

Brussels, 11 July 2024

Paving the Way for an Equality-Centred Policy Cycle

The European Union was founded on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. Yet too many people continue to face discrimination and inequality across the Union, including intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination in all aspects of their lives.¹ In the current climate, it is now imperative that the EU institutions strengthen their resolve to take meaningful and urgent action to address this reality.

As European Union leaders decide on their priorities for the 2024-2029 cycle, we call on them to ensure that equality and non-discrimination are included as central priorities in the EU work programme for the next five years. Only by centring equality and protection from discrimination in this way can the EU truly respond to the key concerns of people living in the Union.

The equality and non-discrimination agenda was afforded increased visibility and action during the last five years as a result of the ambitious “Union of Equality” agenda and the appointment of the first Commissioner for Equality. This led to unprecedented progress in efforts to advance equality and non-discrimination across EU policy making. Progress included the adoption of important initiatives such as the Directive on violence against women, inaugural Gender Equality and LGBTIQ Equality Strategies, an Anti-Racism Action Plan, a Green Paper on Ageing, an Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, a Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, as well as the renewal of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the EU Roma strategic framework.

At this critical juncture, it is vital that the EU continue to prioritize efforts to guarantee the founding values of equality and non-discrimination, to advance the entire package which comprises the Union of Equality, and to ensure an intersectional approach to this agenda. Failure to do so would seriously jeopardise progress in this area and mark a very dangerous step backward.

To this end we call on EU leadership to take the following steps:

- Appoint a Commissioner for Equality and Fundamental Rights, ensuring the mandate has the power to renew and deepen the Union of Equality agenda and nominating a candidate with a demonstrated commitment to equality;
- Strengthen the Union of Equality agenda by introducing new strategies to address grounds not already covered, mainstreaming all strategies across policy areas and renewing and building-out existing equality strategies, such as the Gender Equality Strategy, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, the EU Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Roma strategic framework;
- Ensure the next EU budget includes robust funding streams for civil society organisations working on equality and non-discrimination;
- Ensure equality and non-discrimination objectives are also core components of EU priorities in the sphere of international cooperation, external and humanitarian action;
- Maintain the current status of the Parliament’s Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and refrain from weakening its mandate;
- Establish a Council configuration dedicated to equality in the EU and ensure concrete commitments towards implementation of equality strategies by member states;
- Establish a new Directorate-General for Equality and Fundamental Rights thereby strengthening the Commission’s ability to design and monitor equality and non-discrimination laws and policies;

¹ Throughout the text, “equality and non-discrimination” is to be understood as encompassing equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of the full range of human rights, including all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

- Renew and upgrade the mandates of the Commission Coordinators working on equality, ensuring a focus on intersectionality during this term;
- Entrust the Commission Task Force on Equality with a strong mandate and ensure it works transparently and in close consultation and cooperation with civil society organizations and networks.

As 136 civil society organisations with significant expertise on equality, and as representatives of groups at increased risk of discrimination across the EU, we issue this call as a testament to our solidarity with each other, and urge EU leaders to ensure that the people most affected by EU policies and legislation on equality and non-discrimination are always involved in their development and implementation.

1. A Scuola Per Conoscerci, Italy
2. ACCEPT Romania
3. ACT Alliance EU
4. AESCO (América, España, Solidaridad y Cooperación)
5. Agapanto, Italy
6. AGE Platform Europe
7. Agedo Nazionale, Italy
8. Aidos (Italian Association for Women in Development)
9. ALFI - Associazione Lesbica Femminista Italiana, Italy
10. AlfiLune, Italy
11. Amnesty International
12. Amref Health Africa - Italy
13. Anemos Dimiourgias - Greece
14. ANTAMA (Greece)
15. Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels
16. APRe! Associação de Aposentados, Pensionistas e Reformados (Portugal)
17. ARCIGAY LGBTQIA+ Association, Italy
18. ASKV Refugee Support
19. Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Iberoamericanos - AIETI (Spain)
20. Asociación Por Ti Mujer
21. Association Bagdam Espace Lesbian - France
22. Association Legebitra, Slovenia
23. Association Liberas - Italy
24. Association for Monitoring Equal Rights / Eşit Haklar İçin İzleme Derneği (Turkey)
25. ASTRA Network
26. ATDAL Over 40 (Italy)
27. Austrian Disability Council
28. Austrian Family Planning Association (OGF)
29. Autism-Europe
30. Avaaz
31. Avocats Sans Frontières
32. Belgian Disability Forum (BDF)
33. Brain Injured and families European Federation (BIF)
34. çavaria, Belgium
35. Center for Gender Rights and Equality DIOTIMA
36. Center for Reproductive Rights
37. Certi Diritti, Italy
38. Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale " Mario Mieli", Italy
39. Civil Rights Defenders
40. COC Nederland
41. Cologne Counselling - Germany
42. Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO)
43. Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V. - Germany

