Elections Procedures
* Equinet AGM 2015 minutes and 2015 Accounts
* If applicable: membership application of candidate Equinet member/s

The AGM is also the opportunity to **meet and connect with peer equality body leaders as well as EU decision makers and high-level representatives**. This year, we are honoured to welcome Professor Michael O’Flaherty, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) as our keynote speaker, alongside other high-level representatives from EU institutions and international organisations in the field of equality.



Each organisation is invited to inform the Equinet Secretariat of the representative who will be exercising the right to vote on its behalf, preferably doing so by using the [online registration form](https://form.jotform.com/61884500383962) or by contacting the Secretariat directly. **Please also inform the Secretariat should your organization be unable to send a representative.**

Pursuant to the decision of the Equinet AGM in 2009, for Equinet budget reasons and in the specific event of the AGM, **Equinet Member organisations are expected to arrange and cover the cost of their own travel and accommodation**. Further information regarding logistics, and the financial assistance Equinet can offer in exceptional circumstances to support participation if absolutely necessary, will follow soon.

**The deadline for registering for the AGM is 29th August 2016.**

Access the registration form [here](https://form.jotform.com/61884500383962).
The AGM webpage is available [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Annual-General-Meeting-).

For any questions please contact Jessica Machacova, Membership and Policy Officer (Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org) or call the Equinet Secretariat at +32 (0)2 212 31 80.

# Joint press releaseEquinet, ENNHRI, FRA, OSCE/ODIHR and OHCHR call to stop evictions of Roma and Travellers

Traditionally, summer holidays coincide with the eviction of Roma and Travellers throughout Europe, which takes place almost unnoticed. The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** and the **OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR)** join the **Council of Europe**, the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**, the **European Network of European National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)** and **Equinet** in a statement to condemn the recent evictions of Roma and Travellers in Europe.

OPRE (Operational Platform for Roma Equality)\* partners strongly condemn forced evictions without due process and provisions of adequate alternative housing. Such evictions violate international human rights obligations. The authorities must ensure that everyone subject to eviction is adequately informed of their rights, and carry out necessary evictions without discrimination or harassment.

The statement highlights the long-term negative implications of eviction that can result in physical and psychological problems, including emotional trauma and lasting social isolation, which particularly affects elderly people, women, children, and people with disabilities.

**\*Operational Platform for Roma Equality (OPRE)**

*The establishment of the OPRE platform is the result of the joint conference of the Council of Europe, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which took place in October 2013 in Vienna. The conference set the scene for closer cooperation among national bodies and between national and international bodies. It was agreed to establish such platforms for collaboration on pressing topics such as asylum and migration, Roma integration, combating hate crime, and advancing social and economic rights and socio-economic equality.*

For more information, contact Tamás Kádár, Equinet Head of Legal and Policy (tamas.kadar@equineteurope.org).

Read the press release in English and French [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Press-Release-Stop-Evictions-of-Roma-and-Travellers).

# Equinet Working Paper on StandardsDissemination and call for translation

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| Overview - PDFOn the occasion of the evening reception and the conference “Strengthening the effectiveness of European equal treatment legislation” which were held on 15 and 16 June in Brussels, Equinet officially launched its **working paper on developing standards for equality bodies**. This Working Paper is the result of discussions that took place in the framework of the Equinet Cluster on Standards in 2015, as well as contributions and comments provided by Equinet members.It seeks to establish positions that equality bodies could promote, negotiate and advance vis-à-vis European and national administrations in the establishment of standards for equality bodies at European level and their implementation at national level. |

 **Dissemination**

The Working Paper, as well as a visual briefing summarising its key messages, are available [on the Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equinet-Working-Paper-on-Developing-Standards-for-Equality-Bodies). We would be grateful if you could disseminate it to your relevant contacts in order to ensure maximum impact of our messages.

**Translation**

UNIA, one of the two Belgian equality bodies, kindly translated the Working Paper in French (available soon). The Bulgarian Commission for Protection against Discrimination is also currently translating the paper in Bulgarian.

If your organisation would consider its translation it in your national language, please get in touch with **Tamás Kádár, Head of Legal and Policy** (tamas.kadar@equineteurope.org).

