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COVER NOTE

From:	Ms Hadja LAHBIB, European Commissioner for Equality; Preparedness and Crisis Management
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	2026 Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement

Delegations will find attached the "2026 Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement" by Commissioner Lahbib.

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European Commission

2026 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Simplification, Implementation & Enforcement



Hadja Lahbib

European Commissioner for Equality and European Commissioner for Preparedness and Crisis Management

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INTRODUCTION

Among the priorities of the 2024-2029 Commission, the President made a strong commitment towards a simpler and more accessible EU law. The aim is to cut administrative red tape, simplify legislation and implementation, and reduce bureaucratic burdens. In this context, I, Hadja Lahbib, the Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, am presenting the annual progress report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement. This report covers 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026 and details the measures I have overseen and implemented in collaboration with the Directorates-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (DG HERA), and, in the Equality policy area, with the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST).

1. Executive Summary

Significant strides in regulatory simplification, implementation and enforcement have been made from August 2025 to July 2026.

With regard to **preparedness and crisis management**, I held an implementation dialogue on how the EU can better prepare for the next health crisis. The conversation focused on efficient and effective provision of lifesaving medical countermeasures (MCM) and discussed the support needed for EU policies to deliver results in this area. Moreover, the Emergency Framework Regulation[1] was stress-tested to assess its effectiveness and sustainability, while the work on the implementation on the actions in the MCM strategy[2] continued, including the publication of the handbook for EU health crisis procurement of MCM. The Commission's simplification agenda for humanitarian aid prioritises transformative funding and aims to modernise grant management with digital systems and streamline supply chains through initiatives like the Humanitarian Procurement Centres (HPCs) recognition framework. The May 2026 Joint Communication on Humanitarian Aid reinforces this approach to enhance predictability, cost-efficiency, and local empowerment in crisis response.

One year after the implementation dialogue, progress has continued through key measures, including a localisation roadmap (targeting 25% of funding to local actors by 2027), strengthened protection programmes (e.g., SHIELD and expanded Protect Aid Workers initiatives), and systemic resilience-building via the Preparedness Union Strategy. In parallel, the Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment (CoRTA) aiming at informing a collective reflection on risks and threats, and strategies such as the EU Stockpiling Strategy and the Communication on integrated wildfires risk management will further bolster the Union's capacity to respond to evolving climate, security, and health risks.

With regard to **equality**, I held an implementation dialogue in November 2025 on the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. The dialogue addressed the critical challenges and obstacles faced in implementation of national Roma strategies. Furthermore, the Commission continued to support the transposition process of multiple laws in the field of equality, namely, the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the Pay Transparency Directive, the two Directives on standards for equality bodies, the Directive establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card, and the European Accessibility Act. Implementation support was provided through transposition workshops, funding, guidelines, multi/bi-lateral meetings, expert groups and other forms of information sharing as well as the preparation of delegated and implementing acts.

The Commission stepped up enforcement in the equality and non-discrimination policy area by issuing reasoned opinions to several Member States for incomplete or incorrect transposition of the European Accessibility Act, the Directive on gender balance in company boards, the Directive on equal treatment between men and women in goods and services, and the Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers, while closing cases where full transposition had been notified. The Court of Justice also confirmed breaches of the European Accessibility Act and

[1] Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2372 of 24 October 2022 on a framework of measures for ensuring the supply of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures in the event of a public health emergency at Union level

[2] Medical Countermeasures Strategy - Public Health - European Commission

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of the Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers, imposing lump-sum payments or daily penalties on some Member States.

2. Delivering Results: Key Measures

A. Simplification and costs savings

Preparedness and Crisis Management

The Emergency Framework Regulation was stress-tested towards the end of 2025 to assess its effectiveness and sustainability. This included the mapping of the relevant policy areas as well as analysis of the conducted simulation exercises and related digital initiatives. Since coming into force in 2022, there has been no cross-border threat to health of such a serious nature that a public health emergency at EU level was recognised. Consequently, this Regulation has never been activated or tested so far to identify potential scope for simplification.

