



**AGM 2020 Voting Document (16 October 2020)**

**DRAFT MINUTES OF**

**THE 14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF**

**EQUINET**

**EUROPEAN NETWORK OF EQUALITY BODIES**

**Wednesday, 23 October 2019**

Brussels, Belgium

## **Attendance**

### **Equinet Members' representatives**

Please refer to the attendance list attached (**Annex 1**)

### **Attending Board Members (mandate 2017 - 2019)**

Tena Šimonović Einwalter (Chair)

Laurence Bond

Patrick Charlier (Treasurer)

Valérie Fontaine

Rhoda Garland

Sandra Konstatzky

Kalliopi Lykovardi

Kirsi Pimiä

Petr Polák

### **Equinet Secretariat**

Sarah Cooke O'Dowd (Communication Officer)

Anne Gaspard (Executive Director)

Moana Genevey (Policy Officer/Gender Equality)

Yannick Godin (Administration and Finance Officer)

Tamás Kádár (Deputy Director - Head of Policy and Legal team)

Teodora Nguyen (Policy and Communication Assistant – Trainee)

Evelin Rizzo (Administration and Events Assistant – Trainee)

Milla Vidina (Policy Officer)

### **Minutes:**

Yannick Godin / Anne Gaspard, Equinet Secretariat

### **Venue**

*Bedford Hotel & Congress Centre*

*Rue du Midi 135*

*1000 Brussels, Belgium*

## **Quorum**

Quorum:

39 Equinet Members attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2019 and 6 Members that could not send a representative delegated their voting right to other attending member organisations through the proxy voting procedure, giving a total of 45 voting Equinet Members represented at AGM 2019.

In line with the Statutes of the organisation that set a validity threshold for the Equinet AGM (Annual General Meeting) to 50 percent of Equinet Members being represented (at least 25 out of 49, in this case) in order for the AGM to take place and make decisions, it is hereby established that the necessary quorum was reached for the meeting and that decisions taken during AGM 2019 are therefore valid and will be enforced.

### **List of Members that delegated their voting right through proxy:**

Bulgaria	Commission for Protection against Discrimination
Croatia	Ombudsperson for Gender Equality
Denmark	Board of Equal Treatment
Denmark	Danish Institute for Human Rights
Latvia	Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia
North Macedonia	Commission for protection against discrimination
Portugal	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment
Romania	National Council for Combating Discrimination

# AGENDA

## Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Wednesday 23 October 2019

8:45-9:15	Registration	
9:15	Welcome by Equinet Chair	
<b>Session 1 – Equinet 2019 review and introduction Board Elections</b>		
<i>Chair: Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director</i>		
09:25-10:10	<b>Report on Equinet Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on 2019 Work Plan - Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Equinet Board</li> <li>Report and update on Equinet Funding &amp; Finance – Patrick Charlier, Treasurer (Equinet Board Member)</li> </ul> <b>Q &amp; A – Members’ discussion</b>	
<b>MEMBERS VOTE</b>	<b>ACCOUNTS 2018</b>	<b>DRAFT MINUTES AGM 2018</b>
10:10-10:30	<b>Equinet Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website &amp; Communication Strategy - Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer &amp; Yannick Godin, Finance and Administration Officer</li> </ul> <b>Q &amp; A – Members’ discussion</b>	
10:30-11:10	<b>2019 Board Elections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction: Steps and procedure for the closed ballot vote</li> <li>Personal introduction of candidates (2 min each)</li> </ul>	
11:10-11:30	<b>Coffee Break</b> (Opening of Closed Ballot Vote for Equinet Board Elections)	
<b>Session 2 – Looking forward: 2020 plans and Equinet governance</b>		
<i>Chair: Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Equinet Board</i>		
11.30 – 12.00	<b>Equinet 2020 Work Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed 2020 Equinet Work Plan &amp; budget – Anne Gaspard, Executive Director &amp; Tamás Kádár, Deputy Director</li> </ul> <b>Q &amp; A – Members discussion</b>	
12.00-12.15	<b>Equinet Membership Application</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ombudsperson Institution, Kosovo*</li> </ul>	
<b>MEMBERS VOTE ON</b>	<b>RATIFICATION OF CANDIDATE FOR MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>EQUINET WORK PLAN AND BUDGET 2020</b>
12:30-13:30	<b>Networking Lunch</b> (End of Closed Ballot Vote – Equinet Board Elections)	
<i>Open to Equinet Members and external stakeholders</i>		
<b>Session 3 – Good Leadership driving Equality in Europe</b>		
<i>Moderator: Liisa Pakosta, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, Estonia</i>		
13:30-14:45	<b>Keynote speech: Tiina Astola, Director-General, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission</b>	

