

# Equinet: Making Equality legislation Work for Roma and Travellers

## ERIO'S 7TH WORKSHOP WITH EQUALITY BODIES

“Ending discrimination of Roma in housing and health: the role of Equality Bodies”

**Anne Gaspard**  
Executive Director

# Equinet Members

- Network of national **equality bodies**  
(49 members from 36 European countries)
- Equality bodies on the basis of **EU Equal Treatment Directives**  
(2000/43/EC; 2004/113/EC; 2006/54/EC)
- **Diversity** among national equality bodies in terms of size, mandate, grounds, structure and experience

# Equality body tools

- Mandated by EU to
  - “Provide independent assistance to victims”
  - “Conduct independent surveys”
  - “Publish independent reports and make recommendations”
- Promotional functions
- Quasi-judicial functions



# Making Equality Legislation Work for Roma and Travellers (2010)

- Most equality body mandates cover discrimination against Roma and Travellers
- Mutual education and awareness raising:
  - platforms for dialogue and networks (Greek Ombudsman/Hungarian Equal Treatment Authority)
  - awareness of rights among Roma community; cultural sensitivity (Swedish Ombud)
  - Targeted information about rights (former French HALDE)
  - Capacity building of NEB staff (former Irish Equality Authority)
- Strategic litigation (high expense)
  - Capture systemic or institutional discrimination
- Monitoring
  - Research on levels of rights awareness and barriers faced by the communities
- Promote Equality
  - Use positive action measures or equality duties (where these exist)



# Fighting Discrimination on the Ground of Race and Ethnic Origin (2016)

- In a context in which there is a prevalence and rise of
  - race discrimination
  - hate speech and hate crime
  - negative media coverage
  - negative political speech
  - negative public sentiment



# Fighting Discrimination (2016) Cont.

- **Roma in particularly vulnerable situation** compared to other racial or ethnic minorities (17/19 NEBs report)
- **Intersectional discrimination** (Roma women and children in education, early/forced marriage, employment, access to services)
- **Fields**
  - **Employment** (recruitment, working conditions, equal pay, unjustified dismissal, harassment)
  - **Healthcare and social protection** (barriers to access, segregated areas, mistrust)
  - **Housing** (evictions – c.f. OPRE statement; denied tenancy agreements and social housing)
  - **Goods and services** (harassment, discrimination, denial of boarding)
  - **Education** (access, segregation)



# Operational Platform for Roma Equality



- Platform stimulates cooperation among institutions, inter alia on
  - Access to justice and underreporting; Children’s rights; Violence and early/forced marriage; Addressing anti-Gypsyism; Housing
- June 2016: Joint statement on evictions of Roma and Travellers in Europe
- Last meeting of OPRE was a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Rights Platform (4SocialRights) dedicated to discussing housing

# Conclusions

- Outreach to Roma and Traveller communities
  - Increase regional and local coverage of NEBs
  - Build capacity of NEBs (building trust based on mutual respect)
  - Raise awareness
- Work with duty bearers
- Consider positive action measures
- All fields covered by Roma Integration Strategies equally important, importance of renewing and stepping up commitment post-2020
- Importance of a strong MFF 2021-27, supporting Roma policies
- Take an intersectional perspective
- Equality data collection
- Ensure NEBs are independent and can effectively fulfill their role







**Thank you for your  
attention!**

**Any questions?**



**EquinetEurope**

**EQUINET SECRETARIAT**  
138 Rue Royale / Koningsstraat  
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 (0)2 212 3182  
[info@equineteurope.org](mailto:info@equineteurope.org)

[www.equineteurope.org](http://www.equineteurope.org)