



**EQUINET**  
**HIGHLIGHTS** 2018

# Equinet at a Glance



*« Equality is one of the fundamental values upon which the European Union is built, but it is not a given. We need good laws and strong and independent equality bodies to defend our core principles and values so that victims of discrimination can right the wrongs they face. »*

**– First Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans**

Equinet is the European Network of Equality Bodies, a membership organisation bringing together 49 equality bodies from 36 European countries including all EU Member States. Equinet promotes equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of national equality bodies. It supports equality bodies to be independent and effective as valuable catalysts for more equal societies.

Equality bodies are champions for the core EU value of equality and defenders of the right to non-discrimination. They are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and contributing to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.

Equinet aims to enhance the strategic capacity of its member organisations and to strengthen the skills and competences of their staff. Equinet contributes to the European equality agenda by conveying an expert voice of equality bodies drawn from the learnings of their work on the ground, and enhances their recognition

and strategic positioning in relation to all stakeholders at European level. Finally, Equinet serves as a knowledge and communication hub on equal treatment.

To achieve these aims, Equinet organises regular training events and seminars for staff members of equality bodies, as well as working groups to support capacity building and the exchange of information, data and expertise among equality bodies. Equinet engages closely with policy makers and partners at EU and international level, and promotes the work of equality bodies through relevant publications, as well as participation at conferences and other meetings. Equinet communicates widely on relevant themes relating to the work of equality bodies and developments in the field of equality and non-discrimination in Europe.

The highest decision-making forum within Equinet is the Annual General Assembly of Equinet members. Every two years, the General Assembly elects an Executive Board responsible for the overall management and the strategic leadership of the Network. The operational structure consists of thematic working groups bringing together equality bodies' experts and a small Brussels-based Secretariat.

# EQUINET HIGHLIGHTS 2018

## Table of contents

FOREWORD .....	2
SPOTLIGHT – STANDARDS FOR EQUALITY BODIES ADOPTED .....	3
BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES .....	6
CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA .....	10
SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB .....	15
CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS .....	17
GOVERNANCE .....	19
LIST OF ACTIVITIES .....	24
PUBLICATIONS .....	27
MEMBER EQUALITY BODIES .....	28

# Foreword

It's a great pleasure to present the highlights of Equinet activities in 2018. Looking back at our work in the past year allows us to showcase the broad spectrum of support to national equality bodies and the collective efforts made to promote equality across Europe.

During 2018, we took stock of our past achievements, sought to assess relevance, impact and lessons learned and tried to anticipate our future needs. We also took into account the increasingly challenging political, demographic and digital environment across Europe, where enhancing the role of equality bodies as key champions for equality is more crucial than ever. This process led Equinet to develop a new Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2022. The preparation of this ambitious Plan was informed by a comprehensive consultation with our members, key partners and relevant European stakeholders. The work process was driven by the Equinet Executive Board and Secretariat, and resulted in a promising roadmap, which was unanimously adopted by national equality bodies at the Equinet Annual General Meeting in November 2018.

A significant achievement for equality bodies this year was the publication of new European Standards for equality bodies by the European Commission and the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) respectively. These key advancements were made in response to the persisting challenges and increasing threats to public institutions defending equality across Europe. Having long called for standards for equality bodies, Equinet will now closely monitor the implementation of these standards to ensure they are duly considered and respected.

Throughout the year we explored a number of important issues with our members: how to tackle discrimination against young people, deal with work-life balance and dismissal protection and combat hate speech, based on racism, sexism, or any other grounds of discrimination. We looked at how to engage with the UNCRPD

and Article 33(2), how equality bodies carry out research and data collection and how they can best contribute to facilitating freedom of movement as Article 4 bodies under the 2014 EU Directive. We contributed to the European equality agenda through our discussions on investing in equality and on combatting poverty by considering socio-economic status as a ground of discrimination. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the proposal of the Horizontal Directive, we shone a light on the important reasons to finally adopt and implement the Directive.

Equinet continues to be a dynamic pan-European Network working to support its members, and led by them. Their expertise, combined with that of our dedicated team in the Equinet Secretariat, provide the foundations for all of our achievements. Sincere thanks are due to the wonderful staff and the members of the Executive Board for their hard work with continuous enthusiasm and professionalism.

We greatly appreciate the fruitful and dynamic cooperation with all our partners. Equinet is particularly grateful to the European Commission, for its invaluable support through the EC Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme and for its ongoing commitment to enable the potential of Equinet and national equality bodies. We look forward to pursue and consolidate the close cooperation with our members and partners working together to achieve equality for all in Europe in the coming year.

Signed,



**Anne Gaspard**  
Executive Director



**Tena Šimonović  
Einwalter**  
Chair of Executive  
Board

# Spotlight

## STANDARDS FOR EQUALITY BODIES ADOPTED



« Discrimination has no place in the EU. We must ensure that our national equality bodies are independent, with the resources to do what they do best. They are the watchdogs of justice, ensuring all citizens are given equal rights and equal opportunities »

– Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality



Monika Ladmanová, Adviser to Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, speaking about standards for equality bodies at the conference on Investing in Equality, June 2018.

