

Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices: Successfully developing equality bodies' public profiles

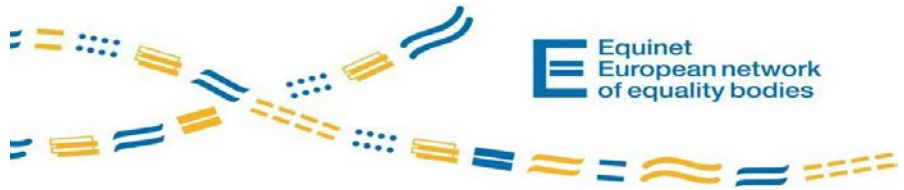
1. Positioning Equality Bodies: Communicating on legislation

After a warm welcome by Ann Kathrin Sost of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA), we were given an example of FADA's work *Communicating on the Horizontal Directive in Germany. A good practice example*. Following some background information on the Horizontal Directive, the main areas that FADA have worked on are:

- Generally trying to raise awareness about Germany blocking the Horizontal Directive: it's a topic on which it is difficult to communicate and to raise awareness: Old topic, not attractive, official position suggests Germany is still doing something.
- Communication and political strategy: Lots of lobbying!
 - Together with Equinet, FADA organized a joint statement and 65 organisations support the call, including the biggest German NGOs.
 - Letter to chancellor Merkel by the Head of FADA, Christine Lueders.
 - Articles in Newspapers, including conservative ones.
 - Political meetings, i.e. with the European Commission in Brussels.
 - Parliamentary breakfast, organized by Amnesty International and LSVD, a German LGBTI NGO. The aim of this was to work on developing political support of opposition parties, and encourage them to raise awareness by asking a parliamentary question on Germany's reasoning for blocking the Directive.
- EU Commission expressed interest to work with FADA on the Directive.
- Their willingness to engage on this topic show FADA's independence.

Discussion

- **GREECE:** Institutional memory is of importance in these kinds of issues. When there's a change of a high ranking officer in the government, they send a list of proposals that were blocked in previous governments (perhaps one of the pluses of political volatility in Greece). For example, citizenship legislation and prison reform were changed, partly thanks to contacts entering government. It is thus useful to contact all possible 'friends' in government, especially new ones, by sending them material or trying to change their mindset by inviting them to meetings etc. If you have an Annual Report, this could also instigate discussion in Parliament.
- **CZECH REPUBLIC:** In the Czech Republic, there is a group of experts advising decision makers with whom the Public Defender of Rights is in contact. Furthermore, it is good to find a politician who will be supportive to your cause, such as a Minister for Equality for example.
- **UK:** Suggests identifying a celebrity or someone who is well recognized to support their call for change. [FADA often work with celebrities to gain attention for certain topics, but well-known people linked to the Horizontal Directive might not have 'general' appeal.]
- **AUSTRIA:** Same anti-discrimination law in place since 2004. No discussion after the "café incident", despite media attention. There has been successful campaigns at the regional level in Styria, but it



may be good to develop a formal network of NGOs like FADA in order to develop national level influence on this topic.

- **POLAND:** They have tried to introduce a strategy on ageing societies, but an expert at the Ministry is blocking it. They are trying to work with others in the Ministry to get the strategy passed, but for now there is no way to get by the expert. On the plus side, at least they know who is blocking it!
- **NORWAY:** A new law on sexual discrimination, sexual identify and gender identity was passed in 2014, with a change in the law on sterilization to change gender identity. Previous to this, there was a lot of work to change the attitudes to this in society, and thanks to Amnesty and other NGOs on board, a TV series was organized that pictured children & young people who wanted to change gender. This emotional twist on TV changed public discourse and politicians' opinions on the issue.

TO DO:

- Send WG the joint statement [Towards a Consistent Level of Protection Against Discrimination in Europe - Overcoming Germany's Blocking of the Proposed Equal Treatment Directive](#), as well as the [Equinet note on the Horizontal Directive](#).

