Stepping Up our Engagement with Youth

Handbook for Equality Bodies

by EQUINET WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES
Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies

Equinet is a membership organisation bringing together equality bodies from across Europe. 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. We believe in an equal Europe: where equality is a reality for everyone, diversity is valued, and all forms of discrimination have been eliminated.

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.
The context of the health and socio-economic crisis tends to make it more difficult for a generation already marked by precariousness to have its rights respected. The COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks for youth in the fields of education, employment and mental health. Intersecting identity factors, such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, intellectual or physical disability and socio-economic disadvantage may exacerbate the vulnerability of young people (e.g. homeless youth, youth NEET – not in employment, education or training – young migrants, etc.

Inequalities are growing and our societies can’t afford to endanger the new generation, our future. But we have to believe in the capacity of young people to adapt to the way our world is transformed. And this world has to offer enough space for equality.

Thus, tackling discrimination against young people has to be one of the priorities of national equality bodies. Our institutions also have an important role to play in order to empower young people to promote equality. But how can we achieve that? Let me propose some suggestions.

Firstly, by handling individual complaints.

Young people, as diverse as they are, should fully enjoy their rights and freedoms without discrimination on any grounds. Equality bodies have the legal tools to tackle this discrimination, which can be multiple.

We can observe that young people tend to rarely approach equality bodies. Because we’re not visible or accessible enough to them, because they might not trust institutions, or simply because they don’t realise that their rights have not been respected.

Secondly, by educating young people about equality and non-discrimination.

This under-reporting is partly due to the lack of knowledge of young people about their rights. In order to assert your rights, you must first know them. Access to rights requires young people and youth organisations to be informed and educated about the rights that young people should enjoy and what can be done if these rights are violated.

Programmes such as “Éducadroit”, developed by the French Defender of Rights, offering educational tools not only to educators and parents, but also to young people directly, are interesting ways to raise awareness.

Thirdly, by building long term partnerships.

Regular exchanges with youth organisations are important. For example, on 1-2 March 2021, Equinet hosted, in cooperation with the European Youth Forum, an online workshop on tackling age discrimination through improved engagement with youth organisations. This is a great example of ways to cooperate around the common goal of furthering equality in society. Mainstreaming and regular consultation are some of the keys for this cooperation.

Equality bodies can also cooperate with structures that offer support to young people, in order to have a global approach to the different challenges.

Moreover, it can be useful to organise collaboration with research institutes to carry out statistical work, quantitative and qualitative studies and joint actions to promote equality and access to rights for young people.

Finally, by empowering young people to promote equality.

There is a need to support the meaningful participation of young people and youth organisations in policy-making, if possible also at local and regional levels where policy-making is carried out closest to young people. In the same spirit, in our equality bodies we need to consult and build strategies with young people and to take their opinions into consideration, starting at an early age.

In the same way as they are boosting global climate action, young people can also have a decisive impact for a more inclusive society, which is why we have to give...
them tools to be “equality champions”. As inclusion and equality are core tenets of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, Equinet could engage a discussion with the European Commission for the creation of a “European Young Ambassadors for Equality programme”, along the lines of the Defender of Rights’s JADE programme. Thus, young Europeans could be trained on equality and non-discrimination values and then intervene in schools and other places to spread their knowledge.

It is important to promote good practices to inspire colleagues in other authorities – that’s the core of Equinet’s mission.

This guide contains several case studies and practical tips, and is just one of Equinet’s various projects in favour of young people. May it enable you to develop new protection and promotion actions, to exchange with your colleagues in other institutions and to draw on the energy of young people to innovate!

Congratulations to the taskforce of the Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices, with the support of Equinet Secretariat, for this useful handbook.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION
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The changes that occur between puberty and the mid-20s create a period of intense learning about who we are and who we want to be. From around age 10 to about 25, we discover, learn from, and adapt to the world around us. We forge our sense of who we are and who we aspire to be. We build resilience, and develop interests, passions, and meaningful goals that shape our adult lives. Our developing brains are well suited to these tasks, but too often the systems that serve us are not. Adults working to support young people must transform discriminatory systems to ensure that all of us have the support we need to explore, discover, and become a force for good in our communities and society, during adolescence and as we transition to adulthood.

This is why we developed this Handbook. We want those working on equality and non-discrimination to think about how to tackle discrimination based on the needs of young people, and to cooperate with them in order to understand what those needs are.

While chronological definitions of youth may differ, youth is a unique phase in one’s life, a transition stage between childhood and adulthood, from dependence to autonomy. This transition can happen at different ages, depending on the social, cultural, and economic context, but the one key feature that characterises youth are specific challenges in becoming independent and autonomous, and in accessing and enjoying their human rights. A flexible age cohort and intersectionality are the defining characteristics of youth, and what, at times, makes it difficult for their rights to be recognised.

Young people may face discrimination on the basis of their age, but youth is not a homogeneous group and age is not the only element that defines them. They can also belong to religious or national minorities and/or the LGBTIQ community, have a particular gender, be workers, students, persons with disabilities, patients, tenants, homeless people, consumers and so much more. The inherently cross cutting nature of youth as a group should not act as an obstacle to their enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. Rather, it should act as an incentive to protect young people in this transition stage from childhood to adulthood.

During this pivotal time in their lives, we should give them a better understanding of equality. The tools available to them to tackle the intersectional discrimination they face, and their understanding of how to put these tools to use, is crucial to ensure their rights are protected, respected and fulfilled. Cooperation and communication are the most effective ways for equality bodies to use their power to engage with youth, and this Handbook is one step on the road to helping them do so effectively. It is primarily written for officers working in outreach, cooperation and communication. Hopefully it will also be of use to anyone else who can support its objectives, as multipliers of equality messages and actions - youth organizations, other organizations and networks working with youth, media, academia etc.

It was prepared by a taskforce of the Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices, with the support of Equinet Secretariat, and improved based on feedback received from participants during our workshop “Tackling Age Discrimination: Stepping Up our Engagement with Youth” (2021). It builds upon Equinet’s previous work on youth – the seminar on Tackling Age Discrimination Against Young People (2018) co-organised with the European Youth Forum, the general legal overview on age discrimination in the Discussion Paper on Fighting Discrimination on the Ground of Age (2018), and the overview of good practices of equality bodies presented in the Perspective: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against Young People (2016).
OBJECTIVE 1:
Understand what legislation & strategies are in place to protect young people from discrimination; recognise the diversity within youth, including different ways they may experience discrimination; and the fields where equality bodies identify discrimination against young people.
1.1 LEGISLATION AND STRATEGY

At the European level, articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are the basis for EU action in the youth field:

- Article 165 encourages the development of youth exchanges and exchanges between youth workers, and the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe.
- Article 166 enables the EU to implement a vocational training policy, facilitating access to vocational training and encouraging mobility, particularly for young people.

The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 calls for special attention to be given to those risking marginalisation based on potential sources of discrimination, and strives to contribute to the eradication of all forms of discrimination of youth. It focuses on empowering the youth, increasing their participation and engagement in decision-making processes, through EU spending initiatives such as the EU Youth Dialogue, the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programme. Furthermore, the Strategy is a key legislative tool that increases youth representation through the proposed EU Youth Strategy Platform and EU Youth Coordinator. Finally, it recognizes the potential of young people and enables them to fully realize it by endorsing the European Youth Goals.

In April 2013 the Council adopted a recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, which ensures that young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, further education or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The scheme was reinforced in October 2020. It encourages Member States to adopt national action plans to support the youth and is part of the larger Youth Employment Support package, proposed by the European Commission.

Within the EU, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states “everyone is equal before the law” (Article 20). It prohibits “any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation” (Article 21). This protection is concretised through several directives:

1. on equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment and occupation or in the access to and supply of goods and services;
2. against discrimination on grounds of race and ethnic origin in several areas of life, including employment, occupation training, social protection, including social security and healthcare, education and access to goods and services; and
3. against discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation in employment and occupation.
Table 1. Current legislative framework

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<th>RACE AND ETHNIC ORIGIN</th>
<th>Employment occupation and vocational training</th>
<th>Social Protection (including healthcare)</th>
<th>Access to goods and services including housing</th>
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<th>Media &amp; Advertising</th>
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Limiting the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of age, as well as disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation to employment and occupation, means that they are in a legislatively weaker position than those of sex and gender, and ethnic or racial origin which are protected in a much wider scope of life areas. This is why national equality bodies advocate and call for the adoption of the so-called Horizontal Directive (Equal Treatment Directive), which would apply the prohibition of discrimination on all grounds to a broader range of everyday life situations - social protection (including healthcare), education, and access to goods and services (including housing).

Table 2. Legislative Framework if Horizontal Directive were approved

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Some Member States created national legislation that goes beyond the minimum defined by the directives – for example, the Croatian Anti-Discrimination Act recognizes 17 grounds, including all covered by EU legislation, and protects against discrimination in many areas of life relevant for youth: work and working conditions; education, science and sports; social security; health protection; judiciary and public administration; housing; public informing and media; access to goods and services and their providing; membership and activities in trade unions, civil society organizations, political parties or any other organizations; access to participation in the cultural and artistic creation.

