

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Report on climate change policies in the EU: exploring the role and potential of equality bodies

EQUINET

Equinet is the European Network of Equality Bodies, a membership organisation bringing together 47 equality bodies from across Europe, including all EU Member States.

National equality bodies are public institutions designated by EU law to combat discrimination based on race and ethnic origin and gender discrimination. Some Member States have gone beyond the EU law minimal requirements and extended the mandate of equality bodies to grounds such as disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender identity and/or other grounds.

Equinet promotes equality in Europe through 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.

More information about Equinet and equality bodies is available on [the Equinet website](#)

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

As climate change is deeply and rapidly transforming our societies, the climate justice movement is also growing. Climate marches, led by young people, urged for immediate and fair actions from policymakers. NGOs representing specific groups, such as women, Roma people, migrants or people from ethnic minorities are underlining that they are already suffering disproportionately from the effects of the climate crisis, and that they will be further affected in the future.

This indicates that climate change and responses to climate emergencies is an equality issue. In the meantime, climate change is becoming a central policy priority at national, European and international level. In 2019, the EU developed an entire legal and policy package dedicated to tackling climate change and mitigating risks: the European Green Deal (EGD). The Green Deal aims at transforming the EU energy, transport and technology sector while providing financial support for making EU and national economies more sustainable. But is this action plan equality compliant? Are equality considerations mainstreamed and taken into account?

Reports and studies already issued on the topic qualify the European Green Deal as a “gender-blind” package¹. For instance, special attention is given in the EGD on providing funds for coal miners to transition into greener industries, which would be mainly benefitting men². Plans

¹ Allwood, G. (2020), *Mainstreaming Gender and Climate Change to Achieve a Just Transition to a Climate-Neutral Europe*, JCMS, Volume 58. Annual Review. pp. 173–186

² EEB and WECF (2021), *Why the European Green Deal Needs Ecofeminism*.

for sustainable public transport should also take greater account of the gender imbalance, since women tend to use public transport more frequently³. On race equality, some reports also highlight that the EU does not address how it will practically assist racialised communities affected by climate change, such as low-income and racialised communities who experience energy poverty or migrant workers that are tied into forms of exploitation labour within agricultural practices⁴. Developing an equality assessment of the European Green Deal could allow to further examine how this policy and legal package affects and takes into account the needs and realities of various discriminated groups, including women and racialised people, but also persons with disabilities, younger and older persons, religious minorities and LGBTI persons. Moreover, this assessment could highlight the “hidden” equality aspects of some key policy fields such as energy, agriculture, transport, industry, climate, environment and research.

Uncovering the invisible equality components of climate laws and policies will be essential for assessing the role equality bodies can play in ensuring fair and equal climate action. Indeed, equality bodies engage on issues that are directly linked to climate change and its consequences, such as access to housing and resources, accessibility of transport, health inequalities, socio-economic inequalities, etc. However, they might not envisage and conceive that the work they deliver directly falls within the framework of climate change and environment laws and policies. Re-defining the issue of climate change through the lens of equality could help better identify the current actions taken by equality bodies in this field, while accurately assessing their potential to protect discriminated groups and promote equal and fair climate policies.

A preliminary engagement on this topic from the perspective of equality bodies already took place in 2019 with the release of Equinet’s Perspective “Equality Bodies contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals” and with the participation of Equinet at the UN High Level Political Forum 2019. Nevertheless, a more detailed and targeted examination of the roles and implications of climate laws and policies for equality bodies is both necessary and timely.

OBJECTIVES and OUTPUT

The Equinet Work Plan for 2022 foresees the commissioning of ‘a research on climate change and the potential of equality bodies’ The objective pursued by this publication should be ‘to evaluate the current work of equality bodies on climate change and related challenges (such as access to housing and resources, health vulnerabilities and socio-economic inequalities) and their potential for ensuring an equality approach to climate policies, laws and actions. The research will also be partly based on an equality assessment of the European Green’.

³ European Committee of the Regions (2022), *Opinion: Gender Equality and Climate Change: Towards Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective in the European Green Deal*.

⁴ Equinox (2021), *Towards Climate Justice*.



