
Equinet Conference Booklet

Equality Bodies and Gender Equality: A Growing Role

3 June | Paris, France

9:00 - 13:30 CET



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the European Union

Concept Note

The adoption of Directive 2002/73/EC, the Gender Goods and Services Directive (2004) and the Gender Recast Directive (2006) generalised the set-up of equality bodies promoting gender equality in the EU. The two Directives granted equality bodies the possibility to tackle gender-based discrimination in employment and access to and supply of goods and services, as well as gender-based harassment and sexual harassment, pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination and gender-based pay discrimination.

Since then, the 2010 Self-Employment Directive expanded the mandate of equality bodies to cover gender-based discrimination faced by self-employed workers. The proposed Women on Board Directive (2012) also offers to grant equality bodies with competences to promote, analyse, monitor and support gender balance on the boards of some companies. The 2019 Work-Life Balance Directive granted equality bodies a mandate to tackle discrimination related to parenthood, paternity and carers' responsibilities. In 2021, the proposed Directive on Pay Transparency foresees new functions for equality bodies, including representing workers in court for equal pay cases and enhancing their access to pay data. In 2022, the proposed Directive on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence also foresees a new role for equality bodies: they could be given an additional mandate to assist victims of violence against women and to issue independent reports and recommendations on this issue.

While a proposal for new EU legislation dedicated to strengthening the role of equality bodies is expected in the autumn of 2022, their role on gender equality has already been gradually strengthened over the years. This highlights their great potential for driving change towards more gender equal societies at the EU level. It is now necessary to reflect on this evolution and to ensure equality bodies can carry out these new functions and responsibilities adequately. Raising standards for equality bodies will allow for a better implementation of EU law on gender equality, and therefore, a better protection against gender-based discrimination all over the EU. Strengthening equality bodies on gender equality can also contribute to strengthen equality in general and enhance protection against discrimination on all grounds.

Objectives

This event aims to:

- Raise awareness on the potential of equality bodies for tackling gender discrimination and promoting gender equality;
- Identify the barriers faced by equality bodies to effectively achieve gender equality and the solutions required to overcome these.

Participants

The conference is aimed at policy-makers at the EU and national level and equality body staff.



Link to live streaming:

Live streaming in French language: <https://tinyurl.com/DDD22FR>

Live streaming in English language: <https://tinyurl.com/DDD22EN>



Agenda

The conference is moderated by *Sophie Robin-Olivier*

Welcome

8:30 - 9:00 - Welcome of participants

Session 1 – Setting the scene

09:00 – Welcome address – *Laurence Bond, Chair of Equinet Executive Board*

09:05 – Welcome address – *Claire Hédon, Défenseure des droits*

09:15 – The European Union and Gender Equality – *Carlien Scheele, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality*

09:40 – Q&A

10:00 – Break

Session 2 – Equality Bodies & Gender Equality: Exploring the Potential

10:15 – Dialogue 1: Equality bodies and Work-Life Balance

- **Dialogue** – *Liesbet Stevens, Deputy Director of the Belgian Institute for Equality of Women and Men & Claire Hasenfratz, Legal officer at the Directorate of Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission*
- **Discussant** – *Aline Brüser, Advisor on Gender Equality, European Trade Union Confederation*
- **Q&A**

10:45 – Dialogue 2: Equality bodies and Pay Transparency

- **Dialogue** – *Sandra Konstatzky, Head of the Austrian Ombud for Equal Treatment & Cristian Pîrvulesc, President of the Fundamental Rights and Rule of Law Group of the European Economic and Social Committee*
- **Discussant** – *Mary Collins, Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, European Women’s Lobby*
- **Q&A**



11:15 – Dialogue 3: Equality bodies and Violence Against Women

- **Dialogue** – *Aleksandra Szczerba, Chief expert at the Polish Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights & María Naredo, Advisor to the Office of the Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence of Spain*
- **Discussant** – *Françoise Kempf, Violence against Women Division of the Council of Europe*
- **Q&A**

11:50 – Break

Session 3 – Equality Bodies & Gender Equality: A Need for Standards

12:00 – Panel discussion: Moving towards stronger equality bodies for a better protection against gender-based discrimination in the EU

Panel 1. Strengthening independence of equality bodies

- *Laurence Bond, Chair of Equinet Executive Board*
- *Mary Collins, Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, European Women’s Lobby*
- *Françoise Kempf, Violence against Women Division of the Council of Europe*

