

The Public Profile of Equality Bodies

An Equinet Report

Prepared by the Equinet Working Group
on Communication Strategies and Practices



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Equinet brings together 42 organisations from 32 European countries which are empowered to counteract discrimination as national equality bodies across the range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Equinet works to enable national equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential by sustaining and developing a network and a platform at European level.

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Introduction

Thekla Demetriadou, Office of the Commissioner for Administration, Cyprus

The public profile of a national equality body may prove to be an important asset or an equally important pitfall for achieving the organization's goals. Hence, when it comes to communication, the shaping of this profile is one of the main tasks for the communicators of the equality body. Doing it properly and effectively might be one of the greatest challenges that the communicators face.

The way an equality body is perceived by the general public, the stakeholders and decision makers directly affects its credibility. Various tools and methodologies may be used in order to shape or change, to some extent, this profile, depending on the target group, the available resources and the results pursued. Other tools may be used to evaluate the actual public profile of the organisation and the impact of the communication work on that profile.

All equality bodies seek to achieve positive change in society, by investigating complaints, following the implementation of the legal and institutional framework for equality, and actively promoting equal treatment and tolerance. Nevertheless, in order to maximize the effect of the work being done, an equality body should consistently and strategically remind people of its existence, accessibility, effectiveness, independence and reliability.

However, the task is not an easy one, and difficulties arise when building or reshaping the profile of an equality body, both internally and externally. Differences exist among the level and type of difficulties faced by the equality bodies, depending on various factors, among which lies the experience of each body and the culture of each society.

When discussing the issue among the Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices (WG), it appeared that some profile-building communication practices have been tested and proven to be more effective and lasting than others. At the same time, it was agreed that each initiative is relevant to the time and the public in which it is applied.

One of the main goals of this paper is to share our experience on different ways to deal with public-profile building. All members of the Working Group were surveyed on their own experience, and discussion followed on the overall findings. This paper is the ultimate result of this fruitful procedure.

On the other hand, this paper has another goal: to remind and advocate for the importance of keeping track and being proactive as regards the public profile of the equality body, as a catalytic factor for achieving its goals. When this position is adopted by all different departments of the equality bodies, then more time, effort and resources will be provided by everyone in order to minimize the difficulties faced by the communicators when trying to keep a positive profile for the organisation.

After all, providing assistance to victims of discrimination and making suggestions towards ensuring equality will not be feasible if the profile of the equality body ceases to inspire trust and authority.

Chapter 1: Why is it important to curate the public profile of equality bodies?

Päivi Ojanperä, Office of the Ombudsman for Equality, Finland

Every organisation and institution has an image and a profile even if it is not aware of it. Everything the organisation does or does not do shapes its image and public profile.

To some extent, it is possible to shape the image and opinions people have of the equality body. Some of the messages concerning the equality body – that have an impact on its image – are intentional and targeted, some unintentional or even unconscious. Some of them can be shaped, others cannot. The image of the equality body is created in people’s minds as a synthesis of their knowledge, perceptions and opinions of the equality body and its work. These opinions may not be truthful or accurate, as the image of the organisation can also be based on insufficient or inadequate information.

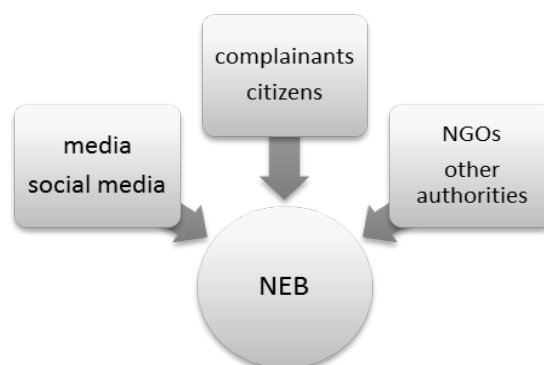
The image and profile of the organisation always arise in relation to the stakeholders. The profile of the equality body is a direct result of its relationship with its audiences and its success in creating and maintaining good relationships with relevant stakeholders.

Individuals and stakeholders build their opinion and evaluation of the equality body on:

- their experiences of working and being in contact with it;
- the behaviour and expertise of the equality body staff and;
- the media-related perceptions of the equality body.

There are also other actors, external shapers, influencing the public profile of the equality body with their public statements, writings and discussions concerning the equality body. The image of the equality body is therefore constantly shaped by:

- media, journalists and social media;
- politicians and NGOs;
- other authorities;
- complainants and the victims of discrimination seeking assistance from the equality body;
- connectors (e.g. high-profile representatives or leaders of the vulnerable communities or groups).



1. *External shapers of the public profile of the national equality body (NEB)*



These perceptions, experiences and externally-shaped images can be influenced by the equality body's own actions and by well-planned strategic work on its public profile. A good reputation is based on doing good things well, having good relationships with relevant stakeholders, and high-quality communication.

The equality body has to work on its public profile in order to be known among the most important stakeholders. A positive profile and reputation has a significant impact on the equality body and its work, on how the equality body is able to fight against discrimination, promote equality and inform about rights and legislation. The actual public profile of the equality body has an impact on how it is viewed and appreciated and how much the stakeholders trust the equality body and its communication.

Aiming for a positive public profile

The overall public profile is shaped by the equality body's mission and functions, and therefore it can be argued that equality bodies are necessary institutions given the existence of discrimination in so many areas of life.

According to a survey of the members of Equinet's Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices, equality bodies generally aim for the profile of an independent, neutral authority that is seen as a reliable and authoritative voice on equal treatment legislation and the promotion of equality.

The profile of a neutral, respected authority means openness and transparency in decision-making, measures and communication, as well as efficiency in actions. According to this "ideal" profile, equality bodies should be seen as modern and accessible and easily available and understood, by both a wide range of stakeholders and by potential victims of discrimination.

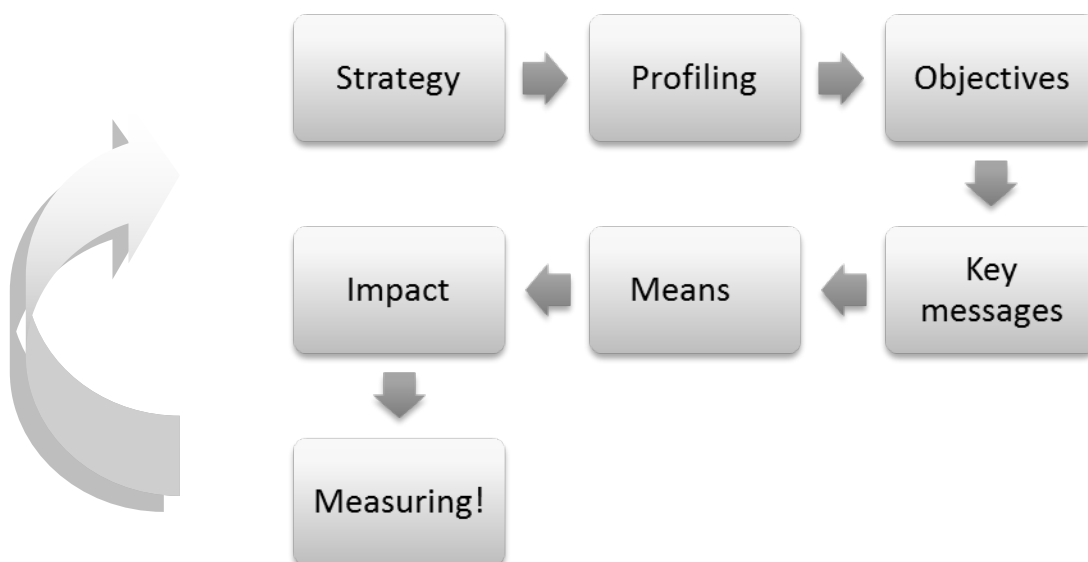
The benefits of working towards a positive public profile, as experienced by equality bodies:

- Persons suspecting that they have been discriminated against will know that the equality body exists, and already have some information about its mandate and services. The complainants trust the equality body as an authority;
- NGOs and other authorities and stakeholders seem to value the equality body's work and seek its advice - the equality body is wanted and appreciated for its cooperation;
- An equality body with a strong, positive profile is able to make a difference with its public statements and initiatives in legislation and society;
- A good reputation protects the equality body when it faces criticism or slandering.