Read and download the Working Paper [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equinet-Working-Paper-on-Developing-Standards-for-Equality-Bodies).
Materials of the 16th June conference on strengthening the effectiveness of European equal treatment legislation are available [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Strengthening-the-effectiveness-of-European-Equal-Treatment-Legislation) (a summary of the event will be published soon).

# Survey on Social Media use for Equality BodiesDeadline: 12th August 2016

As part of our 2016 Work Plan, and in collaboration with social media experts Key Influencers Interactive (KII), we are developing a **training module** on social media use for equality body staff working in communication. The manual and training session will aim to provide expert advice that **improves social media use by equality bodies**, while also delivering practical examples of social media campaigns carried out by our members and the evaluations thereof.

In order to make the training as relevant and useful for our members as possible, the trainers at KII have created a survey to find out about your goals, current usage and needs as regards social media.

We would be very grateful if someone from your equality body (ideally the person who works most closely with social media) could take the time to **fill in the survey before 12 August 2016**: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEdnXXCUTNJp7MmLD3OHnGJxsqSMPoBcb3-Y4I0tKGD-lVLQ/viewform>

If you have any questions regarding the survey, or need help filling it out, please don’t hesitate to contact **Jaroslav Faltus at** **jaroslav.faltus@gmail.com****, and putting Sarah in copy (****sarah.cookeodowd@equineteurope.org****).**

The training session will take place in the autumn, but registration won’t be launched for that until the end of the summer.

For any questions please contact **Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer** (Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org) or call the Equinet Secretariat at +32 (0)2 212 31 84.

# Equinet’s Online Directory of Equality BodiesDeadline: 29th August 2016

As the European network of equality bodies, one of our main tasks is to provide information on equality bodies to external audiences. We do that in a number of ways, but the basic method that we currently use is a section of the website called [Equinet members](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Member-organisations-), which includes very basic profiles of each of our members. We are happy to say that this section will soon be replaced (it has long been due an update)!

The **Online Directory of Equality Bodies**, which we started working on back in 2014, is slowly coming together. The technical side of things is advancing well and we now have individual profiles for most of our members, as well as comparative charts based on the information that you have provided.

We aim to launch the Directory this autumn (AGM 2016), and in order to do this properly, we need for all of our members to have complete profiles. Therefore in the coming days, contact persons will receive an email to request that you either **update or fill out the profile for their organization. The deadline for this is 29 August.**

Although you will receive all the information in the email, you can already check the state of your profile by logging on to the internal section of the Equinet website (contact Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org if you don’t have your password) and then going to: <http://equineteurope.org/spip.php?page=membersdata_edit>

Thanks to all members for your patience with the slow development of this tool, but hopefully it will have been worth the wait!

For any questions please contact **Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer** (Sarah.cookeodowd@equineteurope.org) or call the Equinet Secretariat at +32 (0)2 212 31 84.

# Equinet Seminar on Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation4th and 5th April 2016, Vienna, AustriaSummary available

On 4th and 5th April 2016, Equinet and the Austrian Disability Ombudsman organised the seminar **"Accessibility and reasonable accommodation"** in Vienna, Austria. The seminar took stock of the experiences of equality bodies on accessibility and reasonable accommodation. It also aimed to build their capacity in understanding, promoting and ensuring reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

The **materials** and **summary** of the seminar are available [on the Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/Equinet-Seminar-Accessibility-and).

# 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 last meeting of the ECOSOC Cooperation Platform was held on 28th January in Strasbourg. The next meeting will be held on 10th October in Belgrade, Serbia, hosted by the Serbian Commission for the Protection of Equality. The meeting should provide the platform and Equinet members with an opportunity to engage inter alia with the European Pillar of Social Rights, for which the Commission currently conducts an ongoing open consultation process.

**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. The summary is available [on the Equinet website](http://www.equineteurope.org/-Thematic-Platforms-for-Cooperation-).

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

1. **COOPERATION PLATFORM ON ROMA EQUALITY**

The last meeting of the Operational Platform for Roma Equality (OPRE) was held on 7th and 8th June in Athens, Greece. As mentioned in this Members’ Bulletin, a [joint statement on evictions of Roma people](http://www.equineteurope.org/Press-Release-Stop-Evictions-of-Roma-and-Travellers) was published in June 2016.

