



- DISCUSSION NOTE -

Session II.b: Fostering equality legislation and promoting non-discrimination policies

The session will identify the main obstacles to countering discrimination based on religion, belief and/or ethnic origin in the employment field and beyond. It will offer a platform where the main stakeholders, local, national and international authorities, equality bodies, business and civil society will discuss challenges and avenues to combat discrimination and accommodate religiously motivated practices, such as relating to clothing, food, symbols and holidays. The session aims at enhancing cooperation between the main actors in order to better implement equality legislation, exchange best practices and fight against underreporting, deficiencies on monitoring and lack of data collection.

Discussions in this session will serve to highlight the role of employment in fostering social inclusion, diversity and non-discrimination. Specific attention will be paid to the need of applying existing EU legislation correctly, such as the Employment directive and the Racial Equal Treatment directive. This session will also look at the added value of the pending Horizontal Equal Treatment directive aimed at ensuring protection against discrimination based on age, religion, sexual orientation and disability in the areas of social protection, education and access to goods and services.

Indicative questions to steer the discussions:

- 1 – What type of discriminatory obstacles Jews and Muslims experience most frequently in the field of employment and in other fields such as education or access to housing?
- 2 – How could the society adjust to an increasing diversity? What is the society at large ready to accommodate for a better "living together"?
- 3 – What are/could be concrete measures to be taken by businesses (in public and private employment) and by social partners to facilitate and encourage inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities and foster mutual understanding and how could they be disseminated?
- 4 – How could the current existing antidiscrimination legislation be better implemented?
- 5 – What are the main gaps and obstacles (legislative, political, administrative, or financial) to fill to counter discrimination based on religion, belief and/or ethnic origin in practice? How can such gaps be tackled at EU level?