

Decision No 771/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council
of 17 May 2006 establishing the European Year of Equal Opportunities
for All (2007) — towards a just society (Text with EEA relevance)

DECISION No 771/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

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Opportunities for All (2007) — towards a just society

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular
Article 13(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁽²⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty⁽³⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Non-discrimination is a fundamental principle of the European Union. That principle should be taken into account in all the European Union's policies.
- (2) On the basis of Article 13 of the Treaty, the Council has adopted Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin⁽⁴⁾ in, *inter alia*, employment, vocational training, education, goods and services, and social protection, Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation⁽⁵⁾, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation and Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services⁽⁶⁾.
- (3) Article 2 of the Treaty provides that the promotion of equality between men and women is one of the essential tasks of the Community. Likewise, Article 3(2) of the Treaty requires that the Community aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women in all its activities.
- (4) Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union sets out a prohibition on discrimination on a variety of grounds, whereas Article 23 thereof sets out the requirement that equality between men and women be ensured in all areas.

- (5) European legislation on equal treatment and non-discrimination covers all persons in the European Union.
- (6) The Social Agenda 2005 to 2010, which complements and supports the Lisbon Strategy, has a key role in promoting the social dimension of economic growth. One of the priorities of the Social Agenda 2005 to 2010 is the promotion of equal opportunities for all as a means of achieving a more socially inclusive society.
- (7) The year 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of the European Year against Racism, which has enabled considerable progress to be made towards the elimination of racial discrimination.
- (8) European legislation has significantly raised the level of guaranteed equality and protection against inequalities and discrimination across the European Union and acted as a catalyst for the development of a more coherent, rights-based approach to equality and non-discrimination. Despite this fact, people in the European Union still encounter discrimination and unequal treatment in their daily lives.
- (9) The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (hereinafter referred to as the European Year) should lend fresh impetus to supporting Member States efforts to implement Community legislation on equal treatment and non-discrimination.
- (10) It is essential that actions in relation to racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation take full account of gender differences.
- (11) The consultation process organised by the Commission through the Green Paper entitled 'Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged European Union', which was presented on 28 May 2004, shows that, in the opinion of most of the persons questioned, the Union should step up its efforts to combat discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- (12) In its Resolution of 28 April 2005 on the situation of the Roma in the European Union⁽⁷⁾, the European Parliament draws attention to the prevalence of anti-gypsyism and its discriminatory effect on the opportunities in terms of employment, education and social services for the European Union's most disadvantaged ethnic-minority group.
- (13) Key elements in the successful impact of the Community non-discrimination legislative framework are the extent to which it enjoys broad popular support and the existence of genuine political will for change. In that context, the social partners, local and regional authorities and NGOs have a vital role to play. The European Year should act as a catalyst in raising awareness and building momentum. It should help to focus political attention in all the Member States and mobilise everyone concerned in order to drive forward the European Union's new non-discrimination and equal opportunities framework strategy, including after 2007.
- (14) The European Year will also seek to address issues of multiple discrimination, that is discrimination on two or more of the grounds listed in Article 13 of the Treaty. It will also seek to promote a balanced treatment of all the grounds listed therein.

- (15) The varying levels of progress made at national level call for urgent action to be taken at European and national level in the field of equality and non-discrimination; in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the bulk of actions of the European Year is to be decentralised at national level.
- (16) Participation in the European Year should be open to Member States, the acceding countries, the candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy, EFTA/EEA States, in accordance with the conditions established under the European Economic Area Agreement, the countries of the western Balkans, in line with the conditions laid down pursuant to their respective agreements, and the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, in accordance with the provisions of the May 2004 Strategy Paper and the Country Action Plans.
- (17) Consistency and complementarity with other Community action is needed, in particular, with action to combat discrimination and social exclusion, and to promote fundamental rights, education and training, culture and intercultural dialogue, youth, citizenship, immigration and asylum and gender equality.
- (18) This Decision lays down, for the entire duration of the programme, a financial framework constituting the prime reference, within the meaning of point 33 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure⁽⁸⁾, for the budgetary authority during the annual budgetary procedure.
- (19) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁽⁹⁾.
- (20) Since the objectives of this Decision cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, owing to the need, *inter alia*, for multilateral partnerships, the transnational exchange of information and Community-wide dissemination of good practice, and can therefore, by reason of the scale of action, be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve those objectives,

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally adopted).

- (1) [OJ C 65, 17.3.2006, p. 70.](#)
- (2) Opinion of 16 November 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (3) Opinion of the European Parliament of 13 December 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Council Decision of 28 April 2006.
- (4) [OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.](#)
- (5) [OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.](#)
- (6) [OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37.](#)
- (7) [OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2006, p. 129.](#)
- (8) [OJ C 172, 18.6.1999, p. 1.](#) Interinstitutional Agreement as amended by Decision 2003/429/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2003 on the adjustment of the financial perspective for enlargement ([OJ L 147, 14.6.2003, p. 25](#)).
- (9) [OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.](#)