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OPPORTUNITIES OMBUDSPERSON



Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices

SUMMARY

6 March 2018, Vilnius, Lithuania

Tuesday, 6 March: Working Group Meeting	
9:00 – 9:30	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agneta Skardžiuvienė</i>, Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania • <i>Katrine Gaustad Pettersen</i>, Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, Norway & Working Group Moderator <p>Agneta Skardžiuvienė, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (Lithuania) welcomed the group to Vilnius with her baby daughter, and informed us about recent amendments in the labour law which allow her to take flexi time and share parental responsibilities with parents. Following that, there was short tour de table for participants to present themselves, as there was such a big group present and quite a lot of new faces.</p>
09:30 – 10:30	<p>European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Communication Explained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Živilė Macijauskienė</i> (Stakeholder relations) and <i>Bernadette Gemmell</i> (Research Communications officer) <p>Taking the opportunity of EIGE's offices being located in Vilnius, we were fortunate to have two of EIGE's staff give us an overview of their work, including the communication priorities in the coming year. EIGE is the only EU agency focusing on the gender equality (GE) – producing data and evidence-based research for European policy making.</p> <p>Their main stakeholders are the EU Commission (particularly DG JUST Gender unit & Comm unit), Council of the EU, EU Parliament (FEMM Committee), and various "knowledge brokers", such as Equinet (e.g. for the Gender Challenges in Education promotion).</p> <p>Vision: making equality between women & men a reality for all Europeans and beyond (in the past 10 years progress on Gender Equality (GE) has only improved by 4 points (currently 66 out of 100)).</p> <p>Main focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GE Index – flagship product, as most popular publication – ranking system focusing on country profiles • Gender Statistics Database – on the website – repository for the EU – comparable data + thematic/policy areas • Monitoring implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, done at the request of Council presidencies • Gender mainstreaming tools into policy making



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- [Gender-based violence](#) (last year – EU Violence against Women (VaW) campaign – active participation – 25 Nov main day)

Coming up – focus on communication (2018)

- Gender-sensitive parliaments – to be launched later this year – Online tool to assess gender-sensitivity of parliaments; Pilot phase: tested in EE, SI and some regional ES parliaments (power has the lowest score on GE)
- Numbers of women and men in decision-making - statistics database is maintained by EIGE
- Digitalization – opportunities and risks for youth
- On 8 March there will be EU-wide [press release](#) by EU agencies on tackling VaW (will be sent to stakeholders, e.g. Equinet)
- Gender-based violence (study last year – report to come out soon)
- Improving data collection by policy and justice on intimate partner violence conducted
- [GE glossary](#) – over 400 definitions – working on language versions (German, French, Latvian + 16 languages)
- Gender Equality Index – Factsheets on Member States due for release this year (28 factsheets)
- Factsheet on Gender & Disability to come out – in touch with European Disability Forum (EDF)
- Intersectionalities report (1 feature of the Index which was given importance – age, family status, ethnicity, etc.).
- [Education](#) – report publications – Economic benefits of GE; Gender segregation; Challenges in education systems

Campaign on Gender Equality from last year – communication strategies/techniques/tools applied for the campaign

- GE Index launched in October
- developed 3 [teaser videos](#) (short attention span of people taken into consideration = 10sec approx.; importance of subtitles)
- creating buzz before release
- 7 infographics for the actual launch (disseminated during the conference + social media)
- Dedicated social media plan - #EIGEIndex 2017
- Live tweeting was very important during the conference
- Live Facebook streaming during the conference (FB crashed – proved the popularity of the event but also gave chance to think about how to avoid such mishaps in the future)
- Importance of multipliers (Jurova twitter) – getting opinion-shapers on board
- [videos after the publication](#) (also an animated video)
- Media outreach – working with journalists (database of journalists within the EU) + more personalized relations with journalists, who work in mainstream media but are interested on GE + 2 meetings per year with them, presenting the work of EIGE (also taking to meet people affected)
- "[GE Index 2017 Progress at a snail's pace](#)" + image (snail race) – bold move but worked – press release – the Press release was also translated in EU languages. Expensive but it paid off



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- Press briefing during the launching (Jurova, Swedish minister...)

