



EQUINET E-NEWSLETTER NO. 22

Welcome to the Equinet e-newsletter

Dear Subscriber,

The Equinet e-newsletter and the [new Equinet website](#) are the leading sources of information at European level about and for equality bodies in Europe. We encourage you to forward this newsletter to potentially interested colleagues and partner organisations. Subscription to our newsletter is possible through the homepage of our website at www.equineteurope.org.

PDF and Word versions of all our newsletters are also available on [this page](#) of the Equinet website.

We hope you will find the current edition of the e-newsletter informative and we thank you for your interest in Equinet.

We wish you all a wonderful month ahead,
The Equinet Team

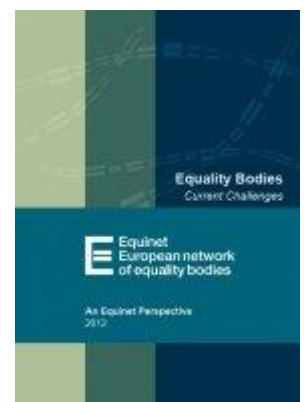
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News from Equinet

Equinet launches new perspective on “Equality Bodies – Current Challenges”

The perspective, launched in October, was prepared by Equinet’s Working Group on Policy Formation and addresses **key current challenges and opportunities facing national equality bodies in the context of the economic and financial crisis**. This



context presents extraordinary challenges to equality bodies as well as offering a valuable opportunity to realise their potential at a moment of change in our societies. Equinet has prepared this perspective in order to monitor developments for equality bodies at Member State level in this context of challenge and opportunity and the impact of these developments on their ability to realise this potential. [Continue reading here](#)

Annual Meeting between the Fundamental Rights Agency and Equinet

The meeting on 16 October was also attended by the Chair of the European Group of NHRIs and the Office of the European Ombudsman and focused on the challenges and opportunities that national equality bodies face in the context of the current economic crisis.

Working groups on these and other issues were also held and the discussions will feed into the next [FRA Annual Conference](#) to be held on 6-7 December in Brussels. Concrete examples of cooperation between FRA and equality bodies were also discussed, and include FRA's 'Clarity' project (Complaints, Legal Assistance and Rights Information Tools for You), the exchange of information on relevant complaints and case law at the national and EU level, and the anti-discrimination directives which will be reviewed by the European Commission.

European Developments

Bulgarian quasi-judicial equality body regarded as a 'court or tribunal' by the Advocate General Kokott of the ECJ

On 20 September 2012, Advocate General Kokott of the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) delivered an opinion in the case Valeri Hariev Belov (C-394/11), brought before the Court through reference for a preliminary ruling from the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the Bulgarian equality body. In the opinion the Advocate General examined the case-law elements defining a national 'court or tribunal' with the power to refer cases to the Court for such rulings, and came to the conclusion that this equality body should be considered as fulfilling the conditions of that case-law. [Continue reading here](#)

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News from Equality Bodies

Belgium - [Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism](#)



Last year, the Centre created a new Working Group called "Care". One of their objectives is to work more proactively on **fighting discrimination and promoting diversity in the health care sector**. The Centre recently published a report based on a colloquium about "transcultural competences".

People working in the healthcare sector are confronted with new challenges resulting from an increased cultural diversity, both in regard to staff and people seeking to avail themselves of healthcare services. This increased diversity is raising many questions as to how to treat patients equally yet taking into account their cultural framework. With this colloquium and publication, the Centre gives an overview of the challenges raised by cultural diversity in the health care sector and hopes to contribute to the development of practices to manage and respect diversity.

The report can be downloaded [here](#).

Estonia – [Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner](#)



SOOLISE VÖRDÕIGUSLIKKUSE VOLINIK

The Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner Mari-Liis Sepper will be presenting at a number of **seminars in November, introducing Estonian gender equality law**. The target groups of the upcoming trainings

are lawyers, judges, legal assistants, employees of arbitration councils and professors of various Law departments.

The series of seminars will continue with thematic trainings on gender equality issues in the field of employment. Those trainings will be based on the 2008 publication by Ministry of Social Affairs "[Gender Equality in Your Company. The Recipes for Success](#)".

