



# 2025 WORK PLAN



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# Presentation

Equinet is the European Network of Equality Bodies, a membership organisation which promotes equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of National Equality Bodies. It provides general support to Equality Bodies through capacity building activities, facilitates peer-to-peer exchange and knowledge sharing across Equality Bodies while also creating new knowledge on innovative issues related to non-discrimination and equality.

By building bridges between Equality Bodies and partners (policymakers, civil society organisations, European institutions, etc.) as well as other actors related to equality and non-discrimination, Equinet stimulates expert and informed reflection on the situation of equality and non-discrimination in Europe. As a result, the Network strengthens the European equality framework, channeling the learnings and voices of Equality Bodies in European discussions, consultations and legislative processes.

For the past 2 years Equinet was actively involved in the negotiations that led to the adoption of EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies in 2024. This 2025 work plan lays out the activities planned for the year, with a strong focus on those related to the implementation efforts for these Directives.

## Equinet Strategic Plan 2023- 2026

**Vision:** An equal Europe, where equality is a reality for everyone, diversity is valued, and all forms of discrimination have been eliminated.

**Mission:** Equinet promotes equality in Europe by supporting Equality Bodies to be independent and effective catalysts for more equal societies, and delivers its mission in a way that embodies and promotes its values.

**Values:** Equality, Respect, Dignity, Solidarity, Diversity, Inclusion, Transparency, Participation, Innovation, Justice, Protection.

## Areas of change & long-term objectives

Equinet will deliver on its mission with awareness of the work that remains to be done in the field of equality and non-discrimination and the context in which the Network and its members evolve. The focus will be on three main areas for which three long-term strategic objectives have been identified:

- A) Strengthen and support Equality Bodies to achieve equality for all**
  - 1. Strengthen Equality Bodies as the cornerstones of national and equality infrastructures
  - 2. Support Equality Bodies through knowledge, capacity-building, and skills sharing for the enforcement of their mandate
- B) Act as an expert voice of Equality Bodies in Europe on equality and non-discrimination**
  - 3. Advance the equality agenda in Europe through strategic engagement and communication
  - 4. Maintain Equinet's position as a research and knowledge hub drawing on Equality Bodies' experience of equality and non-discrimination
- C) Maintain and improve Equinet's capacity as a strong, resilient, and innovative Network**
  - 5. Ensure an enriching membership experience in Equinet by tailoring activities and engaging all members

6. Develop and sustain Equinet's resources and accountability to better respond to members' needs

[For further information on our Strategic Plan, please see the Equinet website.](#)

## Equinet Expert Groups

Cooperation with members is an essential part of the inner functioning of Equinet. Bringing in the expertise of National Equality Bodies and focused exchange on special topics fuels the development of critical resources for the Network.

## Equinet Working Groups

The Equinet Working Groups are composed of expert staff from member organisations and are the central standing platforms for effective cooperation and sharing of expertise amongst Equality Bodies. Equinet Working Groups are headed by one or two Moderators from National Equality Bodies who, assisted by the Equinet Secretariat, are responsible for the organisation and the implementation of the work as planned in the annual Work Plan. Each Working Group meets twice during the year, typically one in-person meeting, and one online.

- **Artificial Intelligence** (coordinated by Milla Vidina)  
Moderator: **Valérie Fontaine**, Adviser for Partnerships and Public Relations, Defender of Rights, France
- **Communication Strategies and Practices** (coordinated by Teresa Pedreira)  
Moderators: **Ana Tretinjak**, Communication Officer, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia & **Päivi Ojanperä**, Communications Specialist, Ombudsman for Equality, Finland
- **Equality Law in Practice** (coordinated by Jone Elizondo-Urrestarazu)  
Moderators: **Imane El-Morabet**, Unia, Belgium & **Leona Bashow**, Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom
- **Gender Equality** (coordinated by Moana Genevey)  
Moderator: **Aleksandra Szczerba**, Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland
- **Policy Formation** (coordinated by Tamás Kádár)  
Moderator: **Monika Cavlovic**, Office of the Ombudswoman, Croatia
- **Research and Data Collection** (coordinated by Daris Lewis and Milla Vidina)  
Moderator: **Bogdan Banjac**, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Serbia

## Project

Set up in 2019 to support **the understanding, implementation, and monitoring of European standards for Equality Bodies** at the European and Member State level, this project enables Equinet to use the practical experience and expertise of Equality Bodies to develop indicators in order to measure compliance with standards for Equality Bodies. The Standards project meets twice during the year, in-person or online, depending on the needs of the group in relation to the developments of the legislative proposal and its future implementation.

- **Standards for Equality Bodies** (coordinated by Tamás Kádár)  
Moderator: **Tena Šimonovic Einwalter** (Ombudswoman, Croatia)

## Equinet Clusters

**Equinet clusters** are **time-limited taskforces focusing on specific topics of high interest** to Equality Bodies, bringing together **high-level experts for focused and results-oriented discussions**. Their objective is to provide a platform for Equinet members to exchange good practices, while also building their capacity by enabling engagement with European-level policy and legal developments. Clusters may be in touch regularly via email, meet online, or in-person if linked to other capacity-building events.

In 2025, following the growing interest of members and Equinet's preliminary work on the topic, Equinet will establish a new cluster to further discuss the issue of Climate Change & Equality

- **Age** (coordinated by Daris Lewis)
- **Disability** (coordinated by Jone Elizondo Urrestarazu)
- **Climate Change & Equality** (coordinated by Moana Genevey)



# Equinet Work Plan 2025

## Standards for Equality Bodies

Workshops: Standards for Equality Bodies: Strategies, tools, and best practices

Standards Project

Standards camp: Utilising Equinet outputs to ensure an effective transposition

Standards Project

Training: How to develop and use effective equality indicators

Standards Project  
R&DC Working Group

Piloting: Equinet Minimal Guidelines for Improving Complaints Data Collection by EBs

R&DC Working Group

Workshop: Leadership for Equality Hub

Heads of EBs

## Exploring new and current equality trends

Format TBD: The disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities

Climate Change Cluster  
Equality Stakeholders

Webinars: Equality by design: The interface between technical standards and legal requirements

AI Working Group  
Equality Stakeholders

Technical committee participation: Equality-proofing technical standards under the AI Act

Technical experts

Seminar: Addressing challenges & opportunities posed by AI for persons with disabilities and older persons

AI Working Group  
Disability & Age Clusters

Workshop: How to build a case on algorithmic discrimination

AI Working Group

Publication: Enforcing Equality: AIA and EU Non-Discrimination Law in Sync

Equinet Members  
Tech & Equality Stakeholders

Training: Hate speech, polarization, misinformation, and politicisation of equality

Communication WG

Training & Publication: Tackling hate speech in the times of disinformation and social media

Policy Formation WG

## EU Equality Strategies

Webinar: Equality Bodies ensuring LGBTQI+ Equality

Equinet Members  
Equality Stakeholders

Roundtable: Equality Bodies enabling equal access of Roma people to education

Equinet Members  
Equality Stakeholders

Workshop: Towards a new EU Action-Plan against Racism: Learning from the work of EBs

Equinet Members  
Equality Stakeholders

Workshops: UN treaty bodies and following up cases on racism

Equinet Members

## Developing equality law & the role of EBs

Conference: Past, present, and future of Equality in Europe

Equinet Members  
Equality Stakeholders

Training: Alternative dispute resolution

Equality Law WG

Workshop: Access to justice by Equality Bodies

Heads of Legal Dpts

Monitoring of European Court of Human Rights

Equality Law WG

Study visit: How to conduct a gender-neutral job evaluation?

