

**Tackling Age Discrimination against Young People:
Building Bridges between Equality Bodies & Youth Organisations
EQUINET SEMINAR - in cooperation with the EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM
Wednesday 27th & Thursday 28th June 2018
Ljubljana, Slovenia**

CONCEPT NOTE

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The **one-and-a-half-day seminar** will take place on **Wednesday, 27th & Thursday, 28th June 2018** in Ljubljana, Slovenia. It will be hosted by the **Advocate of the Principle of Equality**.



The seminar is co-organized with the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and will bring together national equality bodies working on issues related to age discrimination against young people and Youth Forum member organisations.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Despite deepening inequalities of young people in relation to the right to education, high levels of unemployment, the wait for a first quality job and precarious forms of work, access to affordable housing, and mental health services, equal treatment legislation in the EU does not tend to define the ground of age or young people¹. International legal and policy frameworks, similarly, do not address the specific needs of young people, but rather consider them within wider human rights and anti-discrimination measures.²

More so, EU equality law, obliging Member States to set up equality bodies to assist victims of discrimination, and promote equality, does so only in relation to grounds of gender and race or ethnic origin. In practice, the majority of equality bodies cover age discrimination, even if many report difficulties to prioritise these issues due to a lack of resources³.

In the EU legislation, aged-based discrimination in particular is only addressed within the area of employment and vocational training, leaving young people exposed to discrimination and inequality in such crucial public spheres as education, provision of goods & services, including housing, social protection & healthcare, as well as social advantages. A solution to filling these legislative gaps, also through the long-halted EU Equal Treatment Directive (Horizontal Directive), is yet to be reached by EU policy-makers.

The particular difficulty of identifying and tackling age-based discrimination is often related to its deep rootedness in society, especially in reference to young people. At the same time, structural and

¹ Equinet Perspective: Opening the Issue: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against and Promoting Equality for Young People_ http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/young_people_perspective_web.2.pdf (p. 1).

² YFJ Policy Paper on Equality and Nondiscrimination http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/04/0099-16_Policy_Paper_Equality_Non-discrimination_FINAL2.pdf (p.p. 5-6).

³ Equinet Perspective: Opening the Issue: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against and Promoting Equality for Young People_ http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/young_people_perspective_web.2.pdf

institutional barriers hinder young people's full participation in society and equal access to existing opportunities. The European Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)⁴ and the Youth Guarantee⁵ are some of the EU policies to remedy existing structural inequalities.

Within this context, and in the absence of strong and clear standards, equality bodies report low levels of casework on the age ground in general and, within this casework, very few cases in relation to young people. Range of work in supporting good practice for young people is also reportedly low.⁶ In general, issues of discrimination against and inequality of young people tend to have a medium to low focus for a majority of equality bodies, often due to limitations in their mandate, under-reporting and lack of casework, and limited data.⁷ This is coupled with a low level of awareness among young people regarding their rights, existing protective mechanisms, including equality bodies⁸, which further diminishes the effectiveness of anti-discrimination and pro-equality work.

The strong acknowledgement of close(r) cooperation among equality bodies and young people and their organizations is shared between equality bodies and young people's organizations, represented by Equinet⁹ and the European Youth Forum¹⁰. Given this shared interest, and the challenges young people face specifically due to their age, there is still strong need for Equinet member equality bodies to build their capacity in the area and in cooperation with youth organisations for combating age-based discrimination, as well as intersectional discrimination against young people.

NEEDS OF EQUINET MEMBERS

In February 2018, a **short needs assessment survey** was sent to staff members of equality bodies working on age discrimination. The replies to the survey will help designing the agenda according to Equinet members' and YFJ members' needs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

The overall objectives of the seminar are to **build capacity of national equality bodies to address inequality of and age discrimination against young people** and to **discuss ways to strengthen the cooperation of equality bodies with youth organisations**.

In particular, **the Seminar aims to:**

- Help equality bodies with **understanding and clarifying the main concepts** related to inequality of and age discrimination against young people.
- Build the capacity of youth organisations on key EU/international frameworks on anti-discrimination, and explore if, how and to what extent these cater to young people.
- Provide Equality bodies with practical guidance on how to

⁴ European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion: Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176>

⁵ European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion: Youth Guarantee <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

⁶ Equinet Perspective: Opening the Issue: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against and Promoting Equality for Young People_ http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/young_people_perspective_web.2.pdf (p.4).

⁷ Ibid. (p.2)

⁸ <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2015/10/Multiple-discrimination-and-young-people-in-Europe.pdf> (p. 8).

⁹ Equinet Perspective: Opening the Issue: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against and Promoting Equality for Young People http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/young_people_perspective_web.2.pdf (p.4).