The process of strategically developing a public profile

Institutional profiling stems from an adequate communication strategy. As a process, creating a communication strategy consists of the following steps:

1. Defining the mission, vision and the values of the equality body
2. Defining the aimed, ideal public profile
3. Defining the core objectives
4. Defining the key messages
5. Choosing the means and channels for communicating the key messages to the defined target groups
6. Measuring and evaluating the impact with chosen available good measurement tools (both qualitative and quantitative)
7. Evaluating the possible changes that need to be done (e.g. new target groups, new ways of communicating and reaching the stakeholders, tackling under-reporting, finding resources, enhancing the image of the equality body in a specific stakeholder group etc.)



2. The ongoing process of strategically developing a public profile



A positive reputation and profile are based on consistent work directed by clear objectives: being consistent with what is said and done, and also consistent with the visual identity of the equality body (i.e. the way of presenting the equality body visually in order to be recognized and remembered). Profiling can be defined as constantly managing the public profile in accordance with the mission and communication strategy of the equality body, in a way that supports the defined core objectives of the equality body.

How to measure the public profile and the impact of profiling

The power of profiling depends on systematic planning and measuring its effectiveness as the strategic communication plan is put into practice. Measuring the effectiveness of profiling means following stakeholders' attitudes, for example by evaluating the relationships with the latter regularly and comparing the long-term changes over specific time periods (e.g. every third or fifth year). There are two things that make it easier to target key messages and strengthen an equality body's public profile: having good relations with the most important groups that shape the public profile of the equality body from outside, and having fact-based information about their expectations, attitudes, and knowledge about the equality body's work.

There are many ways of measuring the public profile and the image of the equality body. In terms of profiling, examples of how to evaluate whether or not the equality body is doing a good job include:

1) Media analysis measuring the representation of the equality body in the media

Evaluating the tone of the message and the impression:

- how the equality body is represented in the media: 1) how often/how many times; 2) tone positive/neutral/negative
- how the messages of the equality body are represented in the media: 1) how often/how many times; 2) tone positive/neutral/negative
- how a relevant issue e.g. discrimination based on relevant grounds, equality etc. are represented in the media: 1) how often/how many times; 2) tone positive/neutral/negative

2) Measuring the image and the public profile among the most important stakeholders

The Office of the Ombudsman for Equality in Finland has commissioned an evaluation of the public profile of the body among the key stakeholders (complainants, journalists, relevant authorities and NGOs). The five different dimensions of the profile of the authority were considered:

- *Authoritative* (non-cooperative/cooperative; withdrawn/open; bureaucratic/flexible; dictator/discursive; old-fashioned/modern; not listening/listening)

- *Respected* (not developing its work/developing its work; unknown/known; not respected/respected; reactive/proactive; does important work/does not do important work; motivated staff/unmotivated staff; attractive as a workplace/unattractive as a workplace)
- *Reliable* (objective/partial; for common good/not for common good; irresponsible/responsible; unfair/fair; not a specialist/a specialist; unreliable/reliable; inconsistent/consistent)
- *Serving* (passive/active; does not consider the needs of the stakeholders/does consider the needs of the stakeholders; does not communicate contact person clearly/communicates clearly who to contact; low-quality work/high-quality work; inaccessible/accessible; not useful/useful; does not meet the expectations/meets the expectations; does not inform sufficiently about its work/informs sufficiently about its work)
- *Effective* (ineffective/effective; poorly managed/well managed; slow/quick; does not meet the deadlines/meets the deadlines; communicates the objectives clearly/does not communicate the objectives clearly)

The measurement tool used is called Osgood Semantic Differential, measuring the stakeholder attitudes and connotative meanings of adjectives used by respondents. The results of the profile survey will give a lot of information on how the equality body is actually seen among the different stakeholders, i.e. what is the actual public profile of the equality body; how do the stakeholders evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the equality body and, on the other hand, what are the expectations of the different stakeholder groups.

Evaluations measuring the different dimensions of the public profile are important and valuable tools, since they give measurable and reliable feedback that the organization can use for comparing their own evaluation with the stakeholder evaluation. It also gives quite concrete conclusions of what should be done in order to reach the objectives.

3) Benchmarking

i.e. comparing the processes and the best practices with other equality bodies and other relevant authorities

4) Evaluating campaign communications

These should be analysed in accordance with the strategic campaign messages and the public profile for which you are aiming. This means that you would evaluate and measure the outcome and success in profiling through campaign work.

5) Measuring the public profile on the equality body's official website and social media

- Measuring the attractiveness of its' profile and the ability to reach the stakeholders online: e.g. using the Google Analytics and social media analytics (Facebook and Twitter analytics about the online traffic, the amount and the demography of the



followers, amount of likes and the content analysis of liked/disliked posts, viral activity, missing target groups etc.) and

- measuring the overall public conversation about the equality body in the different social media services by using specific social media measuring tools provided by online media monitoring companies.

The equality body should be aware of the impact of its work and communication efforts to be able to estimate the efficiency of its work. In most cases the impact of its communication initiatives can be measured through questions such as:

- Are the key messages of the equality body recognized, well known and remembered?
- Is the knowledge of the work and mission of the equality body increasing among stakeholders?
- Have the attitudes or opinions changed according to the expectations (among a certain target group/during a campaign or certain time period)?
- Has the public profile and reputation of the equality body changed and in what way/in which stakeholder groups?
- Did the themes addressed by the equality body go public as wished and expected?
- Is the cooperation better with a specific stakeholder group?
- Has the equality body built some new stakeholder relationships or partnerships/resources after systematic profiling?
- Have the key messages gone through as the equality body planned them to?
- Is there an increasing interest in the equality body and its actions/statements?

By defining the strategic objectives, key messages and audiences, and by measuring the impact of the chosen communication means, equality bodies are able to evaluate the actual impact of their strategic work and, systematically, work on the public profile for which they aim.

Chapter 2 – How do equality bodies build their public profile?

2.1 The current state of affairs

Cornelia Amon-Konrath, Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria

When discussing this topic among the WG members, it was no surprise for us to learn that there is a wide margin on how the aspect of communication is dealt with in the different equality bodies. This is not only because different bodies have a different mandate, but also due to the fact that there are equality bodies that have been working for a longer time than others, had mergers, changed their mandate and so on. But what we all could agree on – and this was confirmed in the answers to a survey we did – was that communication is a priority. This is due to the simple fact that whether it is stated in the mandate of the body or not, promotion of equality (and therefore communication) is a prerequisite to achieve the equality body's objectives.

Equinet supports peer learning amongst its members and on this occasion, produced a survey with 20 questions. The following chapter deals with the questions and answers given to the aspect of funding communication work and the basic principles the equality bodies give themselves.

What objectives do equality bodies establish for their communication work?

In the answers to the survey it became clear that there are two sides of communication: the internal and the external.

Internally, it seemed to the WG that especially newly founded equality bodies (as well as those that merged with other organisations or had other transition processes) have the need to encourage their employees to understand and support the vision and mission of the institution. This is important to create a common identity and to increase personal involvement, but also motivation and an opportunity for personal and professional development. As equality bodies tend to always be in need of more funds and are therefore asking a great deal of intrinsic motivation of its employees, it is vital to develop a creative, constructive and value-oriented workplace. Therefore communication lines should be short and employees should be able to receive the information they need and be able to share information in an effective way.

External communication mainly takes place with the various audiences equality bodies are trying or should be trying to reach. Again there is a great variety of needs, depending on where the equality body stands. Is it newly founded and still needs to make itself known to a general public? Or was there a merger and the equality body has to reassure target audiences that it is still an institution dealing with their needs? Is it a well-established body trying to tackle underreporting in certain fields of society or is it dealing in a proactive way with stakeholders?

Regardless of the very different “stages of development“ a body finds itself in, there are some aims and principles common to all the equality bodies.

- Communication work is seen as something essential to reach the equality bodies’ aims.
- Equality bodies want to be regarded as independent, trustful and reliable, friendly and easy to reach. They want to establish themselves as authorities and respected experts concerning their field of work, to be seen as a trusted and wanted partner (or respected opponent).
- They want to be flexible, to set standards and to engender change within a society to create an equality based environment. They want to be able to accommodate and be attentive.
- Equality bodies want to inform people about their rights actively and in a modern and easy to understand way.
- They want to lobby for legal changes and to establish the understanding within society that discrimination has to be taken seriously.
- Equality bodies want to reach out to different vulnerable groups and stakeholders, but also to multipliers so that there is a ripple effect .

Discussing those statements the WG came to the conclusion that as “promoters of equality“ and to be able to reach all those objectives, equality bodies have declared the most important things for them are:

- to develop a communication strategy and
- to establish an entity within the equality body dealing with communication work.

