

**April 2017**

The European Union is founded on equality and respect for human dignity and human rights, including those of minorities. The Council of the European Union, with the consent of the European Parliament, is responsible for adopting secondary legislation to combat discrimination based on gender, race, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation. Several directives targeted at specific forms of discrimination have been adopted over recent years, but gaps in EU action remain. In 2008 the European Commission proposed a horizontal anti-discrimination directive that would address discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and consequently close the gap in many areas not covered by EU legislation. However, although endorsed by the European Parliament, the proposal is still under discussion in the Council. In addition, equality has not been achieved in those areas that are already covered by EU directives, as legislation is only the first step in combating discrimination. This Topical Digest offers a selection of recent publications, produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service, on equality and diversity.

EU measures against discrimination

At-a-glance note by Martina Prpic, April 2017

Respect for human dignity, equality and human rights are among the core values of the European Union. This is reflected in several EU directives targeting various types of discrimination. However, not all grounds and areas of discrimination have been covered by EU law, and work on strengthening protection against discrimination is ongoing.

The rights of LGBTI people in the European Union

Briefing by Piotr Bakowski, Marc Lilienkamp and Rosamund Shreeves, May 2016 (next update May 2017)

Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons persists throughout the EU. Sexual orientation is now recognised in EU law as a grounds of discrimination, but the scope of existing provisions is limited and does not cover social protection, healthcare, education and access to goods and services. EU competence does not extend to recognition of marital or family status; especially problematic, for instance, for same-sex couples and their families wishing to move to another Member State.

International Roma Day

At-a-glance note by Anita Orav, March 2017

The Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Europe. Since 1990, 8 April has been marked every year as International Roma Day, providing an opportunity both to discuss the situation of Roma, and to celebrate Romani culture. The European Parliament has called to end the discrimination of Roma, and the European Commission supports the integration of Roma through policy guidance and funding.

EU action against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

At-a-glance note by Anja Radjenovic, January 2016

Recent years have witnessed growing trends of anti-Semitism as well as a sharp increase in incidents and attacks directed towards members of the Muslim community. Attacks against Jewish communities in Toulouse, Brussels, Paris and Copenhagen, and verbal and physical violence against Muslim communities have shown the need for additional measures.

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[How the EU budget is spent: Rights, Equality and Citizenship](#)

Briefing by Gianluca Sgueo, December 2015

The Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme aims to protect equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU) and the international human rights conventions to which the European Union has acceded. The programme has nine specific objectives, ranging from the promotion of non-discrimination to the enforcement of consumers' rights, and funds a variety of actions, including awareness-raising and training activities, and support to key European actors involved in the protection of equality and the rights of persons.

Further reading

[EU Fundamental Rights Agency](#)

At-a-glance note by Anja Radjenovic, May 2016

[Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons: Complementary Impact Assessment of the proposed horizontal Directive on Equal Treatment](#)

Study by DG EPRS in collaboration with DG IPOL, February 2014

[The Employment Equality Directive: European Implementation Assessment](#)

Study by Jan Tymowski, February 2016

[Implementation of the Employment Equality Directive: The principle of non-discrimination on the basis of religion or belief](#)

Study by DG EPRS, January 2016

[Jewish communities in the European Union](#)

At-a-glance note by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, September 2016

[Dialogue of the EU institutions with religious and non-confessional organisations](#)

At-a-glance note by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, September 2016

[The EU institutions and dialogue with non-confessional organisations](#)

At-a-glance note by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, November 2015

[EU Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\): European Implementation Assessment](#)

In depth analysis by Irmgard Anglmayer, February 2016

[Cohesion policy and disability](#)

Briefing by Christiaan van Lierop, March 2017

This topical digest does not cover gender equality. For a list of EPRS publications on gender equality, please see the [gender equality topical digest](#), published in March 2017.

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