

# Standards for Equality Bodies

High Level Group on non-discrimination, equality and diversity

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**Chair of Equinet**



Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship  
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[www.equineteurope.org](http://www.equineteurope.org)



**Equinet**  
**European Network**  
**of Equality Bodies**

# Equinet – A brief history

**2000:** EU Racial Equality Directive obliging MS to set up equality bodies

**2003-2007:** cooperation project by equality bodies

**2007:** creation of Equinet as a European Network of Specialised Equality Bodies

**2008:** setting up of Brussels-based Equinet Secretariat

**2013:** incorporation of the work of the former Network of Gender Equality Bodies

**2017:** Equinet celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with 46 members



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# Equinet members

- **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)**
- **Increasing mandates** (e.g. free movement, work-life balance, etc.)
- **Merging mandates** (e.g. human rights, ombudsman, etc.)
- **Diversity among national equality bodies** in terms of stand-alone or multi-mandate bodies; mix of competences; grounds; size; resources; history and experience



# Functions of equality bodies

## Functions laid down in EU Directives:

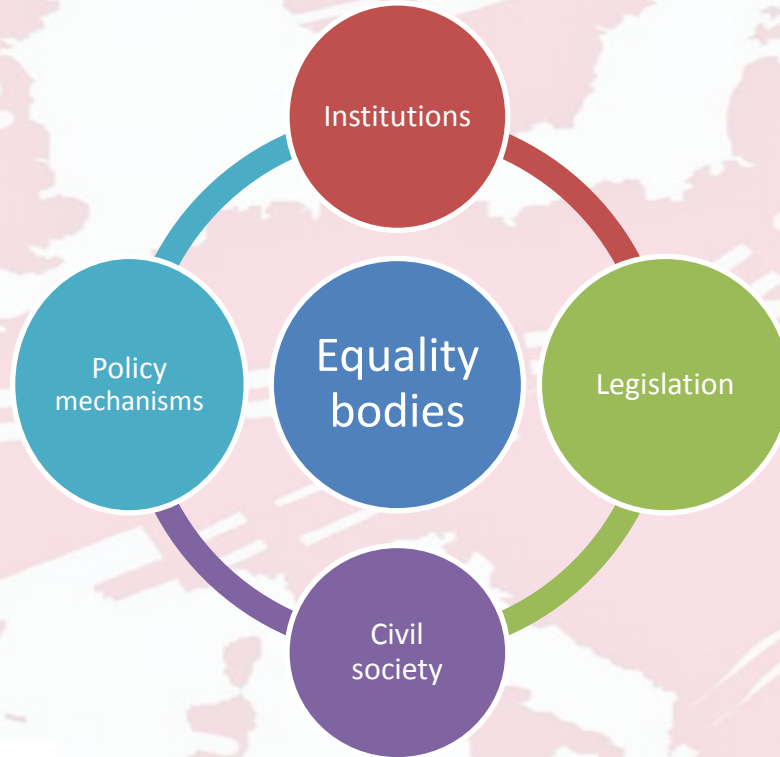
- Independent assistance to victims of discrimination
- Independent surveys and reports concerning discrimination
- Recommendations on discrimination issues
- Exchange of information with European bodies

## Wider functions accorded to Equality Bodies:

- Awareness-raising
- Promotion of good practices
- Work with stakeholders
- Monitoring and supervision



# A strong equality infrastructure



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# Why EU standards for equality bodies?

Only minimum standards in EU Directives

Equality bodies are a creation of EU law

Challenges to equality bodies threaten effective work

Standards enable contribution to implementing EU law

Need to reaffirm commitment to the European value of equality

Particular nature of equality bodies



# International and European references

EU Directives

UN Paris Principles  
(for NHRIs)

