

Equinet Executive Board Meeting III 24 & 25 May 2012 Vilnius, Lithuania

Venue:

24 May 2012 (afternoon):
European Institute for Gender Equality
Švitrigailos g. 11M,
LT-03228 Vilnius, Lithuania

25 May 2012 (morning):
Holiday Inn
Seimyniskiu str. 1,
LT-09312 Vilnius, Lithuania

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members:

Jozef De Witte (JDW) - Chair
Evelyn Collins (ECo)
Domenica Ghidei (DG) (on 24 May 2012)
Elke Lujansky-Lammer (EL)
Julija Šartuch (JS)
Therese Spiteri (TS)
Néphèli Yatropoulos (NY)

Board Advisor:

Niall Crowley (NC) (*audio conference*)

Equinet Secretariat:

Anne Gaspard (AG), Executive Director
(*audio conference*)
Tamás Kádár (TK), Policy Officer
Yannick Godin (YG), Administration Officer
Cosmin Popa (CP), Communications Assistant
Catharina Sahl (CS), Trainee – Policy Assistant

Apologies:

Csaba Ferenc Asztalos (CA)
Tena Šimonovic Eínwalter (TE)
Domenica Ghidei (DG) (on 25 May 2012)

Chair of the meeting: Jozef De Witte (JDW)

Minutes: Yannick Godin (YG) + Catharina Sahl (CS)

MINUTES
DAY 1 (15:30-18:30)
Thursday 24 May 2012

1. Opening

Jozef De Witte (JDW) opened the Board Meeting at 15:30 and welcomed all Board Members and Equinet Secretariat team. The proposed agenda for the meeting was reviewed and agreed upon by all participants.

JDW presented apologies received from Csaba Ferenc Asztalos and Tena Šimonovic Einwalter for not being able to take part in the meeting. Domenica Ghidei also confirmed that she would not be able to attend the second day of the meeting (25 May 2012).

2. Announcements

The external Equinet Evaluation Report for 2011 was finalized by Amber Analysis taking into consideration Equinet's comments on the draft report submitted.

DECISION: Final version of the Equinet Evaluation Report for 2011 conducted by Amber Analysis to be sent to Board Members and to be appended to next Board meeting agenda (recommendations to be considered in the framework of Work Planning 2013).

3. Minutes of last Equinet meetings

DECISION: Minutes of the 27 March Equinet Board Meeting are adopted by the Board and can be uploaded on the Equinet website's Members section.

4. Strategic Issues

▪ Proposal CRPD ad-hoc Initiative

TK: such an initiative should be led by a Member representative with a strong experience in the field and should have a clear scope, objectives and lifespan.

NY: the objectives of the Equinet ad-hoc initiative should be two-fold, (i) to level up our expertise on the issue of disability and (ii) to implement a first collaboration with the Eurogroup of NHRIs (also linking to their dedicated CRPD Working Group on the issue).

Equinet could explore organising a side-event on 18 September in Geneva (meeting of the Eurogroup of NHRIs; got changed to 21 September after this meeting took place) that would focus on Equinet issues regarding CRPD to raise its profile in the general debate on CRPD.

DECISION: check competence on CRPD (which members appointed as the independent mechanism) for each country represented in Equinet network. All Equinet Members to be informed that Equinet is planning and drafting up terms of reference for an ad-hoc initiative on CRPD, inviting those members interested to contributing to it (notably in defining its objectives) and/or to leading it.

- **EC Network of Gender Equality Bodies**

6 June 2012: meeting with EC representatives to discuss the possible convergence and integration of the existing Gender Equality Bodies network/meetings into the framework of the Equinet Network.

11 June: next meeting convened by the European Commission of the Gender Equality Bodies network where the possible future link and integration into Equinet will be raised on the agenda closing.

It was discussed by Board Members that Equinet should make clear that taking over the gender equality bodies' network and meetings would mean applying and extending some key Equinet's working methods (working group structure and engagement, trainings, seminars...) to this specific field, thus, in a sense, evolving what the network has been so far and making it a full part of Equinet. As such, we cannot really speak of a "merger" *per se*, but rather of a convergence.

DECISION: Equinet will approach the EC meeting and exchange with a positive attitude and approach to this opportunity whilst clarifying that incorporating the gender network activities will not impact its independence and that Equinet can only accept Equality Bodies as members (and not other institutional members that may be involved in the current gender equality bodies' network initiative).

DECISION: feedback on the 6 June meeting with the European Commission to be given to Board Members as soon as possible.

- **Financial sustainability**

JDW: the first question we need to ask ourselves: do we need to look for extra funding outside of the current sources of funding (EC grant with Members' fees and time commitments co-funding)? Or do we look for solutions within this framework?

There is a general sense on the Board that Equinet should not look for external sources of funding. This issue should be discussed further at a next board meeting, notably in light of the discussions surrounding the integration of the Gender Equality Bodies network into Equinet scope of work and activities that will take place in the coming weeks and may enhance some EC financial support to the Equinet network in this context.