CONSIDER:

- Developing a Joint Communication Strategy on Horizontal Directive: How about starting with a joint statement from equality bodies, linking closely to the FADA joint statement, coordinated by Equinet. Together with a clear message, a picture could be added from each country showing how the lack of the Horizontal Directive is creating obstacles in each country, and the focus would be on VALUES → Need to collect stories from across European countries that could be used to raise awareness, which would be linked to ordinary people's lives. -> **Equinet already produced a statement available on its [website](#) (as above), and gathered a number of examples from around Europe on this which was sent to equality bodies at the beginning of the year. They are in copy of the email!**
- Consider channels to promote our work once done eg [twibbon](#) or hashtag on Twitter, Facebook campaign.

2. Dealing with hate speech from political actors

ITALY: Situation at UNAR

- Following a post on the private FB account of an MP about not accepting Muslim immigrants in Italy, UNAR decided to send a letter to the MP to encourage her to speak with a different tone and avoid propagating hate speech. Her reaction was to gag herself in front of parliament, following which the government reacted: UNAR's general director (who signed the letter) did not have his contract renewed, and all 15 experts from UNAR have been fired.
- Previously, UNAR was the first organisation to start a strategy on LGBTI people for civil partnership and have criticized the government in the past. While UNAR sits in government, they are independent, and have no support inside government (such as a ministry of equality).
- The European Commission sent a letter a few weeks ago to the general secretary of the government. No reply.

- Now, the European Commission has sent a warning. The Italian government has 40 days to reply before the EC opens infringement proceedings.
- 30 senators have questioned the government to ask what they were going to do with the staff and the European structural funds (20 million Euros) but have not yet had a satisfactory answer.

PRISM Project

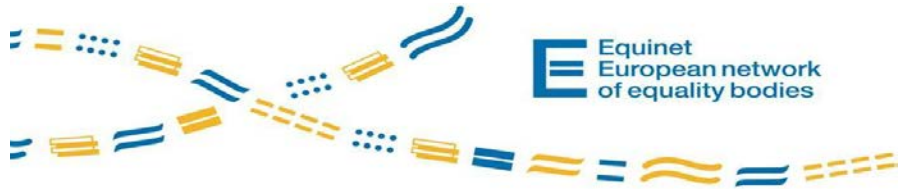
- Two-year project about hate speech entitled [PRISM](#). Funded by DG justice. UNAR (Marco Buemi) is a partner in the project. It is the only EU-wide project tackling hate speech, and is based on general research carried out in the 28 Member States and more in-depth research done in the five partner countries: France, UK, Romania, Spain and Italy.
- The project includes research, communication and training strands.
 - Research: Research Papers will be made available on the website on different aspects of hate speech.
 - Communication: Aim to raise awareness, reach stakeholders, reach victims and promotion of European cooperation. Website has a love and hate speech section with highlights from the web. Furthermore, each country writes and publishes articles with journalists. PRISM has an FB and twitter account. Multilingual booklets will be available in 5 languages. Working on a promotional video against hate speech (no language used) that should go viral. A radio ad will be created in 5 languages, following, for example ads from the Belgian police. 3-4 people working on communication in project.
 - Training: courses on how to identify and deal with hate speech are given to police and judges.
- Discussions have taken place with Facebook managers on the way to report hate speech and close profiles etc. FB have people who check hate speech regularly and also citizens can report it easily. FB has cancelled some profiles. IP generally not reviewed by FB but if police ask to check, then they can.
- Work with code of conduct with journalists, so most newspapers (tabloids included) don't write hate speech themselves.
- No specific legislation in Italy on hate speech.
- European Court of Human Rights: recent decision on hate speech. Two men quarreled (Serb vs Croat), Croatian court said it was hate speech, person who lost went to ECHR, and they said there is freedom of speech, but if you insult other person on ground of ethnicity it is hate speech.

TO DO:

- Final event will be held in Brussels May 2016 → organise Social Media Training 2016 linked to the conference

GREECE

- One of the effects of the economic crisis has been the marginalization of large parts of the population, while at the same time seeing the rise of populism and nationalism.
- Golden Dawn blamed the crisis on a lack of patriotism and verbally and physically attacked opponents. In 2010 they won one seat in Athens, while in 2012 gained 5% of the vote.