ECRI GPR No. 2

CoE Commissioner  
for Human Rights  
Opinion

By analogy:  
Standards for Data  
Protection  
Authorities

**EU standards?**



# Standards for equality bodies

## Equinet Working Paper on Developing Standards for Equality Bodies (15 June 2016)

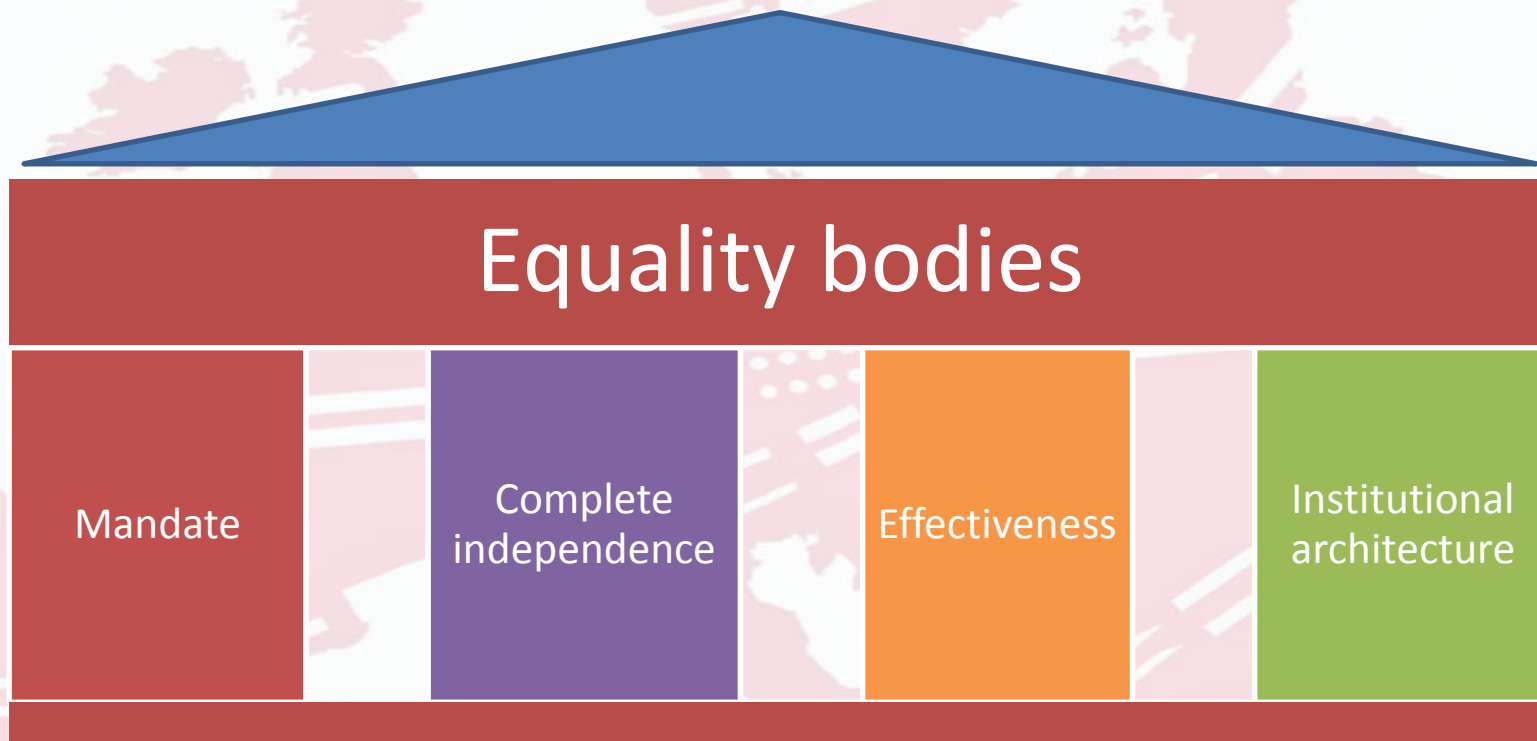
### Goals:

- To assist the European Commission in monitoring the full and effective implementation of the EU Equal Treatment Directives.
- To assist Governments in establishing and creating suitable conditions for equality bodies.
- To ensure that equality bodies can implement all of their functions and powers to a scale that can achieve an impact
- To protect them from being undermined or diminished in the exercise of their functions





# Four key pillars for standards



# 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
- At minimum all Treaty grounds covered under Article 19 TFEU and multiple discrimination, giving due consideration to grounds covered in Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



# 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**
- **Independent management of staff and financial resources**



# 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, adequate resources and visibility** 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

Enable the full  
potential of  
equality bodies

Ensure full impact  
of equality laws  
and policies

Champion the  
fundamental  
European value of  
equality

Renew and  
strengthen the  
equality  
infrastructure





**Thank you for your  
attention!**

**Any questions?**



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