## #Standards4NEBs

2018 saw remarkable developments on standards for equality bodies, both at European Union and Council of Europe level. The new standards acknowledge the potential of equality bodies and take into account the full diversity and complexity of these institutions. These new documents provide a framework and guidance for ensuring the independence and effectiveness of equality bodies. Equinet has worked hard to see improvements in this area, as laid out in our [working paper on developing standards for equality bodies](#) published in 2016.



## Why are strong standards for equality bodies necessary?

- Strong standards allow equality bodies to effectively promote equality and assist the most vulnerable.
- EU Directives only provide minimum standards for equality bodies and this fails to ensure equal levels of protection against discrimination in all Member States.
- Challenges to equality bodies, their independence, resources and powers, threaten their effective work.
- There is a need to reaffirm commitment to the European values and legal guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, which are embodied by equality bodies as a European good practice.

## What are the new standards for equality bodies?

The **European Commission** adopted a [Recommendation on standards for equality bodies](#) in June 2018, in order to ensure the independence and effectiveness of national equality bodies. It is a legal act of the Commission, but it has no binding force.

At the Council of Europe level, the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** published their [Revised General Policy Recommendation No.2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level](#) in February 2018. This standard will be implemented as part of the country monitoring by ECRI and the constructive dialogue between ECRI and the Council of Europe member states.

## What areas are covered by these standards?

Although the detailed provisions may vary, both sets of standards cover similar key areas for the work of equality bodies:

- **Establishment of equality bodies:** the standards clarify that equality bodies should be established by constitutional provision or legislation passed by parliament;
- **Mandate:** standards foresee that the mandate of equality bodies should cover a large number of discrimination grounds in all areas, in both the public and private sectors;
- **Functions:** equality bodies should be assigned functions and the necessary powers to (1) promote equality and prevent discrimination (including e.g. surveys, reports, recommendations, training, awareness-raising); (2) provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination (including legal advice, mediation, but also litigation); and (3) take decisions on complaints;
- **Independence:** equality bodies should function without any undue external interference from the State or others;
- **Effectiveness:** equality bodies should be provided with the human, technical and financial resources, premises and infrastructure necessary to perform their tasks and exercise their powers effectively;
- **Accessibility:** the physical premises as well as the information and communication of equality bodies should be easy to access for all;
- **Institutional architecture:** equality bodies should ensure a focus on each part of their mandate and a focus on each ground; where several equality bodies exist in the same Member State, regular and effective coordination between them should be ensured.

## What are the next steps?

Equinet had been calling for standards for many years and we are pleased to see these efforts bear fruits. However, our work continues in order to ensure the implementation of these standards and to seek ways to reinforce them even further in order to empower equality bodies to fulfil their mandate of promoting equality and enforcing European equality legislation. Equality is a founding value of both the European Union and the Council of Europe and the support provided to equality, and equality bodies, has to reflect this. Equinet will therefore:

- Seek to ensure strong commitment to the existing standards from all Member States;
- Contribute to regular discussions and good practice sharing among Member States;
- Continue discussions on and assist the European Commission and ECRI in their monitoring of standards;
- Facilitate discussions between equality bodies on the implementation of standards;
- Encourage and assist academic experts to analyse the potential of standards and the best ways to implement it.



*« This Commission Recommendation will be a strong basis for enhancing further work in making EU equality legislation a reality for all citizens, by protecting them against discrimination and promoting equality in our societies. »*

**– Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Executive Board**

# 1

## BUILDING CAPACITY AND PEER SUPPORT OF EQUALITY BODIES

### Objective 1 - Areas for action:

- Develop knowledge and skills of staff members of equality bodies
- Develop strategic and organisational capacity of equality bodies
- Foster and promote innovative approaches in the work of equality bodies

### I. EQUALITY BODIES COMBATTING HATE SPEECH

#### SEMINAR: **NOT ON OUR WATCH! EQUALITY BODIES FIGHTING HATE SPEECH**

19 – 21 November, hosted by the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), Italy

The seminar, which aimed to build the capacity of equality body staff in tackling hate speech on- and off-line, looked at three main areas: understanding the phenomenon, dealing with hate speech once it has already taken place and working toward preventing hate speech.

Identifying “Hate speech” and reaching a common understanding of this phenomenon proves challenging, including definitional, regulatory and practical complexities. Understanding the characteristics and sources of online hate speech was a clear focus for equality bodies, as well as putting the victim at the centre of their work. The role of the media in taking responsibility to ensure a civil debate and delete derogatory and offensive comments that amount to hate speech was made apparent.

The seminar was an opportunity for equality body staff to discuss good practices and challenges they encounter on national level and reflect on what aspects they need to develop. Participants worked closely together to identify how to develop a strategy for alternative narratives, build national alliances on hate speech, engage with hate speech in formal and informal education, and ensure the equality bodies’ mandate on hate speech.