What are the facts, regarding financing and staff?

When looking at the situation now, however, there are certain facts that make it very difficult for equality bodies to reach their objectives. First, there is the state of funding. In the survey, equality bodies were asked to give figures on the percentage of budget used for communication compared to the total budget of the equality body:

Some bodies did not know and one body set an example in stating that 48% of its budget was used for communication work. But the vast majority declared that only from 0,002 to 6,4 percent were given to communication affairs.

Accordingly, we asked how many of the their staff works on communication (number given in percentage). There were two bodies where 30% and 31.8% respectively are dealing with communication. With the others, it differed from 1.66% to 17%, but mostly the figures ranged between 5% and 9%.

When looking at those figures, it is clear why some bodies focus on an ad-hoc communication strategy or have a more ad-hoc approach without a stringent strategy behind it, and other bodies are able to develop fine-tuned strategies with a flexible ad-hoc approach.

Another and very important aspect was, that in most of the equality bodies, there is a majority of lawyers dealing with the day to day work. In some bodies there are no communication experts as such, but lawyers or other staff shouldering the work of a communication

department. The interesting thing that came out of discussions among the members of the WG was, that aims and requirements for communication can be very different in a lawyer's or communication expert's view. Lawyers tend to back away from putting things in a simple way as they worry about being incorrect. On the other hand, experts in communication try to keep messages as simple as possible, all the while keeping the audience in mind. Their main objective is to raise awareness and not essentially get a legal detail right. In our opinion, the combination of these two aspects, to be correct and to keep it simple, would be the ideal way to move forward and would be an opportunity to learn from each other. Some equality bodies try to get the best out of this challenge (and the financial one) by building matrixed cross-discipline teams. Others give special trainings to lawyers so that they can also communicate effectively with different target groups. This may also be important when dealing with the media, as there are other laws to be respected in this kind of field and non-communication experts tend to back away from dealing with the media.

All in all, the majority of equality bodies stated that there was a good level of coordination and cooperation between the communication department/person and the other departments.

It is highly important to value the aspect of communication. This can be achieved in different ways:

- **By installing the responsible entity for communication in a respected hierarchical position.**
- **By making it clear in the overall strategy that communication is an essential factor in reaching the equality body's aim and that it has to be thought of in every aspect of the equality body's work.**

To sum up, communication is important not only when it comes to an overall strategy, but also in the day to day work, as the employees of an equality body are the key factors to promoting the principle of equality in their everyday communication.

2.2 The public profile of equality bodies

Marco Buemi, National Office against Racial Discrimination, Italy

The aim of this section is to explain how an equality body can achieve their aims and objectives using the active promotion of their work as one of their strategies. Actively promoting an equality body in a planned way may be far from everyone's mind as they work intently and passionately on achieving their organisation's objectives.

The overall public profile of the equality body is usually that of an accessible and effective institution that is proficient in safeguarding equal treatment in ways that can be easily available and understood by a wide range of stakeholders. It is very important to underline that the accessibility of the equality body is important, above all, for anyone who may be at risk of being discriminated against. The public profile is often shaped by its institutional mission and functions.



The equality body should be an independent and neutral authority, which acts as a reliable specialist on relevant legislation and promoting equality. Equality bodies are in a process of radical reappraisal of their role by moving away from the isolationist approach and the alleged self-reliance of a “national” Office towards: a more dynamic, non-bureaucratic attitude based on the principle of the effectiveness of the role; the execution of all the duties assigned by the European Directive and the current regulatory framework; and a strategy aimed at a constant sharing, cooperation and mutual enhancement with the system of:

- local autonomies (Regions, Provinces and Municipalities as well as the relevant representative associations)
- the NGOs active both on a local and national level
- the reference communities
- the social forces (trade union and employers' organizations)
- civil society

The equality body in some cases does not commonly decide and register the public profile of the organization. The strategy of the public profile is more traced by the Equality Department that set up a specific plan for equality bodies' equality work and tries to develop key indicators to ensure a horizontal perspective on discrimination issues.

In some organizations this aim has been commonly decided and registered in the equality body's annual reports, in other organizations the public profile has been decided by involving the Management Board, the stakeholders, the internal staff and external expertise. For some equality bodies, it is more difficult to convince internally that communications is not only about “informing” and that it can bring benefits at all levels. Further efforts, in fact, need to be made within equality bodies to streamline the legal and communication work in order to ensure adequate channels and messaging towards external stakeholders.

How to actively promote one's work to develop a public profile?

Most commonly the equality body seeks a public profile through internal discussions and ad-hoc decisions on how and when to react but also when they decide what kind of topics they want to bring up (e.g. meeting with journalists). But the very common way to seek a public profile is through general communication activities.

All the equality body's activities to seek a public profile are directed toward awareness campaigns, events to promote equality and non-discrimination, publications (guidelines, codes of conduct, toolkits, brochures etc.) and lately through the most important social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube).

Well organized and consistent social media engagement is important. Either to communicate publicly or to exchange information with specific groups (e.g. twitter for journalists or stakeholders to know a report has been issued, Facebook for promoting the work of the equality body and for sharing articles on related issues). However, dialogue can sometimes be difficult like providing answers, or avoiding disputes through the web.



The main problem identified by most equality bodies to successfully develop their public profile are the limited resources available. In the case of limited funds, the focus of the communication work should be dedicated to shaping and improving the image among target audiences that have a neutral or already positive view of the equality body, rather than trying to impact audiences that already have a clearly negative view.

Many equality bodies seek to have a particular public profile, in particular with these groups or on these grounds:

- ethnicity
- gender
- disability
- Roma community
- intersex people
- trans people
- employers
- trade unions
- each specific ground of discrimination that is covered by the equality body
- civil society
- media
- duty bearers
- social partners

Evaluation of the public profile

The equality bodies don't always evaluate the public profile due to lack of time and above all, a lack of financial resources. Those that do evaluate their public profile often use on-line surveys or media monitoring. The media monitoring can be done daily and is more immediate and direct. Through the media monitoring, it is possible to understand what the media are interested in. This data could be strategic for the equality bodies' communication department to present news, projects, awareness campaigns, events, and strategies in a more attractive way for the media.

Chapter 3: What can equality bodies do to build and shape their public profiles effectively?

Aidan Toomey, British Equality and Human Rights Commission

The 2013 Equinet Communication Survey ¹ raised the important question: Do equality bodies in any way seek to influence the “external shapers” ² of its public profile? Of the 14 equality bodies asked, 11 answered that they do seek to influence whilst three responded that they do not seek to influence.

What this can suggest is that not all equality bodies have the capacity and resources to communicate externally or that communications planning is not so prominent on the organisational agenda.

The EU equal treatment legislation requires Member States to set up an equality body and most Member States have implemented the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)³ and the Gender Equal Treatment Directives (the 2010/41 on self-employed persons⁴, the 2006/54 Recast Directive⁵, and the 2004/113 Goods and services Directive⁶) either by designating some existing institution or by setting up a new institution to carry out the competences assigned by the new legislation.

Importantly, each Directive contains the text:

“Member States shall designate a body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of either racial or ethnic origin / sex. These bodies may form part of agencies charged at national level with the defence of human rights or the safeguard of individuals' rights.

Member States shall ensure that the competences of these bodies include:

- Without prejudice to the right of victims and of associations, organisations or other legal entities, providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination;
- Conducting independent surveys concerning discrimination;
- Publishing independent reports and making recommendations on any issue relating to such discrimination.”

The above three points suggest that communication planning needs to be an integral part of the equality body. Consider also, that no two equality bodies are the same. They all work in different ways through different departmental structures, policies, processes and procedures.

¹ Equinet Communication Survey 2013: What are the main difficulties faced by equality bodies in building and shaping their public profiles?

² “External Shapers” of National Equality Body’s (NEB’s) profiles as outlined by Equinet include Media and Journalists; Politicians; National Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Complainants and victims of discrimination who seek the NEB’s assistance; Connectors (e.g. high-profile representatives or leaders of vulnerable communities or groups); Social media.

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:EN:NOT>

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:180:0001:0006:en:PDF>

⁵ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/transposition-table>

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0113:EN:HTML>



But what the requirements of these Directives and these three key points, can legitimise is that this type of work is important for Equality Bodies.

It is recommended that the requirements of the directives of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Gender Equal Treatment Directives (the 2010/41 on self-employed persons, the 2006/54 Recast directive, and the 2004/113 Goods and services directive) are taken into account as they can legitimise that this type of work is important for equality bodies.