Nonetheless, DG HERA actively prepares the EU's response capacity and has organised four simulation exercises over the last years to test its level of preparedness and readiness, as well as its governance structures that involve Member States, industry representatives and civil society. These exercises have enabled stakeholders to better understand the policy architecture surrounding MCM and clarified how the Commission can effectively support Member States in ensuring access to and availability of MCM. They further provided insights into the activation of the Emergency Framework Regulation and the coordination with the Council, Member States, and other Commission services and agencies. These exercises have also demonstrated *how* lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic have been effectively translated into a clear legal framework of emergency measures for ensuring the supply of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures in the event of a public health of emergency at EU level.

Following the recommendation from the European Court of Auditors to clarify respective responsibilities and coordination mechanisms[3], and the HERA Review's[4] call to strengthen further synergies within the Commission and with relevant EU agencies, the DG works together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to improve this. Together, they set up a 'HERA-EMA Strategic Engagement Plan', which guides the collaboration across several working areas with increased foresight. The simulation exercises mentioned above have also allowed for clarification of responsibilities and the streamline of operational procedures, towards a more efficient, comprehensive and coordinated EU response.

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) has no regulatory deep cleaning planned for Humanitarian aid policy. The legal basis is still fit for purpose (1996). The Union Civil Protection Mechanism/Health Emergency Response Regulation is currently under negotiation. I am committed, however, to contribute to the simplification agenda in broader terms. Over the past year, simplifying humanitarian aid procedures has been a priority to reduce administrative burdens and optimise limited resources.

On 27 May 2026, the Commission adopted a Joint Communication on EU's humanitarian action, entitled "Defending values, driving reform, delivering impact: the EU humanitarian action in a shifting global order". The Communication reinforces a shift toward transformative funding, such as multiyear contracts, cash assistance, pooled funds, anticipatory action, and support for local actors. Multi-year contracts, now more widely used in protracted crises, reduce transaction costs and improve predictability, while cash assistance has been prioritised for its cost-efficiency and ability to empower affected populations. The aim is to channel two-thirds of EU humanitarian funding through these modalities, alongside efforts to simplify grant management and non-regulatory requirements.

[3] Special report 12/2024: The EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic – The EU medical agencies generally managed well in unprecedented circumstances
[4] HERA review: Taking stock to reinforce health security in the EU - Public Health

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To ease administrative burden, the Commission will look at ways to simplify reporting requirements for its partners. This includes putting in place interoperable digital systems, which will enhance transparency, improve the traceability of EU funds, and safeguard operational flexibility.

The Joint Communication also acknowledges the key role of humanitarian supply chains in how humanitarian aid is delivered. It provides concrete actions aimed at making the supply chains more efficient and effective. Amongst them features the setting up of a recognition framework for Humanitarian Procurement Centres (HPCs) that partners and EU Member States may use for simpler and more effective procurement of certain relief items. This procedure has been launched and interested HPCs can already apply to be recognised.

Lastly, within the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), in close cooperation with EU Member States and Participating States, is simplifying procedures related to emergency response grants through the implementation of multi-action grants.

Equality

As the legislative acts in the equality policy area are less numerous compared to other regulated policy areas, there are also less simplification opportunities. Nonetheless, together with DG JUST, I am assessing the potential for simplification in the equality and non-discrimination policy area. The prioritisation of policies for stress testing was based on their potential for simplification and on stakeholders' views regularly collected by DG JUST in technical level meetings and consultations.

In that context, DG JUST carried out an analysis and proposed to focus next efforts on the Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity.

B. Implementation

Preparedness and Crisis Management

The implementation dialogue on how the EU can better prepare for the next health crisis took place on 10 July. The conversation focused on efficient and effective provision of MCM and the support needed for EU policies in this area. This includes the ongoing implementation of the MCM strategy, announced by President Ursula von der Leyen in her political guidelines and included in the Preparedness Union Strategy.