- At that time, the establishment discussed making legislation on hate speech more severe, but this didn't go through under the right wing government.
- Golden Dawn members started attacking immigrants in particular, notably killing a rap artist in 2014. This started an investigation of Golden Dawn as a criminal organization. Some head people received sentences.
- Since the passing of the new hate speech legislation in 2014, prosecutions are on the rise. Any party that expresses hate speech can now get fined by the Court.
- Another party, the Independent Greeks, are a member of the current coalition. In the past, they have attacked Jews and LGBTI in the social media (before getting into office). Their discourse focuses on conspiracy arguments to get rid of all external organisations/influence in Greece.
- Politicians are always in the spotlight and opponents often use social media memory against them.
- Ombudsman: can only intervene in discrimination and promotion of anti-discrimination directive. Doesn't want to get involved in political fights, so doesn't name politicians or parties, but does attack political attitudes coming from parties, and suggests remedies in attacking these attitudes. For example, Ombudsman general comment on children in advertising: use of children in election is undesired. It is an insult to childhood the children use as carriers of hate speech messages and should be protected.
- When Ombudsman is dealing with hate speech from political actors: stay within the mandate, comments based on values, try to pinpoint exactly what is the hate speech, try to avoid personal critics but attack ideologies.

TO NOTE:

- The Greek Ombudsman will organise a conference on hate speech in March 2016, funded by an EEA grant.

BELGIUM

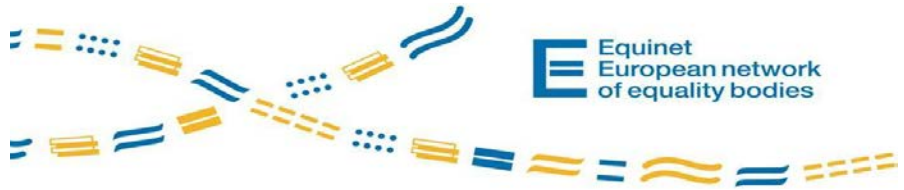
- See Annex 2.2 for the full overview of 'Crisis communication – Hate Speech. Draft Strategy of the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, Belgium' (and presentation attached in email).
- This is a draft strategy that the Interfederal Centre is working on, but everyone in the group found it useful and very comprehensive.

Feedback from Group Discussion

After the three presentations, participants broke up into groups for discussion.

Group 1: Principles in dealing with hate speech from political actors from the Ombudsman-type institutions point of view

1. **Independence.** We ought to use our ability to intervene on hate speech instances, asserting our disassociation from the attitudes expressed by sections of the political establishment.
2. **Propagation.** We should use the communication means we have in our disposal to combat hate speech, in the same manner that we use them to combat discrimination, with reference to EU directives and ECHR decisions and other legal tools available.
3. **Cooperation.** We should seek cooperation with other national institutions working on the same field. In particular we should try to find a common ground for combined interventions with other public authorities such as the Television and Radio monitoring authorities, equality bodies, and



NGOs. In addition we must try to combine our efforts by organizing common actions in the framework of projects.

4. **Oppose ideas-attitudes.** We should try to avoid personifying our critique. We should target racist attitudes and ideologies.
5. **Academic approach.** The Ombudsman should be an active factor into the exploration of the boundaries between the hate speech/freedom of speech discourse, using the experience of its case work as well as international case law (EU-CoE).
6. **Application of existing legislation.** The Ombudsman should press into the use of existing anti-hate speech legislation in all fields of social life (e.g. codes of conduct in police, sports etc.)
7. **Compare.** We should seek to develop a transnational comparative tool (index) on the application of the anti-hate speech legislation in each country. This may only be achieved through a wide cooperation between a range of available national and international actors.

