



European  
Commission



# STANDING UP FOR VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Commission proposal on binding standards for equality bodies

December 2022  
#UnionOfEquality

Equality bodies are public organisations that assist victims of discrimination, monitor and report on discrimination, and contribute to raising awareness of people's rights. While they can be called differently, for instance Defender of Rights, each Member State has their own equality body dedicated to fighting discrimination.

Despite their valuable work, equality bodies have still an untapped potential in preventing and combatting discrimination.

Europeans believe that **discrimination** is **widespread** in their countries

**53%**

Discrimination related to sexual orientation

**44%**

Discrimination related to disability

**59%**

Discrimination related to ethnic origin

**47%**

Discrimination based on belief or religion

**40%**

Discrimination related to age

Equality bodies currently face many challenges

- ✘ the legal safeguards to their independence are not always sufficient
- ✘ lack sufficient resources
- ✘ assistance provided to victims varies depending on Member States
- ✘ no power to act in court in all Member States
- ✘ limited ability to contribute to policy development

# The Commission proposes to strengthen equality bodies so they can:

provide **free and accessible** services to all victims on an **equal basis**.

*To help access to justice across the EU*

**engage in prevention, promotion and awareness-raising**

*So that citizens are aware of and can uphold their rights, and to build the capacity of public and private entities*

**act in court in discrimination cases**

*To provide reliable support to victims of discrimination and help enforce EU equality rules*



Member States will be **required** to provide them with the necessary **human, technical and financial resources**

*To perform their tasks effectively at the service of citizens and society at large*

They should also ensure equality bodies are **free from external influence**

*To play a strong and independent role in the interest of equality and non-discrimination*

Governments will be **required to consult** them and **consider** their recommendations on non-discrimination

*To ensure equality bodies have a transformative impact on policy and can share their expertise*

**The mandate already covers:**

- ✓ Racial Equality directive
- ✓ Directives on Equality between women and men in goods and services; in employment; and in self-employment

**The mandate would be expanded also to include:**

- ✓ Directive on non-discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the workplace
- ✓ Directive on Equality between women and men in social security