20 participants represented a wide variety of stakeholders including industry, academia, and civil society representatives. The implementation dialogue showcased broad support for the EU's ambition to reinforce preparedness through a strong MCM strategy and confirmed that preparedness cannot be limited to emergency response alone. Stakeholders welcomed progress since DG HERA's establishment, but consistently pointed to unresolved challenges in funding continuity, market predictability, stockpiling governance, equitable access, and workforce resilience.

Work ongoing on the implementation of the MCM strategy includes several key actions. Firstly, the EU's updated framework for crisis procurement of MCM offers the Commission and Member States a series of tools which can be deployed. However, their effectiveness depends on close collaboration and swift decision-making in the early days of a crisis. To promote this, the Commission has developed a handbook on crisis procurement which sets out the options available, considerations on their use and how to operationalise them.

The Commission is also developing, through a Team Europe approach, standardised procedures for sharing agreements with global partners, which builds on lessons-learned from the recent successful response to the mpox outbreak in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Finally, as stated in the MCM strategy, the Commission will consider and, if appropriate, propose a revision of the 2014 Joint Procurement Agreement for MCM to align with the revised Financial Regulation and to make it better fit for today's needs.

When it comes to initiatives enhancing digitalisation and data access, DG HERA works to ensure that actions in the MCM strategy are fully digitally compatible. This includes work on 'ATHINA' – an IT system designed to collect intelligence on health threats and vulnerabilities in the supply chains of MCM. The DG also supports the

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interoperability of Member States' databases with the system through the EU-HIP project ([5]) and works closely with the relevant Commission services and agencies to ensure efficient interoperability and avoid data collection duplication.

Since the implementation dialogue that took place on 21 May 2025, significant progress has been made in transforming the EU's humanitarian landscape. This includes the adoption of a localisation roadmap, the development of a Staff Working Document on integrated approach to fragility, and enhanced Commission support for key enabling services. The localisation roadmap, adopted in late 2025, sets a target of directing 25% of EU humanitarian funding to local actors by 2027. This milestone is already reflected in the 2026 allocations, where 20% was directed to local/national responders. The Commission continues to foster decentralised coordination, capacity-building, and reduced administrative barriers to empower grassroots organisations, while considering transparent partner reporting critical to track progress. Additionally, the Commission continues to support key enabling services.

The Joint Communication adopted in May 2026 highlights the need for better operational security coordination and cooperation among humanitarian organisations. It advocates for the development of common minimum security standards and the promotion of better security capacities among UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil society partners. The EU will also invest in capacity building and training in security risk management, increasing humanitarian organisations' awareness of duty of care responsibilities.

Protection of Aid Workers has also advanced. The EU-led Protect Aid Workers (PAW) programme has also been expanded to provide global coverage, offering legal, medical, and financial support to humanitarian workers who have been attacked or otherwise affected by critical incidents. This expansion reflects the growing recognition of the risks faced by aid workers, particularly in high-conflict settings, where local staff bear the heaviest burden The SHIELD programme was launched to address sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies, with an initial allocation of EUR 20 million. This programme is part of a broader effort to ensure that humanitarian responses are inclusive and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.

Beyond humanitarian aid, the Preparedness Union Strategy has driven systemic resilience by promoting a holistic approach. The 2026 Cohesion Policy Framework now enables Member States to reallocate funds for civil preparedness, while the next Multiannual Financial Framework will embed preparedness priorities. Initiatives to promote volunteering and exchange opportunities in the field of preparedness, attract and equip talent in the field of preparedness, the integration of preparedness topics in school curricula, improving early warning systems, promoting risk communication and awareness-raising, establishing guidance for 72-hour self-sufficiency and promoting a culture of preparedness and are key for societal preparedness.

A Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment (CoRTA), analysing climate, health, security, and technological risks, will inform the EU Minimum Preparedness Requirements, set for adoption in late 2026, identifying priority preparedness targets in critical vital services, adopting a holistic approach to resilience. Lastly, the EU Stockpiling Strategy has further enhanced the Union's ability to respond to crises by establishing a dedicated Stockpiling Network, which convened experts in May 2026 to address challenges such as supply chain vulnerabilities and the identification of essential goods.

