



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

PROGRAMME

Hearing

Unblocking the Anti-Discrimination Directive

Tuesday 20 March 2012, 9.00 – 12.30

European Parliament, Brussels

Room: József Antall 4 Q 1

Introduction

In 2008 the Commission issued a proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation¹.

The European Parliament adopted its Opinion on this issue under the Consultation Procedure on 2 April 2009², with Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg serving as Rapporteur. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the proposal now falls under Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; thus unanimity in the Council is required, followed by the consent of the European Parliament. The new EP Rapporteur is Raül Romeva i Rueda.

The impact assessment carried out by the Commission in preparation of the initiative showed that, while non-discrimination is recognised to be one of the fundamental values of the EU, in practice the level of legal protection to secure these values differs between Member States and between discrimination grounds.

However, despite the need to raise standards in several Members States, this file has for the past years been blocked at the first reading stage in Council.

The European Parliament attaches great importance to this Directive and has repeatedly called for works on this file to be started again. The aim of this hearing will be to revisit the current state of EU legislation on equal treatment, equality, non discrimination before and after the Lisbon Treaty, identify its scope and limitations across fields of application and grounds of discrimination, focusing on the grounds listed in Article 19 TFEU. The hearing will also address concrete obstacles to its adoption, including costs, in order to stress the need for a comprehensive Anti-discrimination Directive to be adopted.

¹ COM(2008)0426.

² P6_TA(2009)0211.

Order of business

WELCOME by Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament

INTRODUCTION	State of play of the Anti-Discrimination Directive - the institutional point of view
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9.00 - 9.10	Introduction by Raül Romeva i Rueda, Rapporteur
9.10 - 9.20	Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Equality, DG Justice, European Commission
9.20 - 9.30	Anne-Mette Kjær Hesselager, Danish Presidency, Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration

9.30 - 9.50	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
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SESSION I	Current scope and limitations of equality and non discrimination law: the EU Charter, the EU directives and relevant case law
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The panel will revisit the current state of EU law on equal treatment, equality and non discrimination, aiming for an appraisal of the scope and limitations across fields of application and grounds of discrimination, focusing on the grounds listed in Article 19 TFEU.

9.50 - 10.00	Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Fundamental Rights Agency, Head of Department on Equality and Citizen's Rights
10.00 - 10.15	Isabelle Chopin, European Network of Legal Experts in the non discrimination field
10.15 - 10.25	Pierre Baussand, Director of Social Platform
10.25 - 10.40	Olivier de Schutter, University of Louvain

10.40 - 11.10	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
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SESSION II	Overcoming the obstacles to substantive equality in the EU: actions to be taken
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The panel will address the need for a comprehensive Anti-discrimination Directive as framed from the previous panel in theory, practice and from own experience, and discuss concrete obstacles to its adoption, including costs.

11.10 - 11.20 Tobias Müllensiefen, Equality Directorate of the European Commission

11.20 - 11.30 Jozef De Witte, Chair of EQUINET - European Network of Equality Bodies

11.30 - 12.00 NGO representatives on the different grounds of discrimination:

Age - AGE Platform Europe, Anne-Sophie Parent

Disability - EDF, Carlotta Besozzi

Sexual orientation - ILGA-Europe, Greg Czarnecki

Religion and belief - ENAR, Michaël Privot

12.00 - 12.25	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
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12.25 - 12.30 **CLOSING REMARKS** by Raül Romeva i Rueda, Rapporteur

ANNEX

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE DEBATE

- Speakers wishing to supplement their speeches may do so in writing by submitting a document (preferably in English or French) in advance to the secretariat (e-mail: libe-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu). These documents will be circulated during the meeting.
- Meeting documents will be progressively added to the Events section of the LIBE Committee pages.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR THOSE WISHING TO ATTEND THE MEETING

This meeting is open to the public.

However, for security reasons, participants who do not have a European Parliament access badge must obtain a pass in advance. Those wishing to obtain such a pass should contact the secretariat (libe-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu) **before Friday 16 March 2012 at 12.00.**

It is essential to provide us with your **LAST NAME, First name, date of birth, nationality, type of the ID (passport, identity card, driving licence, etc.), number of the ID, address and company/institution/organisation.** Without this information, the Security Service will not provide entry passes.

THE MEETING IS BROADCASTED LIVE AND RECORDED

LIBE Committee pages:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/LIBE/home.html>

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