Beyond the EU framework on the protection of the rights of the youth, similar approaches for amplifying their voices have been adopted elsewhere. The **Youth Sector Strategy 2030 of the Council of Europe** puts a great emphasis on strengthening youth engagement and dedicates the institution itself to increasing youth participation in its processes. The **UN Youth Strategy** also aims to advance the rights of young people across the world and ensure their participation in the implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. In line with the Agenda, **UNESCO’s Operational Strategy on Youth (2014 – 2021)** focuses on working with youth and establishing stronger cooperation, such as through the UNESCO Youth Forum.
1.2 RESEARCH AND DATA

9/10 Europeans say a social Europe, committed to equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion is important to them personally.

Ageism
1/3 Europeans experienced ageism, youth perceive it more often. Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age.

1 in 4 young people aged 15 to 24 have personally felt discriminated or experienced harassment on one or more grounds in the past 12 months.

Discrimination
Nearly 1 in 5 young people who are not in education, employment or training experience discrimination when looking for work.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

In order to provide practical advice on how to communicate and cooperate with young people better, we need to know more about youth, and be aware of the barriers they face in accessing and enjoying their rights across Europe.

Young people: Champions of equality and non-discrimination

According to the Special Eurobarometer 509 on Social Issues, nearly nine in ten Europeans say that a social Europe – i.e. a Europe that is committed to equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion – is important to them personally. Students (91%), of which we can suppose the majority are young people or spending time with (and thereby influenced by) young people, are the most likely to say that a social Europe is important to them. Respondents aged 15-24 years are more likely than those aged 55 and over to mention rights of minorities and protection against discrimination (22% compared with 15%) when asked about which elements are the most important for the EU’s economic and social development. When asked about the future of Europe, respondents aged 15-24 years are much more likely than those aged 55 and over to mention gender equality and equal opportunities (23% compared with 13% for both items).

Young people have a need to try things out, take risks, make mistakes, and learn from this process. If we treat young people as champions of equality and non-discrimination, and give them the tools that empower them as such, they will be able to explore and act to effectively develop their identities, interests, and ambitions around the themes of equality and non-discrimination.

Educational resources are one way to do that.

In 2017, the French Defender of Rights launched a platform called Educadroit.fr to help understand major rules of law necessary for the functioning of our society, in a non-academic language. Different tools have been developed to enable teachers, educators, facilitators, parents and legal professionals in school and out-of-school to discuss with children and young people the major issues of our society, such as equal rights and discrimination, by promoting a peaceful exchange of views.
Ageism: Negative attitudes and discrimination towards young people

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age. It can be institutional, interpersonal or self-directed. Ageism starts in childhood and is reinforced over time. From an early age, children pick up cues from those around them about their culture’s stereotypes and prejudices, which are soon internalized. People then use these stereotypes to make inferences and to guide their feelings and behaviour towards people of different ages and towards themselves.

Ageism often intersects and interacts with other forms of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, including ableism, sexism and racism. For example, a risk factor for being a target of ageism against younger people is being female. Multiple intersecting forms of bias compound disadvantage and make the effects of ageism on individuals’ health and well-being even worse. In Europe, the only region for which the WHO has found the data, one in three report having been a target of ageism, and younger people report more perceived age discrimination than other age groups.

1 in 4 young people aged 15 to 24 have personally felt discriminated or experienced harassment on one or more grounds in the past 12 months, especially in public places or school and university. They are more likely than older age groups to say they were discriminated against in a public space (27%), at a café, restaurant, bar or nightclub (13%) or by school or university personnel (18%).

Ageism is less commonly known as a form of discrimination compared to others, although thanks to the recent WHO report on ageism and the work of networks such as Age Platform Europe and the European Youth Forum, this is beginning to change. While less known, age based and multiple discrimination against youth can be as damaging as other forms of discrimination and harassment, affecting not only individuals, but also society as a whole.

What does the data say?

It may seem that people are less discriminated based on their young age than on any other ground of discrimination. For instance, 78% of respondents of the 2019 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU say they would feel comfortable with a person perceived as young being elected to the highest political position, with the only other identity trait receiving a higher score is if they were a woman (88%). Nevertheless, up to 15% would be totally uncomfortable with this in Lithuania, or 14% in Romania and Finland.
Various surveys show that young people experience discrimination and harassment based on other grounds more frequently, often intersecting with their age. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has carried out a number of large-scale surveys that provide reliable data on the lived experiences of young people across Europe. The Fundamental Rights Survey (2020) 14, the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) (2017) 15 and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Survey (EU-LGBTI II) (2019) 16 are unique sources of information and provide invaluable insight into the everyday experiences of young people in a wide range of areas, including discrimination, violence and harassment, crime victimisation and safety, data protection and privacy, functioning of democracy, views on human rights and experiences with public services. FRA has developed data visualisation tools 17, which allow in-depth access to the various surveys’ findings and data by country, by age and by question.

For example, in the LGBTI II survey (2019) 18 FRA asked respondents if they felt discriminated against in certain areas of life in the year before the survey. Across all LGBTI groups, the majority (53%) of those aged 15 to 17 felt discriminated against in at least one area of life in the year before the survey. By contrast, 41% of adult respondents (aged 18+) did so. The share is even higher for trans (69%) and intersex (62%) respondents aged 15 to 17.

Infographic from the 2019 Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU
As regards race and ethnic origin and religion or belief, FRA has carried out research on specific themes such as [Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges](#), [Young Jewish Europeans: perceptions and experiences of antisemitism](#), [EU-MIDIS II: Being Black in the EU (2018)](#), [EU MIDIS II: Roma – selected findings (2016)](#), and looking also at the situation of young Roma. Ethnic profiling - the use by law enforcement of race, ethnicity, religion or national origin as the basis for suspicion in directing discretionary law enforcement actions - affects young people a great deal, particularly young men.

### Race & Ethnic Origin

1 in 4 young people aged 16-24 (26%) indicated that they experienced racist harassment in 12 months before the survey, compared to 16% of people over 60 years of age.

### Roma

30% respondents across the EU would feel uncomfortable if one of their children was in love or in relationship with a Roma. In some countries the level of being uncomfortable is much higher, e.g., 57% in Lithuania, 60% in Greece and 73% in Bulgaria.

In 2017, FRA mapped minimum age requirements in various areas of life such as access to health services, child benefits or vocational training, entitlement to minimum wage or issuance of a credit card. The research showed various age patterns across EU Member States identifying inconsistencies and restrictions deriving from different age thresholds. For example, in five EU Member States children cannot access sexual or reproductive health services without parental consent.

FRA’s [Fundamental Rights Survey](#) found that “young people in the age group 16–29 years consistently attach a lower level of importance to the six aspects of democracy asked about in the survey, compared with older age groups.”

Therefore, FRA urges: “The EU and its Member States should consider the evolving patterns of youth political engagement and explore new ways of engaging and communicating effectively with young people across Europe.”

One way to increase children’s political participation is to harmonise across the EU the minimum age to vote or stand in elections or to take part in youth councils.
The effects of COVID-19

Finally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a disproportionate impact on youth, and this is likely to continue in the long term. According to a June 2021 report by the European Youth Forum, there are already identifiable impacts on young people’s social and economic situation, and overall well being. Intersectionality plays a crucial role too, as young people from marginalised backgrounds are more severely affected in nearly all areas. If left unaddressed, these impacts risk leaving a lifelong “pandemic scar” on young people.

**Work and income:** Young people have experienced considerable loss of work and income as a result of unemployment and reduction in working hours, with marginalised youth twice as likely to be affected by job loss.

**Education and learning:** 2 out of 3 students believe they are learning less as a result of school and university closures. This increases to 3 out of 4 for students in marginalised situations. Some young people, particularly young Roma, and young people from immigrant heritage backgrounds, highlighted that digital learning was not accessible for them. The challenge was not about having an internet connection, but about having access to a device that they could use. Many did not have their own laptops or smartphones. These devices were not something that was easily affordable by their families and communities, highlighting the role that existing socio-economic inequalities play in affecting young people’s right to education during COVID-19. Other young people, such as those in rural areas or with chronic illness, highlighted that online learning had many advantages for them. Those who had connectivity and a computer but would normally face a long or challenging commute had found many benefits to digital learning. Remote education was helping some young people to manage their health needs more effectively.

**Mental health and wellbeing:** Nearly 2 out of 3 young people may be affected by anxiety or depression as a result of the pandemic. Young women’s mental health and wellbeing was notably worse than young men’s, while pre-existing inequalities cause marginalised youth to be disproportionately impacted. A key issue affecting several young people was unhappiness with being forced to move back to the family home because of a decline in economic circumstances. It was felt that this led to life ‘stalling’ and a loss of independence. There was concern from young people who identified as transgender about moving back home. For them, this could carry risks for their mental health when their families did not fully accept their sexuality and gender identities.
1.3 CASES ON AGE DISCRIMINATION

Having looked at the legal and policy practices in place to tackle age discrimination against young people, and having a better understanding of how young people experience discrimination based on their identities and in different fields, let’s have a closer look at where equality bodies identify the most cases of discrimination against young people.

It is important to note three main issues linked to discrimination against, and inequality of young people, which are very specific. First, it is very often (very likely more often than for other groups) intersectional, i.e. another protected characteristic plays an important role (LGBTI bullying, ethnic profiling, etc.). Second, when it is ‘just’ age discrimination, that is often justifiable under Anti-Discrimination law and/or even has a legislative basis (e.g. age limits) and therefore not justiciable. Third, linked to the previous point, there are many cases where we see inequality of young people (access to resources, political participation) that can only be tackled by means of policy change, not by litigating under Anti-Discrimination law.

