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Conclusions of the 3rd Equality Summit, 16–17 November, Stockholm

The Swedish Presidency and the European Commission have held the 3rd Equality Summit, bringing together over 300 high-level delegates. The delegates represented European Union Member States, candidate and EEA countries, international organisations, European NGOs, social partners, the business sector, media, academia, equality bodies, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The aims for the annual Summits are to promote equal rights and equal opportunities for all in the European Union, and to share knowledge and experiences in order to develop more effective ways of counteracting all forms of discrimination. A legacy inherited from the 2nd Summit in Paris 2008 was mainstreaming equality and multiple discrimination.

The 3rd Equality Summit had as its main theme **cooperation for equality** between different stakeholders and different levels. The main theme was addressed in four workshops, focusing on how to work successfully on equality in both public and private sectors; in the legislative process; how various actors can cooperate; and the role of the media in equality and anti-discrimination in an era marked by diversity. Special attention was paid to the situation for Roma as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in our societies.

The principal messages that emerged from the debates at the event were the following:

- Cooperation is key when one wants to **mainstream equality** in public policies. European societies with their rapidly changing demography cannot afford to waste their pools of talent on the grounds of sex, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief or sexual orientation. Non-discrimination issues must therefore be mainstreamed in all public policies to allow each individual to realise their potential and to be given equal opportunities to contribute to society. Developing mainstreaming activities at a national level by supporting these activities via the Progress programme is therefore of utmost importance for the European



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Commission and its Member States. The creation of a European level manual on non-discrimination /equality mainstreaming including concrete national best practices was strongly supported by the participants. The establishment of a set of indicators that can be used to measure progress in this field was also discussed.

- With regard to the proposal for a **new Article 13 Directive**, there was a strong signal from the participants that the proposal should be kept as broad as possible in order to avoid further gaps. Many concrete examples of discrimination, which the Directive should address, were presented throughout the event.
- The need to continue to follow-up on the recommendations on **multiple discrimination** made by the Governmental Expert Group on anti-discrimination, was highlighted. Participants also called for the inclusion of multiple discrimination in the new Article 13 Directive.
- Everyone involved in the field of non-discrimination, be it at national, regional or local level, should work to ensure the full implementation of the existing legal framework created by the transposition of the **current Article 13 Directives** into the national laws of the 27 Member States and by the adoption of the “acquis commautaire” in the candidate countries. Again, many examples of discrimination, which the Directives addresses, were presented during the event.
- **Cooperation between all stakeholders and all levels** should be further promoted both at EU, national and local level to take further steps in combating discrimination and enhancing equality. Although cooperation is often more time-consuming than individual initiatives, strong support and encouragement must be maintained. The use of existing models from other policy areas should be investigated, as finding new partners from new areas. One model of cooperation is the joint declaration by ETUC and the Social Platform that can be used as a basis for further action between for example NGOs and trade unions both at EU and national level.
- Mobilisation of **business** should be sustained and recognition of good diversity management practices should be made more visible. A platform for EU-level exchange between organisations promoting and implementing diversity charters at national and regional levels should be encouraged. A European diversity award to support and reward successful and innovative practices of companies in the EU was encouraged.
- The role of **media** through all its components in raising public awareness about equality in society was highlighted. The need to follow-up the recommendations in “Media4Diversity”, a European Commission study on Media and Diversity in EU Member States and 3 EEA countries, was raised.
- In regard to the **Roma and LGBT issues**, which were integrated in the entire event, the conference confirmed that to be able to live freely, more effort must be put into accepting diversity close to



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home. Because these two groups suffer from discrimination more than others in Europe, extra effort is required to improve their situation. Methods that can be used are awareness-raising campaigns and legislation reinforcement.

Finally, the Swedish Presidency and the European Commission wish to impress upon the European community, both its people and its businesses, the paramount importance of cooperation for equality. The use of good examples and best practices is a very strong instrument and should be continued in the future. The focus for the forthcoming year should be to spread the practice of mainstreaming equality to even more areas than at present. One such area is the labour market and the 4th Equality Summit, taking place during the Belgian Presidency 2010, will concentrate on discrimination in employment.