

## EQUINET WEBINAR SERIES on Equality, Diversity, and Non-Discrimination in Healthcare

Tackling systemic inequalities for a more egalitarian  
access to healthcare services

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22, 24, 28, 30 June 2021



### 1. State of Play: Equality and non-discrimination in the access to healthcare

22/06/2021, 14.00-16.30 CEST



A recent Eurobarometer survey showed that healthcare was by far the most important issue for the future of Europe according to Europeans. However, equality in the field of healthcare, despite its centrality to wellbeing, remains a relatively under-examined field in the work of equality bodies compared to fields such as employment or education. This is reflected by the lack of EU wide legislation that would cover the field of healthcare in national anti-discrimination legislation across all grounds, which indirectly affects the mandates of equality bodies throughout Europe. Due to these limitations, the mandates and powers of equality bodies among European countries greatly varies.

The findings of the forthcoming Equinet perspective 'Equality, Diversity, and Non-Discrimination in Healthcare' prepared by Niall Crowley, points to obstacles faced by equality bodies in the field of healthcare. These barriers are for instance linked to the design of national healthcare systems, which often face an overall lack of resources and an uneven geographical spread of services, directly affecting access for the most marginalised groups. Other obstacles identified in Equinet's perspective include the inherent complexity of healthcare systems requiring particular expertise from equality bodies and the power imbalances between patient and provider. The perspective points to the lack of attention to equality within healthcare systems signalling the lack of organisational equality infrastructures, capacity, and policies in healthcare provider organisations.

Moreover, it is undeniable, as shown by the results of the Eurobarometer survey mentioned above, that the COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the pre-existing structural and systemic inequalities in this field and has brought to the fore the relevance of egalitarian access to healthcare services. This has prompted for healthcare services to become a priority issue in both national and international agendas.

This webinar series aims, on the basis of the findings of Equinet's perspective at building an event in which key healthcare actors, together with equality bodies, can share their concerns and find ways to collaborate and overcome identified obstacles to securing equality competent healthcare service provision. Whilst the impact of COVID-19 will be examined specifically in one of the sessions planned, focus will be put on stressing the pre-existing systemic inequalities in the design and delivery of such services.

# Agenda

State of Play: Equality and non-discrimination in the access to healthcare

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Moderator: **Tamás Kádár**, Deputy Director and Head of Legal and Policy, Equinet

<b>14.00-14.10</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <i>Tamás Kádár, Deputy Director and Head of Legal and Policy, Equinet</i>
<b>14.10-14.15</b>	<b>Opening speech</b> <i>Tena Šimonovic Einwalter, Equinet Chair and Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia</i>
<b>14.15 – 14.40</b>	<b>Equinet perspective Equality, diversity and non-discrimination in healthcare: Learning from the work of equality bodies</b> <i>Niall Crowley, Independent expert and author of the Equinet Perspective</i> <b>Q&amp;A</b>
<b>14.40- 15.20</b>	<b>Access to healthcare services and inequalities, State of Play</b> <i>Jean McHale, Professor of Health Care Law and Director of the Centre for Health Law Science and Policy at the University of Birmingham</i> <b>Q&amp;A</b>
<b>15.20-15.30</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>15.30- 16.20</b>	<b>European and International legal &amp; policy framework</b> <i>Panel session</i> <i>Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero, Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion at Directorate-General Employment, EC, DG employment</i> <i>Marie-Dominique Parent, Europe Deputy Regional Representative a.i. UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe in Brussels</i> <i>Tatiana Puiu, Member of the European Committee of Social Rights, Attorney at Law, Specialist in Human Rights</i>
<b>16.20-16.30</b>	<b>Closing first session</b> <i>Tamás Kádár, Deputy Director and Head of Legal and Policy, Equinet</i>

## Our speakers

### Tena Šimonović Einwalter

**Chair of Equinet Executive Board and Ombudswoman, Office of the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia**

Tena Šimonović Einwalter graduated from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law, awarded the Diploma of the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg, holds a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Political Science and a Master's degree in European and Comparative Law from the University of Oxford Faculty of Law.

As one of the drafters of the Croatian Anti-Discrimination Act, Tena began working in the Office of the Ombudsman in 2008 to set up its equality body mandate. She was elected by the Croatian Parliament as a Deputy Ombudswoman in 2013 and has overseen the institution's non-discrimination and equality work. In 2020, she was elected as the new Ombudswoman by the Croatian Parliament. As an independent expert, she is also a member of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). She also delivers lectures and training and publishes on human rights, the rights of national minorities and particularly non-discrimination and equality law.



### Niall Crowley

**Independent equality and diversity expert**

Niall Crowley is an independent equality and diversity expert. He has worked on research, policy, evaluation, and strategy development projects at a European level with the European Commission, EIGE, and the Council of Europe and in a wide range of European countries.

Prior to this he was Chief Executive of the Equality Authority in Ireland, an equality body that worked on nine different grounds including gender in the fields of employment and of goods and services. Previously he worked on rights issues in the NGO sector. He is author of 'Empty Promises: Bringing the Equality Authority to Heel' published by A&A Farman in 2010 and 'An Ambition for Equality' published by Irish Academic Press in 2006. He is the main author of Equinet's perspective Equality, Diversity, and Non-Discrimination in Healthcare: Learning from the work of equality bodies.



