

New Directions for Equality between Women and Men

An Equinet Opinion on the Roadmap for Equality between Women and
Men
November 2009

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Introduction

The Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006 – 2010 has provided a valuable stimulus for greater gender equality across the European Union. It has served to guide policy, programmes and initiatives to make a strategic impact on the significant gender inequalities that persist in all Member States. It has ensured that some priority continues to be accorded to the elimination of these inequalities. An action plan such as this Roadmap is a valuable tool in the fight against discrimination and the struggle to advance equality.

The commitment of the European Commission to prepare and publish a new Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men is welcome. It is both timely and important. It is timely due to the new and very particular context created for the promotion of equality in a time of economic and financial downturn. It is important due to the persistent and significant inequalities that continue to be experienced by women across the European Union.

Equinet welcomes this opportunity to provide an opinion to the European Commission on the forthcoming Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men. Equinet is the European network of specialised equality bodies. This opinion draws directly from the work of the specialised equality bodies in implementing Equal Treatment legislation at Member State level. An Equinet survey of the work of equality bodies on the gender ground was conducted to inform the preparation of this opinion. This opinion is, therefore, only focused on the policy areas and issues that fall within the remit of the equality bodies rather than seeking to be all encompassing of the issues of inequality currently facing women.

Context

The 2009 European Commission 'Report on Equality between Women and Men' highlights progress that has been made in the pursuit of greater gender equality across the European Union. The Lisbon Strategy objective for a 60% female employment rate is close to being reached with a 58.3% female employment rate recorded in 2007. However, this masks uneven progress across the Member States. Women accounted for 58.9% of university degrees in the European Union in 2006. The average share of women members of Member State parliaments increased from 16% to 24% between 1997 and 2008. However, national figures range from 9% to 46%.

The 2009 report captures the persistence of gender inequality. It notes that occupational and sectoral segregation has remained almost unchanged in most Member States. The percentage of women working part time is four times higher than that of men. The gap in the employment rate between men and women with children under 12 to care for is almost double the overall employment gap between men and women. The gender pay gap is 17.4% on average across the European Union. It notes that most Member States will not meet the Barcelona childcare targets by 2010. The number of female managers has remained static averaging 30% across the European Union. Only 3% of the directors of top quoted companies are women. Women continue to take responsibility for the vast majority of caring work and household tasks.

The persistence of these inequalities reflects the structural and systemic nature of the inequalities experienced by women. There has been a significant body of Equal Treatment legislation developed on the gender ground at European level. Discrimination in the labour market and in the provision of goods and services beyond the labour market has been prohibited. Gaps in legal protection remain on the gender ground, in particular in relation to education, the media and advertising. Statutory leave entitlements to facilitate flexible working and to enable people to combine paid work and caring responsibilities have been put in place. The persistence of significant gender inequality points to a need to review and further develop this legislation to ensure that it is adequate to the challenge posed by this inequality. The European Commission is in the process of reviewing the adequacy of current European legislation on equal pay and is committed to a report on the implementation of the Directive on equal treatment for women and men in the provision of goods and services. This is a valuable start to a necessary process of review and further development of the equal treatment legislation.

Equality bodies with a statutory mandate to promote equality and combat discrimination on the gender ground, and on other grounds, have an important contribution to make in advancing gender equality and in ensuring that equal treatment legislation can maximize its impact at Member State level. The requirement in the European Union Equal Treatment Directives that Member States establish equality bodies to combat discrimination on the gender ground has resulted in a valuable increase in the number of these equality bodies in Member States across the European Union. It is important to ensure that these equality bodies are established and resourced in a manner that secures their independence and effectiveness if the Equal Treatment Directives are to make their full contribution to gender equality.

It is clear that there is a need for a wider policy framework of measures to advance gender equality that goes beyond legal provision. The Roadmap itself is one of these measures. Gender mainstreaming is another of the key tools being used alongside equal treatment legislation to advance gender equality. Gender mainstreaming was a particular feature of the European Employment Strategy and did play a role in achieving some of the advances in labour market equality secured by women. However, the commitment to gender mainstreaming clearly diminished when the European Employment Strategy was incorporated into the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs. In May 2007 the European Commission Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men reiterated its concern that 'the commitment to gender mainstreaming was being given a diminished priority at

European Union level' and that there were 'significant deficiencies in the implementation of gender mainstreaming at Member State level'. It will be important for the new Roadmap to rectify this situation.