What happened afterwards?

- 492 website mentions of Index across media types
- 371 mainstream media mentions – 100% positive coverage
- Highest number of mainstream coverage was in Greece (which is lowest country on the Index)
- People to people communication was also very important – but less easy to report

Other:

- Measuring incoming stakeholders requests for technical assistance + presentation at conferences, etc. 50% are accepted (200-250 requests, e.g. WG Comm meeting request)
- EIGE's work was highlighted in Spiegel, other news agencies

Possible synergies in the future – things to consider

- EIGE has a 3 year strategy for knowledge management and communication – this year ending for the period
- 5 priority areas in relation to communication: videos, social media, monthly newsletter, work with stakeholders, events
- Online platform: [EuroGender](#) – cooperation and consultation hub – register profile – create a post about event/publication that you'd like to share

Q&A

- Q: Debate on Istanbul Convention (word 'gender' in Bulgaria) – how to ensure that the debate is not twisted?

A: EIGE infographic on which states have joined the convention. So, it mainly provides evidence-based publications, and doesn't have an official political position on the issues

- Q: does the research rely on Eurostat?

A: Yes + Eurofound + Self-compiled data; but the analysis is done by EIGE

- Q: Timing of launching – is it possible to get an advanced notice (advanced mailing) – if possible sending in advance to Katrine @Equinet – so through Equinet it can be received (regarding 6 June national and regional parliaments – Gender-sensitive parliaments tool – workshop (it will be a place to test the tool and to fill it with data – 1 politician + 1 admin)).

A: Provided by Sarah: Similar notifications are usually sent out through the members' bulletin, however if you're interested then we can also send personalized email.

- Q: On the example of “white ribbon” action - aiming to engage men & boys in combatting VaW – high level participation - how to effectively run a campaign?

A: It is important to build momentum – social media + reaching out to stakeholders, talking to people to explain why/how; never stop talking about the campaign :) + website is very important too

- Q: Do you suggest political solutions to narrowing the gap?

A: EIGE's mandate is only on identifying gaps and giving recommendations through reports and press releases

- Q: evaluation – how do you evaluate communication effectively



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	<p>A: EIGE developed baselines (website hits, stakeholders requests, articles mentioning EIGE, etc.) - will share with Equinet the monitoring baselines. After that set up aims (they have an external contractor social media monitoring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q: Equinet is developing its upcoming Strategic Plan. Therefore any input on developing a communications strategy within the larger one? A: EIGE has a separate strategy for knowledge management and communications (can share with Equinet) – user-friendly (25 pages, easily read) – how to work with stakeholders, who they are, etc.• Q: Do you get requests for opinion on external campaigns (e.g. #metoo) A: Yes, the director often gets requests – e.g. Iceland GE equal pay on Euronews. It must be noted however, that EIGE is not opinion-makers – and doesn't have a mandate on broad issues (e.g. LGBTI) – in that case they direct to the experts for Member States
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Working with children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Dagmar Krišová</i>, Office of the Public Defender of Rights, Czech Republic <p>In a recent report that came out in the Czech Republic, it indicated that 75% of young people dislike Roma people, so it was decided that the Public Defender of Rights needed to reach out to young people to address the topic of discrimination of race and ethnic origin. The Defender's office reached out to a popular Youtuber called Kovy, and asked him to put together a video on this issue, framed as stereotype/bullying/cyberbullying. His video is currently a work in progress.</p> <p>Following the short introduction, the participants were separated into 4 groups to share examples of strategies in engaging with young people. The result (positive examples, ideas on effective communication), as reported by each group, are presented below:</p> <p>Group 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finland: sexual harassment campaign – short video and materials for teachers – created with teenagers and 'tested' on children prior the launching. Also mentioned in our Framing Equality Handbook.• Germany: School competition on anti-discrimination asked school children to submit projects every year. The three best projects are given an awarded at a ceremony – moderated by a popular presenter from a children's tv show; good use of Instagram but hard to maintain• Also is was asked „what channels do young people use?“ and noted that involving young people's organizations is important, as well as reaching out to teachers – transferring message to school kids• Czech Republic: made videos on Roma inclusion in schools with well-known people last year - a famous Roma singer made one video and thanks to that many young Roma got engaged. Next week, a festival of documentary movies on human rights takes place in Brno. The Defender has offered their conference room for school screenings, so hundreds of young people are going to visit our office.