Gender Equality WG

Workshop: The EU Directive on violence against women and domestic violence

Equinet Members

# Activities

To plan for 2025, the Equinet Executive Board and Secretariat have collaborated with the Network’s Expert Groups to propose a program that fits the Equinet Strategic Plan 2023-2026, always guided by our main strategic objectives of:

- Strengthening and supporting Equality Bodies to achieve equality for all;
- Acting as an expert voice of Equality Bodies in Europe on equality and non-discrimination; and
- Maintaining and improving Equinet’s capacity as a strong, resilient, and innovative Network.

With the adoption of the EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies in 2024, Equinet will be dedicating a lot of resources on empowering members to advocate for an ambitious implementation in Member States, and to build capacity to adapt to the operational changes that will come from the implementation.

Throughout this document, you will be able to recognize all activities that directly relate to these efforts by the “Standards for Equality Bodies” seal:



This Equinet Work Plan 2025 outlines all planned activities for the coming year, structured along the following areas of activity and themes:

## Standards for Equality Bodies

- Implementation strategies
- Leadership for Equality

## Exploring new and current equality trends

- Equality and the future

## EU Equality Strategies

- Tackling hate speech in the times of disinformation and social media
- LGBTQI+ Equality
- Anti-racism actions

## Developing equality law and the role of Equality Bodies

- Equality legislation
- Equality law in practice
- Gender equality

## Relationship management, network development, and governance

- Communication
- Member Engagement
- Partnerships

## Standards for Equality Bodies

With the adoption of the EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies in May 2024, National Equality Bodies become a centrepiece and support for their Member States regarding the correct and ambitious transposition and implementation of those Directives. Therefore, in 2025 Equinet will focus its efforts on building Members' capacity not only to prepare for changes within their institutions' work, but also to advocate for an ambitious implementation of the Directives.

## Implementation strategies

### Standards for Equality Bodies: Strategies, tools, and best practices



3 online workshops

#### Background

The adoption of EU legislation on Equality Bodies is a major step towards better implementation and enforcement of EU equal treatment legislation and effective protection of the rights of all victims of discrimination across Europe. The Directives establish minimum requirements for these bodies, allowing and recommending Member States to go beyond the minimum requirements enshrined there to ensure the best protection from discrimination possible to all persons.

Building on the work done within the Project on Standards for Equality Bodies and the Equinet secretariat, as well as the Workshop series run in 2024, this new series aims to continue to provide National Equality Bodies with tools and practical examples to ensure the best possible transposition and implementation.

In essence, Equinet's targeted workshops on standards for Equality Bodies not only fortify their capabilities but also bolster the collective effort towards a more equitable society.

#### Objectives

- Continue providing tools and support regarding key issues of the Standards Directives to ensure the best possible transposition and implementation.
- Provide a platform for regular discussions on the Standards Directives.
- Ensure a correct, swift, and ambitious transposition of the Standards Directives

**Target audience:** Members of the Equinet Project on Standards- open to the rest of the membership.



## Standards camp: Utilising Equinet outputs to ensure an effective transposition



2.5-day in-person workshop

### Background

In 2024, Equinet hired Equal Rights Trust to produce, thanks to a grant provided by the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, a thorough legal analysis of the provisions in the directives, to the benefit of equality body staff working on transposition and implementation and legal practitioners (including CSOs and public authority experts), as well as a shorter document in the form of a toolkit summarizing the main findings in an easily accessible format.

Building on this work, this 2.5-day Workshop aims at presenting and discussing the outputs in depth and helping Equinet members use it to defend their interests.

### Objectives

- Analyse and shine a light on potential different interpretations of all relevant articles of the EU Directives, with a focus on their scope, added value and potential risks
- Reflect on relevant interactions between the EU Directives and other international and European supporting legal and policy documents
- Ensure thorough understanding of the 2024 outputs by those in a position to advise on the transposition of the Standards Directives
- Leverage the 2024 outputs in order to ensure an in-depth understanding of the possibilities they present

**Target audience:** Project on Standards, Equality Body experts that will advocate or advise on the transposition of the Standards Directives at the national level.

## How to develop and use effective equality indicators, including indicators for measuring effectiveness and impact of Equality Bodies' work



1.5-day in-person training, linked to Research and Data Collection Working Group and the members of the Project on Standards.

Possible written output based on the training and discussions with the Working Group and Project Group (pending financial and staff capacity)

### Background

The newly adopted EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies foresee the development of indicators to measure the implementation of the Directives on different issues, mainly as regards to both reporting (Article 17) and monitoring (Article 18). The European Commission is tasked with developing ‘common indicators’ for monitoring the implementation of the Directives. They do so with Equinet’s assistance, taking into account Equinet’s previous experience in developing [three sets of indicators](#) on mandate, independence and resources of Equality Bodies, as well as published reports on [how to build indicators on the impact of equality bodies](#) (2013). This initiative goes a step further, attempting to provide more detailed equality indicators, including to measure the effectiveness and impact of Equality Bodies’ work. By promoting the use of standardized equality indicators, Equinet seeks to foster a unified approach to combating discrimination, enabling members to contribute more effectively to European equality initiatives.

In 2025 Equinet will organize a training on developing and using effective equality indicators, aiming at enhancing Equality Bodies’ ability to measure and demonstrate the impact of their work. By equipping Equality Bodies with the skills to develop and use robust indicators, this training strengthens their capacity to make data-driven decisions, ensuring more effective interventions and greater accountability to stakeholders. Further, it will serve to assist measure the effectiveness of their own activities, pursuant to the Standards Directives.

Overall, this activity is essential for empowering Equinet Members, enhancing their operational effectiveness, and supporting their contributions to broader European efforts in promoting equality and non-discrimination.

### Objectives

- Develop Equality Bodies staff skills in creating and applying equality indicators to measure the effectiveness and impact of their work
- Enhance the ability of Equality Bodies to use data-driven approaches for decision-making and strategic planning
- Foster the harmonization of measurement standards and practices across Equinet Members to ensure consistency and comparability
- Strengthen the capacity of Equality Bodies to demonstrate accountability and communicate their impact to stakeholders effectively

**Target audience:** Members of the Equinet Research and Data Collection Working Group and Standards Project Group



# Ensuring Comparability of Complaints Data Collected by Equality Bodies: Piloting of the Equinet Minimal Guidelines for Improving Complaints Data Collection by Equality Bodies



Piloting by members of the Equinet Research and Data Collection Working Group

## Background

A number of the European Commission's initiatives, including the [Gender Equality Strategy](#), the [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy](#), the [EU Roma Strategic Framework](#) and the [Anti-racism Action Plan](#), call for ensuring the collection of reliable and comparable equality data—including an explicit focus on complaints data—at European and national level. Improving the quality of complaints data could improve assistance to victims by providing information on various aspects of handling complaints. In addition, complaints data could be a valuable source of insight on recurrent or specific discriminatory practices, thus enabling Equality Bodies to develop informed, targeted, and effective prevention and awareness raising activities.