\* 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Friso Roscam Abbing</b>, Advisor on Communication, Fundamental Rights Agency</li> <li>• <b>Tena Šimonović Einwalter</b>, Equinet Chair &amp; Deputy Ombudswoman, Croatia</li> <li>• <b>Adriana van Dooijeweert</b>, ENNHRI Representative &amp; President, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights</li> <li>• <b>Q &amp; A</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Session 4 – Equality implications of digitalisation and artificial intelligence</b>			
14.45 – 15.15	<b>A new space for equality in Europe? A study on the equality implications of artificial intelligence and the role of equality bodies in the public discourse on AI and algorithmic discrimination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentation of preliminary findings</b> - Robin Allen and Dee Masters, Cloisters</li> <li>• <b>Q &amp; A</b></li> </ul>		
15.25 – 16.45	Discussion group I: <b>Artificial Intelligence &amp; Equality Bodies</b>	Discussion Group II: <b>Standards for Equality Bodies</b>	Discussion Group III: <b>Complaints Data Collection</b>
<b>Session 5 – Closing Session</b>			
16:45-17:00	Plenary gathering		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Announcement of Elections results for Equinet Board mandate 2019-2021</b></li> <li>• <b>Conclusion and closing of AGM</b> – Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director</li> </ul>		
17:00 – 18:00	<b>Board Meeting with newly elected Board Members</b> <i>Nomination of the Chair of the Executive Board 2019-2021</i>		

## **SESSION 1 – Equinet 2019 review and introduction Board Elections**

*Chair: Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director*

### **Welcome and introduction**

On 23 October 2019, Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of the Equinet Board of Directors (the Board) and Deputy Ombudswoman of Croatia, delivered a welcome address and declared the **fourteenth Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)** open at 09:15.

### **Report on Equinet Work Plan 2019; Funding & Finance; Update on Equinet Membership**

On behalf of the Equinet Board, Equinet Chair Tena Šimonović Einwalter, gave a comprehensive report on **Equinet activities for 2019**. With further input of Patrick Charlier (Equinet Treasurer), an **overview of the financial situation for 2019** was introduced to the Members, alongside future Equinet budget 2020 and EC funding perspective, and the possible need for Board to review and propose at a next AGM an increase in Equinet membership fee system (unchanged since Equinet creation) for the years ahead.

### **Votes**

As foreseen in the AGM agenda and on the basis of voting documents previously sent to Equinet Members, the Chair invited Equinet Members **to cast their votes on the minutes of the Equinet AGM 2018 and accounts 2018**. No amendment proposal on the draft minutes had been received from the Equinet Membership.

- **The Minutes of the Equinet AGM 2018 were adopted unanimously (45 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.**
- **The Accounts for the year 2018 were adopted unanimously (45 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.**

Members national equality bodies were then presented future plans related to Equinet Communication Strategy and Website, by the Secretariat communication team.

### **2019 Board Elections: Introduction and presentation of candidates**

The procedure for the election of the new Equinet Executive Board (two-year mandate 2019-2021) was introduced by the Equinet Executive Director, and all ten candidates standing for election to the Equinet Executive Board were invited to introduce themselves. One candidates could not attend the AGM due to force majeure, and introduced herself through a video message.

It will be possible for Members to cast their secret ballot vote from the next break and until lunch, for Board elections results to be announced during the final session of the day.