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General conclusion: We should be in touch with youth organizations

Group 2:

- YouTube as a channel is an important way of reaching out to young people, but still alien to Equality Bodies, so can be better explored
- Focus is mainly on politicians – forgetting that young people can be a good pressure group for policy-change
- Great Britain: post-Brexit campaign against increased hate-crime for 20 y/o – [George the Poet](#) – youtuber – voicing out about violence
- Belgium: ['give me a minute' campaign](#) – 16-18 y/o – students made videos 'why there should not be discrimination' + cooperation with local organizations to give stage to young people (raps, dance, poetry on the topic) – importance of contact net to increase participation (e.g. Working with NGOs)
- Lithuania:
 1. Common project with Centre for Human Rights – documentary festival – how people with down syndrome are infantilized – for 16 y/o;
 2. 'Coffee & equality' campaign – talking about equality – advertising/PR topic
- Portugal:
 1. 3-5 y/o – colouring book – pencils with different skin colours – children asked to paint their city (mentioned in our Framing Equality Handbook)
 2. Welcome kits with pictures for refugee children from local children

Group 3:

- Slovakia: competition – drawings on the topic of equality and discrimination – reached out to 5000 children and received 100 drawings – there is an idea of creating a calendar
- Latvia: Moot Court for law students – finals are taken in the Constitutional courts – so are quite motivating for law students
- Bulgaria: A11y – “Accessible Bulgaria” campaign – hip-hop performers – they were awarded, went on stage to receive the award in wheelchairs – the video went viral

Group 4:

- Greece - Mostly school visits on various topics – e.g. bullying; trans kids inclusion; open days at EBs;
- Serbia – 20 young people volunteering with the EB
- Hungary – presentation during a festival
- Albania - School visit, open days, meetings with NGOs, information sessions for the new mentors, concerts in cooperation with schools with the help of local offices of EB to issue anti-discrimination messages

Questions & Comments raised

- How to produce text – communication ways: visuals
- Importance of young interns at Equality bodies
- Important collaborators to transfer knowledge