Nevertheless, the equality body cases reviewed show a spectrum of age discrimination where young people might face disadvantages or inequality, which we will briefly address here. In our 2016 Perspective on discrimination against young people, equality bodies report a spectrum of key issues faced by young people, including issues of economic, political, cultural and social inequality. These overarching inequalities are reflected in the examples of age discrimination below.

**Economic inequality** is manifested in young people facing barriers in accessing employment or financial services. **Political inequality** is reflected in young people being powerless in political decision making due to age limits on voting, whereas **cultural and social inequalities** are seen in examples of young people experiencing different forms of violence (including hate speech) and a lack of access to adequate healthcare and education. Sometimes the harm of **stereotyping** is linked not only to young age, but also to other qualities, like gender, ethnicity, race. E.g. stereotyping of young women when seeking work due to their capacity to give birth, stereotypes of young migrant men when seeking to access clubs and discotheques.

**Limited or burdened participation in employment.** This includes high levels of unemployment, low-paid jobs, unpaid internships, part-time jobs, temporary contracts. In addition, the requirement of a concrete number of years’ experience in job advertisements and applications might set obstacles for young people to apply for positions that are better paid and require higher competences.

In **Germany**, a few cases were recently received about young people being rejected from a position, paid less and getting less holidays because of their age.

In **Croatia**, Roma young people aged 15-19 make up 40.8% of the total number of unemployed Roma people (68.6% of them have no formal education, and 24% have completed only primary school). Most work they do is occasional and temporary, meaning no permanent employment or prospects of employment through obtaining permanent qualifications.

In **France** research has shown that young men aged 18-34 of extra-European origin tend to experience discrimination in the field of work.

**Age limits** can serve to indiscriminately restrict access to particular benefits for all people below, or above, an often arbitrary age limit. They can be a form of discriminatory rationing of scarce resources. Age limits have been found by equality bodies in their casework to be used as a mechanism to discriminate against people. However, not all age limits have been amenable to litigation or have been found to be discriminatory.

Young people may find it difficult to access various services, goods, benefits and/or jobs, or they are not entitled to vote for example. These limits become a mechanism of discriminating young people for those individuals who happen to fall just outside the age limit set, but share the same needs or hold the same potential as those inside the age limit. Age limits could also be imposed for entering places like shops, restaurants, hotels with small children, made very clear as a result of limitations put in place to tackle COVID-19.
Access to affordable housing and financial services. This involves requirements in terms of income and of permanent forms of employment that bar many young people from buying or renting a place to live. Flats or houses are not being rented to people under a certain age. As highlighted by the European Youth Forum during our workshop on tackling age discrimination, this means that 42% of 24-29 year olds still live at home with their parents.

In Croatia a problem of access to student dormitories was mentioned – the demand is higher than the availability, therefore young people are forced to rent private apartments, which often exceed their financial possibilities.

Restrictions and discrimination in education. These involve access to education, financial obstacles, school absenteeism, early school dropouts, inclusive education for pupils with disabilities or individual needs. A widespread problem of bullying in schools across Europe is strongly related to a specific trait of identity of young people, like sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ethnicity.

In Slovenia, research carried out in schools has revealed that 40% of LGBTIQ+ young people have been discriminated against because of their identity.

Access to services. Unjustified restrictions for young people might arise in various services and access to them. For instance, in Lithuania, an enquiry was received regarding restrictions to access a night club for anyone under the age of 21. The night club administration was considering banning under 21s from entering a nightclub for everybody, motivated by the legal age limit for alcohol usage in Lithuania being set at the age of 21. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson explained that this restriction would be unlawful, especially taking into account that the accessibility to alcohol for underage people is a nightclub employees’ responsibility and young people could be motivated to enter the club not for alcohol usage, but for dancing and enjoying the party.
Access to social protection. This includes access to health insurance and health care, high rates of poverty and exclusion, social guarantees after the death of parents, homelessness. According to WHO data, less than 25% of countries in Europe allow adolescents access to health services based on maturity without parental consent (e.g., the age of consent for health services is higher than the age of criminal responsibility, or adolescents have limited legal access to contraceptives without parental consent in some countries).

Access to decision making and powerlessness of young people within mainstream and targeted systems of policy and provision. Equality for young people encompasses not only the resources available to young people to effectively make the transitions they are faced with, but also the status and standing of young people, the access of young people to participate in decisions that impact on them, and the experience of young people of relationships of respect and trust.

Hate speech was also mentioned as one of the forms of inequality which young people face nowadays, especially online.

In Croatia, a survey in 2019 revealed that 44% of youth received hateful or intolerant comments in the past 5 years, mostly aimed at their physical appearance (39%), nationality or ethnicity (29%) or religion (28%). The experience left them feeling humiliated, ashamed, angry, sad, endangered, less worthy, fearful, different.

Violence against children and youngsters. This includes domestic violence, involvement in begging and human trafficking, ill-treatment, abandonment, early marriages. Although these issues are not directly covered by equality bodies, it is still important to keep in mind the prevalence of child maltreatment and violence against children ranges from 9.6% for sexual abuse (13.4% in girls and 5.7% in boys), 22.9% for physical abuse and 29.1% for mental abuse, with no real gender difference. Worldwide research on neglect shows that the prevalence is high: 16.3% for physical neglect and 18.4% for emotional neglect. Applying these figures to the population of children in Europe frighteningly suggests that 18 million children suffer from sexual abuse, 44 million from physical abuse and 55 million from mental abuse. WHO estimates that 90% of all abuse goes undetected.

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OBJECTIVE 2:
Mainstream the youth perspective across your work, then work to build partnerships & coalitions.
2.1 MAINSTREAMING THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE IN YOUR WORK

Making a positive impact on youth equality is not a goal that can be achieved by a single activity or a one-time project, but asks for dedication, time and consistency. This approach implies that a strategic decision has been made within the equality body to make youth a priority in our work. If so, mainstreaming the youth perspective is the way to go.

This means you are helping to standardize the youth perspective in public discourse and considerations of decision makers, organzing work to maximize your impact and amplifying youth voices.

This can be done by choosing more than one of the following:

- Consider youth experience and impact on youth in all legislation or policy work.
- Consult youth organizations in preparation of the Annual Report, include youth issues in it.
- Publicly endorse youth stakeholders and acknowledge their work (in Annual Report, media interviews, social media posts, by participating in their activities).
- Give youth a stronger voice by inviting them to speak at your events.
- Talk about the youth perspective when raising awareness on issues relating to the general public.
- Team up with different experts from within the equality body and organize an internal working group on youth.
- Dedicate a budget to youth related work, including for capacity building.
- Run youth sensitive monitoring and data collection.

2.2 YOUTH AS VALUED PARTNERS FOR COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

Civil society organizations, international organisations and governmental organisations can all be valuable partners to equality bodies in promoting equality and fighting discrimination. When it comes to young people, any organisation which advocates for youth rights, but especially youth organisations, should be considered as key partners. Their daily work involves engaging with youth, including the most vulnerable; and as youth rights advocates, they have a thorough understanding of the situation of young people on the ground and the barriers they may face.

“Civil society organizations, international organisations and governmental organisations can all be valuable partners to equality bodies in promoting equality and fighting discrimination. When it comes to young people, any organisation which advocates for youth rights, but especially youth organisations, should be considered as key partners. Their daily work involves engaging with youth, including the most vulnerable; and as youth rights advocates, they have a thorough understanding of the situation of young people on the ground and the barriers they may face.”

– The European Youth Blueprint to Recovery

Invite Youth as Expert Speakers

The Croatian Ombudswoman included a young person living in a rural area as a speaker on a panel she organized in the Parliament, called “Away From the City, Away From Rights”. It was a discussion about human rights in rural areas and the young person talked about the youth perspective, giving them equal footing in the discussion with the usual suspects from academia and state officials.
Partnering with youth organizations, as reported in the *Equinet Perspective: Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against Young People*, is a challenge faced by many equality bodies, and hopefully this Handbook can help change that to make the transition from a missed opportunity to a success story in our institutions.

There are many advantages of cooperating with youth organizations, and some of those can be:

- Getting access to a larger pool of knowledge, experience, good practices and tools.
- Reaching more youth than you would by yourself.
- Reaching vulnerable groups of young people on the margins of society, at risk of experiencing violations of their rights.
- Establishing a long-term partnership with a goal to promote equality.

Build partnerships with youth organisations who represent marginalized groups to ensure better outreach, through civil society organisations that work with youth, through youth organisations, in schools and universities and through your social media.

If you plan to work with a group of young people on your project, here are some tips that might help you make the cooperation more successful:

- Identify national youth councils and associations who already have a developed network of organizations and trainers, and build on their structure and knowledge to implement joint activities.
- Provide enough data about your work, mission, projects and goals for them to be informed about what you do and what could be expected of them.
- Organize regular training and other educational activities for your partner organizations.
- If you are going to work on a project together:
  » Get to know your partners before you start - invite them to your office for a meeting and don’t hesitate to organize a get-together, e.g. a small team building event in an educational spirit.
  » Give your youth partners freedom to discuss your project and express their opinion, and remember they know your target group much better than you.
  » Define the objectives together and make sure everyone included has the same understanding of them.
  » Break the project into phases and agree with participants on their exact roles.
  » Be clear with the timeline and your expectations, adjust them to participants’ interests and skills.