In writing this final chapter, I have looked at those survey findings that demonstrate examples of good practice in communication and have used this information to tackle the essential question: What can equality bodies do to build and shape their public profiles effectively? The points identified are by no means exhaustive or finalised but can act as a useful indicator to improving effectiveness in this area of work.

Ensure effective internal communication

1. Communication jobs

If jobs are created or in place that are specific to communication then this indicates that the equality body is taking their communication planning seriously.

When difficulties occur which are relevant to the equality body and its communication work, then having a dedicated member of staff in place dealing with this line of enquiry can be effective.

2. A clear Communication Strategy (CS)

A CS can help the equality body to communicate effectively and meet core organisational objectives. The support of organisation leaders is important as they can set the stage for the importance of communication with a clear mission, a statement of purpose, and objectives. This can mean that communication is highly valued and considered in every action of the equality body. Ultimately it can mean better communication which can save time and money. An example of an equality body laying a CS for the future is the Cyprus Ombudsmen. The participation of an Officer of the Cyprus Ombudsman on the Equinet WG on Communication Strategies and Practices, as well as the experience of two other Officers working on communication issues during the Cyprus EU (European Union) presidency, led to the preparation of the first CS Action Plan for the Cyprus Ombudsman, which was submitted as a proposal in July 2013, and was adopted in September 2013.

The Communication Team (formed unofficially by the three Officers) is expected to proceed further with the implementation. It must be noted that apart from the knowledge they have gained from experience, none of them have had specific training.

The CS and Action Plans last for three years, at the end of which the actions will be evaluated. The CS includes four Chapters with relevant actions, notably:

- Enhancement of public visibility
- Maximization of use of electronic media



- Development of structured internal communication
- Improvement of the collaboration with other authorities and stakeholders.

Specifically on building a positive public profile, the CS includes, among others, actions in relation to the following:

- Building a proper and efficient two-way relation with media;
- Preparing and circulating a Newsletter with actions, activities and important reports of the Ombudsman;
- Doing a survey online to get public opinion as regards the effectiveness, usefulness and accessibility of the institution;
- Organising a series of events aiming to reach, as widely as possible, the public and inform on the mandates and the potential of the Ombudsman.

3. Objectives

Objectives can be the key to the success of an equality body's communication strategy. The equality body can ensure that their CS is organisationally driven rather than communication driven.

Alignment of communication and organisational objectives help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communication and help make a case for the proper resourcing of communication activity within the equality body.

4. Internal channels of communication

Good internal channels of communication in an equality body can ensure that employees know what is happening in an organisation internally and it enables them to contribute to organisational agendas. It is useful to have these channels in place so as they can help in ensuring that there is joined up working and no duplication or misunderstandings.

The British Equality and Human Rights Commission uses a variety of channels when conveying messages to employees. Just some examples of these channels are:

- **The intranet:** This is an internal private network that displays web based information to staff members. It features a wealth of information including forms library, regular updates, training activities, internal and external news stories and updates.
- **Regular meetings in which information is shared:** Open forum meetings are held regularly in which staff provide updates about their work. Lunchtime seminars take place in which speakers present on interesting and insightful topics in relation to equality and human rights. All staff meetings are held to inform staff of the latest organisational developments.
- **Newsletters:** There is a regular Research information team internal fortnightly electronic bulletin that contains information about new equality and human rights developments, policy and publications, legal cases, useful websites, forthcoming events and other items of interest.

The channels of communication are also accessible. For example, the intranet is designed to meet accessible web standards; access requirements are organised in advance for meetings; newsletters are designed to meet accessible information standards.



Ensure effective external communication

Survey findings revealed that most equality bodies believe in effective external communication in helping to establish the creation of networks of cooperation and exchange of information for every ground of discrimination. To ensure effective external communication, techniques can be applied by equality bodies, such as:

1. Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a technique used to identify and assess the influence and importance of key people, groups of people, or organisations that may significantly impact the success of your activity or project⁷.

This kind of analysis is specific. For example, an equality body might choose to hold a seminar specifically around Health, Social Care and Disability. Their stakeholder analysis primarily may entail referring to their existing in-house databases to look at stakeholders groups in these three areas of work. Secondly they may choose to do further analysis externally to ensure that they have a balanced number of stakeholders, from each group, to choose from before extending invitations to the seminar.

2. Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is the process of effectively eliciting stakeholders' views on their relationship with the organisation/programme/project.

Participation Questionnaires are a good example of stakeholder engagement: In November 2013, the British Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) launched the UN (United Nations) Disability Convention Participation Questionnaire. This questionnaire was about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the UNCRPD, or the Disability Convention). This was sent to all disability stakeholders and Disabled People's User-Led Organisations in the United Kingdom (UK). The questionnaire findings helped in providing further information for EHRC's work on the Disability Convention and the list of issues that they want the UN Disability Committee to consider. The questionnaire is just one information gathering method that helps to set the agenda for the examination of the UK Government's report on implementation of the Disability Convention⁸ that is expected to happen in 2015. The EHRC are currently engaging disabled people on the issues to include in their submission to the UN Committee.

3. Sharing the learning

Equinet aims to ensure that sharing the learning initiatives takes place between equality bodies regularly. Their work can often mean that equality bodies do not work in isolation.

Equinet consistently produces important documents that can be of value to equality bodies in their working practices. For example, they produced a Report on *Tackling under-reporting of*

⁷ Stakeholders: Theory and Practice, Friedman & Miles, 2006

⁸ <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disabled-people-and-legislation/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-disabled-people/have-your-say.php>



*discrimination through better communication*⁹ stating that good communication strategies and practices needed to be at the heart of any adequate response to under-reporting. In Equinet's view such a communication response aims to:

- Inform members of groups experiencing discrimination about their rights and how to exercise them. This includes finding the right channels of communication for different groups experiencing discrimination and conducting outreach activities toward these groups.
- Build confidence among members of groups experiencing discrimination in exercising their rights. Trust needs to be built with the equality body. Equality body processes need to be accessible. Complainants need to know what will happen once they make a complaint and the process needs to be predictable. Groups experiencing discrimination need to hear about successful cases.
- Build a culture of rights in society. Equality bodies need to contribute to a wider culture in society that is positively disposed to diversity and to people challenging discrimination.

Equinet also works to share the learning through training programmes for equality bodies. For example, in November 2012, Equinet ran a Common Cause¹⁰ workshop around the question of how as a national equality body should we communicate to bring about societal change? To summarise, this training outlined the values and frames model that Common Cause promotes which advocates that society changes when certain values are engaged. According to the research presented, using economic value arguments for equality and human rights increases the likelihood of engagement with the audience's "extrinsic" values that are less altruistic and less concerned with the benefits of society as a whole. It endorses these self-interested views and, according to the Common Cause theory, is counter-productive.

A key value of sharing this learning is that this kind of invaluable work with external stakeholders such as Equinet can offer fresh approaches for national equality bodies in terms of their strategy and thinking¹¹.

4. Meetings

Equality body staff consistently have face-to-face meetings with external stakeholders. In addition to this, if the technology is there, they have the option to meet using Video Conferencing and Audio Conferencing technology. Meetings can ensure that a large number of stakeholders are reached with focused and targeted messages. They can ensure that good working relationships and partnerships are built with key stakeholders.

⁹ Tackling the "Known Unknown": How Equality Bodies Can Address Under-Reporting of Discrimination through Communication. <http://www.equineteurope.org/Tackling-the-Known-Unknown-How>

¹⁰ Common Cause is a network of people working to help rebalance cultural values to create a more equitable, sustainable and democratic society. Website: <http://valuesandframes.org/>

¹¹ [Following on from the Common Cause workshop and paper on Under-reporting, in 2013, the Working Group on Communication Strategies and Practices prepared a survey on the values that their organisations express in their work. Based on this and additional research, the Public Interest Research Centre published a commissioned report in 2014 that mapped out how European equality bodies express values in their communications, and the impacts such communications may be having.

The report enables a deeper understanding of the way values work and how equality issues might be affected by appealing to different values. It provides advice on how to put an understanding of values and message framing into practice and offers indicators for good and bad practice in this area. The aim of this research is therefore to inform equality bodies and other organisations how to align their communications with the societal values that will ensure that people across Europe are motivated to live in acceptance of one another, free from discrimination. Website: <http://www.equineteurope.org/Using-values-to-create-a-more/>



5. Attending essential public events

Equality body staff will attend public events for information gathering purposes, promotion of work and to network and engage with external stakeholders.