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

1. **COOPERATION PLATEFORM ON HATE CRIME**

The FRA working party on hate was held on 28th and 29th April in Amsterdam. A short meeting of the Platform was organised on 29th April. It was decided to continue the cooperation among Platform members mostly based on information exchange (Newsletters, emails etc). In order to maintain this information exchange, **please send FRA information on activities, meetings, studies and publications in the field of combating hate crime and hate speech, which you think could be interesting for the other Platform members**. During the summer period, please use these two email addresses : elena.balzarini@fra.europa.eu and pia.tirronen@fra.europa.eu.

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

# Save the date! Next Equinet Meetings

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| **Capacity-building events** | **Thursday 13th and Friday 14th October (TBC)** | Training event on social media *(Dublin, Ireland)* |
| **Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th November** | Seminar on race and ethnicity *(Budapest, Hungary)* |
| **Governance** **Meetings** | **Thursday 8th September** | Board meeting *(Helsinki, Finland)* |
| **Thursday 29th and Friday 30th September** | Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM) *(Brussels, Belgium)*  |
| **Conferences and other Equinet events** | **Monday 19th September** | Meeting of the Evaluation Lab *(London, UK)* |
| **Wednesday 7th December** | Conference on intersectionality and gender equality *(Brussels, Belgium)* |
| **Working Groups** | **Thursday 22nd September** | Working Group Equality Law *(Riga, Latvia)* |
| **Thursday 6th October** | Working Group Policy Formation *(Brussels, Belgium)* |

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

# Equinet members’ requests

* **Request to other Equinet members**

**Dear Equinet members,**

In order to use updated contact lists and avoid spamming and multiple sending, should you want to circulate a request/question to Equinet members, please contact directly Jessica Machacova, Equinet Membership and Policy Officer (Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org). Thank you very much!

# Updates from Equinet members

* **Annual Report on the Activities of the Hungarian Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights**

The Hungarian Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights published its 2015 Annual Report of Activities.

Last year, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights’ priority areas of investigation were the protection and enforcement of the rights of children, disabled people and other vulnerable groups. 8,240 complaints were submitted to the Office in the year under review.

Read more information and access the report in English and Hungarian [here](http://www.equineteurope.org/Annual-Report-on-the-activities-of-the-Hungarian-Office-of-the-Commissioner-for).

* **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC, Great Britain) – Reactions to the consequences of the EU Referendum**

Following the results of the United Kingdom EU membership referendum on 23rd June, the number of hate crime incidents dramatically increased in the UK (e.g. the police reported a 57% increase in online crime reports in England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

On 12th July, as part of the monitoring of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the EHRC published a call for a [full-scale review of the hate crime’s strategy](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/commission-calls-full-scale-review-uk%E2%80%99s-hate-crime-strategy).

The EHRC also published [a statement underlining the importance of protecting rights of citizens](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/blogs/eu-referendum-we-will-be-strong-independent-voice-conversation-people%E2%80%99s-rights) in the context of a potential withdrawal of the EU.

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

# Stakeholder consultation on FRA programmatic focus 2018Deadline: Saturday 30th July 2016

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) would like to **gather views from its key stakeholders on its programmatic focus for 2018**.

The proposed programmatic focus was introduced in a Director’s note on the development of the Work Programme 2018, which was presented at the 24th FRA Management Board meeting on 19-20 May 2016. This document includes multiannual activities carried over from previous years as well as new activities that are proposed on the basis of the current Multi-Annual Framework. In addition to those activities capacity will be retained in 2018 for responding to emergencies and other unanticipated issues.

**How to provide your inputs?**

You will find herewith enclosed a short document **[ANNEX 1]** including the description of the activities expected in 2018.

Each page contains an input form with some blank fields: please provide your feedback by filling in the form.

The results from the present consultation will help the Agency to finalise the draft Annual Work Programme 2018, which will be presented to the FRA Management Board at its next meeting. In order for your input to feed in this process we look forward to receiving your valuable contributions and views by 30 July 2016.

We thank you in advance for your time and should you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact planning@fra.europa.eu

# European Journalism Award on Diversity – for EU28 Deadline: Sunday 31st July 2016

The European Journalist Award on Diversity recognises excellent journalism that promotes diversity and raises awareness of discrimination in the EU. The 2016 edition of the European Journalist Award on Diversity rewards journalism that promotes social acceptance and diversity of all faiths and beliefs, in other words, writing that fights discrimination based on religion or faith.