Accordingly, the commissioned researcher(s) will be expected to produce an Equinet Report with a view to:

1. Assess the equality dimensions of the EU Green Deal, in terms of content and impact. This assessment could uncover policy and legal blind spots on the link between equality and climate change, as well as opportunities for engagement of equality bodies.
2. Evaluate the current work of equality bodies relevant to climate change and related challenges, such as access to housing and resources, health vulnerabilities, access to transports and socio-economic inequalities, etc. The list of relevant fields of work for equality bodies on climate change should be derived from the equality assessment of the EU Green Deal.
3. Evaluate the potential of and suggest possible actions for equality bodies for engaging with climate-related issues and for ensuring an equality approach to climate policies, laws and actions.

EXPECTED APPROACH

During the process, the researcher will be expected to:

- 1) Conduct a review of relevant literature.
- 2) Conduct an equality assessment of the EU Green Deal and identify equality “blind spots” and “opportunities” in the legal and policy package.
- 3) Make use of the extensive pre-existing Equinet database regarding equality bodies and conduct a survey of Equinet members to collect their inputs, perspective, and information on the topic. Based on the equality assessment, the survey should include, among other things, questions aimed at mapping the relevant climate-related fields in which equality bodies conduct work and activities and questions on the potential of equality bodies for meaningfully engaging on this issue.
- 4) Conduct interviews with selected equality bodies (maximum 6 members to be chosen together with the secretariat, if relevant, limited to availability of members, observing a geographical balance and a balance in the mandate and competences of the equality bodies).
- 5) Compile and analyse the responses received by equality bodies.
- 6) Make suggestions and recommendations about potential engagement from equality bodies on climate change in general and on EU and related national climate laws and policies in particular.

In the course of their work, the researcher or team of researchers should regularly update the Equinet Secretariat on their progress and if and when needed and appropriate, should consult with the Equinet Executive Board and thematic Working Groups. In specific, the researchers are encouraged to update and inform the Equinet Secretariat in a timely manner and seek support from the Secretariat team regarding the content of the publication, but also should

they encounter any obstacles and delays in the any of the above steps, and especially, if these obstacles and delays involve or are caused by members of Equinet. Please note that the Equinet secretariat will ultimately be responsible to decide when a publication satisfactorily addresses all requirements of these terms of reference.

EXPERTISE REQUIREMENT

The selected expert to be commissioned for this report is expected to demonstrate:

- A track record of work in the field of equality and human rights
- Knowledge of the work of national equality bodies and their diversity
- Knowledge of climate change laws and policies, and of the link between equality and climate change.
- Publication(s) in the field of EU equality laws and policies
- Excellent drafting skills in English

SELECTION PROCESS

The Equinet Secretariat will select the winning tender. In the selection process the following criteria will be considered:

- Quality and content of the proposal & adherence to the request expressed in these terms of reference.
- Demonstrated expertise working on equality
- Price

The proposal offering the best value for money will be selected. There exists no possible appeal against the decision of the secretariat.

TIMEFRAME

The indicative timeframe (all dates refer to 2022) for the commissioned paper is as follows:

- Deadline for applications to be submitted: 5 April
- Result of the selection process: Mid-April
- Start of the work: Mid-April
- Surveying members (network wide survey of all members): May-June
- Check-in with Equinet Secretariat (at conclusion of the surveying process) to confirm and discuss relevance and sufficiency of members' inputs from the survey: end of June
- Individual interviews with members: by June
- Stakeholders' interviews (e.g., EC, FRA, CoE, relevant European-level civil society organisations): mid-June until mid-July (concurrent with the surveying of all members and individual interviews)
- Present interim results to Equinet, based on survey results and interviews conducted: mid- August,
- First draft of the Report presented to the Equinet Secretariat: 30 September
- Feedback on 1st draft of the Report by the Equinet Secretariat: mid-October
- Implementation of revisions and amendments suggested by the Equinet Secretariat and submission of second draft: 7 November
- Feedback on the second draft of the Report by the Equinet Secretariat: 18 November

- Submission of final draft to the Secretariat for Board approval and comments: 5 December
- Completion of the work, including an approval by the Board of the final changes: 23 December

Additionally:

- The researcher(s) might be invited to present the main findings (based on the first draft of the Report) at Equinet Annual General Meeting in late September/ early October 2022
- The researcher(s) might be invited in 2023 to an Equinet event to present the results of the report.

BUDGET

The maximum budget for the commissioning of this report is **12.000 EUR** (VAT included).

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals, alongside the expert's CV need to be submitted by **Tuesday 5 April 2022** to the attention of Moana Genevey, Policy officer (moana.genevey@equineteurope.org).