Memorandum of Cooperation

*In Serbia, the Commissioner for Protection of Equality signed a Memorandum on Cooperation with Youth Capital of Europe 2019 (OPENS) and supported their efforts to improve the position of youth in the country. This project was largely promoted in social and traditional media. The Commissioner also conducted a survey on participation of youth in public authority bodies, that was presented at the final conference in Novi Sad where more than 100 representatives of youth organizations, local communities, international organizations and schools were present.*

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

You should reach out to young people who are committed to learning more about equality and non-discrimination. They are, by definition, youth experts in their own right. Include young people from different backgrounds, with different skill sets depending on the actions you wish to put into place. They will all have a passion for learning, and ideally, should be perceived as someone who has, or could develop, influence among their peers.
Be heard on CERD: Youth Consultation in Ireland

In 2019, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission were preparing their independent report as part of the UN examination on Ireland’s compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). To make sure this represented lived experiences in Ireland, they wished to consult with a broad range of actors across Ireland. Knowing that racial discrimination affects young people in particular ways, youth perspectives, insights and recommendations were a key part of the consultations for their independent report to the UN Committee.

Why work with a youth organisation?

On 30 March 2019, in association with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), they held a youth consultation inviting young people – aged 16-24 – to tell them how the Irish government could create a more just and equal society that is free from racial discrimination. The NYCI is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland, with significant experience bringing young people together for events and consultations. Including young people from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds in events is a core aspect of its work. Through their 11 year experience running an Intercultural and Equality programme, NYCI has built trusting relationships with minority ethnic youth, and their youth leaders. They were the perfect partner to work with in order to inform the CERD report with the voices of young people across Ireland.

How did the partnership develop?

The Commission and NYCI had shared values, namely equality, voice, agency and accountability. They knew that they brought complementary expertise and experiences to the table. They agreed on a common approach together, that was based on trust, openness, creativity and flexibility. Good and ongoing communication & planning from both sides was key to a successful consultation, which they both contributed to in the planning and delivery phase. Members of NYCI had key roles on the day of the event itself, where they acted as peer facilitators, creating a safe and fun space for participants to share their experiences. Participants of the consultation appreciated being given a forum to voice their opinions and are open to sustained social justice engagement because they felt heard.

What was the impact of the cooperation?

This cooperation had a positive impact for all involved. It was a positive and empowering experience for participants, identified the key concerns of young people around racism, and not only built stronger relations between the Commission and NYCI, but also strengthened the network of minority ethnic youth leaders in Ireland.

How did they communicate about the event?

Apart from having the NYCI’s network to reach out to young people, the Commission adapted their communication to help them reach out to young people in a more youth friendly way. They created audiovisual outputs to raise awareness about the consultation, as well as summarising the main outcomes of the consultation in an easily digestible format.
Working with Youth in France

The French Forum of Youth (FFJ), a national association gathering the main French youth organisations, is a member of the Defender of Rights Educadroit “task force”, together with three other youth associations. The Educadroit network develops pedagogical resources for young people to get to know their rights (see educadroit.fr for more).

The JADE program is offered each year to “Young Ambassadors of Rights”, aged between 16 and 25 years old. Trained and supervised by the French Defender of Rights, the JADE (young ambassadors) carry out a 9-month civic service mission with the institution in order to raise awareness of children and young people on their rights. The programme was created in 2007 and since 2014, one part of the programme has been dedicated to equality. In order to inform as many young people as possible, these young ambassadors intervene in various and varied places: schools, structures of child social assistance and juvenile judicial protection, leisure facilities, hospitals, associations helping young migrants. They develop their own tools to organize debates with children and young people and participate in the evaluation and the development of the JADE programme.

In March 2021, with the objective of tackling under reporting of young people, the French Defender of Rights organised a round table bringing together more than twenty youth associations and structures involved with young people. It gave voice to young people’s views on access to rights and on the fight against discrimination in order to consider, after collecting these testimonies, how the Defender of Rights can better respond to the expectations of young people. This first meeting, which will be organised on a regular basis, also contributed to the strengthening of collaboration with youth organisations. To further identify the needs of young people, the Defender of Rights has signed a partnership with a university research department for studies on youth.

Fundamental Rights Dialogues

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has organized a series of Fundamental Rights Dialogues with young people. These interactive online events give young people a chance to raise their fundamental rights concerns and share their ideas on how things should change with Michael O’Flaherty, FRA’s Director. The views and experiences shared will inform the discussions of the Fundamental Rights Forum taking place in Vienna and online on 11 and 12 October 2021 – the largest gathering of policymakers and human rights defenders and practitioners in the EU.
2.3 PARTNERING UP WITH INDIVIDUALS

Apart from directly working with organisations promoting youth rights, there are a range of other actors you might consider engaging with. They might not be so obviously working on equality issues, but they may value equality and non-discrimination, and could be interested in amplifying your messages in their own words.

PEOPLE-NEXT-DOOR WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You may choose to engage “people next-door”, neighbours who represent the values that you want to promote. These persons are not famous or powerful, they are just ordinary people who stood up to protect someone from discrimination, or made personal actions to help people belonging to vulnerable groups. For example, there is a carpenter from a small town in Serbia who was making wooden feeding chairs for toddlers and giving them to young couples who couldn’t afford to buy them. He was doing it in silence, without any publicity for many years, until someone made a post about him on Facebook and journalists spread his story. After that, the whole country knew about him and he received great support from everyone, which he used to produce more free chairs for toddlers. Or, like a man who worked in security at the football game between Serbia and Portugal, who picked up a captain ribbon that Ronaldo threw away in anger, and later offered that ribbon at auction to collect money for a sick child who needed very expensive medical treatment. He collected more than 60,000 euros for this ribbon, with subsequent approval of Ronaldo himself, who joined the action and sent a signed club shirt for the same purpose.

Telling stories of ordinary people who make a difference, who break stereotypes and prejudices, can inspire others to make a difference too, and proves that everyone can get involved in the promotion of equality. You may find them through your personal contacts, civil society organizations, schools or universities, social media, etc.

If you decide to reach out to such people, consider your duty to care for them when cast into the public eye. You should give them guidance & offer support to deal with any unwanted attention that highlighting their story might bring. If, beyond sharing their story, you wish to have them speak out on your behalf or more systematically on this topic, develop a fair cooperation agreement, creating a shared vision on the time investment, messages, compensation and other parameters. For further promotion, also consider:

- Making a real life story for your social media.
- Inviting your partner influencers to spread this story.
- Involving them in your events.
- Sharing their stories in your campaigns.
- Inviting journalists from traditional media to talk to them to tackle the issues of discrimination, equality, support, etc.

EDUCATORS

Don’t forget those professors who are popular among their students. They mastered story-telling and understand how to work with young people. They can be your partner to reach schools and university students.
Working with educators

Patrick Charlier, Co-Director of Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities), Belgium, wrote a book to explain discrimination to young people. It is written as a dialogue between him and his teenage son. This book is being sent to teachers interested in talking about discrimination in their classrooms.

Furthermore, every year, Unia launches a school competition called “GiveMe1Minute” to make teenagers think about equality, diversity and human rights. It raised significant interest of both teachers and students, with more than 200 enthusiastic schools taking part in the competition in 2018 and 2019. They made a one-minute video about racism and the next edition will be dedicated to sexual orientation. The communication department created this concept based on the observations of their colleagues working with schools and a test-action launched by Unia that revealed the willingness of teachers to work with their pupils on different topics. The activities included a webpage, posts on social media and posters that were displayed on the walls of every school in Belgium. A jury composed of activists working with youth selected the best videos. Unia organized prize ceremonies in a Holocaust museum and at the cinema, and the classes who made the best videos received a prize of a few thousand euros to help them set up a project on diversity or fight against racism.

The Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo (OIK) organizes discussions with students in schools in order to hear their opinions, attitudes or concerns relating to everyday situations and problems. Those falling under the equality body mandate are then addressed by the OIK in their further work.

FAMOUS PEOPLE, AN ATTRACTIVE CHOICE

By engaging an influencer or well-known activist you will be able to reach more young people than you’ve ever imagined. However, in order to make this cooperation successful, you have to be careful when choosing, especially if you want to engage a public figure.

Which influencer do we want to cooperate with?

You are the equality expert, influencers are usually not. With a good brief, this can be an opportunity, because they will most probably use a different approach than you – one that reaches a younger audience much better. And when you have decided on the type of cooperation, put some trust into the talents of the influencer: you engage somebody, because they can do something that you cannot.

Influencers and institutions – does it work?

That depends. When you decide to cooperate with influencers, make sure that your expectations of them are realistic. You cannot give influencers a script and expect them to play along 100% – instead expect a dynamic process and short-term agreements.
Tips for engaging

• Whoever you wish to work with, choose carefully – do the research. Go through their Instagram profile(s), YouTube channel, search for any interviews, media stories about them, google their name with keywords such as discrimination, equality, or minorities to check if they have shared controversial attitudes, because you are linking your organization with this person. You don’t want to engage someone who is very popular but has disputable statements or offended someone in a discriminatory manner.

• Explain your position, mission and why you want to engage this specific person. Explain that they could promote equality and discrimination issues in their overall work.

• Consider the influencer’s proposal about their appearance in your project, let them propose ways of communication.