## SESSION 2 – Looking forward: 2020 plans and Equinet governance

*Chair: Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair - Equinet Executive Board*

### **Ratification of new Equinet membership**

The Chair of the Board introduced **one new Member application** to join Equinet which was reviewed, accepted and forwarded by the Equinet Board to the General Assembly of Members at the AGM for its ratification vote:

- **Ombudsperson Institution, Kosovo\***

An exchange of views took place with the participating members.

M. Hilmi Jashari, Ombudsperson, briefly introduced his organisation to Members before the voting took place.

### **Vote**

As foreseen in the AGM agenda and on the basis of voting documents previously sent to Equinet Members, the Chair invited Equinet Members **to cast their votes on the ratification of the candidate to Equinet Membership.**

- **The candidacy of the Ombudsperson Institution, Kosovo was ratified by the General Assembly of Equinet Members (32 votes in favour, 7 against and 3 abstentions).**

Upon ratification of its candidacy, the above-mentioned equality body became a full Member of the Network, thus acquiring voting rights for the next item put forward to the vote of the General Assembly of Members.

### **Equinet Work Plan 2020 proposal**

Equinet Executive Director Anne Gaspard, and Deputy Director Tamas Kadar, gave a comprehensive overview of activities planned within the **Equinet Work Plan 2020 proposal**. This was complemented by a short presentation by Equinet Treasurer, Patrick Charlier, on the related **budget proposal for 2020**. He also introduced the plan to review and propose a reasonable increase of Equinet annual Membership fees in future – considering these have remained unchanged from the start of Equinet - to help meet essential co-financing requirements including under potential future project grants and

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build a social reserve fund required for the Network under Belgian regulations context. The Equinet Executive Board would develop and present a proposal for next year 2020.

The Work Plan and Budget 2020 put forward to the vote of Equinet Members can be found on the [Equinet website](#).

#### **Vote**

- **The draft Equinet Work Plan and Budget 2020 proposal was unanimously approved (45 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.**

**-- AGM NETWORKING LUNCH FROM 12:45 to 14:00 --**

#### **SESSION 3 - Good Leadership driving Equality in Europe**

*Moderator: Liisa Pakosta, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, Estonia*

Panel speakers underlined the importance of triggering people's core values, choosing the right messages and the right messengers to convey those messages and not top down human rights language and communication.

They welcomed the priority on Equality granted a stand-alone portfolio within the newly established European Commission, giving it a promising focus. This conveys a very strong message for Equality by the European Commission, which was reaffirmed by keynote Director General Tiina Astola.

The results of the latest Eurobarometer give an overall picture that warrants cautious optimism. Some of the results are still very worrying, though: 17% of respondents felt discriminated in the past 12 months. But the figure is much higher for LGBTI people (58%) and Persons with disabilities (52%). A large share of Europeans say that discrimination is widespread.

A European Commission report on the implementation of the Race Equality Directive and the Employment Directive will be released next year (second half 2020), which will include a dedicated focus on equality bodies. The High Level Group on Non-discrimination, equality and diversity would also support and welcome follow-up to the EC Recommendation on Standards for National Equality Bodies (NEBs).

The Commission will also address gender balance in decision-making, violence against women and the gender pay gap. The upcoming gender equality strategy will replace the current strategic engagement. Other issues that will be a focus of work for the European Commission: LGBTI people; Roma people (a post-2020 initiative is being considered, with a strengthened discrimination focus); persons with

disabilities (achievement of European Accessibility Act); hate speech (incl. online), hate crime; artificial intelligence (guidelines will be produced).

It was reminded that there was a glaring protection gap in EU law, with some Member States offering comprehensive protection and comprehensive mandate for NEBs, while others don't. A majority of governments in the EU agree that protection gaps must be filled. There was a general concern about lack of enforcement and available equality data. The call for the debate on the so-called Horizontal Directive be unblocked was reiterated, alongside the need for effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions as an essential component for an effective Equality framework for all. Mainstreaming non-discrimination and equality in national government initiatives, as well as strong, well-resourced, well-mandated, independent NEBs that are also working proactively and promoting equality are essential to ensuring the protection from discrimination for all European Citizens.

Equality is a common value that should be protected, promoted and exercised by all, and the need to leverage positive values in messaging were underlined.