« Equality bodies can contribute to reporting and monitoring, creating knowledge. They could also contribute to developing laws that are compliant with human rights and equality obligations. »

– Joanna Szymanska, Article 19

## II. EQUALITY BODIES TACKLING ETHNIC PROFILING BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

### SEMINAR: **EQUALITY BODIES COUNTERING ETHNIC PROFILING**

8-9 November, co – organised with the [Open Society Justice Initiative](#)

This event brought together more than 30 equality bodies from across Europe with civil society representatives and other experts to discuss the role of equality bodies in countering ethnic profiling. Challenges such as the lack of a legal mandate, the lack of data, evidentiary issues, under-reporting and working with law enforcement were discussed. Participants looked at effective ways for equality bodies to overcome these challenges, including:

- the use of a strategic mix of competences such as research, awareness-raising or public statements to address a limited legal mandate;
- taking the lead in data collection efforts;
- arguing for the correct use of shifting the burden of proof;
- working with civil society and conducting outreach; and

- working in a collaborative and practical manner with law enforcement.

To harness the results of the seminar and to make the lessons learned available to everyone, Equinet and OSJI has published a factsheet and a compendium on promising practices by equalities bodies countering ethnic profiling.



### III. BUILDING BRIDGES

Achieving equality for all is a collective effort, and equality bodies often benefit from building bridges with different organisations. This year, Equinet continued to collaborate with a variety of actors and stakeholders, including organising joint events on various equality issues.

#### SEMINAR: **TACKLING AGE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE**

**27 – 28 June**, co-organised with European Youth Forum, in partnership with the Advocate for the Principle of Equality, Slovenia

During the event, equality body staff members were given the opportunity to work with representatives of youth organisations, in order to find new and innovative ways to collaborate on youth rights and youth discrimination. They focused mainly on legal actions, policy making and communication.



### TRAINING: **ENGAGING WITH THE UNCRPD COMMITTEE AND DISABLED PERSONS' ORGANISATIONS (DPOS)**

**3 – 4 October**, co-organised with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman, Latvia

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The training brought together members of the UNCRPD Committee, representatives of DPOs and staff members of equality bodies and NHRIs. Participants discussed good practices and the best strategies to provide relevant inputs to the CRPD Committee and to enhance their work to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities by closely cooperating with DPOs.



### SEMINAR: **TACKLING DISCRIMINATION AND ENSURING DISMISSAL PROTECTION FOR CARERS IN EUROPE**

**17 – 18 October**, co-organised with the European Commission, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels

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Reports show that workers still face obstacles when exercising their right to take leave. As important actors in the enforcement of equality and non-discrimination on the labour market, this event gathered equality bodies and labour inspectors together for the first time. They discussed how to ensure effective collaboration when addressing discriminatory dismissals against pregnant women, parents and carers. Following extensive good practice exchange, seminar participants expressed positive attitudes and hope for continuous cooperation in the future.



# 2

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE EUROPEAN EQUALITY AGENDA

### Objective 2 - Areas for action:

- Contribute to equality policy and law at European level
- Convey an expert voice of equality bodies by sharing their expertise, experience and recommendations
- Inform and engage with policy makers and partners



« Equinet is an active body with members involved in finding solutions to compliance with the principles of equality. Equinet's contribution has always been appreciated at European level and has contributed to the adoption of various legal rules or European policies. »

– National Council for Combatting Discrimination, Romania

### I. MOVING FORWARD ON ANTIDISCRIMINATION & EQUALITY LAW IN EUROPE

With the current European Commission and Parliament entering their final period, the UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe (UN OHCHR ROE) and Equinet convened a public discussion on the state-of-play of EU anti-discrimination law, with particular attention to the draft EU Horizontal Directive. The discussion was intended to review reasons for the importance of the draft Directive, as well as to provide support for entities endeavoring to advance the debate. The main reasons identified for adopting this legislation are, because the Directive:

1. Reflects and expresses Europe's core human rights values;
2. Would expand possibilities for people to exercise fundamental rights;
3. Would remove gaps between international and European Union law, as well as providing equal levels of protection against discrimination across EU Member States;

4. Would be good for society and the economy, as well as solidarity between people;
5. Would stop the back-sliding of rights and show strong EU leadership on equality worldwide.

If adopted, millions of Europeans would benefit from expanded protection against discrimination.





« As long as the situation around the Directive remains at an impasse, the EU's legal framework will remain incomplete. As long as the Equal Treatment Directive is not adopted, the European Union will be limited in its ability to support victims of discrimination and hold perpetrators to account... Comprehensive protection against discrimination is both a legal and a moral imperative for the European Union and its Member States. It is time for lawmakers to act, and champions are needed! »

– **Joint statement** by Equinet Chair Tena Šimonović Einwalter and Birgit Van Hout from the regional representative for Europe of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) highlighting the importance of swift adoption of the «Horizontal Directive»

## II. COMBATTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### #EBsCanHelp

Equinet's project on violence against women came to a close with an online campaign highlighting the meaningful work of equality bodies on this topic. Members of the project shared good practices of equality bodies combatting violence against women as part of the international campaign of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, under the hashtag #EBsCanHelp.

Throughout the year, Equinet also took part in meetings of the European Coalition to end Violence Against Women. This included a meeting in November, where Equinet and other members of the Coalition met and exchanged views and priorities with Dubravka Simonovic, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences.

