

Brussels, 11 July 2024

Joint Statement Calling on Incoming EU Leadership to Prioritise Equality and Non-Discrimination

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

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

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