44. Danish Family Planning Association
45. Disabled Peoples' International European Region (DPI Europe)
46. Doctors of the World Spain
47. EDGE, Italy
48. EMAIZE Sexologia Zentroa - Centro Sexológico
49. End FGM EU
50. Epen, El Parto es Nuestro
51. EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)
52. European Blind Union (EBU)
53. European Disability Forum
54. European Dyslexia Association
55. European Federation of Hard of Hearing People
56. European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
57. European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network)
58. European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA)
59. European Women's Lobby
60. Famiglie Arcobaleno APS, Italy
61. Federación de Mujeres Progresistas
62. Fédération Laïque de Centres de Planning Familial (FLCPF)
63. Foundation for Women and Family Planning (FEDERA)
64. French Family Planning / le Planning Familial
65. Fundación Aspacia
66. GAMS Belgium (Groupe pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles féminines)
67. Gaynet - Formazione e Comunicazione sui temi Lgbti, Italy
68. GenderLens, Italy
69. General Commission for Justice and Peace of Spain
70. GLAS Foundation, Bulgaria
71. Haurralde Fundazioa
72. HelpAge International
73. HelpAge International Spain
74. Human Rights Watch
75. IGLYO
76. ILGA-Europe
77. Iniciativa Inakost', Slovakia
78. International Commission of Jurists
79. International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)
80. International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
81. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
82. International Federation of Persons with Physical Disabilities (FIMITIC)
83. International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
84. International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)
85. IntersexEsiste, Italy
86. Irish Family Planning Association
87. Jovesólides
88. Kif Kif vzw
89. KISA
90. Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
91. La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo (Spain)
92. La Strada International
93. Labrisz Lesbian Association - Hungary
94. LesbenRing e.V. - Germany
95. Lesbian Magazine and Program Organizing Association - Hungary
96. Lesbian Organisation Rijeka – LORI – Croatia
97. LesWorking - Spain

98. LGBT komiteen - The LGBT Committee, Denmark
99. Light for the World
100. LSVD, the Lesbian and Gay Federation, Germany
101. Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability (MFOPD)
102. Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM)
103. medicusmundi
104. Mujeres Jóvenes de la Región de Murcia: 8 de marzo (MUJOMUR)
105. Mujeres Supervivientes de Sevilla
106. NET.Collect - Germany
107. Nőkért Egyesület / Association for Women, Hungary
108. Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE)
109. OII Europe
110. Older Women's Network
111. PA.SY.D.Y. Pensioners Union (Cyprus)
112. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
113. Polish Women's Strike
114. Possibile LGBTI+, Italy
115. PRISME – Fédération wallonne LGBTQIA+, Belgium
116. pro familia Bundesverband
117. Quaker Council for European Affairs
118. Queer Base - Welcome & Support for LGBTIQ Refugees - Austria
119. Queer Sisterhood Cluj – Romania
120. Quore, Italy
121. Rainbow Families Croatia
122. Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe – España
123. Rete Genitori Rainbow, Italy
124. RFSL, Sweden
125. Rutgers
126. Save the Children
127. SB Overseas
128. SEDRA-Federación Planificación Familiar
129. Sensoa
130. Society for Education on Contraception and Sexuality - SECS
131. Stichting LOS, Netherlands
132. Terre des Femmes
133. TGEU – Transgender Europe
134. Toutes des Femmes -France
135. Turun Valkonauha ry, Finland
136. Women Against Violence Europe - WAVE Network
137. Zavod Moja mavrica – Slovenia
138. Zavod Transfeministična Inicijativa TransAkcija - Slovenia