

# Equinet Training

## Improving Equality Bodies' media relations

24-25 May 2023, 9:30 – 15:00, Hotel International, Miramarska Cesta 24, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia

### Context

Media work is a daily activity for many Equality Bodies, supporting our core mandate for promoting equality. Members of the WG on Communication Strategies and Practices chose media relations as one of two training topics for 2023. The trainers are volunteer WG members with relevant experience :

- Markéta Bočková, Spokesperson, Public Defender of Rights, Czechia
- Ana Tretinjak, Spokesperson, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia

### Why media relations?

To do our work efficiently – promote equality and help fight discrimination – we as Equality Bodies need to **be visible to, well known by and able to reach various audiences** – vulnerable groups, NGOs, politicians and other decision makers as well as the media (both journalists and editors). Among all these audiences, **the media have the most potential to help us reach other target audiences and multiply our messages**. They can do it on a much larger scale than we can in direct contact or that other audiences can as multipliers.

To maximise that potential, we need to build and maintain good media relations. The **benefits** can include:

- Wider awareness of our Equality Body, the right to equality and how to protect it
- More victims of discrimination know where to seek protection
- More potential discriminators aware of equality legislation, on what discrimination is and that if something is unfair, it is not automatically discrimination
- Stronger relationship with partner NGOs



- Wider public support for equality, our specific goals and our work in general
- Less risk in a crisis communication situation

Additionally, investing the time and effort in media relations **helps to mainstream equality** – if journalists and editors are better informed on both equality and the work of the Equality Body, they will use that information in their everyday work, spontaneously and independently. This is especially useful for communication person(s) who face a **challenging workload**.

To be able to create and maintain good media relations, it is essential that staff of the Equality Body, particularly the **head, has trust in the communication team** and makes decisions based on their expert advice. It is also essential that he/she understands the importance of investing **resources in media relations** – expert staff, education for him/her and staff, his/her time and comm team time. It also needs a **communication person/team that knows how the media functions who has direct access to all internal information related to the work of the Equality Body**, and is allowed to set the journalist's expectations based on their understanding and knowledge of the topic and/or organisation.

In conclusion, good media relations mean the Equality Body has:

- capacity to recognize, create and use media opportunities efficiently;
- knowledge on how the media works, including an overview of technical necessities that depend on media type (deadlines, length of statements, appearance, etc.);
- the skills to adapt (or help the spokesperson to adapt) the communication to different media and to perform efficiently;
- management who understands the importance of media work, and enables the communication team to be able to do their work effectively.

## What are we going to learn in the training?

Aimed at members of the Working Group on communication strategies and practices, or any colleague who wants to develop their knowledge and understanding of the media, participants of this training will learn:

- Four steps to prepare the EB for good media relations
- Tips and tricks on building good media relations daily – concrete actions, easy to implement



- What to ask journalists who contact you for a story/interview
- Golden rules for media appearances and statements (to train your heads, experts)
- Recognizing, creating and using media opportunities
- What to do in a crisis communication situation

During all sections, participants are expected to share their good/bad experiences or discuss challenges in media work.

## What to expect after the training?

### **Materials and events:**

- Guide on media relations, including checklists and examples from WG members
- Follow-up meeting with WG members 6 months after members receive the guide

### **Skills:**

- Better understanding of how the media works and tools to capitalize that understanding
- Enhanced media relations that will lead to more visibility of the Equality Body
- Skills to train your heads/spokepersons to perform better in statements and interviews



## DRAFT AGENDA

### Day 0 – 23 May 2023

**9:30 – 16:00**      **Working Group meeting**

### Day 1 – 24 May 2023

**9:30 – 10:00**      **Welcome & Warm up**

**10:00 – 11:00**      **Four steps to prepare your Equality Body for good media relations**

This session will explain the importance of support from your leadership, with an understanding of the value of media relations; how to make contacts in the media; what a communication friendly workflow looks like; and how to create media-friendly material.

**11:00 – 11:20**      **Coffee break**

**11:20 – 12:50**      **Tips and tricks to build good media relations**

How can you identify journalists that might be interested in your topics, and how can you understand their needs? What can you do to show journalists that you are of value to them? What do journalists need you to do to feel respected and appreciated? There are so many ways you can build good media relations, and this session will allow us to identify and discuss concrete actions that are easy to implement.

**12:50 – 14:00**      **Lunch**

**14:00 – 15:30**      **You are contacted for an interview: now what?**

There are many practical aspects of an interview that you will need to understand in advance so that you can prepare your head or expert. This session looks at what you should ask journalists when they contact you for an interview, and if everything works out and the interview goes ahead, what the golden rules for media appearances and statements are.

**15:30 – 15:45**      **Coffee break**

**15:45 – 16:30**      **What have you learned so far? Putting it into practice**

In small groups / pairs, participants will be invited to delve into areas of media relations work that they would like to build their skills.

**16:30 – 16:45**      **Wrap up & close**



## Day 2 – 25 May 2023

**9:30 – 10:00**

### **Feedback from small group session**

Each group is invited to share the outcome of their practical session, and address any challenges they encountered with the whole group.

**10:00 – 11:00**

### **Recognising, creating and using media opportunities**

How are you going to apply your new skills going forward, and make the most out of any media opportunities coming your way? This session will give you capacity to recognize, create and use media opportunities efficiently.

**11:00 – 11:15**

### **Coffee break**

**11:15 – 12:30**

### **Crisis communication: What to do when the mess hits the fan?**

There is panic in the office as there is a crisis that needs urgent communication. This session will allow you to prepare in advance, so that you can keep a cool head as you deal with it.

**12:30 – 13:30**

### **Lunch**

**13:30 – 14:45**

### **How are you going to improve media relations in your office?**

Great, you've got the training, and are ready to head home to share with your colleagues everything that you've learned! How are you going to put your new learning into practice? What do colleagues need to know? What support will you need? This is time for you to think about the follow up to this training, and exchange with your peers on next steps.

**14:45 – 15:00**

### **Closing session**

This is just the beginning of our road to good media relations! What are the next steps that you can expect from Equinet to support your media relations work?