Equinet and ENNHRI could usefully reinforce their cooperation as the right to an equal treatment is the motor of all human rights. We need to make sure that everyone can understand and relate to the issues we are promoting, in an inclusive way. It is important to support and prioritise the role of school education and promoting equality from a young age.

#### [SESSION 4 - Equality implications of digitalisation and artificial intelligence \(open to externals\)](#)

As an introduction to this session part, Robin Allen and Dee Masters, experts from the UK-based legal Practice *Cloisters*, presented the preliminary findings of the draft report on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the role of Equality Bodies in mitigating potential adversarial effects on Equality of the technologies involved. The practice had been commissioned by Equinet to produce the report that will be finalized as soon as possible and be published and made available in 2020.

Participants were then given the opportunity to discuss this specific topic alongside other selected priority topic, in parallel smaller group discussions:

- **Artificial Intelligence & Equality Bodies Priorities for Equality Bodies in 2019**
- **Standards for Equality Bodies**

#### [SESSION 5 – Closing Session and results of the Equinet Board elections](#)

The audience reconvened in plenary and the results of the Equinet Board elections were announced.

## **Vote**

**Election of a new Equinet Board of Directors for a two-year mandate (2019-2021): In line with the Board election procedures, the following candidates were elected to the new Equinet Board of Directors for a mandate of two years:**

- **Laurence BOND, Director - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), Ireland**
- **Patrick CHARLIER, Co-Director - Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities), Belgium**
- **Valérie FONTAINE, Advisor for Partnerships and Public Relations - Defender of Rights, France**
- **Kirsi PIMIÄ, Ombudsman - Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, Finland**
- **Rhoda GARLAND, Executive Director - Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, Malta**
- **Sandra KONSTATZKY, Director - Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria**
- **Miha LOBNIK, Head of Institution - Advocate of the Principle of Equality, Slovenia**
- **Konstantinos BARTZELIOTIS, Senior Investigator / Equal Treatment Department - Greek Ombudsman, Greece**
- **Tena ŠIMONOVIĆ EINWALTER, Deputy Ombudswoman - Ombudswoman, Croatia.**

The elected Board will hold an initial meeting after the AGM to nominate their chair and treasurer, as possible. Equinet Members and key partners will be informed shortly of Board decision outcomes in this regard.

## **Final remarks and closing of the AGM**

Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director, addressed closing remarks and thanked everyone for their active engagement during the AGM, noting that exchanged views and ideas are well noted, valuable and taken into account to guide Equinet's forthcoming work.

Finally, Anne Gaspard expressed appreciation for the support and key cooperation from Equinet's European and international partners, including the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of the EU, Council of Europe, UN OHCHR, ENNHRI, and civil society partners among others – some of them who kindly joined part of the AGM alongside Equinet members.

*== The fourteenth Annual General Meeting of Equinet was officially closed at 17:00 on 23 October 2019 ==*

**ANNEX 1**

<b>List of Participants</b>				
<b>Equality Bodies – Representatives (Equinet members &amp; observers)</b>				
<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Albania</b>	Commission for the Protection from Discrimination	Mirela	<b>Rrumbullaku</b>	Delegate
<b>Austria</b>	Austria Disability Ombudsman	Magdalena	<b>Hahn</b>	Staff member
	Ombud for Equal Treatment	Sandra	<b>Konstatzky</b>	Director
		Flora	<b>Alvarado-Dupuy</b>	Delegate
<b>Belgium</b>	Unia	Patrick	<b>Charlier</b>	Director
	Institute for Equality of Women and Men	Michel	<b>Pasteel</b>	Director
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Pedrag	<b>Raosavljevic</b>	Head of Anti-discrimination department
<b>Croatia</b>	Office of the Ombudsman	Tena	<b>Simonovic Einwalter</b>	Ombudswoman
	Office of the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities	Darijo	<b>Jurišić</b>	Deputy Ombudsman
<b>Cyprus</b>	Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights	Maria	<b>Stylianou</b>	Commissioner
		Despina	<b>Mertakka</b>	Officer
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Public Defender of Rights	Petr	<b>Polák</b>	Head of Division of Equal Treatment
<b>Estonia</b>	Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioners Office	Liisa	<b>Pakosta</b>	Commissioner
		Roosve	<b>Art-Peeter</b>	Counselor of the Commissioner
<b>Finland</b>	Ombudsman for Non-Discrimination	Kirsi	<b>Pimiä</b>	Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
	Ombudsman for Equality	Jukka	<b>Maarianvaara</b>	Ombudsman for Equality
<b>France</b>	Defender of Rights	Valerie	<b>Fontaine</b>	Adviser for partnerships and public relations

