

Equality Bodies and Equinet

Promoting Equality in Europe



- What are equality bodies?
- Why do we need equality bodies?
- What challenges do equality bodies face?
- What does the European Network of Equality Bodies do?

EQUALITY BODIES: NATIONAL DEFENDERS OF EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Equality bodies are public institutions set up across Europe to promote equality and tackle discrimination on grounds of **gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, disability or other grounds**. They play a fundamental role in the non-discrimination architecture of the EU.

Their role is defined in accordance with **EU equal treatment legislation** requiring Member States to set up equality bodies to combat discrimination based on race and ethnic origin¹, as well as gender². Many Member States have gone beyond these requirements and ensured that equality bodies can also deal with discrimination based on other grounds.

These bodies have a **distinct role from national governments and civil society organisations**. They promote equality and ensure that equal treatment legislation is applied by:

- Investigating cases of discrimination
- Building a culture that values equality, diversity and non-discrimination
- Providing information and in some cases legal support to potential victims
- Monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues
- Conducting research and providing policy recommendations
- Engaging with public bodies, employers and NGOs to foster non-discriminatory practices and ensure awareness and compliance with equal treatment legislation

¹ Directive 2000/43/EC

² Directives 2010/41, 2006/54, 2004/113

CHALLENGES AHEAD

BACKLASH AGAINST EQUALITY

Equality bodies and other equality stakeholders have been working in an increasingly challenging environment where social consensus on the value of equality is being threatened and discriminatory statements, policies and actions that are illegal and have been unacceptable are being normalised. **Equality bodies have a crucial role and responsibility to remind Member States, institutions and all Europeans that equality and non-discrimination are fundamental European values and, ultimately, hold to account violators of equality legislation.**

IMPLEMENTING STRONG EUROPEAN STANDARDS

EU Directives remain limited to providing for the establishment of equality bodies and vesting them with a minimum set of functions. This broad framework has led to very diverse levels of protection against discrimination across Member States.

To fulfill their potential and maximise their impact, standards on the independence, effectiveness, functions and powers of equality bodies have been recommended by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The effective implementation and monitoring of these standards at European and Member State level will be one of our common challenges for the coming years.

EQUALITY BODIES AS VALUABLE PARTNERS

Equality bodies are at the heart of the national infrastructure for equality, cooperating with all relevant equality stakeholders. They are **authoritative voices** in matters of equality and non-discrimination. As a **first point of contact for victims** of discrimination, they have an extensive understanding of how discrimination affects people in Europe and they can provide reliable **"on the ground"** information about the existing challenges.



THE ROLE OF EQUINET

Equinet provides a first point of contact at the European level for information relating to equality bodies. **We facilitate engagement with equality bodies across Europe and provide relevant information about their experience with various equality and non-discrimination topics.**

We can do this because Equinet is the unique platform of equality bodies in Europe. The Network is co-funded by the European Commission and Equinet's member organisations.

OUR MISSION

- Promoting equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of national equality bodies.
- Supporting equality bodies to be independent and effective catalysts for more equal societies.

OUR ACTIVITIES

- Support** – Capacity-building activities with and for equality body staff, as well as support to equality bodies in need of solidarity.
- Networking** – Knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and peer-to-peer support among equality bodies, as well as with equality stakeholders.
- Research and Knowledge Hub** – Legal and policy research to inform European policy and legislative developments, and provide relevant knowledge to those interested in equality and non-discrimination in Europe.
- Expert Advice** – Contribution to the European equality agenda with expert advice on equality and non-discrimination policy and legislation, based on the experience of equality bodies.
- Promotion** – Promoting equality as a European value.

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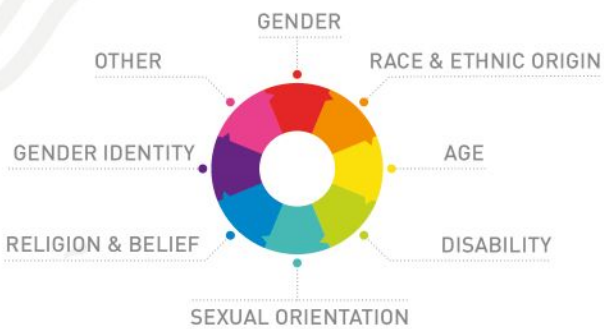


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Equinet Members and the grounds they cover¹

¹ This list illustrates only the grounds covered by the mandates of Equinet's member equality bodies, in employment and beyond employment. In some cases, it is possible that grounds differ from those covered by the country's legislation.



The grounds covered by the mandates of Equinet's member equality bodies, in employment and beyond employment. In some cases, it is possible that grounds differ from those covered by the country's legislation.							
	Employment	Beyond Employment			Employment	Beyond Employment	
ITALY			National Office against Racial Discrimination www.unar.it				
KOSOVO*			Ombudsperson Institution www.oik-rks.org				
LATVIA			Office of the Ombudsman www.tiesibsargs.lv				
LITHUANIA			Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson www.lygybe.lt				
LUXEMBOURG			Centre for Equal Treatment www.cet.lu				
ALBANIA			Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination www.kmd.al	MALTA			National Commission for the Promotion of Equality www.equality.gov.mt Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability www.crpdp.org.mt
AUSTRIA			Ombud for Equal Treatment www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at Austrian Disability Ombudsman www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at	MOLDOVA			Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality www.egalitate.md
BELGIUM			Institute for the Equality of Women and Men www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities) www.unia.be	MONTENEGRO			Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman) www.ombudsman.co.me
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA			Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman www.ombudsman.gov.ba	NETHERLANDS			Netherlands Institute for Human Rights www.mensenrechten.nl
BULGARIA			Commission for Protection against Discrimination www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com	NORTH MACEDONIA			Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination www.kzd.mk
CROATIA			Office of the Ombudswoman - www.ombudsman.hr Ombudsperson for Gender Equality - www.prs.hr Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities www.posi.hr	NORWAY			Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud www.ldo.no
CYPRUS			Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman) www.ombudsman.gov.cy	POLAND			Commissioner for Human Rights www.rpo.gov.pl
CZECH REPUBLIC			Office of the Public Defender of Rights www.ochrance.cz	PORTUGAL			Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality www.cig.gov.pt Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment www.cite.gov.pt High Commission for Migration - www.acm.gov.pt
DENMARK			Board of Equal Treatment www.ast.dk Danish Institute for Human Rights www.humanrights.dk	ROMANIA			National Council for Combating Discrimination www.cncd.org.ro
ESTONIA			Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner www.volinik.ee	SERBIA			Commissioner for Protection of Equality www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs
FINLAND			Ombudsman for Equality www.tasa-arvo.fi Non-Discrimination Ombudsman www.syrjinta.fi	SLOVAKIA			Slovak National Centre for Human Rights www.snsfp.sk
FRANCE			Defender of Rights www.defenseurdesdroits.fr	SLOVENIA			Advocate of the Principle of Equality www.zagovornik.si
GEORGIA			Public Defender (Ombudsman) www.ombudsman.ge	SPAIN			Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.mpr.gob.es Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities www.inmujer.es
GERMANY			Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de	SWEDEN			Equality Ombudsman www.do.se
GREECE			Greek Ombudsman www.synigoros.gr	UNITED KINGDOM			Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com Equality Commission for Northern Ireland www.equalityni.org
HUNGARY			Equal Treatment Authority www.egyenlobanasmod.hu Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights www.ajbh.hu				
IRELAND			Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission www.ihrec.ie				

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.