Economic and financial downturn across the European Union presents a very specific context for the new Roadmap. Member States are grappling with low levels of economic growth, high levels of unemployment, fiscal imbalances and the reduction of expenditure on public services. This context impacts on both men and women, but it also impacts differently on women and men.

The initial sectors hit by the downturn – financial, construction, transport and manufacturing – are all male dominated. However, the planned job reductions in the public sector will result in a more even spread of job losses between men and women. Research has shown that women tend to take longer to regain access to the labour market. Women registering for social welfare benefits tend to find that they receive lower income replacement benefits due to their particular labour market histories. In a context of economic and financial downturn, the amount of unpaid work done increases due to reduced earnings. This unpaid work is predominantly done by women. Cutbacks in public sector services will exacerbate this increase in the workload of women. There can be a backlash against equality in a time of economic downturn – gains made in advancing gender equality over the previous decade are thus put at risk and it can be difficult to make the case for a policy focus on equality in this context. This backlash is already evident in the experience of the equality bodies in some Member States.

The Swedish Presidency hosted a conference on 'What does gender equality mean for economic growth and employment' in October 2009. Research commissioned by the Swedish Presidency into the contribution of gender equality to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was presented at the conference. This research found that a gender equal labour market would contribute an average 27% to GDP of the Member States across the European Union. This economic case for gender equality establishes the importance of a focus on gender equality in the Lisbon post 2010 process for growth and jobs which is now a subject for discussion at European level. A June 2009 opinion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men recommended that the European Commission 'take into account the gender dimension in future initiatives taken to counteract the crisis or limit its impact' and that Member States should 'shape their responses to the economic and financial crisis in a way which is sensitive to the differential impact on women and men'. These are important themes for a new Roadmap.

Survey of Equality Bodies

Twenty equality bodies from sixteen different Member States responded to a detailed Equinet questionnaire over the summer months of 2009. The questionnaire explored the following areas in relation to the work of equality bodies on the gender ground:

- ▶ Vision and objectives of the equality body
- ▶ Legal work
- ▶ Promotional work
- ▶ Research work
- ▶ Communication work
- ▶ Strategic planning.

The survey provided valuable insights into the work of equality bodies on the gender ground and, most important, what were the key gender equality issues that were being brought to the equality bodies and that they were prioritising in their work. The survey does not give a quantitative picture given the different ways of gathering and analysing data by equality bodies in the different Member States. However, a qualitative picture of value does emerge.

Pregnancy related discrimination and discrimination related to statutory leave entitlements emerge as a dominant issue in the legal work of equality bodies on the gender ground. Casework reported on encompasses dismissal or changed working conditions due to pregnancy, discrimination in relation to maternity leave and parental leave, and discrimination in relation to breast feeding and access to family friendly working arrangements. This key issue is also evident in the promotional initiatives taken by equality bodies.

Equal pay is another major issue in the legal work of equality bodies on the gender ground. This issue is also evident in the research work of the equality bodies and in promotional initiatives taken. Workplace promotion and discrimination in recruitment also emerge as significant issues in the legal work of equality bodies.

Sexual harassment is also a significant focus for the casework of equality bodies on the gender ground. Casework in this area has also challenged television publicity for creating an intimidating and hostile environment. Equality bodies have also focused on issues of sexual harassment in promotional initiatives and in research projects.

Most of the legal work reported by equality bodies is focused on workplace issues. There is a longer track record of work by equality bodies in this area and equal treatment legislation in the area of the provision of goods and services is more recent. Legal work is reported in relation to taxation and access to public benefits, including public services and social protection systems. Transport services, insurance contracts and the charging of different fees to men and women for services are also a focus in this legal work on the gender ground.

Multiple discrimination cases involving the gender ground are identified in the legal work of equality bodies. Research work by equality bodies has also focused on this issue. Women with a disability, older women and minority ethnic women are given particular mention in this regard. This issue of multiple discrimination is also identified by equality bodies as an area requiring further methodological development and further evolution of data collection systems.

Stereotyping is identified in the survey as a concern for equality bodies. Stereotyping can be a causal factor in the discrimination experienced by women. This is particularly evident in stereotypes of women in relation to caring responsibilities. Equality bodies report on research work done on this issue and on promotional initiatives developed to combat stereotyping.

Gender based violence and human trafficking emerge as significant issues in the work of a number of equality bodies. Research work has been carried and equality bodies have played coordinating roles in action plans to combat gender based violence.