• Negotiate a fair cooperation agreement, creating a shared vision on the time investment, messages, compensation and other parameters with the (young) influencer. Money shouldn’t be the primary motive for them, but fair compensation could be important.

• Try to establish a long-term cooperation with this person by making them your ambassador.

• Be aware – always monitor influencer activities apart from your joint project.
COMMUNICATING EQUALITY

OBJECTIVE 3:
Build a communication plan to reach out to young people, taking basic premise, objectives, and target group into account. Learn how to make your communication as efficient as possible and deal with hate speech effectively.
3.1 EIGHT STEPS IN PREPARING YOUR COMMUNICATION

There is no one recipe which would work magically in every situation, nor for all target audiences or all objectives. Therefore, take these questions, rules and practical tips as ideas or advice, which could help you make your communication more effective and impactful towards young people. These will give a clear frame to your communication. That will help you, your team and your organization understand what, how and why you communicate. You should use these for good planning, including to evaluate success, which can help you build upon previous communication and make the future versions even better. Keep in mind that you should have your boss on board and your communication plan approved.

1. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OR THE THEME THAT YOU WANT TO ADDRESS?

- **Research and statistics**: Seek data on a problem in society researched by experts like the unemployment of young migrants workers, the rise of extreme right political parties, the existence of strong stereotypes within youth, the over-representation of young people of colour in the criminal justice system or in exclusion from school statistics.

- **What are young people telling you?** Some problems can’t (yet) be proven by statistical data but exist nonetheless. So listen to the young people themselves. If they often contact your organization with the same questions, it might be useful to proactively communicate about these issues. If they see that an issue they have highlighted is developing into a campaign or action, they will feel much greater ownership of it.

- **Professionals**: Professionals also might be aware of problems that are not visible in data so far. They might have observed the lack of knowledge of youth about their colonial history while giving training. They might have helped a victim of discrimination to defend themselves in court.

- **News**: Youth might be interested in a specific topic that appears in the news (traditional or social media) because everybody talks about it. Don’t miss the momentum.

- **Your mission**: It’s your role to communicate on some topics, including those that have not yet been not picked up by anyone else. Focus on the discrimination grounds and the missions that are mentioned in your mandate as an equality body.

Look up what is known to work when communicating about this problem or theme: existing studies, successful campaigns, especially amongst other national equality bodies or your partners within youth organisations.

2. WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTIVE?

Pick one. Don’t try to do everything at once. A clear and narrow objective will canalize your energy into focused communication. That’s the moment to think about your key message and the impact you want to have. Determine what you want your target group to know, feel or do.

- **Raise awareness**: e.g. equality is a value we should all promote, youth have rights and have to know them to be able to use them, equality bodies can offer support.

  In 2017, the Defender of Rights in France organized an exhibition called “Draw me the Law”, in partnership with Cartooning for Peace, an international network of cartoonists who use humour to fight for the respect of rights and freedoms in the world. This pedagogical tool is composed of 11 kakemonos and 11 educational booklets which aim to make young people think about questions of law, including anti-discrimination, through cartooning.

  Since 2012, every year the Commissioner for Protection of Equality in the Republic of Serbia organises a “Moot Court”. This is a simulation of a trial for law faculty students, which focuses on an area of protection against discrimination, and includes the participation of active judges and law professors. Students are given a specific case from the practice of the Commissioner, and act as prosecutors and defence teams in a courtroom. In such a way, they get a deeper practical understanding of the implementation of anti-discrimination laws in Serbia.
• Call for action: For example,
  » File a complaint – youth can defend themselves if they’re being
discriminated against.
  » Speak out – youth can stand up for equality and promote it.
  » Join us in advocacy – youth can be a significant support in calling for
policy/legislation change.

3. WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

Pick your target according to your objective. Don’t try to cover all youth – they
don’t all have the same interests and needs. Try to focus on one group. That will
increase your impact because a specific message will interest a specific group, while
a vague message will interest nobody.

• By “institution”: e.g. youth at school, university, colleges, workplaces (in the
public or private sector), clubs, etc.

  Each year, the Defender of Rights in France welcomes several school students
from disadvantaged areas to a 1-week training program which aims to help
young people in their professional orientation. During this time, they are
trained on children’s rights and equality and introduced to the legal work.

  In 2017, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in Malta
(NCPE) cooperated with the National Youth Agency of Malta. This project
was intended to facilitate gender-balanced representation in decision-
making. As part of the project, a roaming van exhibition was set up for twelve
weeks in six post-secondary and tertiary schools (Malta and Gozo). The van
was situated in a prominent location with
many passers-by. In 58 days, a total of
881 comments by male students were
collected. The aim of this activity was to
raise awareness on gender equality and
break down stereotypes in post-secondary
and tertiary educational institutions.

• By “role”: e.g. young victims, young people having stereotypes, young
people who discriminate.

  Each year in June the Defender of Rights in France participates, as a partner,
in a big music festival called Solidays, focusing on solidarity around AIDS.
For this occasion they organise games and exchanges with the young public on
all types of discrimination. See the online campaign “Sweep Away Your
Prejudices”: [https://balayetes cliches.defenseurdesdroits.fr/]

• By “protected characteristic”: e.g. youth with low income, youth of colour,
Roma, LGBTI etc., but keep intersectionality in mind as well!

  In 2009, Unia in Belgium raised awareness about discrimination of young
people (16-26 years) in employment based on their origin. The campaign
“Cast Me” was organized in two phases. For the first phase, more than 4,000
young people applied to be the face of the campaign. One young girl had
been selected to play in an awareness video widely spread online. For the
second phase, Unia wanted to remind the employers of their obligations.
More than 100,000 employers received two identical resumes except for
the name and the picture of the candidate. These were accompanied with a
reminder that discrimination of candidate based on their origin is illegal.

Young people with disabilities are in general widely exposed to discrimination
in Norway. Out of 2,000 people who contact the Ombuds office every year,
400 seek legal support because of discrimination, and among these, there
are many young people. Last year the office made a video-campaign in a
sarcastic way showing examples on some of the things people contact them
about. It targeted young people and
the goal of the campaign was to
change people’s attitude towards
persons with
disabilities.
• By “topic or specific problem”: e.g. youth unemployment, sexual harassment, hate speech, violence, youth discrimination, etc.

In Germany in 2018, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency prompted thousands of young people to talk about discrimination on social media with the hashtag #DarüberReden (Talk About It). The aim of the biggest national campaign run by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency to date was to make everyday discrimination visible and to talk with young people about how to combat discrimination. Run from October to December 2018, it included activity on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter – stories, video clips, live events with celebrities and a participative campaign for hearing-impaired people – which triggered discussions and chats with the community around the clock. The website provided anyone interested with further information about how to fight discrimination. Advertising on public transport and online drew attention to the campaign and the website. The website drew 35,000 unique visitors during the campaign. On Instagram, Facebook and Twitter more than 4.8 million users were reached. After the campaign a handout for teachers with material from the campaign was produced.

4. MAKE A PLAN

When you have defined your needs by answering the three questions above, it is time to think about how you’re going to reach your audience and accomplish your objective. To write an efficient communication plan, you need to:

• **Be as concrete as possible.** What are the concrete actions that you want to take to reach your objectives? E.g. give training, hold a meeting, work with influencers, launch a social media campaign, create a video, etc.

• **Know your target audience and how to reach them:** Invite a small focus group with people from the target group that you want to reach (e.g. youth clubs, charities, local community organisations providing services and support to young people), and ask them specific questions that are crucial for your preparation. These can include questions like: Do you feel discriminated against while looking for a job? Have you been denied entrance to a pub because of your origin? Which social network do you use on a daily basis? Do you know where to look for help in case of discrimination? What would encourage you to report discrimination if you experience/witness it? Focus on questions that are relevant for the issue and can help you reach your objectives.

• **Look for partners:** Are there other organizations or influencers that can help you shape and spread your messages? Try to get them on board in early stages of planning (defining the objective, audience targeting, choosing the right language, etc.). Consider youth organisations in particular.

• **Select indicators of achievements:** Before the communication takes place, you should know how you will evaluate it – set clear expectations and indicators of success. Also, once it has taken place, take the time to evaluate the output (what went well and what didn’t) and the outcome (did it reach the relevant young people, what was the impact among your target group, what are the lessons learnt) in order to improve next time. These indicators can be: reach on social media, number of articles on a website that targets youth, mentions by the influencers, tools created for teachers etc. If the objective is to fight prejudice or make a similar change of attitude within the target group, you would need to assess them before and after the communication to compare.
5. HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGES

Definitions and legal language are jargon that keeps you far away from your objectives. Talking in general without examples will probably do the same. This is the chance to apply your story-telling skills.

No matter the issue you are communicating about, keep in mind the following:

- Talk about something that young people can relate to and care about.
- Use clear and direct messages, but don’t try to sound like you are part of the group because you could lose credibility – leave the slang to your youth partners.
- Use examples that support your objectives and messages, and are relevant to the experience of young people.
- If you wish to highlight some type of inequality which is common for the whole social group, start with a personalized story and later explain the position of the whole group.
- Consider starting with a question that will allow your young audience to get involved.
- Think of your communication as a dialogue, not monologue – start a conversation, hear their opinions.
- Use graphics, photos and videos, but be careful not to lose your key message in the design.