Jean McHale

**Professor of Health Care Law and Director of the Centre for Health Law Science and Policy at the University of Birmingham**

Jean McHale is Professor of Health Care Law and Director of the Centre for Health Law Science and Policy at the University of Birmingham. She is the author/editor of 9 books including in the area of EU Health Law- *European Health Law Themes and Implications* with Tamara Hervey (CUP: 2015) and numerous academic articles. Her work on EU Health law has led her to be invited to give evidence in person to the UK House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee and House of Lords European Union Select Committee and to presentations to the Scottish Government and members of the Scottish Parliament.

Inmaculada Placencia Porrero

**Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion at Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission**

Inmaculada Placencia Porrero is a Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion at Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission. Her unit is responsible for the coordination of European policies for persons with disabilities. She is working on European disability policies including on the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, and worked on previous European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Disability Action Plan 2003-2010, and the EU implementation of the UNCRPD. Inmaculada holds a degree in Physics and Computer Science and worked in research and development before joining The European Commission in 1991. She has worked on research programmes addressing accessibility as well as assistive technologies and was Deputy Head of Unit for various disability-related units in the Commission. Her work in the "e-Inclusion" unit of the Directorate-General for Information Society and Media addressed accessibility policy. While at the Directorate-General for Justice she contributed to disability-related antidiscrimination legislation. She was responsible for the Task Force for the preparation of the European Accessibility Act and remains responsible since its adoption in 2015. Currently under the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, she coordinates the disability team.



## Marie-Dominique Parent

### **Europe Deputy Regional Representative a.i. UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe in Brussels**

Marie-Dominique Parent has 24 years of experience in the field of human rights and international cooperation, including 17 years based in Africa and Asia. Previous positions included Deputy Representative at OHCHR in Cambodia, Regional Director for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa of Penal Reform International (PRI) and head of PRI Paris Office. She consulted for GIZ in Bangladesh and the Paralegal Advisory Service in Malawi and accompanied the UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture in its mission to New-Zealand. Marie-Dominique Parent has worked on human rights in the criminal justice, economic and social rights issues in development contexts, non-discrimination and the rule of law.



## Tatiana Puiu

### **Member of the European Committee of Social Rights, Attorney at Law, Specialist in Human Rights**

Ms. Puiu is an Attorney at Law in Republic of Moldova and member of the European Committee of Social Rights, which she joined in 2019. Her professional experience in human rights and rule of law straddles the legal, policy and practitioner fields. Tatiana has acted as an expert advisor to a wide range of international and national organisations and bodies working on human rights issues, including the Council of Europe, NHRIs and NGOs.



Tamás Kádár

**Deputy Director and Head of Legal and Policy, Equinet**

Tamás Kádár is Deputy Director (Head of Legal and Policy) at Equinet. Tamás worked previously at the Hungarian Equal Treatment Authority as a legal officer, investigating discrimination cases on all grounds and drafting decisions of the Authority.

He graduated from the Faculty of Law of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest as a Doctor in Law. Tamás also holds a Master of Economic Science degree from University College Dublin in Ireland.

Tamás has published articles on equality and non-discrimination, spoken at numerous international conferences and acted as a trainer and expert in various EU, Council of Europe, OSCE and USAID-funded projects.





## Further Reading

### Equinet Publications and resources

- Equinet perspective, [Equality, diversity and non-discrimination in healthcare: Learning from the work of equality bodies](#)
- Equinet, [Legislating for stronger, more effective equality bodies: Key elements for and expectations from future EU legislation on equality bodies.](#)
- Equinet, [Equinet Highlights 2020.](#)
- Equinet, [Equality blog](#)
- Equinet, [Disability strategy summary.](#)
- Equinet, [Why Intersectionality is relevant for a fairer Europe.](#)
- Equinet, [Future of Equality Legislation in Europe.](#)

### Other interesting resources:

- European Council, [Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin](#)
- European Council, [Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.](#)
- European Commission, [Horizontal Directive Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.](#)
- EU, [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.](#)
- European Commission, [A Union of Equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020.](#)
- European Commission, [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy - 2020-2025](#)
- European Commission, [2020-2030 EU Roma Strategic Framework](#)
- European Commission, [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.](#)
- European Commission, [Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU](#)
- European Commission, [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.](#)
- European Commission, [European Pillar of Social Rights strategy.](#)
- [European Health Union website.](#)
- European Commission, [A European Health Union- Factsheet, Coronavirus Impact and Response](#)
- European Commission, [A European Health Union-Tackling the health crises together- The role of EU agencies.](#)
- European Commission, [Building a European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU's resilience for cross-border health threats.](#)
- European Commission, [EU4Health- 2021-2027.](#)
- European Commission, [NextGenerationEU.](#)
- Council of Europe, [Statement on COVID-19 and Social Rights.](#)
- Council of Europe, [Statement of interpretation on the right to protection of health in times of pandemic](#)
- Council of Europe, Targeted questions for cycle 2021 on “health, social protection and social security”: [Revised Charter](#) and [1961 Charter](#)
- Council of Europe Secretary General, [Information Document: A Council of Europe contribution to support member states in addressing healthcare issues in the context of the present public health crisis and beyond](#)





### Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies

Equinet is 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. By engaging closely with policy makers and partners at EU and international level, Equinet promotes the work of equality bodies through relevant publications, as well as participation at conferences and other meetings.

**For more information, please see our website: [www.equineteurope.org](http://www.equineteurope.org)**

**Check the directory of Equality Bodies for a list of Equinet members:**

<https://equineteurope.org/what-are-equality-bodies/european-directory-of-equality-bodies/>