Italy – [National Office Against Racial Discrimination \(UNAR\)](#)



▶ Nils Muiznieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, in his [latest report after visiting Italy](#) in the summer, has voiced **concerns regarding the cuts in resources allocated to UNAR, the Italian national equality body**. The report states that "[...] the Commissioner would like to express his deep concerns about the announced cuts to UNAR, which jeopardise the capacity of this Office not only to act as the national focal point of the national strategy [for Roma inclusion], but also to continue to fulfil its crucial role in the fight against discrimination, which it has been carrying out with increasing efficiency and independence, despite statutory limitations. The Commissioner stresses the importance of national human rights structures in times of austerity budgets and strongly urges the Italian authorities to reinforce UNAR, both in terms of resources and independence, as opposed to radically reducing its resources as announced."

▶ **Marco De Giorgi has been recently appointed as the new general manager of UNAR** after previously holding this position also from 2004 until 2008 when he was named Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment.

Latvia - [Office of the Ombudsman](#)



The Ombudsman's Office has sent a letter to the Cabinet of Ministers on the **usage of EU financial instruments and national budgetary funds for Roma integration**. It contains information on one of the major problems reported by representatives of the Roma community to the Ombudsman: the lack of efficiency in and utility of using these funds for the purposes stated.

Evaluating the situation more broadly, the Ombudsman concluded that the exclusion of Roma people has not been systematically addressed in Latvia. International laws stating the prohibition of discrimination and the necessary actions to ensure equal treatment have not been complied with, despite the fact that these actions have been financed by the national budgetary funds and the EU financial instruments.

The letter goes on to state that the main objective of the national program "Roma in Latvia" for the period from 2007 to 2009 has not been reached. This objective was: "To promote the integration of the Roma community in the society of Latvia, ensuring the combating of discrimination and efficient implementation of equal opportunities for education of Roma community, their employment and human rights according to the specific features of this community and in line with the requirements and comments of Section 4, Paragraph 2 of the European Council Convention for the Protection of National Minorities".

United Kingdom – [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#)



▶ On October 18 the EHRC welcomed the **appointment of Baroness Onora O'Neill of Bengarve as the Commission's new Chair**. Baroness O'Neill is a cross-bench peer in the House of Lords and was a former Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. [Continue reading here](#)

▶ The EHRC has released a new report **Out in the open: a manifesto for change**. This is the follow up report to the Disability Harassment Inquiry which highlights the need for authorities to take further steps to ensure harassment of disabled people is taken seriously. [Continue reading here](#)

▶ The EHRC has also recently launched a research report entitled "**The impact of changes in commissioning and funding on women-only services**". The objective of this study was to explore whether the introduction of

commissioning procedures and funding cuts were having a disadvantageous affect on the provision of women-only services. [Continue reading here](#)

▶ A brand new **careers education resource for primary school children** has been launched: [Equal Choices, Equal Chances](#). Developed for the EHRC, by education and careers experts, and tested in primary schools, the free toolkit for Key Stage 2 teachers helps to challenge any stereotypical and discriminatory ideas which pupils may already have started to form around the world of work.

[Research](#) shows that formal careers advice needs to start in Primary School and the EHRC hopes that this resource will help to show pupils the varied possibilities the world of work has to offer, whilst making it clear that race, gender, faith or disability need not limit their choice of career.

The toolkit is made up of five learning areas, each containing activities which can be used to create whole lessons or slotted into existing lesson plans. The toolkit also contains an inspirational video called Pass it On and engaging multimedia assets, including vox-pop videos and audio recordings to help capture pupils' attention.

Careers education can provide an excellent opportunity for schools to develop relationships with local businesses and organisations and [Equal Choices, Equal Chances](#) provides a comprehensive guide on how to involve local organisations in careers education.

United Kingdom – [Equality Commission for Northern Ireland \(ECNI\)](#)



▶ A new **survey of Northern Ireland's employers showed an all-time high in awareness of anti-discrimination laws**, with 99% knowing about laws in relation to age, religion and politics; 98% about disability and race and 94% about sexual orientation. [Continue reading here](#)

▶ The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland recently held a seminar to promote and seek support for its **recommendations for age legislative reform relating to goods, facilities and services**. The event provided an opportunity to demonstrate how the reforms would impact on people of all ages when accessing health and social care in Northern Ireland. It also provided a platform for the age sector and other relevant stakeholders to explore with policy makers the changes they wish to see addressed. [Continue reading here](#)