Equality

With the support of DG JUST, I have taken forward efforts to strengthen cooperation with Member States and stakeholders to facilitate and streamline the implementation of EU law.

In November 2025, I held my implementation dialogue on the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. The dialogue addressed the critical challenges and obstacles faced in implementation of national Roma strategies. Stakeholders raised concerns about limited access to funding, structural barriers such as persisting housing and educational segregation of Roma, widespread anti-gypsyism and the lack of disaggregated equality

([5]) EU Funding & Tenders Portal

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data. They highlighted the issue of shrinking civic space, insufficient Roma participation and Roma NGOs capacity building, limited accountability mechanisms at local level and inadequate monitoring of the implementation of the EU Roma strategic framework. At the same time, participants acknowledged the economic benefits of investing in Roma youth employment and inclusion.

Against this background, I reiterated the Commission's commitment to providing financial support, including through the proposed AgoraEU programme, and highlighted the ongoing infringement procedures concerning educational segregation. The Commission also continues to monitor Member States' compliance with and transposition of relevant EU legislation in this area. As part of the EU Roma Strategic Framework's biennial monitoring cycle, Member States submit progress reports on their national Roma strategies to the Commission, based on which, the Commission publishes a consolidated assessment of progress.

Furthermore, DG JUST is supporting me to streamline the cooperation with Member States, in view of a timely and effective implementation and transposition of EU Law. DG JUST is in close contact with national coordination authorities for implementation and provides their contact points with information on the most up-to-date transposition tools.

In particular, detailed roadmaps and templates for explanatory documents have been prepared for Directive (EU) 2024/1500 on standards for equality bodies and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, as well as for Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 on standards for equality bodies, Directive (EU) 2023/970 on pay transparency, and Directive (EU) 2022/2381 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies. All these documents highlight points of attention, support actions, contact details and further information on planning and timing of the implementation actions from both the Commission's and the Member States' side.

The Commission continued to organise transposition workshops for the Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The fourth workshop took place on 29 June, the fifth will take place end of October 2026 and, if needed, a sixth and last one will take place beginning 2027. DG JUST also continued to coordinate the implementation of the Istanbul Convention[6] in the EU's institutions and bodies. As part of the baseline evaluation by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Violence against Women (GREVIO), DG JUST organised the visit of GREVIO on 16-18 and 23-25 June 2026.

To support the transposition process of **Directive (EU) 2023/970 on pay transparency**, the Commission has organised a series of implementation workshops bringing together representatives of the Member States, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet), EFTA countries, social partners and candidate countries as observers. Following the organisation of four full-day transposition workshops in 2024 and 2025 (28 May 2024, 9 December 2024, 30 April 2025, 30 September 2025), the Commission held a dedicated workshop with social partners in April 2026. These workshops provided an opportunity to discuss all provisions of the Directive and to offer guidance on its implementation. In addition, in cooperation with EIGE, the Commission published EU-wide guidelines on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification in March 2026. Presented as a step-by-step toolkit, these guidelines are tailored to different employer sizes to facilitate compliance with the principle of equal pay for the same work or work of equal value between women and men.

The Commission also provided funding to support the implementation of the Pay Transparency Directive. After a first call for proposals in 2024, a second call was launched in January 2026 as part of the CERV Gender Equality strand. It invited projects focused on the development of practical methodologies and digital tools at national level, capacity building and training on the Directive. The evaluation of the projects is ongoing.

To support the transposition process of Directive (EU) 2024/1500 and Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 on standards for equality bodies, the Commission has continued working with the expert group on the implementation of EU equality law with representatives from the Member States, with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA),

[6] Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

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EIGE and Equinet, as observers. In its guidance[7] to Member States, the Commission clarifies certain requirements of the Directive regarding the independence of equality bodies, their litigation and inquiry powers. Furthermore, to ensure uniform conditions for the reporting obligations on the functioning of equality bodies, the Commission adopted two implementing regulations setting out indicators for data collection. Additionally, the Commission continued sharing information from key stakeholders with Member States (through a Wiki collaborative space), with the aim to strengthen administrative capacities of equality bodies on the implications of AI technologies in the operations of public administrations and their readiness to supervise them.