Group 2. Communication Campaigns

Examples of campaigns:

Czech Republic:

- Sexist Pig campaign - made by Czech NGO Nesehnutí, the Public Defender of Rights are a supporting organisation. They want to show that women should not be only seen as objects in ads and want to provoke a discussion on that topic in the Czech Republic. And yes, they are quite successful as the media like to open the controversial topic, even though some people say it is more promotion of these sexist ads than their criticism... For more see at prasatecko.cz (only in Czech language. And alert: the website contains a lot of half-naked women's bodies in the ads, sorry for the shock. People can vote for the most sexist advertisement which is then awarded by anti-prize of the "Sexist Pig" each year).
- Another campaign sexismy.cz was also made by the Czech NGO and supported by the equality body. This one raises the topic of everyday sexism from society through real experiences and short stories written both by ordinary men and women. As a partner of this project, the Public Defender of Rights prepared a mini-campaign which is more educational, available on their [Facebook page](#). There, they add one picture with a description per week and we explain which ads are prohibited, the difference between non-ethical and unlawful ads, why the sexist ads are problematic, how to recognise them and what to do when you see such an advert.
- Another Czech campaign worth sharing is [Hate Free Culture](#) – a project by the Office of Government. They try to explain the hoaxes on the Czech internet and to support openness, multiculturalism, equality etc. They share information, facts, videos and campaigns against racism... Unfortunately, on their Facebook page, there is still a lot of hate speech and vulgarities from anti-supporters and trolls.
- Cyprus: Defining and Exorcising Hate (youth) - [brief summary in English](#) and [Greek](#). The leaflet they developed is [available in Greek here](#).
- Poland: New Ombudsman was personally committed to cleaning hate speech from walls

Discussion on matter of defining hate speech. Should it be named even if not right legal definition? What about considering 'lawful' or 'unlawful' hate speech?

CONSIDER:

- [Manual on Hate Speech \(Council of Europe\)](#)
- [No Hate Speech Movement \(Council of Europe\)](#)
- [ECHR Hate Speech Fact Sheet](#)
- [PRISM](#)

Group 3. How to deal with the situation of UNAR in Italy?

CONSIDER:

- Official letter from board of Equinet could support the organization. However, Equinet needs advice on what to write and who to address it to.
- Emphasize the debate outside of Italy, through public media discussions as this might get a reaction from within Italy. For example, Roma cases in Italy were discussed in the US media, and the Italian government reacted in a positive way. Could this be coordinated by Equinet? Everyone could share their contacts with journalists of the main papers each other's' countries, or even better, Marco could send a basic summary of the situation and everyone could share it with their media contacts. The focus should be on the lack of rights for people who are discriminated against in Italy – where do they go and who can they turn to with UNAR gone? -> **Marco has sent an article. Please see it attached in the email.**

3. Evaluating Public Profiles and Strategies: How to monitor your public profile?

In order to identify whether or not communication work is having an impact, if they are doing the right things and reaching the right people, the Ombudsman for Equality (Finland) uses a service provided by [Meltwater](#) to analyse their work.

- It is based on specific indicators outlined by the communication department. They get daily media reports based on key words such as the name of the organization, giving an indication of your organisation's impact.
- The service also monitors the news and can be used for campaigns as well. It could also be used to monitor hate speech (racism and misogyny in particular).
- It tells us about people's attitudes in general (whether they are positive or negative), thus giving an understanding of what are the trends of extremist attitudes.
- This covers 3000 sources in Finland, 220000 used internationally.
- Also measure quality of work being done and how they are perceived – they have 5 indicators : how they are trusted, how they are seen as equality body... social media, media, stakeholders and complainants are covered.

TO DO:

Paivi will send around an example in English that people can have a look at, in case they wish to develop a similar analysis.

4. 2016 Work Plan

- Next year's Social Media training, as mentioned above, should be organized in Brussels in the context of the PRISM final conference (May 2016). The training should be aimed at experienced communication experts and how they can deal with advanced social media issues in particular. The WG will be involved in developing the agenda and the training manual, but the invitation will go out to the whole Equinet membership.
- Working Group 2016: no moderator yet. Meetings should have thematic focus on communication challenges (internal/external).
- Next WG meeting should be held around the beginning of March. Place also to be identified and we take note that Cyprus has offered to host us.
- We will continue to work on the Media Library, or on the Project Library as it will be called from next year.
- Members are encouraged to send information about activities/publications/events/news from their organisations to Sarah to include on website and/or newsletters.

TO DO:

Sarah will send around a [Doodle](#) to identify a date at the beginning of March for the first 2016 WG meeting.