**The Lithuanian Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson wants to stop people from blaming victims of domestic abuse. Blaming the victim means supporting the offender!**

**This campaign strives to inspire people (friends, mothers, police officers, child rights protection staff, judges, and priests) to support women who open up about the experience of abuse and violence, as opposed to chiding them. People are invited to unite and to cooperate in order to bring back the liability to the real culprit – the abuser.**

"What did you tell him? Perhaps you provoked him?"  
 "Do you really need to destroy your marriage? Can't you talk to your husband?"  
 "Family is the most precious thing. You must listen to your husband!"

#EBsCanHelp  
 #HearMeToo



Good practice example by the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania on combatting violence against women.



### III. TACKLING POVERTY AND PROMOTING SOCIAL RIGHTS

#### CONFERENCE: **POVERTY AND DISCRIMINATION: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN**

22 March, co-organised with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Dublin

Equinet contributed to critical engagement with the core topic of poverty by organizing a conference on the links between discrimination and poverty as a contribution to the European Pillar of Social Rights. Premised on the fact that combatting poverty is a key undertaking of the European Union in the field of economic and social rights, the conference highlighted that poverty leads to discrimination and discrimination exacerbates the experience of poverty. Among the core

objectives attained by the conference was an analysis of these links and an exploration of the experiences with socio-economic status as a discrimination ground, introduced by a growing number of countries. The conference also included an intersectional dimension, key to the European discourse on equality and non-discrimination, focusing on the specific vulnerability of women and societal groups based on, for example, their ethnic origin and/or disability.



Irish Minister of State for Justice, David Stanton meets with Equinet Executive Director Anne Gaspard, Chair Tena Šimonović Einwalter, and Irish Commissioner for Human Rights and Equality, Emily Logan.



## VI. ADVANCING EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION THROUGH INVESTMENT

### CONFERENCE: **INVESTING IN EQUALITY**

1 June, organised by Equinet, Brussels

This conference aimed to trace and highlight the progress made towards a more equal Europe on the 15th anniversary of the deadline for implementing the Racial Equality and Employment Framework Directives and the 10th anniversary of the European Commission's proposal of the Horizontal Directive. During the meeting, we discussed:

- The place of equality and non-discrimination as fundamental horizontal values in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework and the contribution of EU funds to equality and non-discrimination;
- Ways to ensure political commitment to equality and non-discrimination at all levels;

- The role of equality legislation, ways to ensure optimal implementation of existing legislation and the need for completing the legal framework for equality;
- The role of strong, independent equality bodies in safeguarding the value of equality.

Two keynote speeches were given, one by the Belgian Ministry on a proposed rule of law peer review procedure that could serve as inspiration at national level, and one looking at the European Commission's actions and commitment for safeguarding the value of equality (including standards for equality bodies).



## V. RELIGION AND BELIEF

Recent years have seen heated public debates about the situation and rights of religious minorities, and the Court of Justice of the EU issued its first judgments on discrimination based on religion or belief. EU coordinators on anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred were appointed. Equinet has contributed to this discussion by publishing a new report on ['Faith in Equality: Religion and Belief in Europe'](#) analysing the legal developments that have taken place in the field of discrimination based on religion and belief. It describes the general legal framework (noting also the gap in protection at EU level given the delay in

adopting the 'Horizontal Directive' proposed in 2008) and it covers the areas of employment, education, provision of goods and services, manifestation of religion and belief in public and public administration and state functions. The report presents major court rulings from the international and European levels and, as its unique added value, leading cases from the national courts and equality bodies. The report has seen intensive use throughout 2018, including at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, a high level conference of the OSCE-ODIHR and various meetings organised at EU level.



Participants at the OSCE Conference on Combatting Intolerance and Discrimination with Focus on Discrimination based on Religion and Belief: Towards a Comprehensive Response in the OSCE Region, Rome, 22 October 2018. Equinet Chair Tena Šimonović Einwalter in attendance on behalf of Equinet, front row, 2nd from the left.

# 3

## SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION HUB

### Objective 3 - Areas for action:

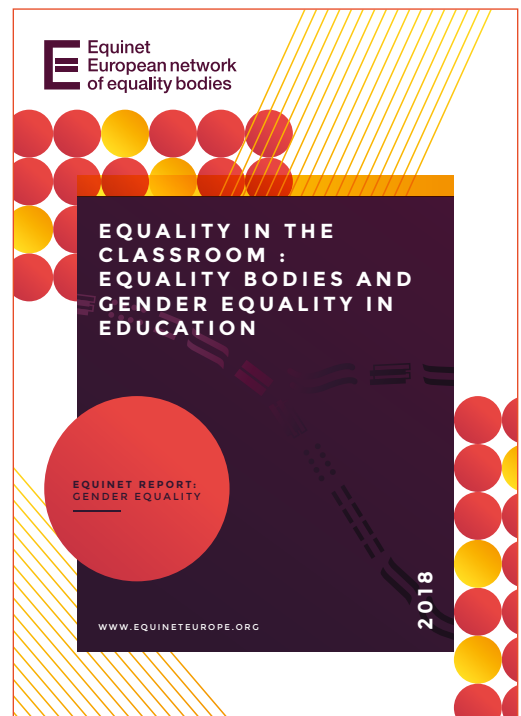
- Inform and engage equality bodies on relevant European developments
- Provide information on equality bodies to external audiences
- Facilitate exchange of information and networking among members
- Generate, collect and communicate knowledge on equal treatment

### I. EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

This Equinet report was prepared by the Gender Equality Working Group. With a foreword by European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová, the report provides ideas and good practices on how to become active in promoting gender equality and fighting gender-based discrimination in schools.

