



European Network on Religion & Belief

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ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

**ANNUAL REPORT to ENORB Assemblée Générale
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I. BRIEF OVERVIEW

2018 – Summary of Activities, June - December

ENORB's AGM was held on June 28th 2018. Key decisions were taken, including the election of a new board and discussion and approval of policy priorities for 2018-19: 1. Religion, Belief and Women's Rights; 2. Combating Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

ENORB's seminar on Women's Rights, Gender and Religion was held on October 4th, covering issues such as: women in positions of religious leadership; the inputs from religion to prevent gender based violence; the so-called gender wars and false concepts of 'traditional values' against gender and sexual minorities; and intersectional feminisms among women from ethnic and religious minorities.

The new Board met in October to start the development of a Strategic Plan 2019-21, of which a draft was discussed at the meeting. The board also included initial discussion of an Organisational Development audit and planning process, to be implemented in 2019, once the new professional team has had the chance to settle in fully.

Further member state seminars on Religion and LGBT Rights were held in the Autumn in collaboration with ENORB member organisations in Greece and Norway. Funding for the ENORB/ILGA project on Religion, Belief and LGBT Rights was completed at the end of December, with member state seminars in Estonia and a preparatory meeting with Sikh community leaders in UK.

2019 – Summary of Activities January - June

In January 2019, meetings were held to plan ENORB's Organisational Development Programme, one of the key components and objective for this year. The audit started in March.

On March 12, a European Seminar on *Peacebuilding: Conflict Resolution and Religion/Belief*, was held in Brussels. Speakers included the Director of the Cyprus Peace Process, Quaker Council for European Affairs, and members such as Pax Christi International and the Cordoba Foundation. Workshops were moderated by experts on national context of Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cyprus. A number of partnerships and links were established between participants. Also, the new presentation leaflets, with up-to-date content and format, was distributed.

Advocacy effort was made to support the fight against islamophobia. ENORB join the informal coalition against islamophobia, led by ENAR. This coalition co-organised with the European Commission coordinator against anti-Muslim hatred. The High Level meeting, held in December 2018, was followed by a workshop on synergies and good practices in Madrid, organised by the Spanish ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security. Later, in December, ENORB was invited, as an expert, to working group workshop on working definition of Islamophobia, organised by the EC. In April, ENORB co-organised with ENAR, OSEPI and EFOMW, a consultation in the European Parliament on strategies to tackle gender-based islamophobia. This consultation led to networking and exchange of narratives on how to advocate pro-actively on better protection of Muslim Women.

ENORB's Annual General Assembly was held on June 18th, with discussion and approval of ENORB Annual Report for 2018 and the audited annual accounts for 2018, as well as a budget for the year 2019. An open space for representatives of member organisations was held to enable networking and sharing information.

ENORB also began a new project, partnering with the Media Diversity Institute the "Get the Trolls out" project, which aims at changing the way religion and belief communities are covered in the mainstream media. The project covers six countries, challenging stereotypes and providing tools to counter racist narratives in Belgium, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary and Greece.

THE PROFESSIONALISATION JOURNEY

The AGM in June also provided an opportunity for the preliminary findings of ENORB's organisational audit to be presented to the board and membership by the responsible consultant, followed by open conversation with the participants. Representatives of member organisations gave additional inputs, designed to influence ENORB's future policy directions by reporting on their key activities over the past year, and asking for assistance and/or advocacy on issues important in their own countries.

These included responding to the increase in mainstream political discourse of Anti-Semitism as well as Islamophobia across Europe, with special pleas from Eastern European members, and also from members of visible minority religions such as Sikhs and Hindus, who also suffered from aggression and hate speech, including from senior politicians and even from some religious leaders.

September saw the completion of the Organisational Development Audit, and a full report outlining the key challenges to be overcome. The report also provided an Action Plan in four sections, outlining a path to long-term sustainability for the network, including a medium and long-term planning process, based on the second three-year ENORB Strategic Plan approved by the board earlier in the year.