Accessibility is important, so think about all segments of your target audiences – people with disabilities, migrants, foreign language speakers. Would they be able to understand your communication? Will you be able to reach them?

- Do your videos have subtitles in your national and other languages?
- Do you ensure contrasting colours for colour-blind and visually impaired people? 45
- Do you use easy-to-read information? 46

Story-telling

People are driven by emotions 47, so put stories in the spotlight – they are key to reaching your target audience and your objectives. They can build a strong connection between people with different backgrounds and by using them, you can make people understand better and motivate them to action.

Stories can be told in one picture, a quote, a video... The most important thing is that they are personal and authentic, inspiring instead of patronizing, and work as a blueprint for the most important values you want to communicate.

How do stories target a younger audience?

Many young people are motivated to take action and engage for a better world – not only for climate change, but for social justice and equality as well. The story of Greta Thunberg has inspired many young people to follow in her steps. Her story is also a classic “David against Goliath” story – not yet with a happy ending, but definitely showing that an individual can make a huge difference.

There are many stories within the equality bodies’ work range that can be similarly inspiring – those promoting equality, diversity, inclusiveness and much more. Find them, make them known and share in a way that inspires young people to share their own stories – social media platforms are ideal for that. By contributing, people become personally engaged in the issue themselves.
It helps when the equality body is easily accessible, engages in discussions on social media, visits schools and takes part in debates. This is also a way to learn more deeply what the interests, thoughts and worries of your audience are, where to expect criticism and what to do better. You need to dedicate time to listen to stories and discuss with others. Good stories alone will not work, you must build and keep the audience.

In 2019 the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) in Malta created a video clip for secondary schools to challenge perceptions and stereotypes of disability. The clip was scripted and acted by persons with a disability, giving a direct voice to their thoughts and feelings. This clip was also promoted on social media: https://www.facebook.com/crpdmalta/videos/475039109728200

It is used regularly in disability equality training provided to young people. The training is provided to many organisations and entities, including schools, educational institutions and youth organisations, to create more awareness on disability.

6. CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHANNELS

Choosing the right channels of communication is key to reaching your audience, and diversifying them increases your chances for success. Your website, social media, traditional media, newsletter or advertising in public spaces are all obvious channels to consider while preparing a communication plan. However, there are a number of other ways to reach young people. For example, you may consider:

- Organizing an equality contest within a school, or number of schools.
- Participating at events such as festivals, street actions.
- Giving a presentation/lecture/discussion to school students about equality, either at their school or in an organized visit to your organisation.

The Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (OCFR) in Hungary visits schools to promote human rights to the next generations. The OCFR partners with UNICEF National Committee Hungary in their “Ébresztőóra” (“Alarm Clock”) programme, where experts provide information in a playful form about children’s rights at school and in general, information on the situation of children around the world, and on the work performed by volunteers. In addition, each year the OCFR welcomes (in cooperation with the Csányi Foundation) 30 - 40 disadvantaged students aged 13 - 15 (supported by the Foundation) from various regions of the country.

The staff members involve the guests in fun activities related to children’s rights and have discussions with them, whereas the students can present their artistic work and texts, inspired by children’s and human rights, and prepared for this occasion.
In 2020 the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson in Lithuania organized theatre activities in several schools across the country with a focus on gender-based violence. The theatrical play was used as a form where spectators are engaged to influence the performance as both spectators and actors with the power to stop and change the performance, so the situation would be solved differently. The situations for the play were related to violence against women with the aim to explore solutions to violence featured in the performance. After the play, actors together with spectators discussed victim-blaming, violence forms and recognition.

You can also consider using the peer-to-peer approach – who can reach young people better than their peers? Here are a few suggestions on using this approach to get the equality message across:

- Let younger people report on your events, on internships etc. – for your own or their social media channels.
- Plan a social media takeover where they can run your social media accounts for a day or more.
- Make videos where younger people explain your daily work or research (even make that a regular event for your social media channels or website).
- Use influencers. Make sure to reach out to those whose work is in line with your values. And even though they are regularly in the spotlight and have the tools and the means to handle social media, keep in mind you will still have to support them if necessary.

And don’t forget - by choosing the channel you are also choosing the style and tone of your communication!

The Webpage of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights in Hungary (http://www.ajbh.hu/gyerekeknek) is linked to a thematic section concerning children’s rights (in Hungarian) with accessible, easy-language information for young people with regard to the Commissioner’s work and available help it can provide.

The Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner’s Office in Estonia created a TV show called “Why Not?!”, running for 30 months between 2017-2019 aimed at encouraging young people to make their career choices based on their will and abilities and not be restricted by gender stereotypes. It told a story of achieving your dreams through 18-year old Anna’s perspective and even gained some international recognition by being selected as INPUT 2019 top 5 best youth shows. It was also aired in Lithuania on a national broadcaster. The script was based on stories from complaints to the Commissioner.

- Organizing students to make a theatre play or a video clip with discrimination as a central theme (you may use examples from your practice).

- Involving educators and their students in your events.

- Contributing to specialized media – school and university web sites, web portals for youth, employment or education portals, etc.

- Giving young people space on your social media or communication channels.
7. WHEN TO COMMUNICATE?

In order to make things easier and more efficient, make a calendar and plan your activities according to dates which are important for your work:

• International days that mark the importance of equality, wellbeing of youth, social justice, employment, education.

• National days, holidays or events such as elections, education fairs, employment fairs, youth festivals.

• Events that are significant to protection of equality such as conferences, implementation of strategies and laws, research, your organization’s annual report.

Also, be ready to be proactive very fast, if current affairs create an opportunity for you – if something happens that involves issues of equality and discrimination which affect young people, consider this an opportunity to (re-)launch a campaign, organize an event or send a message to young people, at least on your social media, or to establish new partnership with some organization, public figure, etc.

8. KEEP IN MIND YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT!

While planning your communication, keep your own work environment and context in mind. Consider the following in all stages of the process:

• What communication channels do you have at your disposal? Think about website(s), social media profile(s), public spaces (like walls, notice-boards, public screens, billboards, other). Do you have free access to them? If not, what is your budget?

• Plan your finances suitably – write down estimated costs and track the real ones, in order to stay within budget.

• Identify all multipliers for your messages. How many experts/specialists do you have at your office or could access outside the office, who could comment on the issue, participate in events, TV or radio shows? Consider your youth ambassadors and other partners who represent young people.

• Do you know any journalists, including for school/university newspapers who might be interested in the topic and help you in writing articles, host a radio or TV show, prepare a report, etc.?

One last piece of advice concerning general principles of effective communication: treat yourself as an expert, who knows your needs and situation best. Feel free to adapt the given ideas and tips and be flexible about them. Others can help you in guiding and giving advice, but in the end, you are the one who will take the decisions (or propose them to your boss) on communication means, messages, etc. Own the content and try to deliver it in the best way that suits your situation and available options.

And don’t forget – be kind to yourself. It’s impossible to do everything at once, so celebrate your successes, learn from your mistakes and keep improving!
3.2 RAISING THE BAR – HOW TO FRAME YOUR COMMUNICATION TO MAKE AN IMPACT

USE VALUES TO CREATE COMMON GROUND

If you want your messages to stick to your target audience, talk about your shared values. You will truly reach them only if you talk about what matters to them. Create common ground: find and express your shared identity, values and interests. There is always a common ground, just make sure to identify it clearly in a way that includes young people.

SPEAK TO PEOPLE’S BEST SELF

Your audience consists of good people: make them laugh, show them how your proposed change will make society better, appeal to their values which reinforce human rights and equality. Do not speak in facts alone, instead tell stories and use powerful images, through the voices of young people from a variety of different backgrounds.

GIVE HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD AND STIMULATE IT

A hope-based communication strategy involves making five basic shifts in the way we talk about human rights:

1. Talking about solutions (not problems)
2. Highlighting what we stand for (not what we oppose)
3. Creating opportunities (dropping fears)
4. Emphasizing support for heroes (not pity for victims)
5. Showing that “we got this!” through human rights in action

Whenever it is possible, embrace positivity instead of negativity. Avoid “don’ts” and “not” in your communication. Instead give your audience a positive image, provide a desirable result, deliver guidance on what you want them to achieve. In your communication, talk in affirmatives.

Try to use a friendly tone of voice. Be constructive and engaging. Avoid sounding patronizing.

If you want to create a better world, talk about your vision, not obstacles. Show young people how they can be part of that change and suggest what action they can take to make that change happen!
BE CURIOUS, OPEN, AND EDUCATE YOURSELF. GET OUT OF YOUR “BUBBLE”

Keep yourself updated about the topics you are working on. Read books, reports, participate in conferences, seminars/webinars, watch movies, listen to podcasts, talk to different people outside of your “bubble”. It’s essential to keep up with the world, know how people live, what moves and bothers them. This will give you a base to work on and help in finding creative solutions for your communication work.

Sometimes it might look like equality bodies already know all the right answers and just have to focus on those. Be aware that this approach might shut the doors to other ideas. Be curious instead – learn about different, even opposite, opinions; those of your opponent, their reasons, their values, their stories. When knowing their fears and worries, you can propose an alternative narrative, which could foster their support for equality, human rights and humanity in general.

Do not forget to check your facts! Check the source of your information before you share it on social media, and encourage young people to do the same, especially if it means they can avoid spreading discriminatory ideas.

