

*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.<sup>1</sup> 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;

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<sup>1</sup> 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 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.

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

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

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