In order to ensure comparability of data about discrimination complaints across different Equality Bodies, there is a critical need for a standardized and consistent approach to complaints data collection. To that end, in 2021, Equinet published a [Report on "Collection and use of complaints data by Equality Bodies"](#) which revealed that there is a minimal set of information gathered in relation to every discrimination complaint by most Equality Bodies, regardless of differences among Equality Bodies in terms of their size, mandate, structure, and competences.

Building upon the Report's findings, Equinet's Working Group on Research and Data Collection developed "[Minimal Guidelines on Improving Complaints Data Collection by Equality Bodies](#)". The Guidelines provide practical guidance for Equality Bodies on minimal and easy-to-implement adjustments to their existing complaints data collection practices to ensure comparability and improve the comprehensiveness and quality of their complaints data.

In 2025, Equinet's Working Group on Research and Data Collection will pilot the Guidelines in order to assess their feasibility and introduce improvements, thereby increasing the likelihood of their uptake by more Equality Bodies and ultimately, paving the way for a coherent overview of complaints data collected by Equality Bodies across Europe.

## Objectives

- Improve comparability of complaints data collected by Equality Bodies across Europe;
- Contribute to the development of a standardized and consistent approach to complaints data collection by Equality Bodies, based on a minimum of collected information;
- Facilitate the future monitoring of the two Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies which will rely on complaints data as key source of data on Equality Bodies' own activities.

**Target audience:** Members of the Research and Data collection Working group and experts dealing with complaints and data collection.

# Leadership for Equality

## Peer support/mentoring program



Coordination of peer support, mentoring, study visits and other exchanges among heads of Equality Bodies

### Background

Piloted in 2024 with the financial support of FADA, the Leadership for Equality Hub for heads of National Equality Bodies seeks to synergize leadership's efforts to create a common vision and ambition in shaping the transposition of the Standards Directives. The Leadership for Equality Hub will serve as a high-level platform for exchange, support, and strategic planning to coordinate advocacy efforts and share best practices on ensuring and monitoring a robust transposition process of the newly adopted directives.

This initiative is based on prior discussions and feedback received from the leadership level within the Equinet membership, pointing and agreeing that a new additional level of dedicated support and cooperation among the heads of equality bodies would bring further benefits and added-value to their work and engagement in Equinet.

### Objectives

- Create a confidential, safe space for heads of National Equality Bodies to exchange ideas, learn, and expand their networks.
- Ensure coordination and information at the highest level in implementing the EU Standards Directives
- Identify common challenges and synchronize efforts for mutual support.
- Facilitate connections and collaborations among various National Equality Bodies at leadership level.
- Discuss emerging political and societal trends and their implications across different European regions, connected to the strategic planning of their equality body.
- Identify best practices to support National Equality Bodies and their top leadership influence national politics, ensuring a robust equality agenda.

**Target audience:** Heads of Equality Bodies

## Leadership for Equality Hub Workshop



### 1-day in-person workshop

The content of this activity is linked to the Leadership for Equality Hub meeting held in Berlin in September 2024. The format and content of the activity are pending final approval by the group, following the group's discussions in September 2024.

**Target audience:** Heads of Equality Bodies



## Exploring new and current equality trends

As a leader in the field of equality, Equinet will further explore trends in the field and look at intersections of new societal developments and equality. In 2025 we will continue to lead on the intersections of equality with AI and with climate change and delve into the impacts of hate speech and misinformation in the era of social media.

## Equality and the future

### The disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities

Format to be determined (potentially linked to a Climate Change & Equality Cluster meeting)

#### Background

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. Its impact is far-reaching, though not distributed equally. Vulnerable groups, including women, racialised people, people with disabilities, often bear the brunt of the climate crisis, which exacerbates existing inequalities. Addressing climate change is thus not only an environmental necessity but also a matter of social justice.

Given the growing interest and engagement of Equinet members in the area, in 2022, Equinet first commissioned a research project on the link between climate change and equality, with a focus on the role Equality Bodies (can) play. The report, [Preliminary Assessment of the EU Green Deal's Impact on Equality. Survey of Current Practices and Needs of European Equality Bodies](#) was presented, in September 2023, at an online roundtable titled [The EU Green Deal's Impact on Equality. Exploring the Role and Potential of Equality Bodies](#).

In line with this emerging equality trend and area of focus of both the Equinet membership and Secretariat, and following up on the discussions and findings of the 2024 seminar on [Climate Change and its Equality Implications in Focus: Tools for Equality Bodies](#), Equinet aims to further address the implications of climate change on equality and enhance the tools available for Equality Bodies to take impactful actions in the field.

#### Objectives

- Further build the knowledge and capacity of Equality Bodies' staff members, in particular those members part of the emerging Equinet Climate Change & Equality Cluster, on the climate/equality nexus
- Showcase the work of Equality Bodies and Equinet in this field, including the new Equinet Cluster, and incentivize peer learning
- Provide up-to-date information and guidance on recent policy and legal developments in Europe and beyond
- Bridge the gap between Equality Bodies and climate experts by providing a forum of exchange and collaboration

**Target audience:** Members of Equinet Climate Change & Equality Cluster, CSOs, NGOs and researchers working in the field

## Equality by design webinars: Empowering Equality Bodies and civil society on the interface between technical standards and legal requirements (continued project externally-funded by the UK Research and Innovation Programme on Responsible AI)

Webinar series

### Background

The EU Regulation on AI (“AI Act”), the world’s first legally binding, comprehensive legislation on AI, sets the ambitious goal of addressing risks to fundamental rights, alongside risks to health and safety. The Act recognises that equality and fundamental rights protection against the adverse impacts of AI systems requires technical protection mechanisms—in the form of requirements laid out in technical standards—in addition to the well-established legal ones. Technical standards are essential to ensuring interoperability and fostering trade and innovation. When properly designed, implemented and monitored, they also could have the *potential* to serve as an enabler of more effective equality protection through “equality by design” approaches, leveraging the benefits of advanced technologies and addressing some of its perils.

Building upon its 2024 [active involvement with the development of the AI Act’s technical standards](#), in 2025 Equinet will organise online trainings for Equality Bodies and relevant civil society organisations to deepen their understanding and awareness of concrete technical and organisational measures that help guard against AI-enabled discrimination. These resources will equip Equality Bodies with a suite of tools and techniques (‘equality by design’ measures) to enhance their capacity to monitor and investigate the discriminatory impacts of AI-enabled technologies and support policy reform to address current legal deficiencies.