The twin objectives of the Award are:

* To break social misperceptions and stereotyping of religious minorities in Europe and to foster tolerance and social acceptance of religious groups at risk of discrimination through the media.
* To portray positive images of religious minorities based on real stories of economic or social contributions of this group to society, as well as successful examples of integration.

**Role of Equality Bodies**

The Commission wishes to use the expertise of the Equality Bodies to help select the articles. Working with these independent bodies will, it is hoped, bring additional credibility to the process. The Equality Bodies will be involved in selection only, they will not be called upon to translate articles, get permission from the journalists or draw up the shortlist.

At least one equality body from each EU28 country will be asked to propose two articles published in their country to put forward for the Award. A shortlist of 28 will then be drawn up from which three will be selected by the EU panel and announced at the Annual Charters Forum.

**What next if you are from the EU28 and deal with religion or belief?**

In order to read the brief from the European Commission, access the information on how to upload articles on the shared platform, please check out the article on the internal part of the website - [here](http://equineteurope.org/European-Journalism-Award-on-Diversity-for-EU28).

**Deadlines for uploading articles to the Shared Platform: 31 July 2016.**

For any questions please contact Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer (Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org) or call the Equinet Secretariat at +32 (0)2 212 31 84.

# Request from the European Commission – Survey on pregnancy/maternity leave-related discriminationDeadline: Monday 29th August 2016

In the context of the “New Start” initiative for work-life balance, the European Commission asked us to disseminate the following questions on pregnancy/maternity leave-related discrimination.

**1.** Based on received complaints, what is your experience with discrimination on grounds of announcing the pregnancy to the employer, taking maternity leave and upon returning to work? Would you know the number of overall complaints you received in this area in the last five years?

**2.** Based on received complaints, do you find that there is a lack of substantiation of the grounds for dismissal in writing in cases of dismissal?

**3.** Based on received complaints, do you find that preparatory steps measures, such as searching for and finding a permanent replacement for the relevant employee or procedural steps such as consulting the employee representation are taken for dismissals?

**4.** Do you find that dismissals often occur after the end of the period of maternity leave? What is the most frequent time-frame for dismissals to take place?

**5.** Are there any cases of discrimination for taking up other types of family related leaves (parental, paternity, carers') leave and upon returning to work? Would you have a breakdown of these complaints by gender?

Please send you contributions to Katrine Steinfeld, Equinet Policy Officer (Katrine.steinfeld@equineteurope.org) by **Monday 29th August**.

# Invitation – ERIO 5th Workshop with Equality Bodies“Ending school discrimination of Roma: the Role of Equality Bodies” Brussels, 13 October 2016Deadline for Registration: Friday 23rd September

The [European Roma Information Office (ERIO)](http://www.erionet.eu/), in close cooperation with Equinet, invites you to attend **a workshop with Equality Bodies, anti-discrimination experts and Roma representatives on 13 October 2016 in Brussels (address to be confirmed)**.

Within the framework of the Race Equality Directive 2000/43 (RED) and national laws on equal treatment as well as on education, the workshop will focus on how Equality Bodies **can stop school segregation and discrimination of Roma children and ensure their equal treatment in education**.

Roma children across the EU continue to be denied equal access to quality education and still face discrimination and segregation. They are educated in inferior segregated environments or sent to “special schools” (schools for children with special needs with simpler curricula than mainstream schools). The European Commission initiated infringement proceedings against Czech Republic (2014), Slovakia (2015) and Hungary (2016) for breaching the Race Equality Directive 2000/43 (RED) in their treatment of Roma school children and where Roma children are significantly over-represented in “special schools” and segregated in mainstream schools.

The aims of this workshop are to:

* Promote cooperation between Equality Bodies and civil society to jointly address discrimination against Roma, including in education
* Foster discussion between different Equality Bodies, civil society and anti-discrimination experts on challenges and effective practices to end discrimination in education of Roma children
* Assist Equality Bodies to work effectively with Roma to tackle discrimination

ERIO will arrange and cover the expenses of the accommodation and travel of representatives of Equality Bodies. The workshop will be in English.

**REGISTRATION**

Places are limited. Please confirm participation as soon as possible, latest by **23 September 2016 at 14:00 (Brussels time)**. Register by email by sending your name, surname and organisation: office@erionet.eu. Tel: +32 (2) 733 3462