# Standards for equality bodies: The purpose and use of standards

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**Chair of Equinet** 

and Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland ECRI's seminar with national Specialised Bodies
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# **Equinet**

- Established in 2007 as the European Network of Specialised Equality Bodies
- Network of National Equality Bodies (46 members from 34 European countries)
- Specialised equality bodies on the basis of EU Equal Treatment Directives (2000/43/EC; 2004/113/EC; 2006/54/EC)
- **Diversity among national equality bodies** in terms of size, mandate, grounds, structure and experience



# **Functions of Equality Bodies**

#### Functions laid down in EU Directives:

- Independent assistance to victims of discrimination
- Independent surveys and reports concerning discrimination
- Recommendations on discrimination issues
- Exchange of information with European bodies

#### Wider functions taken on by Equality Bodies:

- Awareness raising
- Promotion of good practices



# **Objectives of Equinet**

Building capacity and peer support for equality bodies

(staff and organizational capacity)

**Contributing to the European Equality Agenda** 

(through communicating the learning from the work of equality bodies)

Serving as a knowledge and communication hub on equal treatment

Consolidating the network and the position of its members





### Standards - ECRI GPR No. 2.

- Current GPR already important for equality body standards
- Usefully updated reference to 'equality bodies' instead of specialised bodies
- High level of ambition and ECRI's support strengthening the role, standing and capacity of equality bodies
- Clear guidelines for all important conditions that are necessary to enable the effective functioning of equality bodies
- Useful emphasis on the functions and operations of equality bodies
- Focus on the prevention of discrimination among the functions

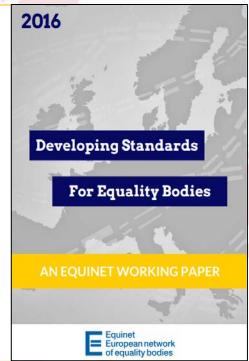


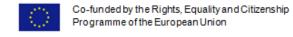
#### Standards for equality bodies – Equinet work

**Equinet's Working Paper on Developing Standards for Equality Bodies** (15 June 2016)

#### **Goals:**

- → Assist Governments in **establishing and creating suitable conditions** for equality bodies
- → Empower equality bodies with an **authority and standing**
- → Ensure that equality bodies can implement all of their functions and powers to a scale that can **achieve an impact**
- → Protect them from being **undermined or diminished** in the exercise of their functions







# Four key pillars

Mandate

Complete Independence

Effectiveness

Institutional Architecture





### **Mandate**

Equality, diversity and non-discrimination

- Public and private sectors in the fields of employment, vocational training, goods and services, education, housing, social protection and social advantages
- All treaty grounds covered under Article 19 TFEU and Article 21 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, including multiple discrimination





# Complete independence

Own legal personality and stand-alone structure

A governance structure reflecting diversity

Systems of accountability ensuring independence

Absence of external pressure and undue interference



### **Effectiveness**

- Adequate financial, staff and physical resources
- General powers
- Specific powers to underpin promotional-type functions
- Specific powers to underpin tribunal-type functions
- Expansions of mandate should be coherent with original mandate and based on adequate resources



### Institutional architecture

- Coherence if several equality bodies are established in one country
- Tribunal-type and promotional-type functions
- Coherent legal bases and adequate resources if mandates of equality bodies are combined with other bodies
- Accessible and coherent pathways for access to justice
- Lead and support the wider infrastructure to promote equality



# Way forward

- The key challenge: monitoring and implementation of the GPR and standards for equality bodies
- Reference complementing, inspiring and strengthening other European and international standards





## Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?







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