### Objectives

- Build knowledge and improve understanding of concrete technical and organisational ‘equality by design’ measures to ensure that the development and deployment of AI technologies is equality-compliant
- Provide Equality Bodies with examples and good practices on equality-protective guidance to AI developers and deployers
- Facilitate mutual learning and foster partnership between Equality Bodies and civil society organisations in advocating for the adoption of “equality by design” approaches

**Target audience:** Equinet Artificial Intelligence Working Group members, civil society organisations working in the area of equality and digital technologies

## Equality-proofing technical standards under the AI Act (continued project externally-funded by the UK Research and Innovation Programme on Responsible AI)

Participation in meetings of technical Working Groups at CEN/CENELEC’s Joint Technical Committee  
21

### Background

Protecting equality and other fundamental rights is one of the stated aims of the world’s first ‘horizontal’ legally binding AI regulation, the European Union AI Act. The Act relies heavily on

technical AI standards that will be produced by European standards organisations which, once approved, will confer on AI providers who certify their adherence a ‘presumption of conformity’ with the AI Act’s essential requirements. Hence AI developers and deployers will have powerful incentives to comply with the resulting technical standards.

However, technical experts developing these standards have no knowledge of equality law, nor sufficient understanding of the implications of AI systems for equality. Hence they are not able to contribute specific equality-protective guidance—in the form of requirements laid out in the technical standards—addressed to those who develop and/or deploy AI systems. There is a critical need to ensure that the JTC-21 standard-setting discussions proceed on the basis of an understanding of the complex interactions between technical standards and non-discrimination legal requirements, for which interdisciplinary legal expertise is essential.

To that end, in 2023 Equinet acquired Liaison status within the Joint Technical Committee 21 (JTC21) set up by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) to develop technical standards to meet the harmonisation requirements of the AI Act (“harmonized standards”). Since December 2023, Equinet has been participating in several technical working groups at JTC-21 to ensure that the technical standards contribute to safeguarding equality and fundamental rights through embedding concrete rights-protecting measures and requirements.

### Objectives

- Secure that technical standards for high-risk AI systems in the EU contain requirements that ensure compliance with non-discrimination law and effective discrimination prevention
- Build awareness about and promote the adoption of “equality by design” approaches, which streamline equality considerations in the process of designing and developing AI systems
- Improve the understanding of equality law of technical experts and members of National Standardisation Bodies participating at JTC-21 and clarify its implications for the development and deployment of AI systems

**Target audience:** Technical experts participating in working groups at CEN/CENELEC’s Joint Technical Committee 21

## Addressing challenges and opportunities posed by AI for persons with disabilities and older persons

1.5-day in-person seminar linked to meetings of the AI Working Group, Disability Cluster, and Age Cluster.

### Background

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and older adults. As outlined by the [thematic report on Artificial intelligence \(AI\) and the rights of persons with disabilities](#) by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, AI-enabled technologies have the potential to enhance accessibility, improve independence, and offer new avenues for participation in society. However, there are significant risks, including biased algorithms, exclusion from digital services, and lack of representation in AI development which can exacerbate existing inequalities. Previous Equinet work, including the "[Equinet AI Report](#)" and activities by the Equinet’s Age Cluster



and Equinet's Disability Cluster, highlighted the urgent need for a focused discussion on AI's impact on these groups.

This seminar will explore the intersections between AI technology, age and disability focusing on both sides of AI's impact on equality. The first half of the seminar will outline risks, based on previous Equinet work, in collaboration with and drawing upon the expertise of rights-holders organisations. The second half of the seminar will focus on the opportunities that AI poses, including assistive technology for persons with disabilities and older persons.

### Objectives

- Create knowledge and build capacity on the potential as well as the risks of AI technologies for older persons and persons with disabilities
- Identify avenues and possibilities for cooperation between Equality Bodies and relevant rights-holders organisations
- Facilitate mutual learning on good practices by Equinet Members

**Target audience:** Members of the AI Working Group, Disability Cluster, Age Cluster.

### How to build a case on algorithmic discrimination

1.5-day in person workshop, linked to a meeting of Equinet's AI Working Group

### Background

The expansion and diversification in the uses of AI systems across Europe has led and will continue to lead to numerous legislative developments at both European and national levels. In this context, strategic litigation is essential to give direction to these developments. The history, mandate, and powers of European National Equality Bodies (NEBs) makes them uniquely well placed to undertake such test and strategic litigation. Thus, one of the central recommendations of [Equinet's Report "Regulating for an Equal AI: a New Role for Equality Bodies"](#) states that Equinet's members should consider bringing, supporting, or funding litigation that challenges discriminatory technology. The Report also included a checklist for Equality Bodies to assess whether AI systems and other similar technologies comply with equality and non-discrimination rules.

To equip our members with the relevant tools to engage in such litigation, in 2022 [Equinet's Legal Advice Clinic](#) took place building upon the knowledge base created by [our first training in April 2021](#). With a practical focus on litigation, this training will provide concrete guidance building legal cases involving suspected algorithmic discrimination.

### Objectives

- Provide practical guidance on how to identify, assess and build an algorithmic discrimination case
- Build understanding about the difference and interaction between technical bias and unlawful discrimination and clarify the role of fairness metrics in investigating discriminatory algorithms
- Identify specific challenges and their solutions related to shifting the burden of proof in algorithmic discrimination cases

**Target audience:** Members of Equinet's AI Working Group

## Enforcing Equality: AIA and EU Non-Discrimination Law in Sync

Publication

### Background

The EU Regulation on AI (“AI Act”), the world’s first legally binding, comprehensive legislation on AI, regulating the impact of these systems on health, safety and fundamental rights, is already in force. The AI Act could be a unique opportunity to strengthen equality protection. In specific, there are several provisions in the AIA that foresee and enable the involvement of Equality Bodies and other national fundamental rights authorities, for example, through access to technical documentation and provision of technical assistance by market surveillance authorities (Article 77) and information and collaboration obligations for market surveillance authorities (Articles 73, 79 and 82).

The Act contains several references to “equality”, “discrimination” and “discriminatory”, including explicit mention of binding non-discrimination law and as central component of the definition of “systemic risk” in relation to General Purpose AI Models. Recitals 35, 36 and 37 point out that certain uses of AI systems may violate the right not to be discriminated against and perpetuate historical patterns of discrimination, for example against certain age groups, persons with disabilities, or persons of certain racial or ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Recital 142 urges Member States to involve equality and non-discrimination experts in the research and development of AI solutions. Recital 45 safeguards that the Regulation does not affect prohibitions under Union non-discrimination law. Article 10 (2) (f) creates an obligation for providers of high-risk systems to examine the data on which these systems are trained to prevent discrimination prohibited under EU law.

It is important to note that the Regulation does affect prohibitions under non-discrimination law (Recital 45), which further highlights the need for close cooperation between market surveillance authorities and Equality Bodies and the inclusion of equality expertise in the national implementation framework to ensure consistency in the enforcement of the Regulation with existing equality law (Article 96 (1)(e)). While the AI Regulation aims at maximum harmonization, it serves as a minimum harmonisation instrument allowing for negotiation of additional and stronger AI-specific protections via collective agreements and amendments in labour law (Article 2.11).