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-traditional media channels are also important• Paper guidelines do not work
12:00 – 12:30	<p>Equality Body Communication Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Petar Kichashki</i>, Commission for Protection against Discrimination, Bulgaria <p>Firstly, Petar Kichashki, Commission for Protection against Discrimination, Bulgaria, presented his equality body, which has a new set of Commissioners since last summer. They are looking at how to develop the EB, so while the EB is mostly a tribunal-type body, it is increasingly adopting promotional strategies (e.g. encourages victims to communicate with media). He noted a case of staff beating up child with intellectual disability in an institution, and the EB initiated a case to highlight this issue. He also noted that the Accessible Bulgaria campaign used similar communication methods to other EBs. He then asked how, as a tribunal-type body, EBs can also manage promotional activities (considering impartiality and privacy). Answers were encouraged, especially from tribunal-type bodies.</p> <p>Great Britain: The EB has a legal team, programmes team, communications team. It develops a strategic plan – 3 years (based around "Is Britain fairer?") - developing corporate priorities from a communication perspective, taking into account business priorities (identification of projects that can be communicated most effectively). It has a legal plan, looking at cases (e.g. Case against a landlord with racist policy – biggest private landlord in Britain wouldn't allow Asian people to rent). While the EB has an underlying strategy it also applies ad hoc engagement.</p> <p>Finland: There is an Act that govt cases are open, so there is no legal issue with privacy. The EB gives no comment on cases when they are in process (impartiality), only when they are done.</p> <p>Norway: Similar to Finland – it gives no comment during the cases but is in contact with journalists to report progress on the case. Disclaimers are included (e.g. not full information available yet) whenever a new case has been submitted to the EB. Has main communication strategy in bullet points with strict guidelines when communicating to the press (especially for privacy of 'clients'). They also ask victims themselves if they are open to communicating to media.</p> <p>Ireland: The EB has a Communications protocols on legal cases – what information can be provided at what stage, who communicates, etc... – Also similar protocols on policy, events...</p> <p>Austria: The EB also has Guidelines. They do not talk about single cases at all due to strict confidentiality regulations in Austria – even if requested. Publication of anonymous cases in newsletters after the case is complete are however made.</p> <p>Latvia: EB has no communication strategy, and no communication on cases but some information about the issues concerned in the case. Good cooperation with public media (radio, television) – e.g. campaign on children in institutional care through public media.</p> <p>Estonia: Commissioner is very active in media/social media. She has 24h access for media requests. Makes no comment to provocative questions, and if victims want to be anonymous. Her language is simple and clear so as not to leave room for interpretation.</p>





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	<p>Slovakia: The EB is getting many requests that are not related to equality and discrimination issues. There is a problem of communicating what is the work of the EB. The EB has no communication strategy.</p>
<p>13:30-14:30</p>	<p>Agenda setting during campaigning periods: Equinet recommendations</p> <p>The participants discussed 2 main issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to avoid hate speech, discriminatory language in political campaigning • how to engage with politicians <p>Objective: to develop recommendations on how to set the agenda on equality and non-discrimination during campaign periods in the run up to elections. Content: what is our agenda? (No hate speech, positive messaging...?)</p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Spain: Local and regional elections in 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 page doc – "avoid using discriminatory or xenophobic discourse during elections" • presenting the crisis and encourage applauding diversity • seeing elections as opportunities to advance the concept of harmonious living together • respect shown by politicians, parties • local municipality level diversity work <p>Some participants noted that negative language used is not so effective (word „avoid“ rather than positive encouragement), especially considering our focus on positive narratives and how to frame equality.</p> <p>Belgium: Local elections due to take place in October 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website being developed: good practices highlighted (e.g. On A11y) – spreading the message, trying to inspire through positive examples. Cities can send good practices – website launch scheduled for May – elections will come in October. <p>Latvia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary elections coming up - youth awareness raising – speaking about critical thinking and good choices – awareness raising on political choices, developments. <p>Finland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal elections last year – package sent to political parties reminding about criminal law on racist speech, reminder of signed charter, also informing them that they will be investigated if they don't oblige. The EB received many alert reports by people. Currently two cases to be taken to court. Parties inquired how to address inter-party discriminatory language. The EB has been criticised and blamed of censorship by some parties – however the EB mandate allows to point out to parties that they also have responsibility, so the EB doesn't see the criticism an issue. <p>Lithuania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudswoman cannot comment on political speeches, politicians etc.. There