To support the preparation of a delegated act of Directive (EU) 2024/2841 establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities, four expert group meetings and one consultation were held with organisations of persons with disabilities between September 2025 and April 2026. The delegated act was adopted by the Commission on 1 July 2026. Furthermore, in the context of the implementation of the European Accessibility Act (Directive (EU) 2019/882), the Commission established an informal expert group consisting of representatives of market surveillance authorities, authorities responsible for the compliance of services and relevant stakeholders, including representative organisations for persons with disabilities. The first meeting was held on 26 June 2026. Moreover, to support Member States in the transposition process, the Commission organised 15 bilateral meetings.

Lastly, the Commission recently adopted a report on the application of the Racial Equality and Employment Equality Directives. The report specifically examined enforcement gaps, the role of equality bodies, inadequate sanctions for discrimination, and emerging forms of discrimination including structural and algorithmic discrimination. The Commission continues to closely monitor the correct application of EU anti-discrimination legislation.

C. Enforcement[8]

Preparedness and Crisis Management

In the area of preparedness and crisis management there are no enforcement actions to be reported on.

Equality

In the area of equality and non-discrimination several significant decisions have been adopted in the reference period, with the aim of enhancing Member States' compliance in such sensitive domains.

Due to persisting gaps in the transposition of the European Accessibility Act (Directive 2019/882), reasoned opinions have been sent to Slovakia, Latvia, France, Finland, Czechia and Belgium, and additional reasoned opinions have been issued against Slovenia, Sweden, the Netherlands, Croatia, Germany and Cyprus, while the procedures against Italy, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Greece and Austria have been closed after those Member States notified complete transposition of the Directive. The Court of Justice held in Case C-646/24 on 19 March 2026 that Bulgaria failed to transpose the Directive on time and ordered the payment of a lump-sum.

In the field of anti-discrimination and gender equality, reasoned opinions have been sent for the lack of complete transposition of Directive 2022/2381 on gender balance in company boards to Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Portugal, while it was decided to close the cases against Denmark, Estonia, Greece, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Romania due to their notification of complete transposition.

A reasoned opinion was sent to Germany for the incorrect transposition of Directive 2004/113 on equal treatment between men and women in goods and services.

In the reference period my services received a total of 72 complaints in the equality policy area.

[7] The Commission guidance documents do not encroach on the Court of Justice's exclusive competence for interpreting EU law.

[8] The Europa webpage on infringement cases, pre-infringement dialogues and transposition of directives provides up-to-date statistical information on the Commission's enforcement activities and Member States' compliance with EU law, including trends per policy area, topic and Member State.

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The Court of Justice in Cases C-68/24 and C-69/24 held on 1 August 2025 that Belgium and Ireland failed to fulfil its obligations under Directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers and ordered to pay a lump-sum. Similarly, in Case C-70/24, Spain was ordered to pay a lump-sum and daily penalties.

Concerning petitions, there were 2 petitions in 2025 regarding gender equality: (1) on Directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance, and (2) on Directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment between men and women in goods and services that both referred to the issues with transposition of the Directive in Spain. The Commission considers the issues raised by citizens in petitions and complaints regarding Directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance in an ongoing compliance check of the national implementing legislation. If the Commission considers that a Member State's legislation does not comply with the requirements of the Directive, it may open infringement proceedings. With regard to the issues raised in the petition on Directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment between men and women in goods and services no breach of EU law was found.

3. Way forward

Preparedness and Crisis Management

Together with DG HERA, I intend to feed lessons learnt from the simulation exercises and the implementation dialogue into health emergency preparedness and response activities.

Together with DG ECHO, over the next year, I will intensify efforts to implement the Preparedness Union Strategy and the Humanitarian Aid Communication priorities.

