



**Draft Minutes of the 17th Annual General
Meeting of Equinet – European Network of
Equality Bodies**

Wednesday 5 October 2022

Brussels, Belgium

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Attendance

Equinet Members' representatives

Please refer to the attendance list attached ([Annex 1](#))

Attending Board Members

Lars ARRHENIUS, Equality Ombudsman, Equality Ombudsman, Sweden
Valérie FONTAINE, Advisor for Partnerships and Public Relations, Defender of Rights, France
Robert GAJDA, Commissioner, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Albania
Rhoda GARLAND, Executive Director, Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, Malta (Treasurer)
Rainer HILTUNEN, Head of Office, Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, Finland
Tena ŠIMONOVIĆ EINWALTER, Ombudswoman, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia (Chair)

Equinet Secretariat

Tamás Kádár (Co-Director - Operations, Policy & Legal)
Anne Gaspard (Co-Director - Network Strategic Engagement)
Sarah Cooke O'Dowd (Head of Communication and Membership)
Yannick Godin (Administration and Finance Officer)
Teresa Pereira (Communication & Member Engagement Officer)
Jone Elizondo-Urrestarazu (Legal & Policy Officer)
Daris Recio Lewis (Legal & Policy Officer)
Moana Genevey (Policy Officer)
Milla Vidina (Policy Officer)
Alizé Larguier (Policy & Legal Trainee)
Martina Rota (Membership & Network Development Trainee)
Chiara D'Agni (Communication Trainee)

Quorum

31 Equinet Members attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022, among whom 6 were appointed as proxy to represent other members, giving a total of 37 voting Equinet Members represented at AGM 2022. Consequently, in accordance with the Equinet Statutes, the quorum for a valid Equinet Annual General Meeting was reached (at least half of the whole 47 Members should be represented at an AGM).

Decision making threshold

In line with the statutes of the organisation, the set validity threshold for the Equinet AGM is a simple majority of the effective members who are present or represented. This implies that 50 percent of Equinet Members present or represented +1 need to vote positively (at least 19 out of 37 in this case), in order for decisions to be adopted

AGENDA (CET, Brussels time)

Opening and Introduction

09.00 – 09.10 **Welcome by Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Equinet Board**

Session 1: Equinet 2022 review

09.10 – 09.50 **Report on Equinet Activities**

- Report on 2022 Work Plan implementation
- Report and update on Equinet Funding & Finance
- Q&A – Members' discussion

09.50 – 10.00 **Voting Part 1**

- DRAFT MINUTES AGM 2021
- DRAFT MINUTES EAM 2021
- ACCOUNTS 2021

10.00 – 10.20 **Coffee Break**

Session 2: Looking forward - 2023 plans and Equinet governance

10.20 – 10.50 **Equinet Strategic Plan 2023-26**

- Proposed new Equinet Strategic Plan
- Q&A – Members' discussion

10.50 – 11.15 **Equinet 2023 Work Plan**

- Proposed 2023 Equinet Work Plan & budget
- Q&A – Members' discussion

11.15 – 11.25 **Voting Part 2**

- AMENDMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN
- STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-26
- WORK PLAN 2023

11.25 – 11.45 **Equinet Board Elections Procedure**

- Proposed new Equinet Board Elections Procedure
- Q&A – Members' discussion

11.45 – 12:00 **Voting Part 3**

- BOARD ELECTIONS PROCEDURE

12.00 – 13.00 **Networking Lunch**

Session 3: Equality in Europe - New developments and opportunities

Chair: Tamás Kádár, Equinet Co-Director

13.00 – 14.00 **EU Standards for Equality Bodies & Shared Priorities**

- Video address: Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality
- Silvan Agius, Member of Commissioner Helena Dalli's Cabinet
- Erik Adell Hellström, Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU
- Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Equinet Chair & Ombudswoman, Croatia

- Q&A – Members’ discussion

14.00 – 14.20 **Coffee Break**

Session 4: Promoting Standards for Equality Bodies

14.20 – 14.55 **Promoting the Standards at national level**

- Proposed Equinet approach to advocating for the Standards Member’s example of national level advocacy
 - Ferda Ataman, Federal Commissioner for Anti-discrimination, Federal Anti-discrimination Agency, Germany
 - Jean O’Mahony, Head of Strategic Engagement, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Ireland

14.55 – 15.40 **Members’ Small Group Discussions**

- Three group discussions
- Feedback to plenary
- Next steps

Closing

15.40 – 15.45 **Conclusion and closing of AGM**

- Closing remarks

Welcome and introduction

On 5 October 2022, Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of the Equinet Board of Directors and Ombudswoman of Croatia, delivered a welcome address and declared the **seventeenth Equinet Annual General Meeting (AGM)** open at 09:10. The Equinet AGM was held in person, in Brussels, at the Pullman Hotel at Gare du Midi.