3.3 THE UGLY SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – HOW TO DEAL WITH HATE, TOXIC AND DANGEROUS SPEECH

You need to be aware that as a state authority and with subjects such as equality, the fight against racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia etc., you will be targeted by haters and trolls. While Instagram is still a relatively friendly channel with mostly respectful discussions, things look very different on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

When you want to reach young people and get them to open up about issues around discrimination on an open platform, you have to do your best to create a safe space. That means strict rules and a clear strategy on how to deal with hate speech. Be aware that you’re responsible.

Some guidelines:

- Establish clear rules that can be seen by all users: That includes using non-discriminatory speech, no attacks of others, no spam. If not, users will be blocked. Report hate speech to authorities.
- Establish internal guidelines on how to deal with hate: Try to engage in conversation, but draw a line with haters. Decide when to block, when to delete or hide and when to report comments to the platforms and/or authorities. There is no rule of thumb here, except that the more support you get from the community, the more useful it can be to engage in discussions. You will not convert or deter a troll on your own.
- Be visible, don’t become intimidated by trolls. They also follow certain rules (complaining about censorship when they are blocked, trying to offend and provoke while often staying just on the edge of what is legally not hate speech). Get to know them and learn. Also keep in mind that they are not the majority. Every post and comment by you will be read by many others, will hopefully be appreciated and ideally lead to counter speech and a constructive discussion.
- Consider “flooding” hate with positive comments with the help of your co-workers, youth partners and others who share your values or answering hate with statistics to create a fact-based environment and encourage a factual debate.
- Support positive comments made by others, answer questions, be there for users. Users who feel supported are more likely to engage. Engagement is the best strategy against trolls.
- Some channels allow you to deactivate the comments. Consider this if helpful but keep in mind that engagement and conversation usually is what you want, especially when it comes to projects with younger people.
- Use brochures on how to deal with hate speech and how to use counter speech. 51
COMMUNICATING EQUALITY CHECKLIST

What is your topic?
- A problem that can be shown in data?
- A problem that can be shown by youth experience?
- A problem pointed out by professionals?
- The news everyone is talking about at the moment?
- Another topic covered by your mandate, but not well known?

What do you want to achieve?
- Make a call for action? Raise awareness?
- Is your objective clear and concise?
- Think about your (specific, not vague) messages at this point
- Visualise – what do you want to happen?

Who is the target audience on this occasion?
- Who needs to act/change their mind?
- Don’t try to reach all youth, they don’t all share same interests and needs
- Groups can be considered by:
  - “institution”: high school students, university students, young workers
  - “role”: young victims, young people having stereotypes, young people who discriminate
  - “protected characteristic”: e.g. youth with low income, youth of colour, Roma, LGBTI... but keep intersectionality in mind as well!
  - “topic or specific problem”: e.g. youth unemployment, sexual harassment, hate speech, violence, youth discrimination, etc.

What is your plan?
- Be as concrete as possible
- How will you reach your target audience?
- Look for partners
- Select indicators of achievements
How to develop your messages?

- Do you use jargon? Rewrite it
- Do you sound like part of a youth group? Rewrite it
- Do you talk about something youth can’t relate to? Rewrite it
- Is your message general and without examples? Rewrite it
- Did you consider:
  - starting with a personalized story to later explain the position of a group?
  - starting with a question? It’s supposed to be a dialogue
  - story-telling?
  - if graphics, photos or videos support or overtake your message?
- Are your materials accessible?
  - Do your videos have subtitles in your national and other languages?
  - Do you ensure contrasting colours for colour-blind and visually impaired people?
  - Do you use easy-to-read information?

How to choose the right channel?

- Where can you find your target audience?
- Did you diversify your channels to increase your reach and impact?
- Will you use obvious channels - website, social media, traditional media, newsletter or advertising in public spaces?
- Will you use less obvious ways to reach them – an equality contest for students, festivals, lectures, plays, specialized media, inviting youth to your events or to take over your social media channels, use influencers?
- Did you use style and tone appropriate for the chosen channel?

When to communicate?

- Do you see an opportunity in current affairs/news?
- Is there an (inter)national day, holiday or event coming up?

Did you make the best use of your work environment?

- What channels can you use for free?
- If you have a budget – plan it carefully
  - Did you consider possible multipliers, spokespersons from and outside your office, including youth ambassadors?
  - Do you know any journalists who might be interested in your topic?
  - Identify all multipliers for your message delivery. Who else is working in this field, could they share your message, participate in your events? Could you join them in already ongoing activities?
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Over the years, many youth organizations have built a strong voice in advocating for and promoting diversity, tolerance and equality. For example, the European Youth Forum (www.youthforum.org), the platform of youth organisations in Europe, gathers more than 100 youth organisations, representing millions of young people. The vision of the European Youth Forum is to be “the voice of young people in Europe, where young people are equal citizens and are encouraged and supported to achieve their fullest potential as global citizens”. Their work includes advocating for youth rights towards key institutions at European and international level, monitoring of policy developments, strengthening the capacities of their members, undertaking strategic litigation, taking legal actions, building partnerships with relevant stakeholders, and developing communication campaigns.

Along with contacting the Youth Forum directly, it can be helpful to engage their membership, representing both National Youth Councils and International Non Governmental Youth Organisation. Find the full list of members here: www.youthforum.org/our-members.

Below, you can find a selection of National Youth Councils of countries in which Equinet members are represented:

LIST OF NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS

- **Austria**: Austrian National Youth Council (ÖJV)
- **Belgium**:
  - Council of the German-speaking Youth of Belgium (Rdj)
  - Forum des Jeunes / Youth Council of the French-Speaking Community in Belgium (FDJ)
  - Flemish Youth Council (VJR)
- **Bulgaria**: National Youth Forum of Bulgaria (NYF)
- **Croatia**: Croatian Youth Network (MMH)
- **Cyprus**: Cyprus Youth Council (CYC)
- **Czech Republic**: Czech Council of Children and Youth (CRDM)
- **Denmark**: Danish Youth Council (DUF)
- **Estonia**: Estonian National Youth Council (ENL)
- **Finland**: Finnish National Youth Council (Allianssi)
- **France**: Committee for national and international relations of youth and non-formal organisations (CNAJEFP)
- **Georgia**: National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia (NCYOG)
- **Germany**: German National Committee for International Youth Work (DNK)
- **Greece**: Hellenic National Youth Council (ESYN)
- **Hungary**: National Youth Council of Hungary (NIT)
- **Ireland**: National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
- **Italy**: Italian Youth Council (CNG)
- **Latvia**: National Youth Council of Latvia (LJP)
- **Lithuania**: Lithuanian Youth Council (LJOT)
- **Luxembourg**: National Youth Council of Luxembourg (CGJL)
- **Malta**: National Youth Council of Malta (KNZ)
- **Moldova**: National Youth Council of Moldova (CMTM)
- **Netherlands**: Dutch National Youth Council (DNYC)
- **North Macedonia**: National Youth Council of FYROM (NYCM - FYROM)
- **Norway**: Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU)
- **Poland**: Polish Council of Youth Organizations (PROM)
- **Portugal**: Portuguese National Youth Council (CNI)
- **Romania**: Romanian National Youth Council (CRT)
- **Serbia**: National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)
- **Slovakia**: Slovak Youth Council (RMS)
- **Slovenia**: National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS)
- **Spain**: Spanish Youth Council (CJE)
- **Sweden**: National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU)
- **UK - Great Britain**: British Youth Council (BYC)

Other youth organisations or representatives of minority groups, that are not included in the European Youth Forum’s membership:

- African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe
- Muslim Students of France
- European Disability Forum - Youth Committee
- European Federation Of National Organisations Working With The Homeless
- Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)
- International Roma Youth Network
- Roma Active Albania
- Women Refugee Route
RESOURCES

COMMUNICATION

- Seeing Hope - A Visual Communication Guide for Human Rights: https://seeinghope.fineacts.co/?fbclid=IwAR0kqohHqOFjikSV-6bOsCIJ3HwZObn2597uLb0SjP5nixxpUXHgGyW1ss
- Reframing Migration Narratives Toolkit: http://www.narrativechange.org/
- Frameworks Institute: https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/
  - Reframing Adolescence and Adolescent Development

STATISTICS

- EUROSTAT. European statistics about young people: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth

This Flash Eurobarometer was designed to explore young EU citizens’ participation in a range of social aspects of European life, including voluntary activities, political elections, as well as groups and organisations such as youth or sports clubs.

WORK ON YOUTH

Equinet has done a range of capacity building and peer exchange for equality bodies around the issue of tackling discrimination against young people. This includes the following publications and events:

The European Commission’s Youth Portal (https://europa.eu/youth/EU_en) aims to inform young people about relevant opportunities for them, but may be of interest for you in order to stay informed about youth initiatives at EU level.

The Youth Department (www.coe.int/en/web/youth/about-us) is part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation within the Directorate General of Democracy (“DGII”) of the Council of Europe. The Department elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio (www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio) is an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand their competence and to develop it more effectively. This tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and generally all those interested in the topic of quality development and recognition of youth work. Relevant publications from the Council of Europe include:

- We CAN! Taking Action Against Hate Speech Through Counter and Alternative Narratives: https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/we-can-alternatives. This manual presents communicative and educational approaches and tools for youth and other human rights activists to develop their own counter and alternative narratives to hate speech.

