



EQUINET E-NEWSLETTER NO. 21

Welcome to the Equinet e-newsletter

Dear Subscriber,

The Equinet e-newsletter and the [new Equinet website](#) are the leading sources of information 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.

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

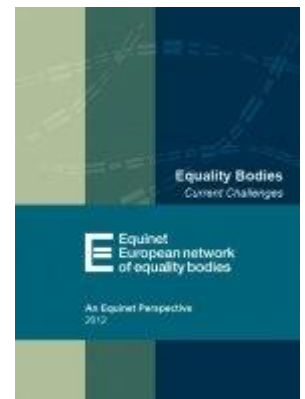
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News from Equinet

Equinet launches new perspective on "Equality Bodies – Current Challenges"

The perspective, launched at the beginning of 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](#)**



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 Hariiev 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](#)**

News from Equinet Members

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



► The Centre has launched a campaign against hate speech on stage. The campaign started during the summer holidays at music festivals and promoted the message that hate speech and incitement to violence do not belong on Belgian stages. Concert promoters are the main target audience of this action. They will receive a CD that explains how to protect artistic freedom while at the same time ensuring that the antidiscrimination law is fully respected. Already 15 Belgian artists support this campaign and recorded a video to promote it.

More information can be found here in [French](#) and Dutch.

► The Centre released their first Diversity Barometer – a project with a purpose to develop a structural, long-term tool for compiling, in a scientific way, a periodical assessment of behaviour (= degree of discrimination), attitudes (= degree of tolerance) and real participation (= degree of participation) in Belgian society. The results and the reports generated by the barometer are designed in the first place for use by the political authorities, but also for the social partners and members of civil society, as well as international organisations as an aid in fulfilling the monitoring and evaluation obligations stemming from the conventions on human rights. The Centre will regularly report on the sectors most directly affected by diversity: *employment, housing, and education*. It will thus publish a barometer every two years on one of these three areas. The first barometer is on the subject of employment. The next one, to be published in 2014, will address the issue of housing. 2016 will see the publication of a barometer on education. A new cycle will be launched in 2018 with a second barometer on the topic of employment, which will allow the results to be compared after a six-year interval.

Reports are only available in French or Dutch but a summary factsheet is available in [English](#).

Denmark - [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#)



► The DIHR has carried out a training project with [Citizen Service Aarhus](#) in order to ensure the Citizen Service's compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, both when it comes to providing services to citizens and when their own employees are concerned. As part of the project, employees from Aarhus Municipality were sent on a study trip to a similar authority in Dublin. Public sector organisations in Ireland hold a legal duty to avoid discrimination in provision of their services. Presenting Aarhus Municipality employees with the opportunity to learn from their colleagues in Dublin, they were expected to receive inspiration and insights on how to best tackle discriminatory practices in their work.

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

► In her [2011 Annual Report](#) (in Estonian) the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner stated that knowledge of her work has spread, reflected by an increased number of complaints received in the two years that she's held the position. However, she called for expanding the institution, since she and the only other employee are struggling with the workload. Read the full news article [here](#).



Finland – [Ombudsman for Equality](#)

► The Ombudsman has given her statement on the government's draft proposal on the Equality Act. It is proposed that the

Act would include provisions to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. The proposal also includes a provision for the promotion of gender minorities' equal status.



The Act on Equality between Women and Men obliges educational institutions to draw up an equality plan. The government's draft proposal suggests that the equality planning obligation should be also extended to comprehensive schools. At the moment the obligation included in the Act applies to all institutions providing educational services including upper secondary schools, vocational education institutions, universities for applied sciences, universities, higher education institutions and educational institutions engaging in liberal adult education. The equality plan must always be drafted in cooperation with representatives of the personnel and students.

▶ The Ombudsman for Equality and the Ombudsman for Minorities attended the annual meeting for Nordic national equality bodies on the theme "Nordic provisions of positive duty to promote equal treatment". Read more about the meeting on the [Equinet website](#).

▶ The Ombudsman has published her [Annual report 2011](#) (in English).

Netherlands – [Netherlands Institute for Human Rights](#)

▶ The *Netherlands Institute for Human Rights* has been officially launched at a festive event in Utrecht on 2 October 2012, following an intensive period of preparations led by the *Dutch Equal Treatment Commission (ETC)*. The Institute, as the successor of the ETC and its work, has received a wider human rights remit, going beyond equal treatment and non-discrimination issues.



Poland - [Office of the Human Rights Defender \(OHRD\)](#)

▶ The OHRD has published a [Summary of the Report on the Activity of OHRD in 2011](#) with a special chapter on Major issues relating to the equal treatment principle and to counteracting discrimination.