Equality bodies report working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include employer organisations, statutory bodies, local government bodies and trade unions. However, it is clear that non-governmental organisations are a particularly important stakeholder. Non-governmental organisations provide a valuable channel of communication for equality bodies with people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing discrimination. They provide important knowledge and information on issues of inequality experienced by groups such as women. It is clear that non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations, are key enablers of effectiveness for equality bodies.

A range of different barriers emerge for equality bodies in seeking to make their contribution to gender equality. Deficiencies in Member State equality legislation are mentioned. Member States with no gender equality body (neither specific to gender nor integrated with other grounds) are also identified. The various legal proceedings being pursued by the European Commission in relation to inadequate transposition of the gender Equal Treatment Directives are important in this regard. Limitations in the Equal Treatment Directives themselves are also reported such as lack of provisions in relation to the functions of the public sector and a range of exemptions in the legislation at Member State level.

Under-reporting of discrimination emerges as a significant barrier to the work of equality bodies. This issue is also identified in terms of fear of victimisation and low levels of inclination to report discrimination. Limitations are also identified in some Member States in the capacity and resources available to non-governmental organisations. This is a serious issue given the valuable role played by non-governmental organisations in enabling the work of equality bodies.

Lengthy delays in the hearing of cases under the equal treatment legislation is raised as another barrier. The dominant barrier identified, however, is the lack of human resources and budgetary restrictions for equality bodies themselves. This barrier has been further aggravated for a number of equality bodies since the survey. Equinet has already been invited to intervene on behalf of equality bodies experiencing severe difficulties in five Member States.

Key Priority Areas

This survey of the work of equality bodies suggests eight key areas that should be prioritised in the new Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men. Each area identified reflects the impact of structures and systems more than any individual behaviour or choices. These areas are:

- ▶ Caring equality
- ▶ Stereotyping
- ▶ Workplace equality
- ▶ Social protection and taxation
- ▶ Protection against discrimination
- ▶ Gender based violence and human trafficking
- ▶ The experience and situation of trans people
- ▶ Multiple discrimination.

1. Caring Equality

Caring equality should be established as a key objective in the new Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men. Inequalities in this field continue to be a significant barrier to gender equality. These inequalities encompass:

- ▶ Discrimination experienced by women in the workplace that is pregnancy related or related to leave entitlements or flexible working requirements, and the discrimination experienced in relation to social protection entitlements due to taking on care responsibilities.
- ▶ The low status accorded to caring work and those doing caring work. This is evident in that most of this work is unpaid or at best is low paid. Significant labour market disadvantages also accrue to those taking on caring responsibilities.
- ▶ The unequal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.
- ▶ The inadequate nature of the care infrastructure available to those in need of care, in particular the inadequacy of publicly financed or subsidised care facilities alongside the threats posed to existing infrastructure under the current economic crisis.

The new Roadmap should ensure that practical and effective actions are taken to secure caring equality. These actions should include:

- ▶ Devising and implementing a strategy to combat pregnancy related discrimination. This should include steps to build an awareness of this issue and the extent of this issue across the Member States. It should include steps to enhance the range of supports available to women who experience this discrimination so that they are aware of their rights and have the confidence to exercise those rights. It should include steps to require employers to

provide information to their employees on their rights in this area under the Equal Treatment Directives.

- ▶ Further promoting the development of a publicly funded or subsidised care infrastructure in all Member States. This should include steps to ensure that the Barcelona targets in relation to childcare are fulfilled and that new targets are set for the provision of care services to older people. It should include steps to support investment in this care infrastructure. The further development of this care infrastructure should be a focus in any economic stimulus packages developed in response to the economic and financial downturn. Structural funds should be deployed to develop this care infrastructure. It should also include steps to ensure that standards are established to guarantee that this care infrastructure is accessible, affordable and attractive.
- ▶ Statutory leave entitlements should be advanced at European Union level in support of caring equality. Paternity leave, paid parental leave, and new carer's leave entitlements in relation to the care of older people and people with disabilities should be introduced. Parental leave provision designed to secure uptake by men should be developed. The right to request flexible working arrangements and to have that request properly considered should be established for all employees.
- ▶ Develop and support promotional campaigns to secure a greater take-up by men of flexible working arrangements, part-time work and parental leave provisions and to create the conditions for a greater sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men.