The four action plans, covered the following key issues:

- rationalising funding of the network's core activities;
- ordering and prioritising activities annually;
- generational planning;
- building the capacity of the team.

II. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST 2019 WORK PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Strategic and Operational Objectives

For each year from 2012 we have set annual objectives in Annual Work Programmes, revised each year on the basis of decisions taken at the ENORB AGM. With the introduction of our second Three-Year Strategic Plan (2019-2021), we have a new set of strategic and operational objectives and outputs, designed to enable us to meet the requirements of the application for next cycle of EU operational funding (2022-2025). These are set out in the diagram in section 4.2 on pages 9-10.

The Objective, Targets and Achievements under each Strategic Objective are set out below.

Objective 1. ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP

- (i) To hold regular meetings of ENORB's Board/Executive Committee and increase active members and partnerships in member states through local events/campaigns
- (ii) To build ENORB's management and organisational capacity in order to manage larger projects, and improve its visibility, policy advice/impact at European and member state levels
- (iii) To improve ENORB's capacity and skills in communications and advocacy in order to provide a better service to members and partners.

Targets:

- 4 Board Meetings (including AGM)
- 2 member-state or regional events (with project funding)
- Members/contact points in all EU member states and 3 candidate countries

Progress: All targets achieved:

- 4 board meetings,
- Full members, adherents or contact points now established in all member states, including Cyprus
- Review leading to new Strategic Plan initiated.
- Organisational Development Programme planned under OSF grant.

Objective 2. BUILDING ENORB'S PARTNERSHIPS WITH EU EQUALITIES AND OTHER NETWORKS

- (i) To develop our partnerships with EU Equality Bodies, member organisations and CSOs to improve the European context for manifesting religion or belief, especially relating to Religion, Belief and Women's Rights, and: Combatting Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia
- (ii) To develop new partnerships on ENORB's other developing policy priorities.

Targets achieved:

- 2 member state seminars/events under ENORB Women's and gender rights programme
- ENAR: inputs to seminars

Progress:

- Equality Networks Group: ENORB participation in meetings of EU Equality Networks;
- ENORB/ENAR: continued collaboration on common interests
- Transnational European project on religion and belief in the media

Objective 3. ACTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIME

- (i) Support for action in member-states against discrimination and hate-crimes.
- (ii) Increased participation in member state actions/meetings/seminars on interfaith/inter-convictional dialogue, and against discrimination and hate crime on grounds of religion or belief.

Targets:

- ENORB support for 3-4 Anti-Discrimination actions at member state level
- ENORB support for 4-5 interfaith/inter-convictional structures at member state level.

Progress: Targets achieved:

- ENORB support for anti-discrimination/hate-crime actions against religious and other minorities in 3 member states;
- ENORB support for interfaith/inter-convictional activities in all member states through regular communication, and direct advice or advocacy where requested.

Objective 4. SUPPORTING SEMINARS, EVENTS ACROSS EUROPE

- (i) To hold regular European events/seminars/activities on Religion and Belief (including joint activities with other Equalities networks, and after ENORB AGM)
- (ii) To support the development of partnerships with member state organisations and hold seminars/events on European and locally relevant issues.

Targets:

- 2-3 European seminars/events
- 5-10 Member state partnerships and events (with funding)

Progress: Targets Achieved:

- 1 European seminar held and 1 post-AGM Workshop; input into ENAR seminar
- Member state seminars held in 3 member states

Objective 5. SUPPORTING RELIGION AND BELIEF NETWORKS ACROSS EUROPE

- (i) To support the development of local interfaith/inter-convictional networks in all member states
- (ii) To produce (or commission) brief reports on the R&B context in member states as funding becomes available.

Targets:

- ENORB support for interfaith/inter-convictional structures at member state level
- To map the main outlines of the religion/belief contexts in selected countries

Progress:

- Formal interfaith/inter-convictional structures now established in at member state level
- Partially achieved through information gathered as part of member state seminar programme.