### Objectives

- Analyse the interplay between the EU AIA and EU Non-Discrimination law
- Evaluate potential opportunities (where the AIA could strengthen protection against discrimination) and risks for undermining Non-Discrimination law
- Equip Equality Body staff, EU Institutions and market surveillance authorities to better navigate issues of inequality and discrimination in the context of AI

**Target audience:** European Commission, Equality Bodies’ staff, market surveillance authorities, legal practitioners

## Tackling hate speech in the times of disinformation and social media

### Background

The increasing prevalence of hate speech especially on social media, amplified by the spread of disinformation, poses significant challenges to equality and non-discrimination across Europe. Equality issues have become a common trope in extremist speech that seeks to polarize and divide societies.

This issue is particularly relevant to Equinet members, who are at the forefront of protecting rights-holders across Europe. Equality Bodies' awareness-raising efforts are often challenged by increasingly bold tactics by opponents of European values of equality and non-discrimination. As these members work to combat hate speech, they face the dual challenge of navigating rapidly evolving digital landscapes and addressing the nuanced interplay between freedom of expression and protection from discrimination.

Equinet's mission emphasizes promoting equality, combating discrimination, and ensuring the effective implementation of European anti-discrimination laws. Previous Equinet initiatives, such as the publication "[Extending the Agenda. Equality Bodies addressing Hate Speech](#)" and the collaboration on the European Commission's Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online, as well as a [seminar](#) and [training](#) underscore the urgency of addressing this issue. These efforts highlighted the need for continued and enhanced engagement, particularly as new forms of disinformation emerge, fuelling divisive narratives and inciting hatred.

## Communicating in hostile environments: hate speech, polarization, misinformation, and politicisation of equality

1.5-day in-person training, linked to the Communication Working Group meeting

### Objectives

- Provide an overview of the current landscape, challenges faced by Equality Bodies, and strategies used to mitigate their impact
- Identify communication strategies to respond to misinformation and hate speech
- Analyse successful cases in awareness-raising strategies that can be used to bring equality to the forefront of the societal debates

**Target audience:** Members of the Communication Working group

## Training: Tackling hate speech in the times of disinformation and social media

1.5-day in-person training, linked to the Policy Formation Working Group meeting

### Objectives

- Provide an overview of the current landscape, challenges faced by Equality Bodies, strategies and tools used to mitigate their impact
- Identify policy and legal changes required to tackle those issues where applicable

**Target audience:** Members of the Policy Formation Working Group

## Tackling hate speech in the times of disinformation and social media

Equinet Perspective

### Objectives

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and strategies for tackling hate speech in the context of disinformation and social media, offering practical guidance for Equinet members
- Provide an overview of the challenges and strategies to face those challenges used by Equality Bodies across Europe
- Make recommendations to better tackle these issues, including policy and legal changes required to do so where applicable

**Target audience:** Policy Formation Working Group members and experts from Equality Bodies in tackling hate speech and disinformation.



## EU Equality Strategies

In 2025 many of EU Equality Strategies are up for renewal. We will delve into specific areas of equality work, such as promoting LGBTIQ equality, and addressing systemic inequalities faced by racialized communities and Roma people.

## LGBTQI+ Equality

### Equality Bodies ensuring LGBTQI+ Equality

0.5-day online webinar

#### Background

According to [the findings of the FRA's third LGBTIQ survey](#), this is a crucial time for LGBTIQ+ equality. Despite important developments towards equality and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons in Europe, such as the first-ever LGBTIQ Equality Strategy issued by the European Commission and more countries adopting national equality strategies, over a third of LGBTIQ+ persons still face discrimination in their daily lives and violence is on the rise.

Equality Bodies have been working for years to ensure better and stronger protection of LGBTIQ+ people. They are essential actors to ensure that the EU is an LGBTIQ+ Freedom Zone, including by protecting trans and intersex persons.

In 2024, Equinet collected the experience and knowledge of our members and released a report that maps the work of Equality Bodies to advance LGBTIQ+ Equality, including examples of good practices and the challenges they face.

As part of the same project, in 2025 Equinet will host a webinar to build the capacity and strengthen Equality Bodies, as well as to raise awareness of the work of the Equality Bodies and foster collaboration with key partners to create a safer and better environment for LGBTIQ+ people in Europe.

#### Objectives

- Inform on the findings of/showcase the Equinet Report on Equality Bodies ensuring LGBTIQ+ equality
- Raise awareness on the key role of Equality Bodies in advancing LGBTIQ+ equality
- Identify avenues and possibilities for cooperation between Equality Bodies and other stakeholders
- Facilitate mutual learning on successful activities for LGBTIQ+ Equality amongst Equinet Members

**Target audience:** Equinet Members, policy-makers, Civil Society Organisations and other relevant stakeholders in the field of LGBTIQ+ equality in Europe.

## Anti-racism actions

### Equality Bodies enabling equal access of Roma people to education

0.5-day online roundtable

#### Background

Roma communities, one of the most marginalized and discriminated groups in Europe, face significant barriers to accessing education, which perpetuates poverty and exclusion. Equality Bodies play a crucial role in addressing these barriers by advocating for inclusive policies, challenging discriminatory practices, and ensuring that Roma people have equal opportunities in education.

The EU Roma Strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030 aims to increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education as one of the main seven objectives. This event builds upon others organized by Equinet in recent years on the development and implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework and the role of equality bodies. In addition, this event will build upon Equinet's publication in 2023, the perspective [Equality Bodies' Interventions for Equality in the Field of Education](#), which served to share information between Equality Bodies on the issues arising and the practice developed, and to inform any future focus on this field of work by Equinet and its members. [Equinet's joint Third-Party Intervention with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights on the segregation of Roma pupils in education](#) submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in 2024 and Equinet's previous perspectives on Roma equality serve as an important backdrop to this activity.

This online roundtable will provide Equinet Members and relevant stakeholders an opportunity to exchange experiences and tools to strengthen their efforts in promoting equal access to education for Roma people, helping to close the significant educational gap.

#### Objectives

- Strengthen Equality Bodies' capacity to address equal access to education for Roma people.
- Share best practices and strategies for addressing educational barriers faced by Roma communities
- Equip participants with tools to identify and challenge discriminatory practices in the education system
- Enhance collaboration between Equality Bodies and other stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for Roma people

**Target audience:** Experts from Equality Bodies and other stakeholders addressing racism, Roma inclusion, and initiatives on equal access to education

### Towards a new EU Action-Plan against Racism: Learning from the work of Equality Bodies

1-day online workshop

#### Background

As National Equality Bodies, Equinet Members are on the front lines in addressing racism and fostering equal treatment within their respective countries. This workshop offers a crucial platform

for these bodies to contribute their experiences, insights, and best practices to shape the upcoming EU Action Plan against Racism.

The relevance of this activity is in line with Equinet's ongoing commitment to anti-racism efforts. For instance, Equinet has previously published reports like "[Tackling Institutional Racism: Realising the Potential of Equality Bodies](#)" (2022), which highlighted persistent challenges and the essential role of equality bodies in combating institutional racism. Additionally, Equinet's participation in consultations and discussions about the development and implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025 has emphasized the importance of coordinated action and the integration of equality bodies' work into EU policies.