6. Transparent and independent decision making procedures

Some equality bodies have policies and procedures in place that ensure transparency and independent decision-making. For example, the EHRC has an independent Regulatory Decision Making Panel (RDMP) that takes the majority of the EHRC's regulatory decisions. The kind of activities RDMP considers includes:

- British Equality Act 2006 Section 28¹² and Section 30¹³ cases
- Encouraging compliance with the public sector equality duty
- Responses to government or others' consultations
- Policy responses to new developments

The RDMP enables the EHRC to:

- Focus their resources on the fulfilment of their duties, and use of their unique powers;
- Ensure their actions align with their strategic and corporate plans, and have maximum impact; and
- Manage their resources effectively and efficiently, enabling them to respond to emerging risks or opportunities.

As this structure is in place, it can ensure effective engagement with stakeholders. It also benefits staff internally as they adhere to set policies and procedures which help determine outcomes.

7. Campaigns

Some equality bodies will run campaigns as a form of communicating and influencing external stakeholders. The Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) in Cyprus ran a comprehensive Integrated Anti-Discrimination Campaign¹⁴ between December 2009 and November 2010 that included several actions and targeted a wide range of audiences, notably policy makers, mass media – journalists, National Government Organisations (NGOs) and Trade Unions/Employer Associations.

The general goals and objectives were, firstly and most significantly, to raise awareness and sensitise the general public on issues of discrimination; secondly, to inform selected stakeholders on issues of discrimination; thirdly, to identify – for policy making purposes –

¹² Section 28 of the Equality Act 2006 allows EHRC to provide assistance to an individual who is or may become party to legal proceedings if the proceedings relate or may relate to a provision of the equality enactments. The EHRC can only offer assistance if the individual alleges that he or she has been the victim of behaviour that breaches equality law.

¹³ As the MoJ is aware, the Commission has been granted a power by Parliament under Section 30 Equality Act 2006 to bring judicial review claims in its own right. We have made reference to this power in pre-action correspondence where litigation was ultimately avoided. In a small number of cases, and only after extensive engagement with the public body concerned, we have used Section 30 to issue proceedings where we considered that it was in the public interest for us to act to avoid the risk of a breach of equality or human rights law which could not be addressed by other means. In such cases, the question of standing does not arise because express statutory standing is conferred by Section 30 Equality Act 2006. However, this illustrates how it may be necessary for a body to act in the public interest, where no individual can do so.

¹⁴ <http://www.equineteurope.org/Integrated-anti-discrimination>



the needs of certain vulnerable groups; and, lastly, to promote some good practices in combating discrimination.

8. Digital and Social Media

Digital and social media is a channel that can be used to promote positive, accurate messages, and to counter inaccurate messages, about the application of the law on equalities and human rights.

Equality bodies will seek to communicate with their audiences using digital and social media, notably:

- **Websites:** The majority of equality bodies have a website¹⁵ and this can help in demonstrating their credibility and showing stakeholders that they are serious about their work. A website can be easily updated and ensures promotion of work. For example, the current homepage of Poland's Human Rights Defender¹⁶ shows their latest statistics notably that in November 2013, their offices received 469 visitors and 3069 telephone calls, providing explanations and advice. They sent 6253 letters in 4809 cases, registered 187 open letters and protests. Another benefit of having a website can be seen in improved stakeholder relations services. A feedback form on the website can be invaluable, giving stakeholders a way to provide honest feedback. Websites can also be used to promote cases and policy developments. For example, the EHRC website has a page on Legal and Policy which demonstrates how they aim to secure an effective legal and regulatory framework for equality and human rights by influencing legislative and policy developments and by using their statutory powers¹⁷.
- **Electronic Newsletters:** Electronic newsletters are a popular way of communicating with stakeholders. The EHRC, for example, sends out a monthly electronic newsletter to around 38,000 EHRC contacts. The newsletter contains news relating to equality, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, transgender, human rights and more. This can be an extremely quick and cost-effective way to communicate with stakeholders and can be used as a key vehicle for promotional content and news feeds. Also, it is an excellent way in linking back to specific pages on an equality body's website or blog, and in turn this encourages quality, targeted website traffic.
- **Social Media:** The majority of equality bodies do not use Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube in the promotion of their work¹⁸. This can be disadvantageous as social media is a key tool area that can be used to generate more followers to a website and it can help an equality body to reach a larger audience. At a technical level, social media can help to boost a website's search engine ranking. Active and new content on social media accounts can mean a better Search Engine ranking on Google. Social media is free so it can prove a very cost effective solution in terms of marketing and promotion of work.

¹⁵ <http://www.equineteurope.org/-Member-organisations-> (this link contains the Equality Bodies of Equinet and their websites.)

¹⁶ <http://www.rpo.gov.pl/en> (Poland's Human Rights Defender website)

¹⁷ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/> (EHRC Legal and Policy pages).

¹⁸ [In the meantime (2015), over half of Equinet members use one form of social media or another, namely Facebook, Twitter or Youtube]



Measuring success

This Chapter has looked at what equality bodies can do to build and shape their public profiles effectively in terms of communication planning. The long-term success of this planning can then depend on measuring the relative success of each strategy and ensuring evaluation.

Free user-friendly tools exist online that can be used to measure success which means that mediums such as websites, social media and e-newsletters can be evaluated with ease.

There are no set criteria or finalised recommended approaches to effective evaluation. Data, statistics and information can be collated relatively quickly using the tools. But, what is of significant importance is as to how the data, statistics and information are used by the equality body.

Evaluation can only be as strong as how committed the equality body is in terms of their overall approach to communication planning. Commitment to this planning means that evaluation techniques are applied and this can help motivate equality bodies to have a clearer picture of the external landscape and what works and doesn't work. It can motivate them to tailor their objectives accordingly and shape their organisation for the challenges ahead.

Annex 1: Survey of the role of communication in equality bodies

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS IN YOUR EQUALITY BODY

1. Please tick one or more options as appropriate:

	My equality body has a communications or public relations department
	My equality body has an expert ¹⁹ (e.g. Communications or PR Officer) working on communications/public relations
	In my equality body a person is in charge of communications/public relations without being an expert in this field
	My equality body follows a specific communications strategy
	My equality body has a specific strategy for shaping its public profile
	My equality body has an ad-hoc approach to communications
<p><i>Please use this space to provide any further comments on the place and role of communications in your equality body:</i></p>	

2. Please fill in the numbers below for 2013 (for parts of the organisation dealing with equality and discrimination issues):

<i>Budget for communications:</i>	<i>Total budget of the equality body:</i>
<i>People working on communications</i>	<i>Total number of staff members of the equality body</i>

¹⁹ This may be a person with education/training in communications or public relations and/or with adequate work experience in the field that qualifies her/him as an expert or specialist.



3. Is there a good level of cooperation and coordination between the communications department/person and other departments in your equality body (e.g. legal, policy, management)? Please explain.

4. What objectives have you established for your overall communication work? (If none please state “none”)

THE PUBLIC PROFILE OF YOUR EQUALITY BODY

5. What overall public profile is your equality body aiming for? Was it commonly decided and registered somehow?

6. How is this aim sought? (e.g. specific Strategic Action Plan on Communications, occasional actions, individual initiatives)

7. If you seek to have a particular profile with certain groups please describe this profile and name the group you seek to have this profile with.

8. What are the main difficulties that your equality body faces when seeking to shape its public profile?

9. Does your equality body evaluate its public profile in any way (e.g. impact assessment, surveys, media monitoring, evaluation of Action Plan, etc.)? If not, please state “no”. If yes, how?



10. Is the public profile aimed for by your equality body the profile that it actually has? If not, please describe what the “real-life” profile is and if this varies for different groups.

11. How do you perceive this “real-life” profile (e.g. evaluations mentioned at previous point, contacts with other stakeholders, overall impression, etc.)?

12. Who are the key actors that shape the profile of your organisation the most (e.g. journalists, activists, politicians, NGOs, community leaders, etc.)?

13. If your organisation has been affected and/or influenced by its representation by the abovementioned external factors, please explain how.

14. Does your equality body in any way seek to influence the “external shapers” of its public profile?

15. What are the main difficulties that your equality body faces when seeking to influence the “external shapers” of its public profile?

16. Please list the most important initiatives that you have taken to shape the public profile of your equality body or to influence the “external shapers” of its public profile.

Name of initiative:

Objective:

Target audience:

Messages:

Channels of communication used:

Short description (200 words):

Resources:

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body:

Contact person:

17. Were there any instances when one of your initiatives, projects, campaigns, etc. had a negative impact on the public profile of your equality body?

