

Equinet Webinar

Advancing LGBTIQ+ Equality in Europe: The role of Equality Bodies

12 May 2025, online (Zoom)

Concept note

LGBTIQ+ equality is increasingly at the centre of political discussions across Europe, with the LGBTIQ+ community facing rising hostility due to extremist and anti-gender movements. This hostile climate particularly affects specific groups, namely trans, intersex, and gender-diverse persons. According to [the Fundamental Rights Agency \(FRA\) third LGBTIQ survey](#), discrimination remains a significant issue, with over a third of LGBTIQ+ people experiencing discrimination in their daily life, while violence against the community is on the rise.

At the same time, recent years have seen a growing attention to the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, broader societal acceptance and increased representation in mainstream media as well as important developments towards equality and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons in Europe, such as [the European Commission's LGBTIQ+ Strategy for 2020-2025](#) and national LGBTIQ+ action plans in several Member States.

Equality Bodies, with their proven experience and the variety of powers at their disposal, are key actors in ensuring that the fundamental rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, such as that of non-discrimination, are safeguarded.

Equinet has been working to support National Equality Bodies in taking action to advance LGBTIQ+ equality at the national level. 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. The [Equinet Report "Advancing LGBTIQ+ Equality in Europe: The role of Equality Bodies"](#) provides an overview of Equinet Members' mandate about the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC); the actions they take and their good practices in a variety of fields of life and aspects of the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ persons, ranging from employment, education, social protection, healthcare, access to and supply of goods and services including housing; to hate speech, hate crime and sexual harassment, family life, legal gender recognition, participation and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals in sports, freedom of assembly and expression, restriction of personal freedom and care-taking.





This Equinet webinar will launch the Report “Advancing LGBTIQ+ Equality in Europe: The role of Equality Bodies”, present the report’s main findings, build the capacity of and strengthen Equality Bodies, as well as 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.

The webinar, similarly to the Report, will adopt an intersectional approach by paying attention to the interplay of SOGIESC with other grounds of discrimination, and will include a focus on the specific forms of discrimination faced by trans and intersex persons.

OBJECTIVES

- Present the key findings of the Equinet Report “Advancing LGBTIQ+ Equality in Europe: The role of Equality Bodies”
- 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

PARTICIPANTS

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



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Agenda

Monday, 12 May 2025, 10:00 – 12:10 & 14:00-16:00 CET, Zoom

Part 1

Host: Marta Pompili, Equinet

10:00 – 10:15

Welcome

Welcome participants and explanation of the objectives of the Report

10:15 – 10:35

Session I - Setting the scene: the experience of LGBTIQ+ persons in Europe

This session will discuss the societal condition of LGBTIQ+ persons and the challenges they face across Europe and in the national context.

- Miltos Pavlou, **Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)** - The lived experience of LGBTIQ+ people in Europe: results from the 3rd LGBTIQ Survey
- Renee Laiviera, **National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta** – The lived experience of LGBTIQ+ people at the national level

10:35 – 11:15

Session II - The role of Equality Bodies in the current legal framework

This session will reflect on the mandate, powers and resources of Equality Bodies, as well as the challenge they face and the opportunities for collaboration with other key stakeholders, in the context of the existing legal framework at the EU level.

- Susanne Knoefel, **European Commission**
- Peter Dunne, **University of Bristol**
- Chiara D'Agni, **Equinet**

Q&A for Session I and Session II

11:15 – 12:00

Session III - Advancing equality for trans and intersex persons

This session will delve deeper into the specific forms of discrimination that trans and intersex people face and how Equality Bodies can tackle and have tackled them.

- Darius Gervinskas, **TGEU**
- Maddalena Bianchi, **OII Europe**
- Miglė Kolinytė, **Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Lithuania**



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- **Equality Bodies in Action:** Jonas Deweer, **Institute for the Equality between Women and Men**, Belgium

Q&A

12:00 – 12:10 **Closing of Part 1**

Part 2

Host: Chiara D'Agni, **Equinet**

14:00 – 14:10 **Welcome**

Welcome participants and summary of main points from Part 1.

14:10 – 15:00 **Session IV - Building strong alliances to advance LGBTIQ+ Equality**

This session will discuss avenues for cooperation between Equality Bodies and other key stakeholders in the field of advancing LGBTIQ+ equality. Especially in the current adverse climate to equality and non-discrimination, strong alliances are vital.

- **Equality Bodies in Action:** João Pereira, **Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)**, Portugal

Panel discussion

Moderator: Tamás Kádár, **Equinet**

- **MEP Krzysztof Smiszek**
- **Marine Uldry, European Disability Forum**
- **Kristijan Kevešević, Gender Equality Ombudsperson, Croatia**
- **Q&A**

15:00 – 15:50 **Session V - Safety of and inclusion for the LGBTIQ+ community in an increasingly hostile environment**

This session will address the rising hostility towards the LGBTIQ+ community, including increased polarization, (online) hate speech, anti-LGBTIQ+ discourse from politicians and media, and shrinking civic space for the support to LGBTIQ+ equality. It will also explore how Equality Bodies have and can uphold the dignity, safety, and equal treatment of LGBTIQ+ individuals in this challenging climate.

Equality Bodies in Action:

- **Anna Máriássyová, Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, Slovakia**
- **Agata Szypulska, Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland**



Panel discussion

Moderator: Moana Genevey, **Equinet**

- Kris Tassone, **Advocates for Trans Equality (A4TE) in the US**
- Cianán Russell, **ILGA-Europe**
- Sarah Chander, **Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice**
- Ilaria Todde, **EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community**
- **Q&A**

15:50 – 16:00

Concluding remarks

Mattia Concas, **Equinet**



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