By organizing this workshop, Equinet facilitates the sharing of knowledge and strategies that can strengthen the new EU Action Plan, ensuring that it is informed by ground-level realities and the expertise of equality bodies across Europe.

### Objectives

- Facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned by Equality Bodies in combating racism and racial discrimination at the national level
- Contribute to the development of the new EU Action Plan against Racism by integrating insights and recommendations from Equality Bodies
- Strengthen the role of Equality Bodies in the implementation and monitoring of the new EU Action Plan against Racism
- Enhance collaboration between Equality Bodies and EU institutions to ensure a cohesive and effective approach to combating racism across Europe

**Target audience:** Equality Bodies staff working on racial discrimination, EU and national institutions, other relevant stakeholders.

## Engagement with UN mechanisms: UN treaty bodies and following up cases on racism

2 sessions of 0.5-day online workshops

### Background

The series of webinars on capacity building for following up on racism cases and engaging with UN treaty bodies is highly relevant to Equinet Members and closely aligns with Equinet's mission to enhance the effectiveness of Equality Bodies in combating discrimination. Racism remains a pervasive issue across Europe, and effective follow-up on cases is crucial for ensuring justice and accountability. These webinars, organized with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), will provide Equinet Members with essential knowledge and tools to improve their case follow-up procedures, particularly in specific areas where racism is most entrenched.

Additionally, engaging with UN treaty bodies is key for Equality Bodies to strengthen their international advocacy efforts and ensure that national practices align with global human rights standards. This series will empower members to leverage international mechanisms to support their work, reinforcing their role in upholding equality and non-discrimination.

This initiative builds on Equinet's previous actions at the European level, such as the focus on combating racial discrimination through reports and cooperation with international bodies. More

specifically, this activity builds upon the previous initiatives regarding engagement with UN mechanisms, started in 2020 with the [Universal Periodic Review](#). By enhancing members' capacity to address racism and engage effectively with UN mechanisms, this activity directly supports Equinet's strategic priorities of fostering strong, independent Equality Bodies capable of promoting equality and combating discrimination at both national and international levels.

### Objectives

- Enhance Equinet members' skills in effectively following up on cases of racism in specific areas
- Strengthen the capacity of Equality Bodies to engage with UN treaty bodies and international human rights mechanisms
- Improve coordination and collaboration between national Equality Bodies and UN structures to address racism more effectively
- Equip members with practical tools and knowledge to align national practices with international standards on racial discrimination

**Target audience:** Experts from Equality Bodies addressing racism or/and interested in engaging further with UN treaty bodies.





# Developing equality law and the role of Equality Bodies

Equinet's commitment to advancing equality law will continue in 2025, delving into the past, present, and future of equality legislation in the EU. Following the adoption of EU Directives on gender equality and Standards for Equality Bodies, the Network will focus building Equality Bodies' capacity to act on these critical areas.

## Equality legislation

### Past, present, and future of Equality in Europe



1-day in-person conference in Brussels.

#### Background

2025 marks the 25th anniversary of several equality related legal tools: the adoption of Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78 and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In the realm of EU Equality Law, the 2000 Directives were milestones in the EU's equality and non-discrimination legislation. Moreover, Directive 2000/43 required Member States, for the first time, to designate Equality Bodies in each Member State to promote equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. The 25 years since the adoption of these legal instruments have seen further crucial developments and groundbreaking legal and policy initiatives in the area of equality and non-discrimination, including the recent adoption of the Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies. It is thus time to take stock of the past achievements and exchange on present and future challenges in a context where the newly elected European Commission and Parliament will need to give response to an increasingly polarised and extreme environment in which it is more and more difficult for actors to promote and defend the values of equality and non-discrimination.

This conference aims to provide the opportunity to share ideas on how to complement the legal and policy framework on equality and non-discrimination to address persisting challenges with all the relevant actors.

#### Objectives

- Take stock of the current state of equality legislation, including the Standards Directives;
- Evaluate the Union of Equality and the role Equality Bodies have played under the equality strategies
- Discuss and exchange ideas for the future of equality legislation and the upcoming equality strategies in the EU
- Raise awareness of the key role of Equality Bodies in the field of equality in Europe;
- Strengthen Equinet's position and relationships toward legal and policy makers in the field of equality in the EU, including new actors of the 2024-2029 legislative period

- Enable exchange and cooperation between Equality Bodies and different actors in the field of EU-equality law and policies

**Target audience:** National Equality Bodies, Institutional actors at the European level, including members of the new EC, new EP and other European equality stakeholders

## Equality law in practice

### Alternative dispute resolution



2-day in-person training linked to the Equality Law Working Group meeting.

#### Background

Article 7 of the newly adopted Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies states that “Equality bodies shall be able to offer the parties the possibility of seeking an alternative resolution to their dispute”. This power can either be given directly to the Equality Body or the Equality Body may collaborate with another competent entity. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are an important means to settle disputes, providing an advantage over court proceedings in many cases.

It is therefore vital that Equality Bodies increase their knowledge on alternative dispute resolution and the different forms this may take. In 2012, Equinet organised a first [training](#) on alternative dispute resolution, which showed that most Equality Bodies already use such mechanisms in suitable cases, either formally or informally. Building on this first training is crucial and timely, taking into particular consideration how Equality Bodies’ role and use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms might need to be adapted due to the transposition of the Standards Directives. This training therefore provides Equality Bodies with the timely and necessary opportunity to deepen and apply their knowledge as well as exchange with their colleagues from other Equality Bodies.

#### Objectives

- Increase the knowledge and understanding of Equality Bodies on alternative dispute resolution models
- Discuss advantages and challenges of alternative dispute resolution methods for national equality bodies
- Provide Equality Bodies with the necessary practical tools to comply with the assigned role according to the implementation of the Standards Directives
- Facilitate mutual learning and exchange of Equality Bodies on best practices and challenges.

**Target audience:** Members of the Equality Law Working Group

## Together for Equality, stronger for all: Access to justice by Equality Bodies



1.5-day combined workshop and study visit

### Background

Access to Justice is undoubtedly one of the key *raison d'être* of Equality Bodies with one of their key functions being defined from the outset as 'providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination'. Equality Bodies are often labelled as low threshold complaints bodies, given their accessibility, speed of their proceedings and free of cost procedures aimed at enhancing access to justice.

Member States, and Equality Bodies themselves, have developed different models of providing this concrete assistance to victims, focusing on the provision of legal advice, active litigation powers such as representing victims in courts, own name procedures (or *actio popularis*) or strategic litigation. Equality Bodies may also be able to support access to justice to victims of discrimination by providing opinions or binding decisions. All of these models have their inherent value, as described for instance in [FRA's publication from 2012](#), and they all have their advantages and challenges.

This initiative will feature a study visit to the Swedish Equality Ombudsman, followed by an exchange of experiences and models, outlining the challenges and opportunities of each legal power to enhance access to justice to victims of discrimination. Additionally, we will explore how the new Standards Directives may pose opportunities to advocate for stronger powers to better support rights-holders.