Panel 2. Strengthening powers and resources of equality bodies

- *Claire Hasenfratz, European Commission*
- *Liesbet Stevens, Belgian Institute for Equality of Women and Men*
- *María Naredo, Office of the Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence of Spain*

Concluding session

13:15 – Concluding remarks

Anne Gaspard, Equinet



Our Moderator

Sophie Robin-Olivier

Professor of Law, Sorbonne University School of Law, France



Sophie Robin-Olivier is a Professor of Law at the Sorbonne school of Law, since 2011. Before joining the Sorbonne, she taught at other Law schools, in France and abroad (US, Japan, Argentina, Italy...). She teaches EU Law (Institutional and Substantive), Comparative Law, Labour and Employment Law and Anti-discrimination Law, both in French and in English. Her research focuses, mostly, on EU Social Law and Free movement of persons. Her PhD dissertation was devoted to the Principle of Equal treatment in EU law. More recently, she edited an “Article-by-Article Commentary on International and European Labour Law”, together with a group of European Professors (2018, Nomos) and published a “European Labour Law” textbook (2016, Bruylant).

She is regularly invited to contribute to conferences around the world on European and International Social Law. She is an expert on Free Movement of workers for the network of independent experts in the field of intra-EU mobility (MoveS) set up by the European Commission. Sophie Robin-Olivier is a member of the board of several Law Journals in France and in Belgium, including the “Revue trimestrielle de droit européen”, “Droit Social” (Dalloz), and the “European Labour Law Journal” (Intersentia).

Our Speakers

Laurence Bond

Chair of Equinet Executive Board and Director of Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)



Laurence Bond has been the Director of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission since May 2017. Before this, Laurence had served as the Acting Director and Head of Research for the Commission, and as Head of Research in the then Equality Authority from 2002. Prior to working in the Equality Authority, Laurence worked for many years in research, policy analysis and campaigning on equality and social justice in the public and voluntary sectors. In 2021, Laurence Bond was elected to the Board of Equinet and currently serves as the Chair of the Executive Board.



Claire Hédon

Defender of Rights, France



Claire Hédon is the Defender of Rights since July 22, 2020. She is appointed for 6 years, her mandate is neither revocable nor renewable. She is the first woman to head the institution since its creation. Claire Hédon holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Paris II and a Master's degree in communications from CELSA. After graduating in 1987, she made her first steps in radio on France Bleu, RFI and France Inter. From October 2003 to September 2017, she hosted *Priorité santé* every morning on RFI, then became Head of Magazines at RFI, a position she held until her appointment as Rights Defender in 2020. She became a member of the Board of Directors in 2005 of the ATD Fourth World Movement, before being appointed Vice President in 2011 and President in July 2015.

As President of ATD Fourth World, she pursues the work undertaken to advance ATD Fourth World's struggles: the increased participation of parents in schools; the definition of a 21st legal criterion of discrimination on the grounds of social precariousness, added to the penal code on June 14, 2016; and the participation of the poorest people in the development, the implementation and the assessment of public policies. She also carries the Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée project, which led to an experimental law in 2016.

Carlien Scheele

Director, European Institute for Gender Equality



Carlien Scheele is the Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in Vilnius, Lithuania. EIGE is the only European Union agency focusing exclusively on gender equality. By providing reliable and policy-oriented research, it supports the EU and its Member States to strengthen the promotion of gender equality. At EIGE's helm since February 2020, she oversees the Institute's strategic programmes of activities and budgets. Ms Scheele aims to cement EIGE's position as the EU's knowledge centre on gender equality and deepen collaboration within and beyond Europe. Before taking up her post at EIGE, Ms Scheele worked as a Senior Gender Equality Adviser/Senior Human Resources Adviser in the Council of Europe, seconded from the Dutch government. Previously, she worked as the

Director for Gender and LGBT Equality for the Dutch government, where she coordinated the national gender and LGBT equality policies.



Liesbet Stevens

Deputy Director, Institute for the equality of women and men, Belgium



Prof. dr. Liesbet Stevens is the deputy director of the Belgian Institute for the equality of women and men, which is the independent Belgian equality body with regard to discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender. Before her current position, Liesbet Stevens worked as a policy advisor on equal rights and poverty for the Flemish ministers of equal opportunities and the fight against poverty.