¹⁰ EYF Policy Paper on Equality and Nondiscrimination http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/04/0099-16_Policy_Paper_Equality_Non-discrimination_FINAL2.pdf (p. 12)

- effectively **communicate with young people** and their organizations to raise awareness among young people about the anti-discrimination and pro-equality work of NEBs
- Effectively **communicate** the need for addressing issues related to discrimination against and equality of young people **to national policy-makers** and **bring tackling age- and intersectional discrimination against young people to the political agenda.**
- Bring together national equality bodies and youth organisations to:
 - **Exchange experiences and discuss challenges** in their work related to inequality of and age discrimination against young people
 - Explore possible **ways of collaboration or strengthening of existing collaborations** in order to better combat inequality of and age discrimination against young people
- Provide equality bodies and youth organizations with **practical guidance** on how to address inequality of and age discrimination against young persons from a **legal, policy and communication perspective.**

TARGETED AUDIENCE

This seminar is dedicated to an audience of approximately **20 equality bodies' staff members** and **10 youth organisations**. It allows for participation with different professional backgrounds, including **legal, policy and communication.**

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. 20 staff members of equality bodies will participate in this seminar
2. 10 representatives of YFJ member youth organisations will participate in this seminar
3. A summary of the seminar will be uploaded on the Equinet website

AGENDA

Wednesday 27 June

TIME	SESSION
08:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants
9:00 – 9:30	Opening and welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kirsi Pimiä, Equinet Board Member (Finnish Non-Discrimination Ombuds) ● Sebastiaan Rood, Board Member, European Youth Forum ● Miha Lobnik, Slovenian Advocate of the Principle of Equality
9:30 – 10:30	Getting to know one another What are NEBs and what do they do? What are youth organisations and how do they work to promote equality and non-discrimination?
10:30 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:30	Overview of existing anti-discrimination frameworks: EU and international levels What is the legal basis for equality and non-discrimination? How does it apply to young people and age-based discrimination in particular? Presentation by Equinet and Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tamás Kádár, Head of Legal and Policy Team, Equinet
11:30 – 12:30	Youth discrimination and inequality – what's the deal?

	<p>Panel discussion: overview of key issues of inequality and age-based & multiple discrimination faced by young people. Structural vs. individual discrimination and where NEBs can intervene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George-Konstantinos Charonis, Policy Officer, Youth Rights European Youth Forum • Eva Porrez, Unia, Belgium • Anna Ludwinek, Research Manager/Social Policies, Eurofound: young people's access to social and health services <p>Moderator: Moana Genevey, Membership and Policy Officer, Equinet</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Youth discrimination and inequality – what's the deal? (continued)</p> <p>In what ways are young people discriminated against on the basis of age across different areas of life? Are they individual or structural? How do multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination come into play? Group work with discussion on four areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Employment • Group 2: Social protection (including healthcare) • Group 3: Participation • Group 4: Goods and services (housing, finance, etc.)
15:30 – 16:00	Break
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Youth discrimination and inequality – how can we deal with it?</p> <p>Responding to specific scenarios / case studies: how could Equality Bodies and youth organisations work together to address the issues? What legal avenues are available, and how could they be used?</p>
19:30	Dinner: Restaurant 'Vodnikov hram', Vodnikov trg 2, Ljubljana

Thursday 28 June

TIME	SESSION
9:00 – 9:15	Brief presentation of group work from the previous afternoon
9:15 – 10:45	<p>Communicating equality & non-discrimination to young people and through youth organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beáta Babačová, Equinet Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices (Slovak National Centre for Human Rights) • Fontaine Valérie, Defender of Rights, France and Maëva Barbier, Young Ambassador for the Defender of Rights, France. • Robert Nesirky, National Youth Council of Ireland <p>Moderator: Mher Hakobyan, Equinet</p>
10:45 – 11:15	Break
11:15 – 13:00	<p>Building bridges: youth organisations and Equality Bodies working together</p> <p>Input and food for thought – an example from Finland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silja Silvasti, Allianssi – Finnish Youth Cooperation <p>Group work to develop guidelines for NEBs and youth organisations to</p>

	<p>promote closer cooperation. How can youth organisations and Equality Bodies work together to combat discrimination against young people? How will approaches differ when addressing structural vs. individual discrimination, for example? Participants develop a set of guidelines for NEBs and youth organisations, to promote closer cooperation.</p>
13:00 – 13:15	<p>Closing & evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Equinet Chair (Office of the Croatian Ombudswoman) • Sebastiaan Rood, Board Member, European Youth Forum <p>Evaluation</p>
13:15	Lunch & departures