The report looks at the following aspects of gender-based discrimination in education:

- Legal framework for combatting gender discrimination, gender inequality and sexual harassment in schools;
- The mandates of equality bodies concerning discrimination in schools and examples of complaints handled by them;
- Operational definitions of gender based bullying and sexual harassment in educational settings;
- Possibilities to promote gender equality in school curricula, equality plans, teacher education and training;
- Final conclusions & recommendations.



## II. NEW EQUINET LOGO

As part of Equinet's strategic development, it was decided to update our brand identity with a new logo, giving us a fresh

new look for our new strategic period starting in 2019. After a call for tenders, the Old Continent communication agency won the bid, and presented a set of proposals to the heads of Equinet members at our Annual



General Meeting in November 2018. Upon further reflection by the members of the Working Group on Communication, the

'flag' proposal was chosen, representing stability, equality, transmission of ideas and united values. This new branding will be accompanied by a new Equinet website which should be online in the Spring 2019.



# 4

## CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK AND THE POSITION OF ITS MEMBERS

### Objective 4 - Areas for action:

- Support the development of standards for and in the work of equality bodies
- Strengthen the standing of equality bodies in a changing context
- Enhance cooperation with stakeholders
- Ensure the sustainable development of the Network and its capacity to respond to the diverse needs of members

### I. EQUINET STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022: TOGETHER FOR AN EQUAL EUROPE

#### Equinet works to:

1. Strengthen and support equality bodies to achieve equality for all
2. Act as an expert voice of equality bodies to advance equality in Europe
3. Sustain a resilient, engaged and innovative network.

As the roadmap for Equinet's strategic engagement for the next four-year period 2019-2022, the strategic plan was developed following extensive consultations with our members and stakeholders. Through this process, we identified our main vision, mission, values, approach and objectives for the coming four years.

During the next strategic period, Equinet, as a strong, engaged and innovative network,

will continue to strengthen and support equality bodies in their work, and act as their expert voice to advance equality and non-discrimination in Europe. Equinet's new Strategic Plan will bring novelty and innovation whilst keeping a line of continuity and consolidation of successful work. We will pursue our goal to enable national equality bodies to fulfil their full potential in order to support people experiencing discrimination, and to achieve substantive equality for all, in an increasingly challenging political, demographic and digital environment across Europe.



« Essential Partner for advocating an ambitious equality agenda »

– European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights



## II. EXPANSION OF THE NETWORK

During the 2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Brussels on 7 November, the General Assembly of Equinet Members voted on the ratification of three candidate members:

- *Public Defender (Ombudsman), Georgia*
- *Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, Moldova*
- *Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities, Spain.*

The Network unanimously welcomed these three new equality bodies, making Equinet a European Network of 49 equality bodies from 36 European countries.

Yan Feldman (Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, Moldova), Nino Lomjaria (Public Defender (Ombudsman), Georgia) and Tena Šimonović Einwalter (Equinet Chair) at the Equinet Annual General Meeting in November. Representative from the Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities in Spain unable to attend.



## III. SUPPORT TO EQUALITY BODIES UNDER THREAT

Equinet is regularly contacted to provide assistance to equality bodies that experience threats to their independence, resources, powers or even their very existence. The type of assistance provided by Equinet ranges from bringing the situation to the attention of the European Commission to sending a support letter to the member organisation and to the relevant authorities of the Member State in question. The type of assistance is based on a discussion with the member organisation and it is always based on a formal request from

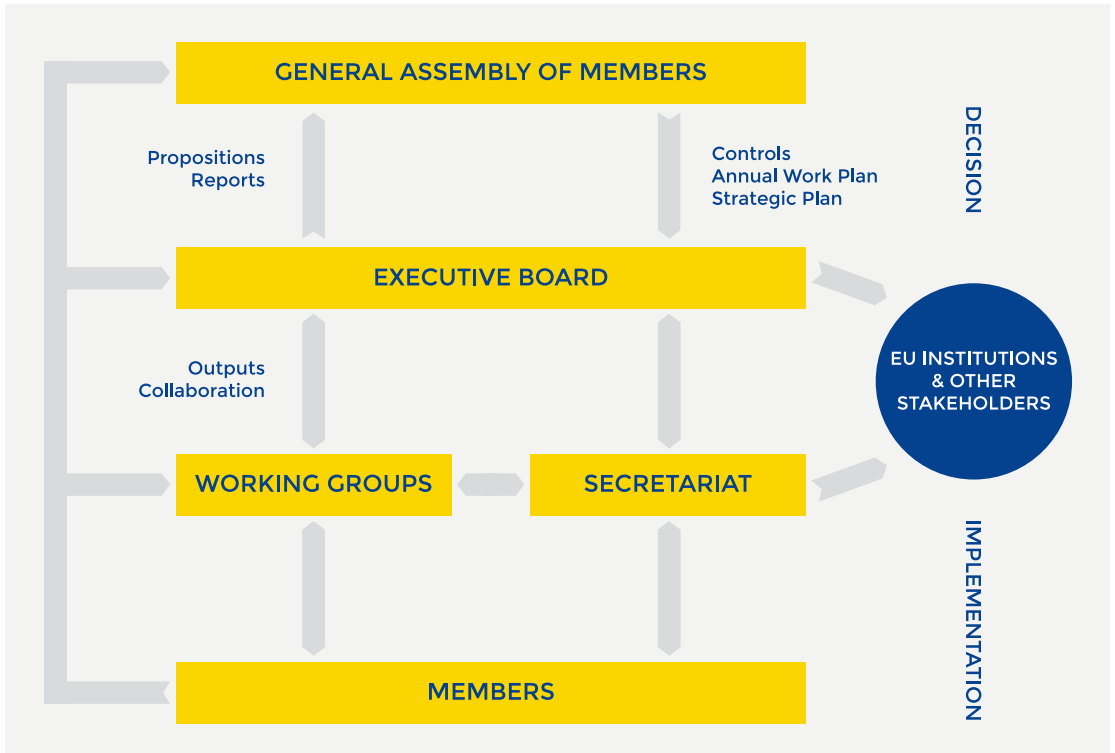
the head of the organisation. The assistance is discussed and signed off by the Executive Board.