### Objectives:

- Discuss effective ways in which Equality Bodies can enhance access to justice
- Analyse what combination of powers for Equality Bodies may offer a better support for rights-holders in their access to justice
- Explore how, in the process of implementation of the Standards Directives momentum can be gathered in order to enhance access to justice for rights-holders.

**Target audience:** Heads of legal departments and legal experts from Equality Bodies

## Monitoring of European Court of Human Rights decisions

Ongoing monitoring activities by members of the Equality Law Working Group

### Background

The Equinet Equality Law Working Group has been actively involved in both analysing Court of Justice of the European Union and European Court of Human Rights rulings. As part of the latter, the group has previously published a report on [Article 14 Cases from the European Court of Human Rights](#) (2020) and has actively monitored ECtHR communicated cases and judgements since 2019. The objective of these activities has been twofold: to better understand how equality and non-

discrimination is interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) jurisprudence, and identify cases in which an Equinet amicus curiae intervention would be strategic. As a result of this monitoring, Equinet has submitted two third party interventions to the ECtHR: [Written observations in applications nos. 34591/19 and 42545/19 Franc TOPLAK v. Slovenia and Iztok MRAK v. Slovenia and Written observations in application no. 29359/22 Salay v. Slovakia](#). These interventions provided critical guidance on and contributed to the further development of European equality legislation.

This ongoing monitoring activity is essential as it not only keeps Equinet members informed of significant legal developments but also equips them with the knowledge to influence policy and legal frameworks in their respective countries. By focusing on ECtHR decisions, the activity fosters a deeper understanding of the Court's evolving case law, ensuring that Equinet members remain at the forefront of legal advocacy and human rights protection.

### Objectives

- Keep Equality Law Working group members informed of ECtHR communicated cases
- Evaluate strategically whether to submit an amicus curiae intervention on behalf of Equinet

**Target audience:** Equality Law Working group members.

## Gender equality

### Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value: How to conduct a gender-neutral job evaluation?

1.5-day in-person event (study visit and training, including a Gender Equality Working Group meeting)

#### Background

The [Pay Transparency Directive \(EU\) 2023/970](#) provides, *inter alia*, that Member States, in consultation with Equality Bodies, shall ensure the availability of analytical tools or methodologies to assess and compare the value of different jobs.

To build the capacity of Equality Bodies in the field of gender-based pay discrimination and to conduct the technical assessment of different jobs, this training is aimed to provide members with existing examples of job evaluation tools developed by different entities.

Leading examples include the [ILO step-by-step guide on gender-neutral job evaluation for equal pay](#), the [EC Staff Working Document SWD\(2013\) 512](#) or the Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) guide for objective job evaluation, based on common criteria for men and women.

In continuity with Equinet's previous work on the Pay Transparency Directive, starting from the publication [Equality Bodies and the Pay Transparency Directive: impacts and opportunities](#), and the related [seminar](#), Equinet aims to continue building the capacity of its members in this area.

### Objectives

- Identify, and build the knowledge and capacity of Equality Bodies on their role as prescribed by the Pay Transparency Directive, with a view to its transposition to be finalized by 7 June 2026

- Provide Equality Bodies with examples and good practices developed by other entities on how to best conduct a gender-neutral job evaluation
- Facilitate mutual learning by showing Equality Bodies the relevant work carried out by a peer institution in the field of pay transparency, namely by the Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE)

**Target audience:** Members of the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality

## The EU Directive on violence against women and domestic violence: Equality Bodies' role in focus

1-day online workshop (including a Gender Equality Working Group meeting)

### Background

The [Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence \(EU\) 2024/1385](#) mentions Equality Bodies in Recital 50 and Article 22. The latter pertains to the possibility for national bodies, including Equality Bodies, to: (a) publishing reports and making recommendations on any issue relating to violence against women and domestic violence; and (b) exchanging available information with relevant European bodies such as the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Given this potential expert role that Equality Bodies may obtain, and in line with Equinet previous work on gender-based violence such as its 2019 publication titled [Tackling Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence. Equality Bodies Contribution](#), this workshop is aimed to shed a light on the efforts toward the long-awaited adoption of the Directive, its features and powers, as well as to provide updated information on other European policy and legal instruments available in the fight against VAW and domestic violence, in order to enhance Equality Bodies' dedicated knowledge in the field.

As prescribed in the Directive, the workshop aims to dive deep into the development of reports and recommendations by Equality Bodies, and their collaboration with relevant European Bodies such as EIGE, that – among other expert voices – will play a key role in the workshop.

### Objectives

- Enhance Equality Bodies Gender Officers' dedicated knowledge on VAW and domestic violence
- Discuss and exchange on European and national strategies and policies to raise awareness on, prevent and combat VAW and domestic violence across Europe
- Develop members' capacity to fulfil the potential role prescribed in the EU Directive, with a view to its transposition to be finalized by 14 June 2027
- Identify avenues and possibilities for mutual learning and cooperation between Equality Bodies and other stakeholders

**Target audience:** Members of the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality

## Relationship management, network development, and governance

Following the European Parliament elections and the appointment of a new Commission, fostering healthy relationships with European institutions and partners becomes a central piece in the activities of the Network. Additionally, the Equinet Secretariat will continue to work on its capacity to provide all members equal access to activities and resources and sustain transparent administration and governance practices.

### Communication

One of the main strategic objectives of the Network is to act as an expert voice of Equality Bodies in Europe on equality and non-discrimination. For that purpose, effective communication and dissemination activities are an essential element of Equinet's work. Promoting all the activities described in this work plan within the Network and to relevant external audiences ensures the positioning of Equinet, delivering content and activities that are relevant not only for its members but also for the equality and non-discrimination agenda at the EU level.

The Equinet Communication and Member Engagement Strategy focuses on key external stakeholder audiences and member engagement to ensure we can efficiently:

- Promote effective transposition of the EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies into Member States' national legislation
- Disseminate knowledge about equality, developments and innovation in the field, and equality legislation and policy. Equinet will strive to highlight, in particular, the work and contribution of Equality Bodies, ensuring that all content disseminated is relevant, accessible, high quality, and innovative
- Ensure that the interests of the members are defended, promoted in the right places and to the right people
- Promote positive narratives developed around values-based messages linked to equality and non-discrimination

We will continue to prioritise and seek to continuously improve our **communication with members**. We will further work to sustain active membership communication and engagement as well as the sense of belonging to the Network through a variety of innovative communication tools.

### Member Engagement

In 2025, Equinet will continue to strengthen its focus on member engagement and strive to provide a membership experience that is as beneficial and supportive as possible for all its members.

The Network will focus on the further development of its membership engagement platform (Members Area) to ensure the members have a more direct channel of communication with their peers and more control over the flow of information from the Secretariat. This will ensure that the information flows within the Network are optimised between the Secretariat and Members and directly between members themselves.

The [Leadership for Equality Hub](#) (a new initiative launched in 2024) will serve as a high-level platform for exchange, support, and strategic planning to coordinate advocacy efforts and share best practices on ensuring and monitoring a robust transposition process of the newly adopted directives.

