Union of equality: standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation

2022/0400(COD) - 29/05/2024 - Final act

PURPOSE: to lay down minimum requirements for the functioning of bodies for the promotion of equal treatment to improve their effectiveness and guarantee their independence in order to strengthen the application of the principle of equal treatment.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU.

CONTENT: equality bodies were set up to promote equal treatment, combat discrimination and provide assistance to victims.

This Directive lays down **minimum requirements for the functioning of equality bodies** to improve their effectiveness and guarantee their independence in order to strengthen the application of the principle of equal treatment as derived from Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Member States will take measures to ensure that equality bodies are:

- **independent** and free from external influence;

- provided with the **human, technical and financial resources** necessary to perform all its tasks and to exercise all its competences effectively;

- empowered to carry out activities to **prevent discrimination and to promote equal treatment**. Such activities may, *inter alia*, include promoting positive action and gender mainstreaming among public and private entities, providing them with relevant training, advice and support, engaging in public debate, communicating with relevant stakeholders, including the social partners, and promoting the exchange of good practices;

- able to provide **assistance to victims**. Equality bodies should be able to receive complaints of discrimination. They should provide assistance to victims, initially by informing them about the legal framework, including advice targeted to their specific situation; the services offered by the equality body and related procedural aspects; available remedies, the confidentiality rules applicable, and the protection of personal data; and the possibility of obtaining psychological or other types of relevant support;

- able to offer the parties the possibility of seeking an **alternative resolution to their dispute**;

- empowered to conduct **inquiry** into whether a breach of the principle of equal treatment;

- allowed to act in **court proceedings** in civil and administrative law matters relating to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment.

In addition, Member States will:

- guarantee **access** to equality bodies' services and publications on an equal basis for all;

- ensure **accessibility** and provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to guarantee their equal access to all services and activities of equality bodies;

- ensure that equality bodies have appropriate mechanisms in place to cooperate, within their respective fields of competence, with other equality bodies within the same Member State, and with relevant public and private entities;

- put in place procedures to ensure that the government and relevant public authorities **consult** equality bodies on legislation, policy, procedure and programmes related to the rights and obligations derived from Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU and ensure that equality bodies have the right to make recommendations on those matters, to publish the recommendations and to request follow-up regarding such recommendations.

Within the context of the monitoring and reporting exercise under the Directive, and in order to enhance the dialogue between the EU institutions and ensure greater transparency, the European Parliament may invite the Commission annually to discuss the matters raised by the Directive.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 18.6.2024.

TRANSPOSITION: from 19.6.2026.