In 2018 Equinet provided letters of support to equality bodies in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovakia**. We are hopeful that the standards adopted in 2018 at the European Union and Council of Europe levels will result in the strengthening of the position of equality bodies and a decrease in the number of such requests.



# Equinet Governance

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



The main decisions concerning the general steering of Equinet are taken by the General Assembly of Members (GA) that is made up of all the current members of the Network and is convened at least once a year for an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The GA:

- Ratifies new members into the Network;
- Elects representatives on the Executive Board every two years;
- Takes decisions on the strategic direction of the Network by participating in the development, reviewing and voting on the annual Work Plan for the next year prepared and proposed by the Executive Board;

- Is entitled to amend the statutes of the organisation and to approve budgets and accounts.

During the course of the year, the GA delegates the management and the administration of the Network to the Executive Board. The latter devises the strategy for implementing the work plan for the year, ensures that the means are in place to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the Network and acts in the best interest of the Network and its members throughout the year. All of the Executive Board members execute their tasks pro bono.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD 2017 - 2019

- **Tena Šimonović Einwalter** (Chair), Deputy Ombudswoman, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia
- **Laurence Bond**, Director, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Ireland
- **Patrick Charlier** (Treasurer), Co-Director, Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities), Belgium
- **Valérie Fontaine**, Advisor for partnerships and public relations, Defender of Rights, France
- **Sandra Konstatzky**, Deputy Director, Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria
- **Kalliopi Lykovardi**, Deputy Ombudsman for Equal Treatment, Greek Ombudsman, Greece
- **Kirsi Pimiä**, Ombudswoman, Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, Finland
- **Petr Polák**, Head of Division of Equal Treatment, Public Defender of Rights, Czech Republic
- **Sylvia Spurek**, Deputy Human Rights Commissioner, Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland



From left to right – P. Polák, V. Fontaine, S. Konstatzky, T. Šimonović Einwalter, K. Lykovardi, P. Charlier, S. Spurek, K. Pimiä, L. Bond

# WORKING GROUPS

The Equinet Working Groups are essential parts of the inner functioning of the Network. Composed of staff experts from member organisations, they are the central platforms for effective cooperation and sharing of expertise amongst member equality bodies and their staff, alongside the Equinet training events and seminars. Each group is headed by a Moderator from a national equality body who, assisted by the Equinet Secretariat, is responsible for the organisation and the implementation of the work as planned in the annual Work Plans.



« Through its various working groups and conferences on equality issues, Equinet effectively contributes to the European equality agenda. »

– **Board of Equal Treatment, Denmark**

The Working Groups in 2018 were:

- **Communication Strategies and Practices**  
*Moderator:* Katrine Gaustad Pettersen, Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, Norway (until March 2018); Ana Tretinjak, Office of the Ombudsman, Croatia
- **Equality Law in Practice**  
*Moderator:* Veronika Bazalová, Office of the Public Defender of Rights, Czech Republic
- **Gender Equality**  
*Moderators:* Nathalie Schlenzka, Federal Anti-discrimination Agency, Germany; Katarzyna Wilkolaska-Zuromska, Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland
- **Policy Formation**  
*Moderator:* Petr Polák, Office of the Public Defender of Rights, Czech Republic

In 2018, we also focused on the following topics:

- Cluster - Research and Data Collection
- Cluster - Freedom of Movement: Article 4 Bodies under the 2014 Directive
- Project - Violence against Women and Gender Based Violence



Participants at the communication working group meeting, Lithuania

## SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat assists the Executive Board in implementing the annual work plan of the organisation. It is responsible for organising and managing the daily activities of the Network and assists individual members and stakeholders with their requests. It supports and coordinates the work of the Equinet thematic Working Groups. The Secretariat regularly reports on the status of its activities to the Executive Board throughout the year.

