



Joint statement: “Building an inclusive European Union of Equality”

We, the undersigned equality and anti-discrimination organisations, call on the European Union’s leaders and European Institutions to ensure equality, anti-racism, and fundamental rights are a priority during the next legislative mandate.

We noted the advances in Equality which have been made by the European Union during this mandate. The appointment of the first-ever Commissioner for Equality was a welcome and much-needed initiative. It has shown that the European Commission is committed to advancing the values of equality enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and to its duties under Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Equality and non-discrimination policies and initiatives became more visible and were addressed through several proposals such as standards for equality bodies, a Directive to combat violence against women, a legislative proposal on the European Disability Card and Parking Card, the action plan against racism, and a proposal for cross-border recognition of parental rights. These initiatives were coupled with strategies on gender equality, LGBTIQ and disability, as well as the EU Roma strategic framework and a Green Paper on Ageing.

However, the EU is far from being a Union of Equality- this is a work in progress, and right now, we witness rising backlash, racial injustice, inequality and discrimination. This needs urgent attention both at the EU and national levels.

For this, we specifically call on the European Union to put in place comprehensive legal protection against discrimination in the EU. We need to guarantee equality of treatment regardless of who you are or where you live in the European Union.

We also call on specific actions to guarantee that the European Union's Institutions have adequate resources and staffing to prioritise and mainstream equality and non-discrimination, with special attention to vulnerable groups and intersectional discrimination:

- Appoint an EU Commissioner with a strong mandate for Equality and Fundamental Rights.
- Strengthen the European Commission's services working on equality, non-discrimination and anti-racism, especially by establishing a new Directorate-General for Equality and Fundamental Rights.
- Revise and introduce strong strategies on all grounds under the Equality Framework beyond 2025 and ensure their mainstreaming in all policy areas.
- Ensure that the Equality Task Force has a strong mandate to ensure cooperation between different services on the implementation of the Equality Frameworks and that it works transparently and in close consultation and cooperation with European Equality networks.
- Host an annual "Equality Forum," gathering policymakers, civil society, and other interested actors to evaluate and develop initiatives for realising a Union of Equality. The Forum should focus particularly on intersectional equality.
- Create an EU Council formation on Equality.
- Ensure the next EU budget properly funds civil society organisations working on equality, non-discrimination and anti-racism.
- Ensure discrimination is also addressed in the work of the EU in external action, international cooperation and humanitarian action.

We remind leaders that all initiatives must meaningfully involve equality organisations, anti-racism organisations and organisations representing the groups most subject to discrimination.

It is essential that the Union's decision-making process is transparent, and organisations are properly resourced and supported to guarantee their active involvement.

It is also fundamental to ensure that staff working at the EU Institutions properly reflects the European population, not only in terms of nationality but also in terms of diversity of gender, race, ethnic or social origin, membership of a national minority, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and variations of sex characteristics. We call on specific action to ensure it and to guarantee training to all staff training on equality and non-discrimination.

Only by working together will the European Union truly become a Union of Equality that reflects its motto of "United in Diversity".

The undersigned organisations remain committed to supporting the European Institutions in achieving this crucial objective.

Signatories

[European Disability Forum](#)

[ILGA-Europe](#)

[AGE Platform Europe](#)

[European Network Against Racism](#)

[ERGO Network](#)

[OII Europe](#)

[IGLYO](#)

[EL*C](#)

[TGEU – Transgender Europe](#)

Additional Information

Organisations' work on the European elections:

- European Disability Forum: "[Building an inclusive future for persons with disabilities in the EU](#)"
- ILGA Europe: "[Come out 4 Europe](#)"
- AGE Platform Europe: [AGE Manifesto for the 2024 European Parliament elections](#)
- European Network Against Racism: "[A Europe for All](#)"
- ERGO Network: "[End Racism to build a stronger Europe](#)"