18. Were there any instances when a *lack of* initiatives, projects, campaigns, etc. had a negative impact on the public profile of your equality body?

USING THE PUBLIC PROFILE TO BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE IN SOCIETY

19. Has the public profile of your equality body enabled it to make a difference in combating discrimination and promoting equality in your country? Please explain why and/or how.

Annex 2: Initiatives to shape an equality body’s public profile

This list includes some of the main initiatives that equality bodies have developed in the past to shape the public profile of their equality body or to influence the “external shapers” of its public profile. They generally fall under the categories mentioned in chapter 3 to ensure effective internal and external communications.

Communication strategy

Finland – Ombudsman for Equality

Name of initiative: **Project on Strategic Communication (2007-2008)**

Objective: To create a Communication Strategy for the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality

Target audience: First the staff of the office of the Ombudsman for Equality. After internalizing the strategic guidelines, all stakeholders

Messages: Clear messages what the office of the Ombudsman for Equality is (reason for existence and what we are aiming for), what are the functions and how we work

Channels of communication used: Internal meetings with the communication consultant

Short description: The strategy project focused on defining the vision, mission, core values, the most important stakeholders (analyzing the current/aimed relations and the missing contacts, need for cooperation and the mutual/contradictory agenda), the main messages (profile) and the communication responsibilities:

- to clarify the profile and the strategy of the equality body internally among the staff, with the mutual internal engagement and, by the clear profile
- to distinguish the Ombudsman from the other authorities working on discrimination (all the other grounds than gender) and authorities working on gender equality/equality (other than gender equality)
- to define the main messages that are used in all communication, with all the stakeholders in the same tone.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: Measures of the strategic communication (media monitoring, survey on image and reputation, social media and website analytics and monitoring, stakeholders’ willingness to cooperate and the relations with the key stakeholders etc.) are constantly evaluated against the strategy and the aimed profile

Stakeholder analysis

Finland – Ombudsman for Equality

Name of initiative: **Commissioned an evaluation (stakeholder survey) of the image and public profile of the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality among the key stakeholders (2008)**

Objective: To evaluate the image and profile of the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality among the key stakeholders

Target audience: Complainants, media representatives (journalists), other authorities, trade unions and the NGOs we work with

Messages: It is very important for the Office of the Ombudsman to know its actual image among the stakeholders to learn from their feedback and experiences and to be able to meet the expectations of the stakeholders.

Channels of communication used: E-form, sent via email

Short description: The survey was evaluating and measuring the image, profile and reputation of the equality body. The quantitative measurement tool used was the Osgood Semantic Differential Scale, measuring stakeholder attitudes and connotative meanings of adjectives used by respondents. There were five different dimensions considered:

- Authoritative
- Respected
- Reliable
- Serving
- Effective

The qualitative dimension of the survey was focusing on first impressions (not affected by the Osgood Semantic Differential Scale) and the experiences of the respondents in cooperating with the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality.

The results of the research were only used in the internal work of the office to enhance the communications.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The survey gave measurable and repeatable qualitative and quantitative data on the actual image and profile of the equality body among the most important stakeholders. The results showed clearly what are the strengths and weaknesses in the profile, and what kind of changes should be done in order to achieve the aimed overall public image and to correct/enhance the profile in different stakeholder groups. The survey also revealed the hopes and expectations of the stakeholders for the Ombudsman and the level of their knowledge about the equality body (right and wrong knowledge, lack of knowledge) but also the impressions among different stakeholder groups. These results led into action and there were many changes made in communications (stressing the changes in those actions that were evaluated as a weakness, like lack of sufficient communication etc.). The survey will be repeated this year and the results are expected to be better than in 2008.

Name of initiative: **Enhancing/updating the visual profile**

Objective: To create a recognizable, fresh and modern, professional visual profile that is in line with the aimed and actual profile of the Ombudsman of Equality (equality body)

Target audience: All the stakeholders

Messages: The Office of the Ombudsman for Equality is interesting, fresh and friendly authority

following its time; also interesting for younger people

Channels of communication used: The Annual Report, official website, Facebook, Twitter, campaign websites

Short description: We have been creating a visual profile for the office for two years now and this spring we decided to great our own “photo bank” that looks like our profile; ordinary people, all ages and genders, having different emotions. The campaign designs have also been following the same idea; fresh, professional, surprising visual profile.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The positively surprised, great feedback from the stakeholders of the annual report; lots of interested people and followers on Facebook and website; lots of great feedback from the campaign design

Stakeholder engagement

Denmark - Danish Institute for Human Rights

Name of initiative: Equality Lab – equal treatment in public authorities

Objective: To promote equal treatment and prevent discrimination due to age, disability, gender, racial and ethnic origin, religion and faith, and sexual orientation in public services as well as in the workplace of public authorities.

Target audience: Public authorities and institutions

Messages: All members of the community should have equal access and equal opportunities to make use of public service provisions.

Channels of communication used: DIHR has developed a number of tools, including equality assessments and action plans to measure equal treatment in public authorities DIHR has engaged with.

Short description: The aim of the Equality Lab project is to develop tools for municipalities enabling them to measure discrimination and equal treatment and to measure the impact of their work on combating discrimination. The tools cover both the municipalities as employers, i.e. in regard to their ability to create a discrimination free and diverse work place with regard to work place policies and procedures, and the municipalities as service providers, i.e. in regard to their ability to carry out their municipal duties free of discrimination and with attention to a diverse population with different needs.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The public authorities DIHR has carried out the project with know DIHR as experts of equal treatment and discrimination.

Name of initiative: The MIA award (Diversity in the Workplace Award) – from 2003-2012

Objective: To promote diversity management, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination on the Danish labor market.

Target audience: Small and large enterprises, public as well as private

Messages: Stop discrimination and use human differences as a resource for business and society

Channels of communication used: The initiative was promoted through an award ceremony, press statements, and on the webpage www.miapris.dk. Moreover, the MIA Award was supported by the Danish Ministry of Employment and the European Commission Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

The MIA awards were also mentioned in most national and local news media.

Short description: On the basis of the two EU-directives on equal treatment and with support from the EU, The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) in 2003 launched a comprehensive project about diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace. One of the initiatives was a diversity award for leadership - named the MIA-award - presented to three companies at a festive award event each year. To qualify for nomination for the MIA Award, companies had to meet the “Three principles of diversity”:

1. The Principle of Rights (ensuring equal opportunities and prevent discrimination).
2. The principle of resource (making diversity a resource in every aspect of the workplace's actions)
3. The principle of results (ensuring a result oriented diversity process that includes both minority and target groups in strategy)

All nominees were evaluated by a jury consisting of representatives from employer organizations, the trade union movement, and experts in management and the juridical framework for equality.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The winning companies receive an award. Participating companies brand themselves as promoting diversity through declaring their participation in the award competition and therefore also promoting DIHR.

Finland – Ombudsman for Equality

Name of initiative: **Active, regular cooperation with the trade unions, the key NGOs and authorities**

Objective: To engage with the key actors to reach certain strategic goals

Target audience: The most important stakeholders (key stakeholders - closely worked with, loosely in cooperation but still important stakeholders - not any earlier cooperation but a need to firm a relationship to get the essential information)

Messages: To address that the Ombudsman is willing to openly share the information and to listen; willing to share the mutual interest and cooperate with the stakeholders to reach certain objectives

Channels of communication used: Regular/irregular meetings, personal appointments, cooperation in different networks and working groups, sharing each other’s news in the social media etc.