5. Priority Issues –Work Programme 2012

- **Nomination of Moderator of Equinet Working Group *Equality Law in Practice***

DECISION: the Board approved the nomination of Jayne Hardwick (Equality and Human Rights Commission EHRC) as the new Moderator for the *Equality Law in Practice* Working Group.

- **Equinet training on underreporting – Malta 26/27 September 2012**

JDW: it should be made clear that this training will be a Communication training on under-reporting.

The Board discussed the details of the training programme and requested the Secretariat to further develop an updated approach and training agenda taking into consideration the remarks made during the discussion.

=== END OF DAY 1 ===

DAY 2 (09:00-12:00)
Friday 25 May 2012

▪ **AGM**

JDW: sufficient time should be given to Members to discuss within their organisation the different proposals and items put to the vote of Members with the opportunity to submit written amendments within a given timeframe prior to the AGM.

DECISION: The general timeline set out in annex 5.3 was agreed upon by the Board, with the acknowledgement that some flexibility might be necessary in view of possible developments between now and the AGM.

Proposed Board Elections Procedure:

DECISION: The final revised procedure will be further reviewed and confirmed at the September board meeting.

Amendments:

- The minimum required number of votes received to become a Board Member is set to **5** or **10** votes (to be determined - the aim is to ensure a minimum legitimacy of elected Board Members)
- 3.1.a: instead of “**Members joining Equinet at the AGM where the Board elections take place**”, it should read “**Members ratified at the AGM where the Board elections take place**”
- 4.9: instead of “**can temporarily appoint a substitute who will perform the mandate of the person he replaces**”, it should read: “**can temporarily appoint a substitute who will perform the mandate of the person she/he replaces**”

Should be reemphasized in the procedure:

- Nominated candidates for Board Member positions must be present at the AGM, except only in case of *force majeure*
- When a Board Member steps down, it is up to the Board to decide whether there is a need to replace him/her and if so, whom to invite or the suitable approach to take.

Should be clarified in the procedure:

- Candidate Members’ applications are accepted or rejected by the Board. Accepted applicants become “Observers” and will become fully-fledged Members with related rights and duties after ratification by Members at the AGM

6. Planning Issues – Equinet Work Programme 2012

JDW: special attention should be given to the time WG Members have to dedicate to travelling to the location of their working group meeting, as not easily reachable places tend to put people off and be counterproductive on the participation rate in the WG meetings.

7. Update on Completion work programme 2011

Cooperation with FRA

Thematic issues to be proposed for discussion as part of the preparation of a Meeting Agenda for 16 October 2012 (FRA annual meeting with NEBs and Equinet):

- Equinet Perspective 2012 on difficulties experienced by Equality Bodies
- Planned FRA Database on jurisprudence (ECJ and ECHR)
- Respective work or perspective of work on LGBT issues (link to FRA current LGBT survey)
- Underreporting and access to justice
- Quality of FRA studies and the way their results can be used by NEBs
- Study on anti-Semitism

DECISION: Moderators of the WG to consult their group members for any topic that they think might be worth discussing with the FRA on the occasion of the meeting.

DECISION: Equinet Secretariat to convey suggestions and liaise with FRA on the joint preparation of a draft agenda for the FRA October Meeting.

Cooperation with EIGE

DECISION: one representative from the *WG Communication Strategies and Practices* to be invited along with one representative from the Equinet Secretariat, to take part in the Consultation meeting on Useful and Effective Forms of Networks of EIGE's Thematic European Network on Gender Equality organised on 18-19 June by EIGE around their web-based resource & documentation centre.

DECISION: EIGE to be invited to be represented at the AGM 2012 and to make a possible contribution in the discussion group relating to gender work and issues with member bodies.

8. Equinet Membership

Membership application – Commission of the Republic of Macedonia

DECISION: Membership application officially submitted to Equinet by the Commission for Protection against Discrimination of the Republic of Macedonia was reviewed and accepted by the Board, and will be presented to Members for membership ratification at the next Equinet AGM (November 2012).

9. Finances

Roles in the financial management of Equinet

In the description of the role of the Equinet Treasurer (page 2), instead of “**ensures accounts meet the conditions of contractual agreements with external agencies**”, it should read: “**ensures accounts meet the conditions of contractual agreements with external contractors**”

In the description of the role of the Equinet Board (page 2), line 1, instead of “**based on the comprehensive information received from the Treasurer**”, it should read: “**based on the comprehensive information received from the Secretariat and the Treasurer**”

10. Next Meeting(s)

26-27 September 2012: Equinet Training on under-reporting (Malta)
27 Sept (pm) & 28 Sept (am) 2012: Equinet Board Meeting (Malta)
20/21 November 2012: Equinet AGM (Cyprus)

=== The Chair Jozef De Witte (JDW) closed the Board Meeting at 12:00 ===