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	<p>would need to be legislative change, since it's currently limiting.</p> <p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar law on limiting comment by state officials on political parties, speeches etc. <p>Portugal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to Germany. However, the Observatory for migration collects data on migration and produces publications to combat myths with concrete facts. <p>Bulgaria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has more independence as it's not a governmental body. There have been a number of cases against politicians and journalists (using hate-speech)... Letter to political parties recommending comments to immigration. <p>Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to maintain independence balancing with promoting equality and anti-discrimination discourse. There are differences in messaging dependent if it's at EU level parties or national level. <p>Norway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can promote non-discrimination in political manifestos. In the run-up process, making contacts with politicians makes communication in later stages easier. Women's groups in parties are quite good allies in anti-discrimination promotion. <p>Next steps? Equinet is due to produce some sort of Recommendation about elections. The WG on Communication will be in charge of this, so looking for volunteers to join a small task force to develop this together. Once done (ideally by the end of the summer), we should aim to translate it into national languages.</p>
<p>14:30-15:00</p>	<p>Celebrating 70 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Dorotheos Dorotheoy</i>, Ombudsman, Cyprus <p>#standup4humanrights</p> <p>Equality bodies can use the resources of the UN for a small joint EU campaign – November/December 2018 – through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • videos? • Materials – UN or Equinet's or both? • General messages + more focused groups (?) <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment – UDHR empowers us all • Relevance for all of us on daily basis • Shared values and reflection within the declaration • Equality, justice and freedom to prevent violence and sustain peace (?) -



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	<p>could be more for NHRIs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandoning HR values poses a risk to our security • Need to stand up for HR <p>Planned events/activities around the 70th anniversary</p> <p>Hungary: conference on the anniversary – proposal to do sign language in Hungarian. Britain: Attitudes to HR research to be published end of April (30% negative attitudes to HR). Framing is very important. Slovenia: Reminder of history (WWII), so the importance of HR</p> <p>ECRI, CoE, UN, FRA, ENNHRI conference in Geneva on 6 March – reclaiming discussion on HR, getting rid of the jargon (watch conference video here) Perhaps one campaign per year could be a good idea?</p> <p>Taskforce to start working on developing the campaign: includes Doros (CY), Paivi (FI), Beata (SK), Irida (AL) (keeping Sarah and new moderator in the loop!)</p>
<p>15:00 – 15:30</p>	<p>Equinet Seminar on Combatting Hate Speech</p> <p>Depending on EB, they either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have mandates to combat Hate Speech (HS) • Do research • Do promotion of equality, non-discrimination <p>Day 1 Plenary Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of issues • US speaker – HS vs Free Speech? – some participants expressed concern that US has a different approach to freedom of speech, therefore unsure of the added value for a Europe-focused training. Worth consider inviting someone like Laura Ligouri (Executive Director, Mindbridge) who could explain the psychological and neurological reasons for hate speech? • CoE (No Hate Speech campaign, CPR 15 on combatting hate speech), European Commission (Code of Conduct etc), European Court of Human Rights (focus on hate speech cases just released), Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) • Presentation of Equinet work: Findings from new Perspective on Hate Speech (to be developed by WG Policy Formation), Communication work on values/framing • national-level examples (e.g. German hate speech law, EHRC – GB) • Consider adding CEJI based on their work on combatting hate speech? <p>Workshops Comm/Legal/Policy – cases Ireland: research - monitoring online HS – looking at Irish context – tracking styles, people – trying to understand rather than to tackling it – Report due out in April/May</p>





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	<p>Prevention – Would be good to know how EBs deal with it, and how to have a more pro-active rather than reactive approach?</p> <p>Norway: Survey – monitoring two of the biggest news agencies' Facebook pages – understanding who are the commentators, what are the main focuses. – Report due out in April/May</p> <p>Slovakia: monitoring HS – anti-HS campaigns can be counterproductive...(?)</p> <p>Portugal: "Hate speech explained" toolkit (see further reading materials on WG section of internal website.</p> <p>Latvia: Research on identifying HS – Guidelines to police how to identify and deal with HS</p> <p>During the seminar, we should address the reason for HS, not just make recommendations on remedies/prevention.</p>
15:30 - 15:45	Big thank you to Mintaute Jurkute for all her help organising the meeting and social event. And an even bigger thank you to Katrine Pettersen for her time and energy as our working group moderator!

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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