Since 2002 she holds a position as a guest lecturer at the KU Leuven, where she teaches the course “Legislation with regard to sex, sexuality and reproduction” and is one of the lecturers in the interuniversity master on “Gender and diversity”. She obtained a Ph.D. in law from the University of Leuven (KU Leuven, 2002), with a dissertation on the criminal legislation with regard to human sexual behavior. In 2002, her book “Strafrecht en seksualiteit” (Criminal Law and Sexuality) was published. In 2011 she edited the book “Recht en Gender in België” (Law and Gender in Belgium) together with Eva Brems; in 2021 she edited the book “Recht en Gender in België – 10 jaar later” (Law and Gender in Belgium - 10 years later) together with Eva Brems and Pieter Cannoot. In 2019, her book “Hoe legaal te flirten?” (How to flirt legally?) was published, a book with which she addressed a general audience for the first time.

Claire Hasenfratz

Legal officer, Directorate Equality and Union Citizenship, DG. JUST, European Commission



Claire Hasenfratz (she/her) works for the European Institutions since 2009 as a legal officer. Since 2020, she is in charge of the legislative initiative on binding standards for equality bodies, in the Directorate Equality and Union Citizenship at the European Commission. She has studied law and political science in Sciences Po Paris and King’s College London, and has been an advocate for equality for many years.

Aline Brüser

Advisor on Gender Equality, European Trade Union Confederation



Aline Brüser (she/her) is Advisor on Gender Equality at the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Since joining the ETUC in 2020, she coordinates the work of the ETUC Women's Committee and works on a range of topics in the field of gender equality, with a focus on trade union actions and strategies to achieve equal pay and to combat gender-based violence in the world of work and beyond. She holds a Master's degree in Gender Studies and Social Policy from the University of Toulouse (France) and a Bachelor's degree in European Studies from the University of Bremen (Germany).

Sandra Konstatzky

Head of the Austrian Ombud for Equal Treatment



Sandra Konstatzky is Head of the Austrian Ombud for Equal Treatment since 01/05/2018, the national equality body of for combating discrimination and promoting equality. Active in various functions in the Ombud since 01/07/2003, specialized in Gender equality law with focus on equal pay. The Ombud deals with six grounds (gender, ethnicity, religion and belief, age and sexual orientation) in the private sector (employment and access to goods and services). It provides independent advice and support, information and awareness raising. It has a head office and four regional offices. From 2015 -2021, Sandra Konstatzky was a Board Member of EQUINET, the European network of equality bodies. She is currently active in Equinet as member of the Working Group on

Policy Formation and involved in the project on Standards for Equality Bodies.

Cristian Pîrvulescu

President of the Fundamental Rights and Rule of Law Group of the European Economic and Social Committee, EESC Member, Romania



Cristian Pîrvulescu is Professor of Political Science and Dean of the Faculty of Political Science at the Bucharest National School of Politics and Administration, activist for human rights and democratic education, honorary president of the Pro Democratia Association and member of the Board of Directors of the organization for the promotion of democratic education Step by Step Romania. European Economic and Social Committee member since 2017, and Chair from 2020 of the Fundamental Rights and Rule of Law Group from 2020. A He is the author and coordinator of the book *Civil society, democracy and institutional building*, 2017. He is author of the chapter “The rebirth of the ‘party’ and the emergence of the system of parties in post-communist Romania” in *The Revolution of 1989: Defeated and*

victorious, coordinated by Anneli Ute Gabanyi, Alexandru Muraru, Andrei Muraru, Daniel Sandru (2020) and “Clivages gelés, oublie ajouter. La Roumanie et les problèmes en suspens”, in *La démocratie dans l’adversité. Enquête internationale*, coordinated by Chantal Delsol and Giulio De Ligio (2019). He is the Rapporteur for over twenty Opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee on rule of law, migration, asylum and education.

Mary Collins

Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, European Women’s Lobby



Mary Collins is Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at the European Women’s Lobby, where she has been working for a number of years. She works mainly on socio-economic issues relating to women’s economic independence, including the gender pay gap, pension, poverty gaps, work-life-balance and EU economic governance issues. She also coordinates the EWL Feminist Economics working group, which published the [Purple Pact](#), for a feminist economic model. Since November 2021, Mary is also a member of the Social Platform Management Committee.

Aleksandra Szczerba

Chief Expert at the Anti-discrimination Law Unit at the Office of Human Rights Commissioner of the Republic of Poland.