Short description: We have annual strategic planning on which stakeholders we should meet with certain agenda (to discuss the Equality Act and its implications in our work and their work, what are the weak signals in their field, what kind of ongoing work they and we are doing and what strategies both actors are using, what kind of cooperation could/should there be etc.). We also evaluate the cooperation and the meeting frequency in relation to agenda/need for sharing the information.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: Through active cooperation and

information sharing it's possible to evaluate

- the image (positive/neutral/negative) and the level of the knowledge of the work we do among the certain stakeholder (e.g. specific trade unions or other NGOs);
- how the equality body is seen in the everyday life and in relation to the strategy and agenda of the cooperation and
- what is the relation of the aimed profile and actual profile among the key stakeholders

Name of initiative: **Meeting the regional media in different parts of Finland**

Objective: To raise the awareness of the Equality Act and the employers' obligations; to get the publicity in the different regions of Finland and make the Ombudsman's work known; sometimes also some special, current agenda

Target audience: Local media, the local employers and employees; sometimes also the national media and the trade unions

Messages: To address that the Ombudsman, though located in Helsinki, is following the regional issues too, servicing and monitoring the whole country

Channels of communication used: Press conference for the local media with the community leaders, representatives of the City and the local employer/employers the Ombudsman is visiting; press release on the visit and findings on their gender equality situation and planning; telling about the visit on Facebook

Short description: Having press conferences for the local media when visiting the employers of the local area (promoting equality and monitoring equality planning)

Resources: Communications Officer: press release, press conference in cooperation with the Communications Officer of the City/Company; Senior Officer, the Ombudsman; traveling costs

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body:

- publicity in the regional media, positive contacts with the employers of the local area and the communal leaders of the cities
- raised awareness on the work of the equality body and on the Equality Act; usually the Ombudsman is seen, both by the journalists and the companies/communal hosts, as an important guest and respected authority. It is appreciated that the Ombudsman herself travels from Helsinki and is interested in the work of the regional actors

Greece – Greek Ombudsman

Name of initiative: Roma Network

Objective: Awareness

Target audience: Roma community

Messages: "Lifting barriers for Social participation"

Short description: The Greek Ombudsman (GO) established an open communication network for the

Roma in 2007. It is an unofficial partnership between the various stakeholders in order to share information, knowledge and collectively work for the promotion of equality and, overall support, for this group of the population. The network currently numbers more than 30 partners. The GO launched this network in order to establish a regular, and more direct, contact with this group. The initiative aims at the dissemination of critical information related to institutional tools and know-how and the gathering of information on the crucial problems faced by this group; but, above all, the main objective has been the joint coordination of action of the participating bodies.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The Ombudsman was transformed into a hub for information and activities related to the Roma. The number of complaints received has increased substantially.

Malta – National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

Name of initiative: Annual Conference

Objective: To present NCPE’s work and NCPE’s commitments with various stakeholders

Target audience: Interested stakeholders from the public and private sector; NGOs; general public.

Messages: To inform about NCPE’s work; promote NCPE’s services and any activities to be carried out.

Channels of communication used: In preparation for the Annual Conference, formal and email invitations are sent to various stakeholders, NGOs and other interested organizations/individuals. Details of the Annual Conference are also uploaded on NCPE’s website and facebook page. Following the Annual Conference, a Press Release is sent out to all media whereby the Conference is covered by local newspapers, and in radio and TV news bulletins.

Short description: NCPE’s Annual Conference is held every year to give an overview of the work which NCPE carried out throughout the previous year, including activities, EU co-funded projects, complaints received and investigated, any requests for information on equality-related matters; and the media coverages we had. A specific topic is also chosen whereby a presentation is delivered followed by a discussion with the attendees. The Minister responsible for equality attends the Annual Conference and delivers a speech highlighting equality issues in Malta.

Measureable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The Annual Conference is one of the major events which helps in shaping and communicating NCPE’s profile to interested stakeholders, NGOs and the general public.

Sharing the learning

Austria – Ombud for Equal Treatment

Name of initiative: Free postcard campaign

Objective: Reach new groups, show in a picture of what discrimination is to make it easier to understand

Target audience: everybody

Messages: No to discrimination! The Ombud for Equal Treatment offers free and confidential advice and support.



Channels of communication used: Free card stands in pubs, restaurant, fitness centers, cinemas, universities, etc

Short description: you can look at the pictures when following this link: http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at/site/cob_50837/currentpage_0/6880/default.aspx

Contact person: Ulrike Salinger

Name of initiative: Short printed information on special topics

Objective: Give legal advice on special topics

Target audience: Persons concerned by the special topic

Messages: What is allowed/not allowed under the Equal Treatment Act concerning this special topic

Channels of communication used: Printed leaflet, website, newsletter

Short description: Topics dealt with so far: 1) age discrimination in employment, 2) sexual harassment, 3) equal treatment for transgender and intersexual persons, 4) headscarf at the workplace, 5) job advertisements in accordance with the Equal Treatment Act

Attending essential public events

Greece – Greek Ombudman

Name of initiative: Participation in the Athens Pride

Objective: Awareness

Target audience: LGBT community

Messages: “Proud every day”

Channels of communication used: Distribution of leaflet at the festival, LGBT bars, NGOs and interviews at LGBT print and online media.

Short description: Since 2007, the GO has participated in the Athens Pride –and it should be noted that we were the first public authority in Greece to have an active presence in the festival. The GO has also carried out targeted campaigns in LGBT online and press media and has established contacts with LGBT NGO’s in Greece. Still the number of relevant complaints remains very low.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The number of relevant complaints remains very low.

Campaigns

Austria – Ombud for Equal Treatment

Name of initiative: Free postcard campaign

Objective: Reach new groups, show in a picture of what discrimination is to make it easier to understand

Target audience: everybody

Messages: No to discrimination! The Ombud for Equal Treatment offers free and confidential advice

and support.

Channels of communication used: Free card stands in pubs, restaurant, fitness centers, cinemas, universities, etc

Short description: you can look at the pictures when following this link: http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at/site/cob_50837/currentpage_0/6880/default.aspx

Contact person: Ulrike Salinger

Denmark - Danish Institute for Human Rights

Name of initiative: Stop hate crimes

Objective: To highlight hate crimes in Denmark and emphasize the importance of reporting such crimes to the police.

Target audience: The offenders and the victims, age 15 to 30. Within this group the campaign mainly focused on the minorities, who according to the Danish Criminal Code are the victims of hate crimes: persons of another race, belief, or sexual orientation.

Messages: Hate crimes are committed in the Danish society and it is a serious problem. Say no to hate crimes and report or register it.

Channels of communication used: Big banners at the front of buildings, posters, a Facebook Cause page, a Facebook campaign, and a homepage, pamphlets, letters, the medias, street events

Short description: In Denmark it seems that more hate crimes are committed than reported to the police. Most hate crimes are committed in Copenhagen at night by young people. Therefore, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Copenhagen Police Department, the City of Copenhagen, and the City of Frederiksberg ran a campaign to stop hate crimes. The campaign was called "Stop Hate Crimes". The long-termed and more specific objectives of the campaign were to make people aware of the fact that hate crimes are committed in the Danish society and that it is a serious problem, as well as to increase the number of hate crime being reported to the police, but to decrease the number of hate crimes being committed.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: Having made the campaign in co-operation with the Copenhagen Police Department, the City of Copenhagen, and the City of Frederiksberg made the partners aware of our work. At the same time it also resulted in in the police now investigating whether there is a motive of hate behind crimes of violence. 25 police investigators in the Copenhagen police force have been trained in handling hate crimes.

Name of initiative: Equality Lab – equal treatment in public authorities

Objective: To promote equal treatment and prevent discrimination due to age, disability, gender, racial and ethnic origin, religion and faith, and sexual orientation in public services as well as in the workplace of public authorities.

Target audience: Public authorities and institutions

Messages: All members of the community should have equal access and equal opportunities to make use of public service provisions.

Channels of communication used: DIHR has developed a number of tools, including equality assessments and action plans to measure equal treatment in public authorities DIHR has engaged with.

Short description: The aim of the Equality Lab project is to develop tools for municipalities enabling them to measure discrimination and equal treatment and to measure the impact of their work on combating discrimination. The tools cover both the municipalities as employers, i.e. in regard to their ability to create a discrimination free and diverse work place with regard to work place policies and procedures, and the municipalities as service providers, i.e. in regard to their ability to carry out their municipal duties free of discrimination and with attention to a diverse population with different needs.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The public authorities DIHR has carried out the project with know DIHR as experts of equal treatment and discrimination.