2. Stereotyping

Gender stereotyping is a causal factor in the discrimination that is experienced by women. Gender stereotyping influences choices made by women and men and leads to occupational segregation. However, gender stereotyping also influences decisions made by policy makers, employers and service providers. It is this latter influence that leads to decisions that discriminate against women. This is why equality bodies have worked to address gender stereotyping as a means of eliminating discrimination.

Gender stereotyping develops as an unfortunate process of lifelong learning that influences decisions by, expectations of and decisions about men and women. Women are stereotyped as dependent, passive and nurturing. Men are stereotyped as independent, active and aggressive. The media, education systems and the advertising industry all play a central role in the generation and communication of these stereotypes. At times, the media, the education system and the advertising industry have also played valuable roles in challenging gender stereotyping.

The new Roadmap should sustain and further develop the actions of the European Commission in this area. These actions should include:

- ▶ Monitoring and reporting on the nature and extent of gender stereotyping in the media, advertising industry and education system. Data of this nature is important in exposing what can often be a hidden process and in building momentum for action to tackle gender stereotyping.
- ▶ Introduce provisions that identify gender stereotyping as a form of discrimination prohibited under the gender Equal Treatment

Directives, in particular bringing the spheres of the media and advertising within the scope of the Directive.

- ▶ Identify, acknowledge, report on and promote good practice in advertising, media and education in challenging gender stereotypes.
- ▶ Promote and support good practice at Member State level to enable boys and girls to make career choices that break with gender stereotypes.

3. Workplace Equality

The case for gender equality is first and foremost a moral case. It is about shared human worth and dignity. However, it is also clear that there is a strong business case for gender equality. Gender equality enhances productivity, innovation and employee retention. More recently an economic case for gender equality has been established. Gender equality in the labour market enhances economic growth.

In a context of economic and financial downturn, this economic case suggests that gender equality should be acknowledged as a prerequisite for achieving economic growth and a return to high levels of employment. However, there has been a failure to include a gender dimension within the responses to date to this economic and financial downturn. In a situation where a clear business case has been established for gender equality, it is hard to understand the ongoing high levels of workplace discrimination experienced by women that are reported by equality bodies. This discrimination includes pregnancy related discrimination. However, it extends to discrimination in promotion, pay and recruitment. It also includes ongoing issues of sexual harassment.

The new Roadmap should have a specific focus on workplace and labour market equality between women and men. It should include actions such as:

- ▶ There should be a specific and named commitment to gender mainstreaming in the Lisbon post 2010 strategy. The preparation of new 'Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs' should encompass a consideration of gender issues. The guidelines should require Member States to conduct and report on gender mainstreaming of their National Reform Programmes. This gender mainstreaming should be applied to both the broad guidelines for economic policies and the guidelines for employment policies. Guidance and support should be made available from a European level to secure an effective, even and consistent implementation of this gender mainstreaming to the highest standard.
- ▶ The Lisbon post 2010 strategy should include a focus on taking specific actions to build strategies to prevent discrimination and to support employers to implement a planned and systematic approach to workplace equality.
- ▶ The Lisbon post 2010 strategy should ensure that responses to economic and financial downturn take account of the different impact of this downturn on women and men and should ensure that new policies and programmes address the different needs of women and men and advance equality between women and men.
- ▶ The European Commission should ensure that the impact of the economic and financial downturn on women and men is identified and analysed and that the responses to this economic and financial downturn are assessed for their impact on gender equality. The

European Commission should put forward proposals to ensure that these responses advance gender equality.

- ▶ Specific action should be taken to address the imbalance between women and men in decision making positions in economic and financial policy making and strategy development. The 2009 Report on Equality between Women and Men identifies that there are no female governors of the national Central Banks in the European Union and women only account for 16% of the highest decision making bodies of these institutions. This should be a particular focus for action.
- ▶ New targets should be established to reduce and eliminate the gender pay gap. A common methodology for gender pay audits at company level should be developed and applied across the European Union. Initiatives should be supported at Member State level to promote and support the implementation of this methodology. The social partners should be involved to assist in driving this initiative. A legal obligation to conduct such gender pay audits should be included in the Equal Treatment Directives, building on best practice at Member State level in this regard.
- ▶ The social partners should be encouraged and supported to implement and further develop their common framework for action on gender equality in all Member States.