Considering the extensive involvement and continuous hard work and commitment of **Tamás Kádár** for Equinet in various fields over the years, he was appointed as the new Deputy Director (head of legal and policy) of Equinet. This is a very natural and positive development for the Network and the Equinet team and Executive Board were very pleased to note and support his nomination as the Deputy.



In 2018 the Secretariat team included:

- **Anne Gaspard** - Executive Director
- **Tamás Kádár** – Deputy Director (Head of Legal and Policy Team)
- **Sarah Cooke O’Dowd** – Communication Officer
- **Yannick Godin** - Administration & Finance Officer
- **Moana Genevey** – Policy officer (Gender Equality)
- **Milla Vidina** – Policy Officer
- **Mher Hakobyan** – Policy and Communication Assistant (January – June 2018) Assistant Officer (July – December 2018)
- **Jessica Machacova** – Membership and Policy Officer (until February 2018)
- **Katrine Steinfeld** – Policy officer (Gender Equality) (until August 2018)
- **Axel Ruppert** – Event Coordinator (September – December 2018)
- **Anita Marullo** – Administration and Events Assistant (February – July 2018)
- **Julia Charlton** – Administration and Events Assistant (September 2018)
- **Bram Feyaerts** – Administration and Events Assistant (September 2018 – April 2019)
- **Tanja Sheikhi** – Policy and Communication Assistant (September 2018 – April 2019)



From left to right – T. Kádár, S.Cooke O’Dowd, Y.Godin, M. Genevey, A. Marullo, A.Gaspard, M. Hakobyan, K.Steinfeld



# List of Activities

*\* A warm thank you to all equality bodies that have contributed to the realisation of our activities by hosting and/or co-organising different events during the year.*

## CONFERENCES

- **Poverty and Discrimination: Two sides of the same coin**, hosted by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Ireland, 22 March
- **Investing in Equality**, Belgium, 1 June
- **Town-Hall Discussion on Anti-Discrimination and Equality Law in Europe – Draft “Horizontal Directive”: Next Steps to Advance the Debate**, co-organised with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), 31 May

## SEMINARS

- **Tackling Age Discrimination against Young People: Building Bridges between Equality Bodies & Youth Organisations**, co-organised with the European Youth Forum, in partnership with the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, Slovenia, 27-28 June
- **Tackling discrimination and ensuring dismissal protection for carers in Europe: Strengthening links between equality bodies and labor inspectorates**, co-organised with the European Commission, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee, Belgium, 17-18 October
- **Equality Bodies Countering Ethnic Profiling**, co-organised with the Open Society Justice Initiative, Belgium, 8-9 November
- **Not on Our Watch! Equality Bodies Fighting Hate Speech**, in partnership with the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), Italy, 18-21 November

## TRAINING SESSION

- **Engagement of the article 33(2) Independent Monitoring Mechanisms with the UNCRPD Committee and Disabled Persons’ Organisations: Training event for equality bodies and National Human Rights Institutions**, co-organised with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman, Latvia, 3-4 October

## CLUSTERS

- **Freedom of Movement**, hosted by Unia, Belgium, 22-23 November
- **Research and Data Collection**, hosted by Unia, Belgium, 25 June and 10-11 December





Participants getting to know each other at the Seminar on Tackling Hate Speech in Rome

## PROJECT

- **Combating violence against women**, hosted by the Commission for the Protection from Discrimination, Bulgaria, 11 April; hosted by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, Germany, 26 September

## WORKING GROUPS

- **Communication Strategies and Practices**, hosted by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania, 6 March; hosted by the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Hungary, 18-19 September
- **Equality Law**, hosted by Unia, Belgium, 8 May; hosted by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta, 11 October
- **Gender Equality**, hosted by the Commission for the Protection from Discrimination, Bulgaria, 12 April; hosted by Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, Germany, 27 September
- **Policy Formation**, hosted by Unia, Belgium, 20 April and 29 November

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

- Hosted by Unia, Belgium, 23 February, 13 June, 9 October
- Hosted by the Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria, 12 December

## STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETINGS

- **Strategic Planning Day**, Brussels, 14 March
- **Consultation meetings with Stakeholders**, Brussels, 12 June, 17 July

## COE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET COOPERATION PLATFORM MEETINGS

- **A rights-based approach to guarantee the right to housing in Europe: between policy and (good) practice**, joint meeting of the Operational Platform for Roma Equality and the Platform on Economic and Social Rights, hosted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Belfast, 15 May
- **5th Meeting of the Operational Platform for Roma Equality (OPRE)**, hosted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Belfast, 16 May
- **6th Meeting of the Platform on Economic and Social Rights**, hosted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Belfast, 16 May
- **A multidimensional approach to guarantee the right to housing in Europe: designing effective tools and concrete ways forward**, hosted by the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 28 November



Equality body staff and Youth Representatives participating at the Seminar on Tackling Discrimination against Young People in Ljubljana

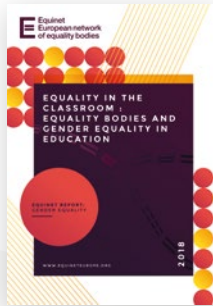
# Publications

## PERSPECTIVE



*Extending the Agenda: Equality bodies addressing hate speech*

## REPORT



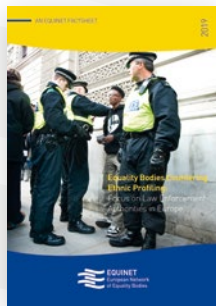
*Equality in the classroom: Equality bodies and gender equality in education*