▶ Due to the continued commitment on the part of the OHRD and several NGOs, the President of the Republic of Poland signed the act of ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 26 July.

▶ "*How to build an intergeneration partnership? Older people in the eyes of young people, young people in the eyes of the elderly*" is a project that OHRD launched in May 2012. The main goal of the project has been promoting intergenerational dialogue in order to encourage people of all ages to participate actively in social life. For achieving this aim, new tools for facilitating intergenerational networking have to be developed. As part of the project, qualitative research on the mutual perception of people from different generations has been carried out. Moreover, two conferences focusing on intergenerational dialogue were held in Warsaw and Katowice. The conference in Katowice in September was included in the three-day 'Citizen Senior Congress', co-organized by the OHRD. The final results of the project will be published in a brochure.



Portugal - [Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality](#)

▶ *Fatima Duarte*, President of the Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality participated in The Human Rights Council's annual panel discussion on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system with a focus on economic, social and cultural rights and the empowerment of women. Among other contributions, Ms Duarte said that it was easy to conclude that in spite of the progress seen in the reduction of inequalities; this burden was a great obstacle to women. She suggested to the Human Rights Council that more work should be done on the right to work and social security, and in the Universal Periodic Review gender pay gaps and parental leave schemes should be considered, with both parents considered equally. Read the whole summary of the panel discussion [here](#).



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

▶ [The EHRC](#) welcomes the ban on age discrimination in services which came into force on 1 October



2012 in England, Wales and Scotland. Read more about the ban [here](#).

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

▶ A new publication "[Showcasing Disability Best Practice](#)" which highlights the practical steps employers are taking to boost employment opportunities for disabled people in Northern Ireland, has been launched. It gives practical examples of how employers are breaking down barriers, both in recruitment and in retention, of employees with disabilities. Download the full publication [here](#).



▶ The Equality Commission has been attending PRIDE celebrations, providing information and advice for those who may have been discriminated against. The Equality Commission's Chief Commissioner Michael Wardlow said, "Despite the fact that the Pride festivals are now a regular event in Northern Ireland's calendar, we cannot ignore the fact that many members of that community continue to experience hurtful and discriminatory treatment." ([read more](#)).

▶ The ECNI is also running a promotional [campaign on sexual orientation](#) and would like Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people to get involved.

▶ The thirteenth [Annual Report](#) of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, covering the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 has been published.

News from European Institutions and Partners

European Commission (EC)

- A new brochure entitled "[The EU Contribution to Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations](#)" has been published. It presents what the EU is doing to promote active ageing with the objective of inspiring more determined efforts in all Member States, thereby ensuring that solidarity between generations can withstand the test of population ageing. It provides a comprehensive overview of the EU legislation, funds, research programmes and coordinated strategies in support of active ageing.



European Parliament (EP)

▶ On 12 September 2012, the *European Parliament adopted a Directive which establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in the European Union*. Seeking to unify national standards on the protection and rights of victims of crime across the EU, irrespective of their country of residence, the Directive also marks an important development in promoting equality and non-discrimination in the field of criminal procedures. The Directive thus aims at ensuring all victims of crime are recognized and treated equally without discrimination of any kind such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, residence status or health (*thereby going further in terms of protected grounds than the EU anti-discrimination directives*). For the Directive to be adopted it now has to be approved by the Council of the EU, and then EU Member States (including the UK and Ireland who have opted-in) will have three years to transpose its provisions into national law. Read the Parliament's [press release](#) for further information.

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

▶ The FRA's new [website](#) was launched, containing upgraded navigation and introducing a range of new features that should enable visitors to have a more user-friendly experience. Read more about the new features on the [Equinet website](#).

▶ The FRA Management Board on 27 September elected *Maija Sakslin* as its new Chairperson and *Manfred Nowak* as Vice-Chairperson. *Frauke Seidensticker*, the Management Board member from Germany, was elected member of FRA's Executive Board. The complete list of FRA Management



Board members and their profiles are available [online](#).

European Group of National Human Rights Institutions

► Members of the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) met in Berlin earlier this month to attend a three day workshop on Business and Human Rights. [The Berlin Action Plan on Business and Human Rights](#) was adopted at the end of the workshop. The Action Plan outlines priority areas for individual NHRIs and for the European Group collectively for the period of 2012-2015. Claire Methven O'Brien, Senior Adviser at the Danish Institute for Human Rights commented on the action plan: *"The Berlin Action Plan is a landmark development for NHRIs in demonstrating our mandate and commitment to address human rights abuses for which market conditions and actors are responsible. Europe-wide, vulnerable rights-holders, such as persons with disabilities, the elderly and children who rely on social support are suffering the consequences of austerity measures that in turn result from failures of market regulation."*

European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

► ECRI published two new reports on the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in [Croatia](#) and [Sweden](#). ECRI's Chair, Mr. Jenö Kaltenbach, welcomed positive developments in the two countries, but regretted that a number of concerns persisted.