4. Social Protection and Taxation

Taxation and social protections systems have begun to emerge in the work of equality bodies on gender issues. The gender issues that arise in these policy areas relate to differences in the labour market histories of men and women due to the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities. They also relate to the design of social protection and taxations systems on the base of a male breadwinner model or a model that defines women as dependent. Taxation and social protection systems designed in this way are a barrier to advancing gender equality and are a source of particular inequalities in a time of economic and financial downturn. The equality bodies identify a number of issues in the field of pensions which result in a greater risk of poverty for older women.

The new Roadmap should have a focus on these systems and stimulate a redesign of such systems at Member State level, where this is necessary, to reflect greater gender equality and to address men and women as independent economic actors. The new Roadmap should include actions such as:

- ▶ The Lisbon post 2010 strategy should support and stimulate a reform of taxation systems to eliminate dependency status and to individualise rights with regards to taxation.
- ▶ The Open Method of Coordination should be developed to support and stimulate a reform of social protection systems to promote gender equality by taking account of the current realities in the different participation of men and women in the labour market and by eliminating dependency status with regard to entitlements.
- ▶ The European Commission should take a particular initiative to assess and highlight the particular situation of older women and their pension entitlements across the European Union. Action should be taken on foot of this initiative to stimulate an effective

response to experiences of poverty by older women due to pension issues.

5. Protection against Discrimination

Equal treatment legislation has advanced considerably in recent times and continues to make a central contribution to gender equality. However, while impressive, this body of legislation remains incomplete and needs to be further developed if it is to be adequate to the ongoing challenges posed by gender inequality. In particular, it needs to be developed in a manner that addresses the structural and systemic dimensions to the inequalities experienced by women. Similarly, equality bodies play a key role in securing the full effectiveness of this equal treatment legislation. It is important to ensure that these bodies are established in a manner to secure their independence and effectiveness. The Roadmap should give some priority to further developing this legal protection but also to ensuring the effective implementation of equal treatment legislation across all Member States.

The new Roadmap should have a particular and focused concern with this issue of protection against discrimination. Actions to be taken in this area should include:

- ▶ The European Union Equal Treatment Directives should be harmonised across the six grounds laid down by Article 19. This should include harmonising the protection against discrimination on the gender ground up to the level of protection currently afforded on the race ground. Significant gaps in protection on the gender ground remain in particular outside the labour market where, for example, gender based discrimination in education, the media and advertising still needs to be addressed.
- ▶ The provisions of the European Union Equal Treatment Directives should be enhanced where they have been found to be ineffective. This is particularly important in relation to equal pay provisions. Casework in this area has been difficult to advance, in particular due to difficulties in securing the necessary information from companies so as to advance the case. Transparency is one of the key means of addressing the gender pay gap. The Equal Treatment Directives should ensure cases can be prosecuted in this area by placing an onus on employers to provide the necessary information if a claim of discrimination is being made. The Equal Treatment directives should promote transparency in pay by requiring companies to conduct equal pay audits on a regular basis and to report on their gender pay gap in their annual reports.
- ▶ A review of exemptions in the gender Equal Treatment Directive should be conducted with a view to eliminating any exemptions that could be deemed to be unnecessary to the promotion of gender equality.
- ▶ The provisions of the European Union Equal Treatment Directives should be enhanced by further developing the positive duties to advance equality and prevent discrimination. Positive duties can make an important contribution in securing institutional change that challenges the structural and systemic causes of gender inequality. The requirements on Member States in relation to gender mainstreaming should be strengthened and extended to policies and programmes outside the labour market as well as labour market policies and programmes. Equality bodies should be afforded a role in setting and enforcing standards for this gender mainstreaming. Requirements on employers and service providers

should be further developed to ensure that they are planned and systematic in their approach to gender equality. Equality bodies should be afforded a role in setting and enforcing standards for such an approach.

- ▶ The provisions of the European Equal Treatment Directives should be extended into new areas. The Directives should explicitly cover the functions of the state as well as the role of the state in the provision of goods and services provided. The Directives should introduce new obligations to advance women in decision making. Targets should be set for the percentage of women on the boards of statutory bodies and publicly quoted companies. These could be monitored and enforced by equality bodies.
- ▶ Public procurement at European and Member State level should include mandatory requirements on those providing goods and services to the public sector in relation to promoting gender equality and combating discrimination. This could be stimulated by new provisions in the Equal Treatment Directives and could be supported by an initiative from the European Commission.
- ▶ The equality bodies should be a particular focus for attention in the new Roadmap. Equinet should continue to be supported to stimulate capacity building for equality bodies through peer learning and to enable an ongoing policy dialogue between equality bodies and the European Commission. The European Commission should establish standards of independence and effectiveness for the equality bodies. These should be carefully monitored and enforced.
- ▶ The role of non-governmental organizations and trade unions in ensuring the effective implementation of equal treatment legislation should be acknowledged. Steps should be taken to support and further develop this role.
- ▶ Training initiatives should continue and be further developed that target key actors in ensuring the effective implementation of the equal treatment legislation. This should include a focus on the judiciary.