SESSION 1 – Equinet 2022 review

Report on Equinet Workplan 2022 and activities, Funding & Finance

On behalf of the Equinet Board, Equinet Co-Directors Anne Gaspard & Tamás Kádár gave a comprehensive report on **Equinet activities in 2022**. Rhoda Garland (Equinet Treasurer) introduced to the Members the **overview of the financial situation for 2022**, alongside the future Equinet budget 2023.

Q&A – Members' discussion

Equinet's board and secretariat were commended for the good administration of the budget and received suggestions on seeking political support for finding funding for non-EU members.

Voting

As foreseen in the AGM agenda and on the basis of voting documents previously sent to Equinet Members, Equinet Chair, Tena Šimonović Einwalter invited Equinet Members to cast their votes on the following documents:

- Minutes AGM 2021
 - The draft minutes of the Equinet AGM 2021 were adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.
- Minutes AEM 2021
 - The draft minutes of the Equinet AEM 2021 were adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.
- Accounts 2021
 - The closed accounts for the year 2021 were adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.

SESSION 2: Looking forward - 2023 plans and Equinet governance

Equinet Strategic Plan 2023-26

Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Equinet Board and Valérie Fontaine, Equinet Board Member, proposed the new Equinet strategic plan and presented all strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Q&A – Members' discussion

Members emphasized the importance of Equinet's membership engagement in 2023, and the support for peer exchange in matters of strategic and annual planning.

Equinet Work Plan 2023

Tena Šimonović Einwalter and Valérie Fontaine presented the Equinet 2023 Work Plan, including the main activities planned for the next year for each working group and cluster.

Q&A – Members' discussion

Members discussed challenges members may face when trying to engage in a large number of Equinet working activities and working structures. Equinet Secretariat addressed concerns clarifying working structures, pointing also to a reduced number of activities planned for 2023, and the development of an online platform for member engagement.

Voting

As foreseen in the AGM agenda and on the basis of voting documents previously sent to Equinet Members, Equinet Co-Director Anne Gaspard invited Equinet Members to cast their votes on the following documents:

- AMENDMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN
 - The amendment to Strategic Plan was adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.
- STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-26
 - The Strategic Plan 2023-26 was adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.
- WORK PLAN 2023
 - The Work Plan 2023 was adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.

Equinet Board Elections Procedure

Tamás Kádár, Equinet Co-director and Rainer Hiltunen, Board Member, jointly presented an amended proposal including small modifications to the Equinet Board Election Procedures, drafted by a taskforce made up of 3 board members in early 2022 (Rainer Hiltunen, Robert Gadja, Laurence Bond).

Q&A – Members’ discussion

Members expressed support for the changes and suggested improving transparency of election process for the replacement of a vacated seat during the mandate of a Board member. The board will assess the need to further amend the election procedure to ensure that a clear procedure is established, a balance should be sought between need for transparency, on one hand, and the need for effectiveness, on the other hand.

Voting:

As foreseen in the AGM agenda and on the basis of voting documents previously sent to Equinet Members, Equinet Co-Director Anne Gaspard invited Equinet Members to cast their votes on board election procedure

- The amendment to board election procedure was adopted unanimously (37 votes in favour) by the General Assembly of Equinet Members.

SESSION 3: Equality in Europe - New developments and opportunities

This was the only session of the AGM open to external participants and speakers. The session provided an update on relevant new legislative and policy developments in the field of equality at the European level, with a focus on legislative standards for equality bodies, and an opportunity for exchanges between equality bodies, policymakers, legislators, and civil society actors on these developments and other pressing equality issues.

Q&A – Members’ discussion

Members discussed the importance of the upcoming legislation on standards for equality bodies, of building support for its future adoption and citing concerns about any possible lobby against it. The EC representative welcomed and agreed with the importance of ensuring wide support to facilitate the legislative process towards adoption and noted that the proposed legislation will not allow for any possible regression on Equality Bodies’ current powers.