Objective 6. CONTRIBUTING TO EU POLICY-RELATED DISCUSSIONS

- (i) To contribute to EU policy discussions through reports, responses, meetings and contributing to European conferences, seminars etc.
- (ii) To assess the impact of EU Policies – especially on Religion and Belief groups – in all parts of Europe (eg through seminar papers, conference contributions, local initiatives, from member organisations).

Targets:

- Regular ENORB bulletins to members and mailing list (includes EU contacts);
- ENORB annual report and seminar reports on available to members on website and online; also to European Commission and Parliament contacts;
- ENORB participation in EU events at European level

Progress: Targets achieved

- ENORB bulletins produced and distributed; New ENORB leaflet produced;
- Annual Report written and distributed;
- ENORB participated and provided secretariat support for DG Justice Islamophobia working group and contributes to European Parliament intergroup and other events.

III. ENORB'S BROADER ACTIVITIES

Identifying existing interfaith activities and supporting actions in the field of Religion and Belief

Unlike the other five key EU human rights priorities, Religion & Belief does not have the pre-existing base of member organisations, either interfaith or human rights activists in this field. So a primary objective for ENORB is to contribute to the development of national religion and belief organisations. This assists both the Europe-wide struggle for equalities and against discrimination and hate-crime, and local action on key issues, including through ENORB's role in facilitating exchanges of expertise between different countries. Through the ENORB/ILGA programme, the informal coalition against islamophobia and ENORB's own member state seminars it has been possible to involve experts from many countries, in supporting activities and campaigns with less developed experience in interfaith or inter-convictional activities. In some cases (e.g. Sweden, Lithuania, Spain these are leading to new or more effective structures).

Mechanisms to monitor equalities/discrimination

ENORB does not yet have the central capacity to monitor and record discrimination across all EU member states on grounds of religion or belief, nor to respond to all local breaches of fundamental rights or hate-crimes, except by offering support when we are approached by local groups for help. But ENORB's capacity to offer such support has been dramatically increased in the past with our new (part-time) professional team in place and operational.

Many of our member organisations and associate members are involved in this work in member-states, and ENORB officers have worked with several member organisations as part of our project work to develop capacity at member-state level. The setting up and strengthening of national interfaith or inter-convictional structures in new member states will provide a basis for monitoring discrimination.

Exploratory work with other Equalities Networks

In addition to joint collaborative work with ENAR, ILGA and CSO in Europe, in 2018-9 we have participated in joint meetings of Equalities Networks with the European Commission and DG Justice, and in the preparation of joint statements and working papers with Equality Networks.

Exchanges of experience and Inter-Faith/Belief activities between organisations across Europe

As part of ENORB's programme of seminars and through the AGM 2019, networking and exchange workshops were held at each event. ENORB also held two European seminars and supported interfaith member state events in Spain and Bulgaria as well as facilitated an exchange programme between the Swedish Interfaith Council and UK Interfaith Networks.

Conceptual Mapping

This is an important method by which the 'mutual understanding' component of ENORB's primary aims is being addressed. Discussions and dialogue on several topics of current moral and political concern have been held in ENORB's seminars and in less formal settings, with a view to helping to identify the values shared across religions and non-religious philosophies. Concepts such as Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, European values, so-called 'traditional values' and 'family values', freedom to wear religious symbols, sexual orientation, women's rights, gender and identity, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, have been discussed in these forums.

IV. ENORB'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. INITIAL ACTIONS

ENORB Board meetings were held to plan the implementation of the operational funding grant 2018-19 from OSF, and to firm up on strategic and operational priorities for the network. Board and officers managed the initial phase of ENORB's transition from voluntary management of a project-grant-based network to a fully operational-funded member of the EU Equality Networks. ENORB's professional team of Director, Deputy Director (based in Bucharest), Administration and Finance Officer have been operating throughout 2019 from our new office base.

ENORB officers discussed our plans with EU/DG Justice officers to ensure we meet criteria for an EU Equalities Network. In 2019, ENORB secure two new funding grants:

- 2020-2022 core grant from OSIFE to support ENORB's professional team and operations:
- Project-based funding with the Media Diversity Institute under the Get the Trolls Out Project until 2021, with possible renewal for a further year.