Social Platform

► Social Platform launches a cycle of lunch debates which will have as a common theme *"The social dimension of the European Economic policies"*, open for members and partners. The first meeting will take place on November 20, with guest speaker Professor Maria João Rodrigues who will present and discuss her study on *"Mapping future scenarios for the Eurozone"*. Find more information about the series of events [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Equinet

► **SAVE THE DATE: 5 December** - Equinet Annual General Meeting (Brussels, Belgium)

Equality Bodies

► **5 October:** The [Centre for Equal Treatment in Luxembourg](#) will organise a one-day event in French and German on the topic of discrimination testing. At the event, *Mr. Jozef de Witte*, Chair of the Equinet Executive Board, will moderate a round-table on the subject of discrimination testing. The official invitation and agenda can be accessed [here](#).

► **18-19 October:** The Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) will organize a two-day conference entitled *"Contributions to a gender perspective in labour relations: from inspection activities to collective bargaining"*. For more information contact Sandra Ribeiro (Sandra.Ribeiro@cite.gov.pt)

► **22 October:** the Belgian [Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism](#) will host a conference to confront situations of differences of treatment of migrants on the basis of their residence status with the principle of non-discrimination. Click [here](#) to read more about the conference.

Europe

► **16 October** - Annual Cooperation and Coordination Meeting between Equinet and the Fundamental Rights Agency (Vienna, Austria)

► **25-26 October:** The [1st European Transgender Participation Symposium](#) will focus on transgender people in the workplace. Themes of the symposium will include: overview of the European Legal environment, creating a strategy for greater acceptance and providing practical tips for better positioning of transgender people in the workplace. The Symposium will take place in Dordrecht, the Netherlands.

► **25-26 October:** [Work Forum](#) on the UN CRPD organised by the European Commission (by invitation only, for more information contact Annelisa.COTONE@ext.ec.europa.eu)

► **30 October** ERIO's Workshop "Protecting Roma Against Discrimination: The Role of Equality Bodies". The event will provide a platform for discussion between different Equality Bodies and Roma representatives to exchange ideas and concerns

and inform each other about the barriers they face and jointly find solutions to overcome them. Please click [here](#) for more information.

▶ **6 November:** "Assessing the impact of European Governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities" - conference on the launch of a study published by the [European Foundation Centre Consortium on Human Rights and Disability](#). Read more about this [here](#).

▶ **20 November:** The EY2012 Thematic seminar on "[Creating an Age-friendly EU by 2020](#)" co-organised by AGE Platform Europe and the Committee of the Regions, will take place in Brussels.

▶ **22-23 November:** The [2012 Equality Summit on "Equality for growth"](#) will take place in Cyprus. Official invitations were sent to national equality bodies by the European Commission and the Cypriot Presidency. For further questions please contact the Equinet secretariat (info@equineteurope.org).

▶ **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.**

▶ **10 December:** The closing conference of the EY2012 will be organised by the Cyprus EU Presidency in Nicosia (Cyprus). This one day event will bring together high level EU and national policy makers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to celebrate the achievements of the Year and to announce follow-up activities to ensure lasting impact of the Year. More information (and draft agenda) will be available soon on the [Cyprus Presidency website](#).

Upcoming Calls for Nominations / Submissions

▶ **15 October (DEADLINE): CALL FOR PROPOSALS:** [Study on Use of Pre-Accession Funds for Roma Inclusion in New EU Member States - Lessons for Accession Countries](#). The *Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma* initiative has issued a call for proposals for a study on how new European Union member states used, or could have used, pre-accession funds for Roma inclusion.

▶ **11 November (DEADLINE): CALL FOR APPLICATIONS:** [ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration](#). The award honours outstanding social projects that show high quality, innovation and sustainability and is open for projects from 13 European countries (listed on the website).

Latest Publications

▶ [Equinet perspective on "Equality Bodies – Current Challenges"](#)

▶ [New Issue of the Equal Rights Review Published by ERT;](#)

▶ [OSI and World Bank reports on improving the economic situation of marginalized Roma](#)

If you have any information you would like us to include in the next editions of the newsletter, or if you would like to subscribe, update your contact details, request a plain text version or unsubscribe, please contact us at info@equineteurope.org.



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