Annex 1: AGENDA

Venue:	Useful contacts on the day:
Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes) Kapelle-Ufer 2, 10117 Berlin (Office currently located at Ministry of Education)	Ann Kathrin Sost: +49 175 2435508 Sarah Cooke O'Dowd: +32 484 771053

Sunday, 1 November: Social Event	
20:00	Dinner at Café Orange, Oranienburger Str. 32 Ann Katrin will meet us at the lobby of the hotel at 19.30 in order to accompany us to the restaurant, but if you wish to make your own way there, from the hotel you should take the S-Bahn for 1 station to Friedrichstraße and walk for 10 minutes or else take the S1 or S2 to S Oranienburger Str.
Monday, 2 November: Working Group Meeting	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome - Ann Kathrin Sost, Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Germany)
09:30 – 10:45	Positioning Equality Bodies: Communicating on legislation - <i>Communicating on the Horizontal Directive in Germany. A good practice example: Ann Kathrin Sost, Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Germany)</i> Discussion: Has your equality body made any communication efforts on legislation that is stuck or contested in your country eg. Marriage equality etc.?
10:45 -11:15	Coffee break
11:15-13:15	Dealing with hate speech from political actors: guidelines for Equinet members - Marco Buemi, Expert (Italy) - Dimitris Hormovitis, Office of the Greek Ombudsman (Greece) - Nadine Brauns, Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Belgium) Following presentations of members' experiences on how to deal with hate speech from political actors, we will break into groups to develop guidelines on communication for Equinet members.
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch break
14:15 – 14:45	Feedback from group discussions
14.45 – 15:30	Evaluating Public Profiles and Strategies: How to monitor your public profile? - Päivi Ojanperä, Ombudsman for Equality (Finland)

15:30 – 16:00 | WG Feedback and planning for 2016

List of Participants

Country	Name	Surname	Organisation	Email
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Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014-2020)

Annex 2: ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Annex 2.1 Examples of Video Campaigns Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, Germany

- [12 things you didn't know about gender discrimination](#)
- [How male, how female do you feel?](#)
- [Video on our nationwide survey about experiences with discrimination](#)
- More videos are available on their [Facebook page](#)

Annex 2.2 Crisis communication – Hate Speech Draft Strategy of the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, Belgium

General principles

1. **Communicate** (depending on the situation, only in response): ignoring the crisis could give the press or the public the impression that the Centre does not share people's concerns or does not take them seriously, or that it is influenced by politics, is trying to conceal information, or to distract from its lack of real power. Ignoring the crisis can also have as consequence that the media or the public will resort to information-shopping from less reliable, sensationalising sources.
2. **Communicate at the right time**: immediately after having received confirmation of the facts, or solid evidence of their credibility. By responding too soon, the Centre risks underestimating or overestimating the scale of the crisis and having to correct its position later (loss of credibility); Too late, and the Centre will be left behind...
3. **Scoring points by**:
 - Maintaining enough distance: staying above the fray, not trying to stir up controversy, at the same time as sharing the emotion, showing sympathy and solidarity.
 - Presenting ourselves as a reliable source (aiming to provide information that is coherent, consistent, complete and sufficiently precise) and neutral/independent (relying on facts, analysing and reformulating them)
 - Showing a commitment to act to remedy the situation as soon as possible, whenever possible, or at least to take the situation seriously, to investigate, talk to the people concerned...
 - Taking a stand: not automatically in relation to the given event, but by reminding people of our stance in general on such matters (the Centre has always had a very clear position in this area: affirm its legitimacy and emphasise the actions we have taken and their results)
 - Placing the accent on principles, values, but without adopting a moralising tone;
 - Speaking with caution (such as presenting numerical data with maximum caution) but without giving an evasive impression



- Speaking in an accessible way
- Involving / communicating with our partners

4. Avoid losing points by:

- needlessly stirring up the emotions of certain groups or individuals;
- alienating our partners;
- reacting defensively: 'yes, but our legal mandate does not allow us to...'
- reacting overly offensively: personal attack, doubting, etc.
- merely stating 'no comment', except for (very rare) exceptions.