Finland – Ombudsman for Equality

Name of initiative: **Campaign on discrimination based on pregnancy and family leaves**

Objective: To act on this issue that no one else (e.g. the trade unions) speaks out about; to raise public discussion on pregnancy discrimination in the media; raise awareness of the rights of the pregnant women as an employees and their possibilities to act; to fight against the unspoken significant problem

Target audience: Pregnant women (employees) and employers, media, trade unions, the citizens

Messages: Profile; to be seen as an influential fighter in this matter; to tell that the Ombudsman is for every woman who suspects discrimination; also monitoring the employers that they know their legal obligations and encouraging the good employers

Channels of communication used: Campaign website, social media, media, public transportation, cooperation with the trade unions (employees)

Short description: The campaign Justice for Those Expecting had a website www.oikeuttaodottaville.fi and posters on public transport in the largest city of Finland. There was also marketing in social media (on Facebook and some targeted online ads on the net)

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body:

- the great feedback from the stakeholders; trade unions encouraged to raise the issue themselves too
- lots of contacts from the women suspecting discrimination - showing trust in this under-reported, difficult matter (calls to the judicial guidance line, visits on the campaign site and the information on the official site, 589 women unofficially reported suspecting being discriminated against; lots of conversation about the experiences among the pregnant women; many good employers reported (we were looking for those);
- media interest
- ➔ an overall a sign that this kind of work should be actively done by the Ombudsman

Name of initiative: Campaign on sexual harassment and gender equality in schools

Objective: Tackling the sexual harassment at schools and promoting the operational equality planning at schools; there will be an extension in the coming amendment of the Equality Act that obliges the comprehensive schools to draw the operational equality plan in co-operation with the students (earlier comprehensive schools were not obliged)

Target audience: Schools and educational institutions

Messages: The Ombudsman is also for the young people and promotes the gender equality also at schools; most young people are victims of sexual harassment (some kind) at schools and there are ways to prevent it and to take an action; the gender equality work should be taken seriously at schools and the Ombudsman is giving the tools how to do it

Channels of communication used: Campaign website, Vimeo and YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, press release for the principals and educational institutions, press release for media, participating the annual national educational expo with the campaign (January 2014).

Short description: The objective of the project is to encourage the schools and educational institutes to take an action if they perceive sexual harassment and actively work on preventing sexual harassment in schools:

- to show how important and rewarding the cooperation is at schools when they are using our concept
- The ultimate goal is to create “the recognized status of the equal school” and to make the schools want to have the status
- to engage the schools in promoting the gender equality and the work against discrimination at schools (make them real actors with real results)

For this we are having a campaign with a website and video on the site and in social media. We have commissioned the project designer to design the concept of operational equality planning (working on gender equality) at comprehensive schools.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The feedback from the stakeholders; feedback from monitoring the visitors of the campaign site and clicking the video, monitoring social media; the feedback from the schools and educational authorities about the work of the Ombudsman on the issue; media publicity; monitoring the qualitative value of the operational equality plans of the schools in two coming years; feedback from the trainings organized for the teachers and principals

Germany – Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

Name of initiative: Anonymous applications

Objective: To give a better understanding about how German job application procedures (including a photo, name, birth date, marital status, kids) can lead to discrimination and how an easy-to-do measure can change that

Target audience: The wider public, companies and public services

Messages: Anonymous applications increase the chances of women and people with a migrant



background to be invited to job interviews. They help companies to focus on qualification.

Channels of communication used: Media, brochures, seminars and a pilot projects where huge companies took part

Ireland – Equality Authority(now known as Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission)

Name of initiative: Say No To Ageism

Objective: to alert society to the negative outcomes of untackled ageism

Target audience: policy makers, public,

Messages: ‘I Say No To Ageism’

Channels of communication used: Partnerships with key service providers like the Health Service Executive, Transport companies, Insurance sector, hospitality and leisure, journalists etc

Short description: A week long activity on a national level involving promotional work and projects in key sectors, seminars, publications and viral messages.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: Very positive response measured in media coverage and callers to our body.

Malta – National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

Name of initiative: Equality Mark

Objective: To identify and award organizations that demonstrate a commitment towards gender equality, certifying them as true equal opportunities employers.

Target audience: Organisations, employers, employees and the general public

Messages: Promoting gender equality at the workplace; being a truly equal opportunity employer; respecting the abilities and experience of employees irrespective of their gender or family responsibilities; combating gender discrimination at the work place; awareness on rights and responsibilities related to gender equality at the workplace; achievement of a valuable recognition and certification for the Equality Mark.

Channels of communication used: Leaflets; billboards; TV and radio programmes; articles and adverts on newspapers and magazines; NCPE’s website; NCPE’s facebook page; training and information sessions.

Short description: The Equality Mark Certification awards organizations which make sure that the opportunities offered to female and male employees are based on the individuals’ skills and capabilities and are not determined by the persons’ sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or because of caring responsibilities. A feature of this certification is the Equality Mark logo which organizations can use in their publications and documentation. Additionally, certified organizations shall be promoted locally such that their practices are showcased as a quality standard for other employers to emulate and for job seekers to look out for. An extensive campaign for the Equality Mark had to be carried out targeting organizations and explaining what the Equality Mark is, its process of certification and what it involves.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: The general public, including targeted organizations, associate the Equality Mark and its logo directly with NCPE. Therefore, this boosted NCPE's image among the general public.

Portugal – Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

Name of initiative: Campaign “Deslike bullying homofóbico” (June 2013)

Objective: To clearly show CIG’s commitment to raise public awareness of equality issues, namely in what concerns specific groups experiencing discrimination and violence.

Target audience: teenagers, young adults

Messages: homophobic bullying has social and individual impacts and therefore it deserves a “dislike”

Channels of communication used: TV, social media, website, radio, leaflets

Short description: By showing that homophobic bullying is a violent and discriminatory behavior with social and individual impacts, this campaign intends to raise awareness of the need to show disagreement with it – “dislike”.

Serbia – Commissioner for Protection of Equality

Name of initiative: Live library (in partnership with Council of Europe)

Objective: Face to face introducing the members of minority discriminated groups to members of a majority population through concept of “reading live books”. Books are the members of minority groups and people can “rent” a book and “read” it by having a friendly conversation with “books”. That’s a very good way to get in a direct touch with minority groups and find out about the problems they’re facing.

Target audience: “Ordinary” people, general public

Digital and Social Media

Austria – Ombud for Equal Treatment

Name of initiative: External newsletter

Objective: inform about the work of the Equality Body and latest (legal) developments in the field of equal treatment

Target audience: all interested persons

Channels of communication used: e-mail, website

Short description: three practical cases and their outcome, latest court judgments and latest activities in the field of equal treatment

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: to be present, to be seen

Cyprus – Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)

Name of initiative: Website <http://www.no-discrimination.ombudsman.gov.cy/>

Objective: To enhance our accessibility and provide information

Target audience: General public and groups vulnerable to discrimination

Messages: Are you a victim of discrimination?

Channels of communication used: Internet

Resources: Funded by the European Commission, through “PROGRESS”

Name of initiative: Media awareness raising campaign in 2010

<http://www.no-discrimination.ombudsman.gov.cy/en/content/tv-messages>

Objective: To raise awareness and promote equality in various grounds of discrimination, including sexual orientation

Target audience: General public

Messages: “Love/ Time... doesn’t discriminate. Who are YOU to discriminate? Say no to all kinds of discrimination”

Channels of communication used: 4 TV, 3 radio and 3 print ads

Short description (200 words): A nationwide media campaign with, which covered thematically various grounds of discrimination, including sexual orientation.

Resources: Funded by the European Commission, through “PROGRESS”

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body: Overall the campaign was welcomed and played vital role in giving fuel to discussion over the LGBT issues, however we *did* have some negative impact.

Finland – Ombudsman for Equality

Name of initiative: **Profiling the Ombudsman in the social media**

Objective:

- to be where people are and to reach the 2 million Finns on Facebook (to be found and to find the people and organizations we exist for)
- to tell about the work of the Ombudsman of Equality and about the Equality Act;
- to share the news among the stakeholders and receive the latest news as fast as possible in a convenient way;
- to represent the Ombudsman positively and in a relaxed way as a modern, open, very approachable and accessible but reliable authority

Target audience: the Finnish people (all age groups; active, interested people and people who might not know about us but find us there), NGOs, media, other authorities in the social media, international partners

Messages: Gender equality involves everybody; Ombudsman is a modern, open, very approachable and accessible but reliable authority and for everybody, who suspects that they are being discriminated against based on gender or who just wants to promote gender equality

Channels of communication used: Facebook, Twitter, soon also Vimeo and YouTube

Short description: We chose the channels that suit best our objectives (Facebook and Twitter) and decided the guidelines, profiles and social media rules for these profiles on Facebook and Twitter.

Measurable benefits for the public image of the equality body:

- Facebook: 1265 followers; different age groups, domestic and international followers; many stakeholders (human right institutes and NGOs actively share our news and statements)
- Twitter: 106 followers (private persons, stakeholder organizations)
- possibility to get the information about the people; which kind of people/organizations are interested in our work - get the feedback about our actual profile among the target groups
- follow up the reactions; what kind of topics and style increases the communication and sharing and become viral; which issues are the most interesting ones; what are the issues the followers themselves bring up; what could be the possible topics that will raise up as negative issues, threatening or challenging issues/groups of likeminded/persons
- possibility to follow and get the information from other essential organizations and key persons, follow the news and the weak signals
- lots of visitors on your official website (40 000 new visitors/year)