

Brief overview of Equinet's Work on Indicators for Standards for Equality Bodies

Introduction

[Equinet](#) is the European Network of Equality Bodies, the only network that represents their expertise, needs and experience. Equinet comprises national equality bodies from each EU Member State, dedicated to promoting equality and combating discrimination in their respective jurisdictions. With its expertise and collective efforts, Equinet strives to ensure that all individuals enjoy equal rights and opportunities, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

Check our Directory to see the Equality Body(s) in your Member State: [European Directory of Equality Bodies](#)

Standards for Equality Bodies

Equinet and its members are at the forefront of promoting and protecting equality and non-discrimination across Europe. One of our key initiatives is the development of indicators on Standards for Equality Bodies, a crucial framework that guides the work and assessment of equality bodies across the European Union (EU). In this document, we give a short introduction to Equinet's efforts in developing these indicators and their significance in advancing equality and non-discrimination.

Standards for Equality Bodies are a major step towards better implementation and enforcement of the equal treatment legislation. While the heterogeneity of our members is respected and there is adaptation to the legal tradition of Member States, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, standards ensure that they have the minimum functions and conditions to be effective catalysts for change and to best protect victims of discrimination. Standards will lead to Equality Bodies that have:

- Better guarantees for independence
- More adequate resources to promote equality and fight discrimination, including assisting victims of discrimination
- More adequate powers to achieve the objective of full equality
- Wider mandates to cover all manifestations of discrimination
- Higher standards and resources to ensure full accessibility to all

Equinet's work on Standards is further described here: [Standards for Equality Bodies – Equinet](#)

Equinet: Project on Standards for Equality Bodies

Equinet recognizes the importance of assessing the conditions created for and by equality bodies in fulfilling the Standards for Equality Bodies. To facilitate this evaluation process, Equinet has initiated a process of developing indicators that allow for the measurement of progress and effectiveness in meeting the standards.

Equality Bodies realised the need to reinforce common Standards for Equality Bodies and created the Project on Standards for Equality Bodies in 2015 as an exchange platform to discuss and develop standards and indicators to measure such standards. This project commissioned a [Working Paper on Developing Standards for Equality Bodies](#) (2016). On the basis of this paper and taking stock of both the [ECRI General Policy Recommendation](#) and [European Commission 2018 recommendation](#) as a basis, Equality Bodies themselves have developed lists of indicators to self-reflect on the practical implementation of standards such as mandate, independence, or resources.

Significance of Indicators

Indicators play a crucial role in assessing the effectiveness of equality bodies and identifying areas for improvement. By establishing clear and measurable criteria, indicators enable equality bodies to evaluate their legal framework and their effectiveness, identify gaps, advocate for necessary legal changes and make informed decisions to enhance their impact.

Equinet's work on developing indicators for the Standards for Equality Bodies contributes to fostering excellence in equality work across Europe. By providing a robust framework for assessment and improvement, these indicators empower equality bodies to enhance their performance and better serve the needs of individuals experiencing discrimination. Importantly, the Equinet indicators were not designed, nor are they used, to rank equality bodies or introduce an accreditation system. They rather serve the purpose of self-assessment by equality bodies, although as they are in the public domain, other actors can also use them.

Key Areas Covered by Indicators

The indicators already developed by Equinet cover a wide range of areas aligned with the Standards for Equality Bodies that can be found here: [Measuring-standards-for-equality-bodies-indicators-for-self-assessment](#). These include:

1. Independence
2. Mandate
3. Resources

These indicators have been developed by Equality Bodies themselves and discussed with all members of the Project on Standards for Equality Bodies before their approval for self-assessment, and therefore take into account the different current scenarios and legal traditions in different Member States. In fact, in 2022, the Independence and Mandate indicators were tested for adequacy and usability by five Equality Bodies (from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany and Romania). A report was developed to summarise and evaluate the learnings from the piloting of these indicators and suggest ways in which these indicators can inform the planned legislation on standards for Equality Bodies: [Learnings from the piloting of indicators for the mandate and independence of equality bodies](#)

Conclusion

Equinet's efforts in developing indicators for the Standards for Equality Bodies reflect its commitment to advancing equality and non-discrimination in Europe. Through collaborative endeavours and continuous evaluation, Equinet strives to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of equality bodies, ultimately creating a more inclusive and equal society for all.