Aleksandra Szczerba is a habillited doctor of EU law and Chief Expert at the Anti-discrimination Law Unit at the Office of Human Rights Commissioner of the Republic of Poland. She is Professor at the Chair of European Law and Integration at the Jacob of Paradies University in Gorzów Wielkopolski and Visiting Professor at the University of Bari Aldo Moro (Italy).

Aleksandra Szczerba is an external expert at the European Institute for Gender Equality and an expert of Team Europe of the European Commission. Her areas of expertise are EU Law and Anti-discrimination Law.

María Naredo

Advisor to the Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence of the Ministry of Equality of the Government of Spain



María Naredo is an advisor to the Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence of the Ministry of Equality of the Government of Spain. As a jurist specialized in gender and human rights, since 1998 she has been conducting research on violence against women and discrimination and she has participated in international research missions and evaluation teams for projects related to violence against women and access to justice. She has also been an advisor in legislative processes, both at the international and state level. Between 2017 and 2019 she was the General Director of prevention and response against gender-based violence of the Madrid City Council.

Françoise Kempf

Violence against Women Division of the Council of Europe



Françoise currently works in the Violence against Women Division of the Council of Europe. The Division acts as Secretariat for the two pillars of the monitoring system set up under the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention): the Group of experts on action against violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO) and the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention. She has spent most of her career working for the Council of Europe, including as an Adviser to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (2012-2021), as part of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (2005-2012) and in the Roma and Travellers Division (1994-2002). She has also worked as an independent expert on the rights of minorities and non-discrimination. She holds Masters in Political Science (Strasbourg and Sevilla Universities) and in International Relations (Geneva Graduate Institute).

Anne Gaspard

Co-Director, Equinet



Anne Gaspard is Equinet Co-Director for Network Strategic Engagement since February 2022, after leading Equinet as its Executive Director since 2008 with the first establishment of the Equinet Secretariat. Anne grew up in France (Paris and Normandy) and later moved and completed her school curriculum at the French Lycée in London. Anne has been active and involved in the field of equality and non-discrimination at a European level since the very start of her professional career, following her Bachelors graduation in European studies and political science from University College London (UK) and Berlin Humboldt University (Germany). Starting work in Brussels with the Campaign of the European Year against Racism in 1997 for the European Parliament and a subsequent stage experience within the *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)* at the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, Anne then joined and managed the UK London-based secretariat supporting the first Chair of the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)*, predecessor institution to the now *Fundamental Rights Agency* based in Vienna, from 1998 to 2000. Anne was then responsible for the implementation of various pan-European equality and anti-discrimination projects for a European diversity management consultancy heading and leading its European office in Brussels for seven years (2000-2007) until her appointment to the position of Executive Director of Equinet Secretariat in February 2008.



Reading Material

Equinet publications

- 2019 Equinet Policy Brief, [The Future Gender Equality Strategy](#)
- 2019 Equinet Paper, [Tackling Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence: Equality Bodies' Contribution](#)

European Commission

- [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020 – 2025](#)
- [EU Work-life Balance Directive](#) and [Factsheet](#)
- [Directive Proposal on pay transparency to strengthen the principle of equal pay](#), [Factsheet](#) and [Impact Assessment](#)
- [Directive Proposal on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), [Factsheet](#) and [Impact Assessment](#)



Défenseur des droits, France

The Defender of Rights is an independent constitutional authority created by French organic law no. 2011-333 of March 29, 2011. The Defender of Rights is an independent institution responsible for defending individual rights and freedoms in 5 areas defined by law:

- Defending the rights of public service users,
- Defending children's rights,
- Observance of ethics by security personnel (police, gendarmes, private security services, etc.),
- Anti-discrimination and the promotion of equality,
- Guidance and protection for whistleblowers.

The Defender of Rights intervenes when a claimant has suffered a difference in treatment for one of the reasons prohibited by law or an international convention, in one of the areas covered by the law such as employment, private or public, career advancement, housing, access to a good or service.

For more information, please see their website: <http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/>

For inquiries, please contact: communication@defenseurdesdroits.fr

Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies

Equinet is a membership organisation bringing together 47 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.

Equality bodies are champions for the core EU value of equality and defenders of the right to non-discrimination. They are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and contributing to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. By engaging closely with policy makers and partners at EU and international level, Equinet promotes the work of equality bodies through relevant publications, as well as participation at conferences and other meetings.

For more information, please see our website: www.equineteurope.org

Check the directory of Equality Bodies for a list of Equinet members: <https://equineteurope.org/what-are-equality-bodies/european-directory-of-equality-bodies/>