Case 1: It is clearly hate speech, and illegal

Reaction mode: proactive and reactive

Scenario:

1. Sharing information internally: comm department, management, head(s) of departments concerned; Making sure that a spokesperson is available (preferably a member of the senior management). Favouring stand-up meetings.
2. Twitter: 'The Centre is opening a case'
3. Response to requests from the press
4. Issuing (no later than 4 hours after the facts / reporting of the facts in the media) a press release (analysis and reaction of the Centre: see model press release in annex) to the media, employees, the Board of Directors and partners involved.

Case 2: The words are offensive but do not constitute a violation of the law

Reaction mode: If this concerns a very popular figure, an opinion leader, and if the words are effectively stigmatising: proactive (recycling where possible – see below) and reactive. In other cases: only reactive.

Scenario:

1. Sharing info internally: press department, management, head(s) of departments concerned; Making sure that a spokesperson is available (preferably a member of the senior management). Favouring stand-up meetings.
2. What kinds of proactive reactions ? (in order of preference)
 1. An opinion, a news item or other reference text associated with the theme in question has been published at an unrelated time (in tempore non suspecto) and is available on our website. Provide links: via Twitter, and in a brief news bulletin ('The Centre has reiterated its position'). In this light, it would be useful to publish 'opinions' on our website on themes that are regularly the focus of investigation (+/- 6 to 8 per year? signed by the senior management). The communication department could draw up a list of subjects in collaboration with the senior management.
 2. The spokesperson(s) for the Centre (senior management) has/have already given interviews and these interviews are available online: in this case, broadcast the link to the interview via Twitter (depending on the quality, of course) ; For example : 'BDW on immigration: reaction by Patrick Charlier (BeIRTL) : www.bellrtl/...'. The interview could also be broadcast on our site, under news, if it is a longer, high-quality / transcribed interview. To be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 3. If there is no existing text/the interview cannot be recycled, then draw up a news bulletin to be spread via our site, Twitter and Belga (+ employees and Board of Directors). This bulletin should

respect the guidelines presented above ('The main principles'). See model press release in annex .

Model press release : Hate speech (Illegal) by a public figure

The Centre has opened a case concerning the remarks made by XXXX targeting XXXX and will assess the factual and contextual aspects / the facts currently available as soon as possible.

According to their initial analysis, and if confirmed, these statements constitute 'incitement to hatred, violence, or discrimination' in the sense of the Anti-discrimination law and are therefore liable to prosecution.

'The courts interpret the concept of freedom of expression very broadly', said Patrick Charlier, Deputy Director of the Centre. 'This is essential in a democracy. Statements which are critical, even offensive or hurtful, must be allowed to be expressed. But this freedom is not absolute. Statements inciting hatred, violence or discrimination are prohibited precisely because they represent a danger to our democracy and to those targeted. And it is clear that the words of XXXX go beyond the mere expression of opinion.'

The Centre will be questioning those involved in this case and will then consider the legal and/or other action to be taken./ At this stage, it does not rule out / it is planning to take legal action /without excluding the possibility of legal action, it also intends to take other action to assert the rights of the individuals concerned as effectively and rapidly as possible, in order to obtain compensation for damage suffered.

Model press release: Words that are offensive (but do not constitute a violation of the law) by a public figure

The Centre has been informed of the statements made by xxxx targeting xxxx. It understands and shares the outrage not only of those individuals directly targeted by these statements but also of all those who believe in and strive each day to build a more inclusive society that is respectful of all individuals, their differences and their history.

'The courts interpret the concept of freedom of expression very broadly', said Patrick Charlier, Deputy Director of the Centre. 'This is essential in a democracy. Only statements inciting hatred, discrimination or violence are liable for prosecution. Legally speaking, the statements by xxxx are therefore not illegal. But this does not mean that they do not deserve a reaction / socially and morally, on the contrary, they are highly questionable / at the very least, unfortunate and harmful. Public figures / politicians enjoy tremendous freedom of expression and a significant media platform. But their responsibility is therefore all the greater in social, ethical and moral terms. Stigmatising statements only lead to deadlock. We have always preferred the idea of dialogue and we invite Mr. XXXX to join us, along with others, in an open debate'.