## DISCUSSION PAPER



*Fighting Discrimination on the Ground of Age*

## FACTSHEET & COMPENDIUM



*Equality Bodies Countering Ethnic Profiling: Focus on Law Enforcement Authorities in Europe*



*Compendium of Promising Practices on Ethnic Profiling*

## IN FOCUS BRIEF



*Work Life Balance*

# Equinet Member Equality Bodies

## ALBANIA

Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination  
[www.kmd.al](http://www.kmd.al)

## AUSTRIA

Austrian Disability Ombudsman  
[www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at](http://www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at)

## AUSTRIA

Ombud for Equal Treatment  
[www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at](http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at)

## BELGIUM

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men  
[www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be](http://www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be)

## BELGIUM

Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities)  
[www.unia.be](http://www.unia.be)

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
[www.ombudsmen.gov.ba](http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba)

## BULGARIA

Commission for Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com](http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com)

## CROATIA

Office of the Ombudsman  
[www.ombudsman.hr](http://www.ombudsman.hr)

## CROATIA

Ombudsperson for Gender Equality  
[www.prs.hr](http://www.prs.hr)

## CROATIA

Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities  
[www.posi.hr](http://www.posi.hr)

## CYPRUS

Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.gov.cy](http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Public Defender of Rights  
[www.ochrance.cz](http://www.ochrance.cz)

## DENMARK

Board of Equal Treatment  
[www.ast.dk](http://www.ast.dk)

## DENMARK

Danish Institute for Human Rights  
[www.humanrights.dk](http://www.humanrights.dk)

## ESTONIA

Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner  
[www.volinik.ee](http://www.volinik.ee)

## FINLAND

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman  
[www.syrjinta.fi](http://www.syrjinta.fi)

## FINLAND

Ombudsman for Equality  
[www.tasa-arvo.fi](http://www.tasa-arvo.fi)

## FRANCE

Defender of Rights  
[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr)

## GEORGIA

Public Defender of Georgia (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.ge](http://www.ombudsman.ge)

## GERMANY

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency  
[www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de](http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de)

## GREECE

Greek Ombudsman  
[www.synigoros.gr](http://www.synigoros.gr)

## HUNGARY

Equal Treatment Authority  
[www.egyenlobanasmod.hu](http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu)

## HUNGARY

Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights  
[www.ajbh.hu](http://www.ajbh.hu)

## IRELAND

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
[www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)

## ITALY

National Equality Councillor  
[www.lavoro.gov.it/ministro-e-ministero/Organi-garanzia-e-osservatori/ConsiglieraNazionale/Consigliera-nazionale-di-parita](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ministro-e-ministero/Organi-garanzia-e-osservatori/ConsiglieraNazionale/Consigliera-nazionale-di-parita)

## ITALY

National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR  
[www.unar.it](http://www.unar.it)

## LATVIA

Office of the Ombudsman  
[www.tiesibsargs.lv](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv)

## LITHUANIA

Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson  
[www.lygybe.lt](http://www.lygybe.lt)

## LUXEMBURG

Centre for Equal Treatment  
[www.cet.lu](http://www.cet.lu)

## MALTA

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability  
[www.crpdp.org.mt](http://www.crpdp.org.mt)

## MALTA

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality  
[www.equality.gov.mt](http://www.equality.gov.mt)

## MOLDOVA

Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality  
[www.egalitate.md](http://www.egalitate.md)

## MONTENEGRO

Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.co.me](http://www.ombudsman.co.me)

## NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights  
[www.mensenrechten.nl](http://www.mensenrechten.nl)

## NORTH MACEDONIA

Commission for the Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kzd.mk](http://www.kzd.mk)

## NORWAY

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud  
[www.ldo.no](http://www.ldo.no)

## POLAND

Commissioner for Human Rights  
[www.rpo.gov.pl](http://www.rpo.gov.pl)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality  
[www.cig.gov.pt](http://www.cig.gov.pt)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment  
[www.cite.gov.pt](http://www.cite.gov.pt)

## PORTUGAL

High Commission for Migration  
[www.acm.gov.pt](http://www.acm.gov.pt)

## ROMANIA

National Council for Combating Discrimination  
[www.cncd.org.ro](http://www.cncd.org.ro)

## SERBIA

Commissioner for Protection of Equality  
[www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs](http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs)

## SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Centre for Human Rights  
[www.snsnp.sk](http://www.snsnp.sk)

## SLOVENIA

Advocate of the Principle of Equality  
[www.zagovornik.si](http://www.zagovornik.si)

## SPAIN

Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination  
[www.igualdadynondiscriminacion.msssi.es](http://www.igualdadynondiscriminacion.msssi.es)

## SPAIN

Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities  
[www.inmujer.es](http://www.inmujer.es)

## SWEDEN

Equality Ombudsman  
[www.do.se](http://www.do.se)

## UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)





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[www.equineteurope.org](http://www.equineteurope.org)

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