



# Tackling Discrimination & Intolerance against Muslims

## Online Workshop

### 25-26 January 2021

## CONCEPT NOTE & AGENDA

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The **online workshop** will take place on **25-26 January**. It will be hosted by **Equinet**, the **European Network of Equality Bodies**.

The workshop is co-organized with **the European Commission (the Commission's coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred)** and will bring together national equality bodies and civil society organisations working on issues related to discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.

The workshop follows a high-level political event held on 18 June 2020 co-organised with the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission's coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred. The high-level political event brought together national equality bodies, civil society organisations, Member State representatives and EU institutions working on issues related to discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Recent surveys<sup>1</sup> and reports<sup>2</sup> show that intolerance and discrimination against Muslims are persistent phenomena in European societies.

The experience of equality bodies shows that Muslims are often victims of discrimination in the fields of employment, goods and services, education, manifesting religion and belief in public and public administration and state functions.<sup>3</sup> A number of other key issues connected to intolerance and discrimination against Muslims are also evident from this experience. This includes ethnic profiling by authorities; hate speech, especially online hate speech connected with the normalisation of Islamophobia; underreporting; and the lack of trust in equality bodies.<sup>4</sup> A relatively new and growing challenge is the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on intolerance and (institutional) discrimination against Muslims.

The gravity of the situation of Muslims makes it important for equality bodies to act and to do so in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders. Equality bodies across Europe carry out different activities according to their mandates and resources and some of them are already engaged with civil society organisations in the field. Enhancing these efforts for cooperation with civil society are all the more important in order to help address the key challenges of underreporting and the lack of trust in equality bodies mentioned above.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.osce.org/odihr/373441>

<sup>3</sup> [http://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/wg\\_religion\\_report\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/wg_religion_report_final_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Based on the data from Equinet's needs assessment regarding the workshop.



## OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The overall objective of the workshop is to **build links between civil society organisations (CSOs) and national equality bodies on the topic of tackling discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.**

In particular, the workshop will meet the following objectives:

- Explore the phenomenon of anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination to better understand its manifestations and its impact on victims
- Identify possible ways to fight against hate speech and the normalisation of anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination based on the shared experience of CSOs and equality bodies
- Identify best practices on how to tackle discrimination and intolerance against Muslims
- Identify strategies on how to build trust in equality bodies to face the challenges of the underreporting of discrimination against Muslims

## AGENDA

25 January 2021	
09:30 – 09:40	<b>Opening and welcome</b> <i>Moderator: Sarah Cooke O’Dowd, Communication Officer, Equinet</i>
09:40 – 09:55	<b>Getting to know one another</b>
09:55 – 10:50	<b>ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED &amp; DISCRIMINATION / RELEVANT FRAMEWORKS IN EUROPE</b>
09:55 - 10:15	<b>Anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred and discrimination: challenges and responses in Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Đermana Šeta</b>, Adviser on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</li> <li>• <b>Julie Pascoet</b>, Senior Advocacy Officer, European Network against Racism</li> </ul>
10:15 – 10:25	<b>Framework for equality and non-discrimination and possible future developments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dorothea Staes</b>, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission</li> </ul>
10:25– 10:35	<b>Equality bodies as part of the institutional framework for equality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tena Šimonović Einwalter</b>, Chair of Equinet’s Executive Board</li> </ul>
10:40– 10:50	<b>Questions and Answers</b>
10:50 – 11:00	<b>Comfort break</b>

<b>11:00 – 12:45</b>	<b>IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES IN COOPERATION</b> <i>Moderator: Tommaso Chiamparino, Coordinator on combatting Anti-Muslim Hatred, European Commission</i>
<b>11:00 – 11:10</b>	<b>Avenues for Cooperation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Henri Nickels</b>, Institutional Cooperation &amp; Networks, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</li> </ul>
<b>11:10 – 11:20</b>	<b>Questions and Answers</b>
<b>11:20 – 12:35</b>	<b>Working together to tackle manifestations of discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslims in different fields</b> Small group discussions, focusing on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the three fields, in order of priority, where you would see cooperation EBs/CSOs useful and needed?</li> <li>2. What are the benefits of EBs/CSOs cooperating?</li> <li>3. What obstacles might block this cooperation?</li> <li>4. How can those obstacles be overcome?</li> </ol>
<b>12:35 – 12:45</b>	<b>Day 1: Closing</b>
<b>26 January 2021</b>	
<b>09:30 – 12:15</b>	<b>IDENTIFYING WAYS FORWARD FOR IMPROVED COOPERATION</b> <i>Moderator: Tamás Kádár, Deputy Director and Head of Legal and Policy, Equinet</i>
<b>09:30 – 10:30</b>	<b>Addressing the challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback by Rapporteurs of previous day's discussions (virtual popcorn)</li> <li>• Discussions on the key practical obstacles and challenges of cooperation</li> <li>• Interactive exchange of ideas and best practises</li> </ul>
<b>10:30 – 10:45</b>	<b>Comfort break</b>
<b>10:45-12:00</b>	<b>Discussing practical ways forward and solutions</b> Small group discussions around a possible list of actions for future cooperation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What area(s) of focus?</li> <li>2. What can you do practically? e.g. establish a contact person in the EB that has relation with Muslim NGO; how to handle communication or campaign about cases</li> <li>3. What other actors need to be involved?</li> </ol>
<b>12:00-12:15</b>	<b>Concluding Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tommaso Chiamparino</b>, Coordinator on combatting Anti-Muslim Hatred, European Commission</li> </ul>