Equality

In coordination with EVP Mînzatu and our services, I plan to organise a Reality Check with practitioners back-to-back with an Implementation Dialogue on the European Care Strategy.

As regards the implementation of Directive (EU) 2022/2381 on Gender Balance on Company Boards, the Commission will issue a specific report by the end of 2026. This report will ascertain whether and how the conditions laid down in Article 12(1) are fulfilled by Member States. Furthermore, the report will provide an overview of the Directive's enforcement and compliance across the Union.

Additionally, in the second half of 2026 we will work with the Member States on an implementing act to enable the cross-border use of the digital versions of the European Disability Card and European Parking Card for persons with disabilities.

Lastly, throughout 2026 and 2027, we will carefully investigate existing legislation related to gender equality in the context of care and leave for self-employed workers, in particular Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity. The aim is to identify why the Directive is currently under-used although gender equality challenges persist. This will provide a comprehensive evidence base for possible future action to address any gaps that may be identified in the scope and application of the existing legislation. Within this context, we will carry out a study on the rights to family-related leave for self-employed persons, and a study on the interaction between the different types of family leaves. We will also build on the ongoing review of the Occupational Health and Safety acquis carried out by DG EMPL, and notably on their study on the application of the Maternity Leave Directive 92/85/EEC.

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Annex: examples

Preparedness and Crisis Management

1) Handbook on health crisis procurement (DG HERA)

The addition of the crisis procurement mechanism in Article 8 of the Emergency Framework Regulation has added to the tools available to the Commission and Member States but has made the overall crisis procurement framework more complex to operationalise in practice. To address this, the Commission has produced a handbook on crisis procurement so that all those involved have set out clearly the options available, the decisions that need to be made, and the likely impact of those decisions.

2) Supply chain optimisation (DG ECHO)

Over time, humanitarian aid organisations have developed parallel supply chains, leading to duplication, higher costs, and delays in delivery. Given soaring humanitarian needs and shrinking resources, a collective shift toward greater efficiency is essential. Optimising supply chain expenditure can unlock resources, increasing the impact of aid for vulnerable populations.

To address this, the Commission launched the Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain (HLGSC), bringing together donors, humanitarian actors, the private sector, and academia. At a High-Level Conference in December 2025, the HLGSC emphasised the urgent need for reform, advocating a more collaborative, interoperable, and resilient model that empowers local actors. Concrete results have already been achieved: in Ukraine, data-sharing agreements saved EUR 250 million by avoiding overlapping assistance, while in eastern Chad, a remote, logistically challenging region hosting over 1 million refugees, resource pooling improved efficiency through shared fuel supply for humanitarian vehicles, joint procurement savings of 10–15%, and equitable access for local partners, enabling their participation in larger-scale interventions.

Equality

3) Implementation support for the Pay Transparency Directive (DG JUST)

The Commission has continued to support Member States in transposing Directive (EU) 2023/970 on pay transparency through a series of implementation workshops. These brought together representatives of Member States, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Equinet (the European network of equality bodies), as well as EFTA countries, social partners and candidate countries as observers. The workshops created a forum to discuss all provisions of the Directive and to provide guidance on practical questions arising during implementation.

The Commission also made funding available to support implementation of the Directive. After the first call in 2024, a second call was launched in January 2026 under the CERV programme. This second call aims to support the development at national level of practical methodologies and digital tools, as well as capacity building and training, including for social partners, related to the Pay Transparency Directive. The evaluation of the submitted projects is still ongoing.

In addition, working together with EIGE, the Commission published EU-wide guidelines in March 2026 on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification. These guidelines are presented as a step-by-step toolkit and are specifically tailored to employers of different sizes, with the aim of making it easier to comply with the principle of equal pay for the same work or work of equal value between women and men.

In the Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights published on 22 July 2026, the Commission renewed its commitment to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the Pay Transparency Directive by continuing to provide support to Member States and social partners to implement the Directive effectively. The Commission will also provide further support to SMEs in particular, as key actors in realising the tangible impact of fair and transparent pay practices, including to ensure that implementation entails the least possible administrative burden.

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