

#DiversityCharterPLEDGE



The European Union is founded on the principles of solidarity, respect for human rights, prevention of discrimination and commitment to social cohesion.

Equality is one of the fundamental values on which the European Union is founded, reflected in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which give the EU a mandate and responsibility to combat discrimination. The Treaty provisions have allowed the EU to introduce non-discrimination laws for specific protected grounds (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation).

The values of equity and social inclusion are demonstrated in our support for diversity, equity and inclusion activities (DE&I) in the workplace. DE&I initiatives have been shown to improve productivity, innovation and workplace relations - outcomes that are key to the ambition of reigniting sustainable growth and building competitiveness, as detailed in the recent Draghi report.

The EU Diversity Charters are an active demonstration of the dedication to building a Europe for all. The 27-member state Diversity Charters have over 17,500 signatories, with 17 million employees in organisations all over Europe. Through signing a Diversity Charter, organisations make a public statement of commitment to promote equality, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace in a framework that is tailored to their member state context. Leaders are visibly demonstrating their adherence to the legal and statutory context for preventing discrimination in the workplace and promoting equality in Europe. They are building a network of signatory organisations and a community of dedicated equality, diversity and inclusion practitioners seeking to build best practice.

We are committed to collaborating with DE&I champions in organisations, in the European Commission, in the European Parliament, in member state governments, in Equality Bodies, in Human Rights Institutions, in civil society networks, and with other committed actors to ensure that the promotion of equality, diversity, equity and inclusion, the protection of human rights and the prevention of discrimination are addressed in this EU legislature.

Now in 2025 we pledge to strengthen our commitments by:

- Supporting the EU Platform of Diversity Charters and the work of each of the 27 Diversity Charters in their member states to attract signatories through awareness raising, data gathering, information sharing, training programmes, participating in the delivery of European Diversity Month and engaging in dialogue with stakeholders to strengthen European DE&I efforts at all levels.
- Fully endorsing the principles and objectives of the new Roadmap for Women's Rights.
- Supporting EU Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib in ensuring that equality policies and legislation are implemented across the EU and targeted measures to renew the post-2025 LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and a new Anti-Racism Strategy are delivered over the coming two years, by enabling consultation with the EU Platform of Diversity Charters and other relevant stakeholders; ensuring that the additional diversity strategies and action plans are strengthened: the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2020-2030.
- Working with all stakeholders to support the adoption of an EU-wide minimum level of protection against discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in several areas of social life. This is required to complement the current EU Employment Equality Directive, and national legal protections for vulnerable groups across Europe. We call on member states to ask the European Commission to reconsider the announcement of withdrawal of the proposal for the new horizontal Directive into their work programme for 2025 and the EU Council Presidency to work on achieving consensus to adopt this Directive.

- We call on all member state governments to ensure that policies to promote equality, diversity, equity and inclusion are added to the EU Council Presidency programmes and are mainstreamed across different policies of the European Commission, in order to support progress in achieving social cohesion.

The #UnionOfEquality is significant, it needs our pledge to protect and enhance all efforts to promote equality, diversity, equity and inclusion in the European Union.

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Notes

To build a Union of Equality, the Commission adopted key strategies and action plans which promote the principle of equal treatment and contribute to the fight against discrimination through a combination of targeted measures and mainstreaming equality in all policy areas.

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, values which are common to all the Member States.

Article 6 of the TEU, the Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter of Fundamental Rights'). Pursuant to the same Article, fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, shall constitute general principles of the Union's law.

The right to equality before the law and protection against discrimination for all persons constitutes a universal right recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter, to which all Member States are signatories.

In 2008, the European Commission presented a proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment outside the labour market, irrespective of age, disability, sexual orientation, or religious belief, which aims at extending protection against discrimination through a horizontal approach. However, unanimity has not yet been reached in the Council. In February 2025 the impact assessment report of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) found that most EU population would potentially benefit from the directive protection. Around three quarters of citizens identify with the four protected grounds under its scope (religion or belief,

age, disability or sexual orientation). At the same time, costs for implementation would remain within acceptable limits. See

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