Joint statement: Paving the way for an equality-centred policy cycle

News, Inclusion and Equality, European Union

> Along with 140 civil society organisations across the EU, we are calling on EU leaders to include equality & non-discrimination as central priorities in the EU work programme for the next five years.

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;
- 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 143 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.

- A Scuola Per Conoscerci, Italy
- ACCEPT LGBTI Cyprus
- ACCEPT Romania
- ACT Alliance EU
- AESCO (América, España, Solidaridad y Cooperación)
- Agapanto, Italy
- AGE Platform Europe
- Agedo Nazionale, Italy
- Aidos (Italian Association for Women in Development)
- ALFI – Associazione Lesbica Femminista Italiana, Italy
- AlfiLune, Italy
- Amnesty International
- Amref Health Africa – Italy
- Anemos Dimiourgias – Greece
- ANTAMA (Greece)
- Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels
- APRe! Associação de Aposentados, Pensionistas e Reformados (Portugal)
- ARCIGAY LGBTQIA+ Association, Italy
- ASKV Refugee Support
- Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Iberoamericanos – AIETI (Spain)
- Asociación Por Ti Mujer
- Association Bagdam Espace Lesbian – France
- Association Legebitra, Slovenia
- Association Liberas – Italy
- Association for Monitoring Equal Rights / E?it Haklar ?çin ?zleme Derne?i (Turkey)
- ASTRA Network
- ATDAL Over 40 (Italy)
- Austrian Disability Council
- Austrian Family Planning Association (OGF)
- Autism-Europe
- Avaaz
- Avocats Sans Frontières
- Belgian Disability Forum (BDF)
- Brain Injured and families European Federation (BIF)

- çavaria, Belgium
- Center for Gender Rights and Equality DIOTIMA
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- Certi Diritti, Italy
- Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale ” Mario Mieli”, Italy
- Civil Rights Defenders
- COC Nederland
- Cologne Counselling – Germany
- Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO)
- Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V. – Germany
- Danish Family Planning Association
- Deutscher Behindertenrat (DBR)
- Disabled Peoples’ International European Region (DPI Europe)
- Doctors of the World Spain
- Društvo Parada ponosa – Slovenia
- EDGE, Italy
- EMAIZE Sexologia Zentroa – Centro Sexológico
- End FGM EU
- Epen, El Parto es Nuestro
- EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)
- European Blind Union (EBU)
- European Disability Forum
- European Dyslexia Association
- European Federation of Hard of Hearing People
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network)
- European Sex Workers’ Rights Alliance (ESWA)
- European Women’s Lobby
- Famiglie Arcobaleno APS, Italy
- Federación de Mujeres Progresistas
- Fédération Laïque de Centres de Planning Familial (FLCPF)
- Foundation for Women and Family Planning (FEDERA)
- French Family Planning / le Planning Familial
- Fundación Aspacia
- GAMS Belgium (Groupe pour l’Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles féminines)
- Gaynet – Formazione e Comunicazione sui temi Lgbti, Italy
- GenderLens, Italy
- General Commission for Justice and Peace of Spain
- GLAS Foundation, Bulgaria
- Haurralde Fundazioa
- HelpAge International
- HelpAge International Spain
- Human Rights Watch
- IGLYO
- ILGA-Europe
- Iniciatíva Inakos?, Slovakia
- International Commission of Jurists
- International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)
- International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- International Federation of Persons with Physical Disabilities (FIMITIC)
- International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights

- International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)
- IntersexEsiste, Italy
- Irish Family Planning Association
- Jovesólides
- Kif Kif vzw
- KISA
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo (Spain)
- La Strada International
- Labrisz Lesbian Association – Hungary
- LesbenRing e.V. – Germany
- Lesbian Magazine and Program Organizing Association – Hungary
- Lesbian Organisation Rijeka – LORI – Croatia
- LesWorking – Spain
- LGBT Ireland
- LGBT komiteen – The LGBT Committee, Denmark
- Light for the World
- LSVD, the Lesbian and Gay Federation, Germany
- Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability (MFOPD)
- Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM)
- medicusmundi
- Mujeres Jóvenes de la Región de Murcia: 8 de marzo (MUJOMUR)
- Mujeres Supervivientes de Sevilla
- National LGBTI Rights Organization LGL – Lithuania
- NET.Collect – Germany
- N?kért Egyesület / Association for Women, Hungary
- Nothern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE)
- OII Europe
- Older Women's Network
- PA.SY.D.Y. Pensioners Union (Cyprus)
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
- Polish Women's Strike
- Possibile LGBTI+, Italy
- PRISME – Fédération wallonne LGBTQIA+, Belgium
- pro familia Bundesverband
- Quaker Council for European Affairs
- Queer Base – Welcome & Support for LGBTIQ Refugees – Austria
- Queer Sisterhood Cluj – Romania
- Quore, Italy
- Rainbow Families Croatia
- Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe – España
- Rete Genitori Rainbow, Italy
- RFSL, Sweden
- Rutgers
- Save the Children
- SB Overseas
- Sdružení pro integraci a migraci (SIMI) / Association for Integration and Migration
- SEDRA-Federación Planificación Familiar
- Sensoa
- Society for Education on Contraception and Sexuality – SECS
- SolidarityNow
- Stichting LOS, Netherlands

- Terre des Femmes
- TGEU – Transgender Europe
- Toutes des Femmes -France
- Turun Valkonauha ry, Finland
- Women Against Violence Europe – WAVE Network
- Zavod Moja mavrica – Slovenia
- Zavod Transfeministi?na Iniciativa TransAkcija – Slovenia

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[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.