6. Gender Based Violence and Human Trafficking

The elimination of gender based violence in all its forms is an essential pre-condition in order to achieve gender equality and to improve the status of women. Human trafficking continues to be another extraordinary abuse of the human rights, in particular of women and children.

A new Roadmap for equality between women and men must ensure significant progress in eliminating gender based violence and human trafficking. Actions to be taken in this area should include:

- ▶ Actions to continue to highlight the significance and scale of these human rights abuses and their impact and to stimulate minimum standards in responding to these issues at Member State level.
- ▶ Continuation of the Daphne programme and action to enhance the impact of the learning from this programme on responses to gender based violence at Member State level.

- ▶ Prioritise a focus on prevention of gender based violence at Member State level emphasising prevention prior to anything happening, early intervention to prevent violence developing and the provision of supports to victims of violence.

7. The Experience and Situation of Trans People

The work of equality bodies is beginning to focus on the situation and experience of trans people. Casework is growing slowly in relation to transsexual people under the gender ground of equal treatment legislation. Response to the wider group of trans people are equally necessary but less well developed.

This is a community that is only now gaining some visibility at European Union level. The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All played an important role in this regard. It is important that this group is now recognised in the new Roadmap for equality between women and men so that their particular situation and experience is recognised and responded to. Actions to be taken in this area should include:

- ▶ Explicit naming of trans people in the Equal Treatment Directives so that they are clearly protected from discrimination under the gender ground in a manner that includes but is not restricted to transsexual people.
- ▶ Initiatives to identify, analyse and respond to the diverse experiences, situations and identities of trans people.
- ▶ Action to stimulate and secure a legal recognition at Member State level for trans people in the gender with which they identify.

8. Multiple Discrimination

The multiple discrimination experienced by women has emerged as an issue in the legal work of the equality bodies. To date this has focused on minority ethnic women, older women and women with disabilities. The European Commission has engaged in a valuable body of work on this issue of multiple discrimination. It is important that this issue is addressed effectively if policy, programmes and practice are to respond to the real situations of inequality being experienced by women.

The new Roadmap should include a focus on this issue of multiple discrimination. Actions to be taken should include:

- ▶ Reports should be developed to identify the particular situation, experience and needs of women holding different multiple identities. This work could start with a focus on minority ethnic women, older women and women with disabilities. This work would develop a deeper knowledge of the issues that are specific to women in these groups.
- ▶ Continue to promote and support an acknowledgement of the multiple identities held by all women.
- ▶ Gender mainstreaming methodologies should be advanced that include a focus on the specific needs, situation and experience of different groups of women holding multiple identities. In this way, gender mainstreaming should advance equality for all women.

- ▶ Legislative provisions should be developed and introduced into the Equal Treatment Directives to ensure that cases can be taken on multiple grounds and that the gravity of multiple discrimination can be recognised.
- ▶ Specific measures taken to advance equality for women should be assessed and designed to ensure that they are relevant to the needs, experience and situation of women experiencing multiple discrimination.
- ▶ Develop methodologies for cross ground data collection to enable an ongoing identification of multiple discrimination issues on the gender ground.

Conclusion

Equinet is conscious that this opinion does not span the full breadth of issues that need to be addressed in securing gender equal societies. However, this opinion draws very directly from the work and experience of the equality bodies in implementing equal treatment legislation. This is not in any way to suggest that other issues are less important but merely reflects the nature of the statutory mandates and strategic approaches of the majority of the equality bodies.

Implementation of the new Roadmap will be as important as the devising of the policy document. Targets, timescales and effective monitoring for actions agreed will be necessary to ensure it makes sufficient impact. Equinet hopes to be able to contribute to this implementation and is ready to respond to any such request from the European Commission.

Equinet looks forward to a positive response to this opinion. Equinet hopes that it can continue to contribute to the development of the new Roadmap through deepening the analysis and detail of any of the recommendations made in this opinion where this is found to be useful and through engaging in ongoing dialogue with the European Commission on the new Roadmap.

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