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News from European Institutions and Partners



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S
INTERGROUP ON
LGBT RIGHTS

European Parliament (EP)

▶ The European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights has recently released a **study on a potential EU roadmap for LGBT equality**. Such an EU action plan would draw together new laws and policies to strengthen equality and non-discrimination for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in the EU. [Continue reading here](#)

▶ 17 October 2012 was the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. On that day, the European Parliament Intergroup "Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Fourth World Committee" organised a **public meeting concerning anti-poverty policies**. Although poverty is not included in the mandate of most Equality Bodies, the insights from the meeting can easily be taken into account when informing policy on other grounds of discrimination. [Continue reading here](#)

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

► FRA has published its **Handbook on the establishment and accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the European Union**. The Handbook includes a step-by-step guide of the accreditation process, with examples of concrete practices related to such issues as their powers, independence and mandate. The Handbook also shows accreditation trends, lists the applicable international standards, and is accompanied by a collection of case studies outlining the experiences of NHRIs in selected Member States. [Continue reading here](#)

► On 24 October, the FRA LGBT team met with 19 senior social scientists from its contractor Franet's National Focal Points, to discuss the kick-off of the fieldwork of the **new LGBT research project**. The project objective is to contribute to more relevant and effective policy making in the field of LGBT equality, by showing what the level of knowledge about LGBT issues is by key public officials in charge, and by drawing conclusions on what works well and why. This analysis should provide a good basis for more targeted advice and expertise to EU institutions and Member States, especially in light of their efforts to meet the standards on LGBT rights agreed at the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2010. The meeting with Franet social scientists paved the way for a professional fieldwork.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

In 2012-2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is implementing a **project on gender training in the European Union and Croatia (mapping, research and stakeholders' engagement)**. The objectives of the project are to **(1)** collect reliable and comprehensive information on the activities, actors and resources related to gender training in the EU-27 and Croatia; **(2)** to identify good practices in gender training in the EU-27 and Croatia; **(3)** to foster a discussion on the quality standards for gender training in the European Union; **(4)** to support policy makers to access high quality tools. [Continue reading here](#)

European Network of Independent Legal Experts in the Non-discrimination Field

The network has recently published its **latest issue of the bi-annual European Anti-Discrimination Law Review**, available in English. The Law Review provides an overview of the latest developments in European anti-discrimination law. [Continue reading here](#)



Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

After one year of production, PICUM launches UNDOCUMENTARY, a web documentary using **new digital storytelling techniques to give voice to undocumented migrants and their advocates**, and to fight against myths and stereotypes around irregular migration. [View the undocumentary here](#)

AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe will be launching a **new publication to support older people's active involvement in the decision-making process of the EU** and mark the International Day of Older Persons on 1st October 2012. [Continue reading here](#)

European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)

EAPN has just published a **new toolkit on structural funds for its national networks and for other social NGOs**, to support their advocacy work. [Continue reading here](#)

Report on the Policy Dialogue on the EU Accessibility Act

In the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 the European Commission proposed to use legislative and other instruments to optimise accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly, and raised the possibility of

adopting a “business-friendly” proposal to improve the proper functioning of the internal market for accessible goods and services. On 11 October the European Policy Centre and the European Disability Forum organised, in cooperation with Oracle, a **policy dialogue meeting on the proposed Accessibility Act**. Participating stakeholders as well as representatives of the European Commission discussed issues such as the possible content of the proposal and the obstacles it may encounter. [Continue reading here](#)

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Upcoming Events

Equinet

- ▶ **5 December** - Equinet Annual General Meeting (Brussels, Belgium)

Europe

- ▶ **26 November:** EC Legal Seminar on the implementation of EU law on equal opportunities and anti-discrimination entitled *Equality Law for Everyone: Challenges Ahead* (Brussels, Belgium). **Please note that formal invitations have been sent out to national equality bodies via Member States Permanent Representations.**
- ▶ **3 December:** [Closing conference of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012](#), organised by the EESC Coordination Group.

Latest Publications

- ▶ [Equinet perspective on "Equality Bodies – Current Challenges"](#)
- ▶ [European Anti-Discrimination Law Review No. 15](#)
- ▶ [FRA's Handbook on the establishment and accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions in the European Union](#)

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