<b>Georgia</b>	Office of the Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia	Ketevan	<b>Shubashvili</b>	Head of the Equality Department
		Skhiladze	<b>Ekaterine</b>	Deputy Public Defender
<b>Germany</b>	Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA)	Niklas	<b>Hofmann</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Greece</b>	Greek Ombudsman	Kalliopi	<b>Lykovardi</b>	Deputy Ombudsman for Equal Treatment
		Konstantinos	<b>Bartzeliotis</b>	Senior Investigator
<b>Hungary</b>	Equal Treatment Authority	Levente	<b>Kollar</b>	Digital Communications Officer
	Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	Tamas Antal	<b>Heizer</b>	International Relations Officer
<b>Ireland</b>	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Laurence	<b>Bond</b>	Director
<b>Italy</b>	National Office against Discrimination (UNAR)	Triantafillos	<b>Loukarelis</b>	Director
<b>Kosovo*</b>	Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo*	Arberita	<b>Kryeziu</b>	Head of International Relations Office
		Edona	<b>Hajrullahu</b>	Deputy Ombudsman
		Hilmi	<b>Jashari</b>	Ombudsman
<b>Lithuania</b>	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson	Laima	<b>Vengale-Dits</b>	Senior adviser
<b>Luxembourg</b>	CET (Centre for equal treatment)	Jean-Marc	<b>Scheer</b>	Assistant
		Patrick	<b>Hurst</b>	President
<b>Malta</b>	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability	Rhoda	<b>Garland</b>	Executive Director
	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)	Andre	<b>Callus</b>	Executive (Policy and Training)
<b>Moldova</b>	Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality	Ian	<b>Feldman</b>	President
		Olga	<b>Bulgaga</b>	Chief Officer
<b>Montenegro</b>	Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman)	Sinisa	<b>Bjekovic</b>	Deputy Ombudsman
<b>Netherlands</b>	Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	Adriana	<b>van Dooijeweert</b>	Chair
<b>Norway</b>	The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud	Hanne Inger	<b>Bjurstrøm</b>	Equality and Anti-

				discrimination Ombudsman
<b>Poland</b>	Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights	Magdalena	<b>Kurus</b>	Deputy Director, Department of Equal Treatment
<b>Portugal</b>	High Commission for Migration	Vasco	<b>Malta</b>	Director
	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality	Teresa	<b>Clode</b>	Policy Officer-Legal Department
<b>Serbia</b>	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	Jelena	<b>Kotevic</b>	Head of Private Sector Complaints Section
		Tatjana	<b>Jokanovic</b>	Senior Adviser
<b>Slovakia</b>	Slovak National Centre for Human Rights	Zuzana	<b>Pavličková</b>	Head of Office of the Executive Director
<b>Slovenia</b>	Advocate of the principle of equality	Miha	<b>Lobnik</b>	Advocate of the Principle of Equality
		Nika	<b>Kovač</b>	Officer
<b>Spain</b>	Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities	Ana	<b>Lite Mateo</b>	Head of Sector
	Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination	Rosario	<b>Maseda García</b>	Technical Advisor
<b>Sweden</b>	Diskrimineringsombudsmannen/Swedish Equality Ombudsman	Anna	<b>Rosenmuller Nordlander</b>	Litigation Officer
		Kerstin	<b>Jansson</b>	International Coordinator
<b>UK Great Britain</b>	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Alasdair	<b>MacDonald</b>	Director of Policy
<b>UK Northern Ireland</b>	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	Glenda	<b>Doherty</b>	Research Officer