SESSION 4: Promoting Standards for Equality Bodies

In this session Ferda Ataman, Independent Federal Anti-discrimination Commissioner and Head of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency of Germany and Jean O’Mahony, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission reported on their national advocacy strategy.

Discussion Groups

Members divided in 3 groups to share ideas and discuss potential strategy to implement at national level. All ideas and suggestions generated from the group discussions were conveyed to the Equinet Secretariat and incorporated into the guidelines for members on standards for Equality Bodies, as appropriate.

Final remarks and closing of the AGM

Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Chair of Equinet Executive Board, addressed closing remarks and thanked everyone for their active engagement during the AGM, noting that exchanged views and ideas were well noted especially on standards for equality bodies, and will be taken into account to guide Equinet's forthcoming work.

== The seventeenth Annual General Meeting of Equinet was officially closed at 16:00 on 5 October 2022 ==

ANNEX 1

Member Participants list

FIRST NAME	FAMILY NAME	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
Lars	Arrhenius	Equality Ombudsman	Sweden
Ferda	Ataman	Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency	Germany
Kostantino	Bartzeliotis	Greek Ombudsman	Greece
Csege	Borbély	Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	Hungary
Agnese Nadia	Canevari	UNAR - National Office against Racial Discrimination	Italy
Patrick	Charlier	UNIA - Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities	Belgium
Evelyn	Collins	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	United Kingdom Northern Ireland
Ian	Feldman	Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality	Moldova
Melanie	Field	Equality and Human Rights Commission	United Kingdom Great Britain
Valérie	Fontaine	Defender of Rights	France
Robert	Gadja	Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination	Albania
Rhoda	Garland	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability	Malta
Michelle	Grundberg	Equality Ombudsman	Sweden
Magdalena	Hahn	Austrian Disability Ombudsman	Austria
Lola	Hasanovic	Commissioner for the Protection of Equality	Serbia
Rainer	Hiltunen	Non-Discrimination Ombudsman	Finland
Niklas	Hofmann	Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency	Germany
Patrick	Hurst	Centre for Equal Treatment	Luxembourg
Brankica	Jankovic	Commissioner for the Protection of Equality	Serbia
Tatjana	Jokanovic	Commissioner for the Protection of Equality	Serbia

Darijo	Jurišić	Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities	Croatia
Balázs	Könnyid	Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	Hungary
Sandra	Konstatzky	Ombud for Equal Treatment	Austria
Nanna Margrethe	Krusaa	Danish Institute for Human Rights	Denmark
Arberita	Kryeziu	Ombudsperson Institution	Kosovo*
Magdalena	Kuruś	Commissioner for Human Rights	Poland
Jana	Kvasnicová	Public Defender of Rights	Czech Republic
Jan-Peter	Loof	Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	Netherland
Jukka	Maarianvaara	Ombudsman for Equality	Finland
Roisin	Mallon	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Despina	Mertakka	Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection Human Rights	Cyprus
Nikolaj	Nielsen	Danish Institute for Human Rights	Denmark
Jean	O'Mahony	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Ireland
Mattia	Peradotto	UNAR - National Office against Racial Discrimination	Italy
Nadan	Petrovic	UNAR - National Office against Racial Discrimination	Italy
Naim	Qelaj	Ombudsperson Institution	Kosovo*
Ivona	Ražnatović	Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Birutė	Sabatauskait	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson	Lithuania
Jean Marc Bernard	Scheer	Centre for Equal Treatment	Luxembourg
Ketevan	Shubashvili	Public Defender (Ombudsman)	Georgia

Tena	Šimonović Einwalter	Office of the Ombudsman	Croatia
Kristina	Stenman	Non-Discrimination Ombudsman	Finland
Bostjan	Vernik Setinc	The Advocate of the Principle of Equality	Slovenia

External participants list

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Erik	Adell Hellström	Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU
Silvan	Agius	European Commission, Cabinet of the Commissioner for Equality
Claire	Hasenfratz	European Commission
Jelena	Jovanovic	ARDI - Anti-racism and diversity intergroup
Ville	Majamaa	European Commission
Katrien	Meuwissen	ENNHRI - European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
Catherine	Naughton	European Disability Forum
Isaline	Ossieur	Business Europe
Helen	Portal	Inclusion Europe
Edyta	Tuta-Lorenz	OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Marine	Uldry	European Disability Forum
Christian	Veske	European Institute for Gender Equality

** 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.*