
Equality bodies: Provisional deal reached on new standards

-
- National bodies should be independent and free from external influence
 - Sufficient resources to carry out their tasks
 - Quick, affordable, out-of-court resolution of disputes
-

The agreement agreed on Tuesday would ensure EU new anti-discrimination rules are effectively applied and enforced.

The provisional agreement reached by Parliament and Council negotiators puts in place new standards for [national equality bodies](#) - public institutions that protect, and provide assistance to those who experience discrimination - to ensure that people across the EU have a minimum level of protection against discrimination.

Independence

Equality bodies should be independent, free from external influence and should not receive any instructions from government, negotiators agree. When an equality body is part of a national ministry, special rules will have to be put in place to ensure it is fully independent in performing its tasks, in particular as regards internal structure, accountability, staffing, and management of financial resources.

Sufficient resources

Member states will have to ensure that equality bodies have sufficient human, technical and financial resources to carry out their tasks, in line with national budgetary processes.

Alternative dispute resolution

Equality bodies should be able to provide assistance to victims. Victims of discrimination will have the option to seek an alternative to taking their case to court to resolve their dispute, such as mediation and conciliation, in each member state.

Equal treatment and intersectional approach

Equality bodies will carry out activities to prevent discrimination and to foster equal treatment, such as promoting positive action and gender mainstreaming, taking into account specific situations of disadvantage resulting from intersectional discrimination.

Quotes

Lead MEP for the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee [Sirpa Pietikäinen](#) (EPP, Finland) said: "This progressive agreement will help victims of discrimination all over the EU. National equality bodies will be able to defend victims of discrimination more robustly and ensure an equal level of protection in all EU member states. Protection against discrimination should never depend on your country of residence. This directive ensures we have effective tools to implement anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Pay Transparency Directive, and defines and harmonises how our national equality bodies can, in reality, defend and support victims."

Lead MEP for the Employment and Social Affairs Committee [Marc Angel](#) (S&D, Luxembourg) said: "Today we celebrate a victory for a European Union of equality. Access to equality bodies will no longer be limited to persons with a legal status of a victim but to all persons in all their diversity that have experienced discrimination. For the first time in the European history, discrimination on these grounds is recognised as an offense justifying protection, support and assistance to victims. It is a crucial step forward in the fight for the respect of human rights. We are stronger in diversity."

The Parliament's negotiating team was chaired by Chair of Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee [Robert Biedroń](#) and Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee [Dragoş Pişlaru](#).

Next steps

Both Parliament and Council will have to formally approve today's provisional agreement before the rules can enter into force.

Further information

Steps of the procedure

Press release after plenary vote - "Equality bodies: MEPs ready to negotiate new EU rules"
(23.11.23)

EP Research Service: Standards for equality bodies: Equal treatment between women and men
in employment (26.09.2023)

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Contacts

Arianne SIKKEN

Press Officer

☎ (+32) 2 28 33126 (BXL)

📱 (+32) 477 99 19 34

✉ arianne.sikken@europarl.europa.eu

✉ empl-press@europarl.europa.eu

🐦 [@EPSocialAffairs](https://twitter.com/EPSocialAffairs)

Natalie Kate KONTOULIS

Press Officer

☎ (+32) 2 28 43562 (BXL)

📱 (+32) 470 88 37 82

✉ natalie.kontoulis@europarl.europa.eu

✉ femm-press@europarl.europa.eu

🐦 [@EP_GenderEqual](https://twitter.com/EP_GenderEqual)