The webpage of the UN Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake (https://www.un.org/youthenvoy) can keep you updated on UN-level plans for youth engagement. Furthermore, the United Nation’s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) works with young people (https://en.unesco.org/youth) and is committed to accompany them to work together to drive social innovation and change, participate fully in the development of their societies, eradicate poverty and inequality, and foster a culture of peace. They have developed a Master Class series for young people about Racism & Discrimination, which may be useful: https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-rights-inclusion/masterclass

LEGISLATION & YOUTH POLICY ACROSS EUROPE

- The European Commission’s Youth Wiki is an online platform presenting information on European countries’ youth policies: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki
- Council of Europe’s Youth Sector Strategy 2030: https://rm.coe.int/background-document-youth-sector-strategy-2030-english/1680a0bb33

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

- The European Youth Forum has created a useful tool to inform young people about their rights: http://tools.youthforum.org/youth-rights-info-tool/

Other relevant publications include (but is not limited to):

ENDNOTES

1 Frameworks (2020), The Core Story of Adolescence.


4 We will focus on the main legal instruments, even if the Gender equality legal framework in the EU contains several instruments that focus on various specific issues, such as the following:

- Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 13 December 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding

5 As regards to:

- statutory social security schemes which provide protection against sickness, invalidity, accidents at work and occupational diseases, unemployment and risks related to old age;
- social assistance which supplements or replaces the basic schemes.


7 European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 509 - Social Issues, 2021

8 For more guidance on what communicators can do to tackle negative public perceptions of youth and why they should do so, see the FrameWorks Institute (2020) ‘What to do’


10 World Health Organisation, Global Report on Ageism 2021

11 European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 493 - Discrimination in the EU, 2019

12 See Age Platform Europe’s #AgeingEqual campaign here: https://ageing-equal.org/. European Youth Forum work on ageism here: https://www.youthforum.org/there-no-age-enjoy-human-rights

13 Special Eurobarometer 493 “Discrimination in the European Union”, 2019. The survey was carried out in the 28 Member States of the EU. 27,438 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed.


19 FRA (2019), Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges, Luxembourg, Publications Office.


23 With respect to age, EU-MIDIS II (p.30) results show a linear trend, with younger respondents more likely to perceive the most recent stop as racially motivated. Specifically, every second respondent aged 16 to 24 (50%) stopped in the five years before the survey perceives the most recent stop as having been racially motivated. By contrast, every third respondent (35%) aged 45 to 59 holds this view. Men are three times more likely to be stopped than women (22% vs. 7%) and four times more likely to perceive the most recent stop as racial profiling (men: 17%, women: 4%).

37 The six aspects of democracy asked about in FRA’s survey were that: (1) elections are free and fair, (2) voters discuss politics with other people before deciding how to vote, (3) opposition parties are free to criticize the government, (4) the reporting by the media is free from government influence, (5) the rights of minority groups are protected, (6) citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums.


29 Ibid


33 In Croatia, the minimum age for employment in Croatia is 15 years - https://www.iio.org/dyn/native/docs/WEBTEXT/41244/72894/e95hrv01.htm

34 The 2016 Equinet Perspective ‘Opening up the Issue. Equality Bodies Combating Discrimination Against and Promoting Equality for Young People’, looked at the issue of age limits. They highlight: “Equal treatment legislation does not define the ground of age or, more specifically, young people. However, other legislation or policy in some countries does contain definitions that use age limits. The Youth Act in Bulgaria defines young people as being aged 15 to 29 years. The Youth law of Latvia defines young people as persons from 13 to 25 years of age. The Romanian Law on Youth defines young people as being between the age of 14 and 35 years. The Law on Youth in Serbia defines young people as being aged from 15 up to 30 years. The Public Employment Service in Austria defines young people as those aged from 15 to 24 years. These definitions, using age limits, reflect a legal and policy need for exact definition. However, there are difficulties in confining any definition of a group to age limits. The variety of age limits set out exposes an inevitable arbitrariness of the choices involved in setting age limits. Age limits raise difficult issues in relation to individuals who happen to fall just outside the age limit set but share the same needs or hold the same potential as those inside the age limit. Age limits tend to have little basis in the reality of the lives of the young people and have been used to exclude young people.”

35 WHO (2019), Technical Briefing on Child and Adolescent Health

36 Equinet (2016), ‘Equality bodies combating discrimination against young people’


38 For a full summary of the IHREC work on CERD, see their website: https://www.ihrec.ie/reports-international-bodies/un-convention-on-the-elimination-of-all-forms-of-racial-discrimination/

39 More information about the Fundamental Rights Dialogues is available on a dedicated website, URL: https://fra.fmi.events/

40 More information about the Fundamental Rights Forum is available on a dedicated website, URL: https://www.fundamentalrightsforum.eu/

41 The highlights video from the first Fundamental Rights Dialogue is available on youtube, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2H-0IK8dM

42 Youtube playlist 2018: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyvS5TAy9DA&list=PL2LXhy6X80h2ZldyoFemRP18T9e7csb1&index=34&t=0s; Youtube playlist 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kdq_yhIf6MY&list=PL2LXhy6X80jusAYSGRTY5S20e5sByWt

43 See for example how the Finnish government enlisted the help of influencers to fight against COVID-19: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/finland-enlists-social-influencers-in-fight-against-covid-19


45 Read more on contrasting colours: https://www.canva.com/learn/contrasting-colors/

46 How to ensure easy-to-read? https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read/

47 “It is an important reality to acknowledge: human beings are driven by emotions more than by rational thought. This means your communication will make much more of an impact if you draw out the emotional meaning and drama in your story” - Key 1: Tell a human story. 10 Keys to effectively communicating human rights, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-effectively-communicating-human-rights-booklet_en.pdf

48 For more about how to frame the equality, please check the Equinet’s and PIRC handbook “Framing Equality”: https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/framing_equality_equinet_pirc電子書.pdf

49 Ibid

50 Read more about hope-based communication here: https://www.openglobalrights.org/hope-guide/

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<td><a href="http://www.prs.hr">www.prs.hr</a></td>
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<td>Ombudswoaman for Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.posi.hr">www.posi.hr</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy">www.ombudsman.gov.cy</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ochrance.cz">www.ochrance.cz</a></td>
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<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>Danish Institute for Human Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.humanrigh.ts.dk">www.humanrigh.ts.dk</a></td>
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<td>ESTONIA</td>
<td>Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commission</td>
<td><a href="http://www.volink.ee">www.volink.ee</a></td>
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<td>Non-Discrimination Ombudsman</td>
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<td>GEORGIA</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ombudsman.ge">www.ombudsman.ge</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency</td>
<td><a href="http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de">www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>GREECE</td>
<td>Greek Ombudsman</td>
<td><a href="http://www.synigeros.gr">www.synigeros.gr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNGARY</td>
<td>Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aijh.hu">www.aijh.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRELAND</td>
<td>Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ihrec.ie">www.ihrec.ie</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unar.it">www.unar.it</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>KOSOVO*</td>
<td>Ombudsperson Institution</td>
<td><a href="http://www.okk-ks.org">www.okk-ks.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>LATVIA</td>
<td>Office of the Ombudsman</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tiesibargs.lv">www.tiesibargs.lv</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>LITHUANIA</td>
<td>Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lygybe.lt">www.lygybe.lt</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUXEMBURG</td>
<td>Centre for Equal Treatment</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cet.lu">www.cet.lu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MALTA</td>
<td>Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability</td>
<td><a href="http://www.crpd.org.mt">www.crpd.org.mt</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MALTA</td>
<td>National Commission for the Promotion of Equality</td>
<td><a href="http://www.equality.gov.mt">www.equality.gov.mt</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MOLDOVA</td>
<td>Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality</td>
<td><a href="http://www.egalitate.md">www.egalitate.md</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MONTENEGRO</td>
<td>Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ombudsman.co.me">www.ombudsman.co.me</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>Netherlands Institute for Human Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mensenrechten.nl">www.mensenrechten.nl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NORTH MACEDONIA</td>
<td>Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kzd.mk">www.kzd.mk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NORWAY</td>
<td>Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud</td>
<td>wwwIDO.no</td>
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<td>POLAND</td>
<td>Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rpo.gov.pl">www.rpo.gov.pl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>PORTUGAL</td>
<td>Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cig.gov.pt">www.cig.gov.pt</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>PORTUGAL</td>
<td>Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cite.gov.pt">www.cite.gov.pt</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>PORTUGAL</td>
<td>High Commission for Migration</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acm.gov.rs">www.acm.gov.rs</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>SERBIA</td>
<td>Commissioner for Protection of Equality</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs">www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>SLOVAKIA</td>
<td>Slovak National Centre for Human Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.snslp.sk">www.snslp.sk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>SLOVENIA</td>
<td>Advocate of the Principle of Equality</td>
<td><a href="http://www.zagovornik.si">www.zagovornik.si</a></td>
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<td>SPAIN</td>
<td>Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination</td>
<td><a href="http://www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.msssi.es">www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.msssi.es</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAIN</td>
<td>Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.inmujer.es">www.inmujer.es</a></td>
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<td>SWEDEN</td>
<td>Equality Ombudsman</td>
<td><a href="http://www.do.se">www.do.se</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN</td>
<td>Equality and Human Rights Commission</td>
<td><a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com">www.equalityhumanrights.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND</td>
<td>Equality Commission for Northern Ireland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.equaltyni.org">www.equaltyni.org</a></td>
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</table>

* 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.