The Communication and Member Engagement Strategy will allow the Secretariat to continue to provide support, resources, and opportunities for peer exchange within the Network, facilitate knowledge-building and exchange, support members in need, and in the context of calls for proposals on equality funding.

## Partnerships

In view of the 2024 EP elections and the appointment of a new European Commission, Equinet will continue its efforts to keep equality high in the European agenda, supported by the experience and perspective of Equality bodies.

Equinet will continue to pursue a close cooperation with the European Commission, specifically the Equality Directorate in DG Justice as well as other Directorates and DGs responsible for relevant equality and fundamental rights issues, such as the Social Rights and Inclusion Directorate in DG Employment, especially through Equinet's observer participation in the EC Disability Platform. We will sustain a strong engagement with the new Commission and all relevant high-level task forces, expert groups, networks, and actors working on anti-discrimination.

In 2025, Equinet will focus on engaging with the new members of the EP and their staff, to ensure the continuation of all efforts to promote and safeguard the rights to equality and non-discrimination in the EU. This includes the committees and rapporteurs linked to the equality and fundamental rights agenda, relevant thematic Intergroups, and Members of the European Parliament interested in the work of Equality Bodies and in topics relating to equality and non-discrimination. In addition, Equinet will continuously raise awareness on the importance of ensuring the continued support to the core European values of equality and fundamental rights.

Equinet will strive to continue building closer links with the General Secretariat and successive Presidencies of the Council of the EU, capitalising also on links that our members have with national governments. In the recent past, fruitful involvement of Equinet and Equality Bodies in the negotiations on the legislation on Standards for Equality Bodies and on events organized by Presidencies of the Council of the EU, underlined the relevance and added value of an increased engagement with the Council of the EU. Equinet will strive to further develop this relationship in 2025, conveying the work and experience of our members in relation to relevant equality files and proposals.

Equinet will pursue and further strengthen its engagement and cooperation with relevant European Union agencies, in particular the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

Together with our members, Equinet will continue active participation in the thematic Cooperation Platform established with the FRA, the Council of Europe and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) in the field of advancing economic and social rights. This partnership features annual thematic meetings and targeted seminars for Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions.

We will also pursue ongoing engagement with ENNHRI through continued close cooperation with its Members and Secretariat. This will include linking with ENNHRI's working group focusing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and in this context, with the EU Framework for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the CRPD Committee as appropriate.

Equinet will also strengthen its engagement with other relevant organisations at European level, such as the Council of Europe and its bodies, OSCE-ODIHR, UN OHCHR, European Ombudsman, as well as key ongoing links and cooperation with civil society and social partners through their European networks. Regarding the Council of Europe, Equinet will pursue its long-standing close cooperation with the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), will further develop its engagement in its role as Observer to the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIESC), and the Council of Europe Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI). Equinet remains open to pursue cooperation with Equality Bodies outside of the European continent, based on mutual learning and peer support.

Equinet takes and will pursue an active role in the C10 Group, an inter-institutional project team, working on promoting and communicating human rights, with the chief communication officers of the following 9 organisations: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Council of Europe, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), European Commission DG Justice, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and EEA and Norway Grants.





# Equinet Member Equality Bodies

## ALBANIA

Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination  
[www.kmd.al](http://www.kmd.al)

## AUSTRIA

Austrian Disability Ombudswoman  
[www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at](http://www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at)

## AUSTRIA

Ombud for Equal Treatment  
[www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at](http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at)

## BELGIUM

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men  
[www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be](http://www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be)

## BELGIUM

Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities)  
[www.unia.be](http://www.unia.be)

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
[www.ombudsmen.gov.ba](http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba)

## BULGARIA

Commission for Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com](http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com)

## CROATIA

Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia  
[www.ombudsman.hr](http://www.ombudsman.hr)

## CROATIA

Gender Equality Ombudsperson  
[www.prs.hr](http://www.prs.hr)

## CROATIA

Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities  
[www.posi.hr](http://www.posi.hr)

## CYPRUS

Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights  
[www.ombudsman.gov.cy](http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Public Defender of Rights  
[www.ochrance.cz](http://www.ochrance.cz)

## DENMARK

Danish Institute for Human Rights  
[www.humanrights.dk](http://www.humanrights.dk)

## ESTONIA

Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner  
[www.volinik.ee](http://www.volinik.ee)

## FINLAND

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman  
[www.syrjinta.fi](http://www.syrjinta.fi)

## FINLAND

Ombudsman for Equality  
[www.tasa-arvo.fi](http://www.tasa-arvo.fi)

## FRANCE

Defender of Rights  
[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr)

## GEORGIA

Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia  
[www.ombudsman.ge](http://www.ombudsman.ge)

## GERMANY

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency  
[www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de](http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de)

## GREECE

Greek Ombudsman  
[www.synigoros.gr](http://www.synigoros.gr)

## HUNGARY

Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights  
[www.ajbh.hu](http://www.ajbh.hu)

## IRELAND

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
[www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)

## ITALY

National Office against Racial Discrimination  
[www.unar.it](http://www.unar.it)

## KOSOVO\*

Ombudsperson Institution  
<https://oik-rks.org/>

## LATVIA

Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia  
[www.tiesibsargs.lv](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv)

## LITHUANIA

Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson  
[www.lygybe.lt](http://www.lygybe.lt)

## LUXEMBURG

Centre for Equal Treatment  
[www.cet.lu](http://www.cet.lu)

## MALTA

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability  
[www.crpdp.org.mt](http://www.crpdp.org.mt)

## MALTA

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality  
[ncpe.gov.mt](http://ncpe.gov.mt)

## MOLDOVA

Equality Council  
[www.egalitate.md](http://www.egalitate.md)

## MONTENEGRO

Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.co.me](http://www.ombudsman.co.me)

## NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights  
[www.mensenrechten.nl](http://www.mensenrechten.nl)

## NORTH MACEDONIA

Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kszd.mk](http://www.kszd.mk)

## NORWAY

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud  
[www.ldo.no](http://www.ldo.no)

## POLAND

Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Poland  
[bip.brpo.gov.pl](http://bip.brpo.gov.pl)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality  
[www.cig.gov.pt](http://www.cig.gov.pt)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment  
[cite.gov.pt](http://cite.gov.pt)

## ROMANIA

National Council for Combating Discrimination  
[www.cncd.ro](http://www.cncd.ro)

## SERBIA

Commissioner for Protection of Equality  
[www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs](http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs)

## SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Centre for Human Rights  
[www.snsnlp.sk](http://www.snsnlp.sk)

## SLOVENIA

Advocate of the Principle of Equality  
[www.zagovornik.si](http://www.zagovornik.si)

## SPAIN

Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination  
[igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es](http://igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es)

## SPAIN

Institute of Women  
[www.inmujeres.gob.es](http://www.inmujeres.gob.es)

## SWEDEN

Equality Ombudsman  
[www.do.se](http://www.do.se)

## UKRAINE

Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights  
[www.ombudsman.gov.ua](http://www.ombudsman.gov.ua)

## UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

*\* 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.*



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