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Enhancing co-operation between parliaments and equality bodies

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

According to General Policy Recommendation No. 2 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), equality bodies should be independent bodies, established by constitutional provision or legislation by parliament, with a mandate to combat racism and intolerance. They are invaluable partners of the Council of Europe and of the European Union, which is expected to adopt new legislation on equality bodies in 2024.

Equality bodies may greatly help Council of Europe member States to materialise the commitment made in 2023 by the Heads of State and Government at their 4th Summit in Reykjavík to strengthen work towards inclusive societies without marginalisation, exclusion, racism and intolerance.

However, as demonstrated at ECRI's 2023 Annual Seminar with Equality Bodies, these bodies face many challenges to both their independence and to their effectiveness. The Parliamentary Assembly and national parliaments have the potential to play a key role in strengthening them. For instance, parliaments have a decisive role in implementing equality bodies' recommendations to adopt or change legislation.

To fulfil this potential, co-operation between parliaments and equality bodies must be further developed and better structured throughout Europe, thereby making the best possible use of their contribution towards achieving effective equality and fighting discrimination.

The Assembly should carefully study how co-operation between equality bodies and parliaments as well as ECRI could be enhanced to promote equality and counter racism and intolerance more effectively, including by studying what existing structures and good practices may already exist within national parliaments for co-operating with equality bodies. Based on such a review and on ECRI's work, the Assembly should seek to make recommendations on how best to strengthen national equality bodies and ECRI by means of enhanced co-operation with parliamentarians.

