

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001330/25
to the Commission**

Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D), Maria Walsh (PPE), Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE), Ilaria Salis (The Left), Lucia Yar (Renew), Birgit Sippel (S&D), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Matjaž Nemec (S&D), Magdalena Adamowicz (PPE), Marc Angel (S&D), Rudi Kennes (The Left), Rasmus Nordqvist (Verts/ALE), Merja Kyllönen (The Left), Kira Marie Peter-Hansen (Verts/ALE), Kim Van Sparrentak (Verts/ALE), Jonas Sjöstedt (The Left), Carla Tavares (S&D), Katrin Langensiepen (Verts/ALE), Villy Søvndal (Verts/ALE), Christophe Clergeau (S&D), Dainius Žalimas (Renew), Thijs Reuten (S&D), Alessandro Zan (S&D), Robert Biedroń (S&D), Nicolae Ștefănuță (Verts/ALE), Lukas Sieper (NI), Catarina Martins (The Left), Brando Benifei (S&D), René Repasi (S&D), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), Gabriele Bischoff (S&D), Thomas Bajada (S&D), Petras Auštrevičius (Renew), Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE), Nikos Pappas (The Left), Lena Schilling (Verts/ALE), Carolina Morace (The Left), Evin Incir (S&D), Mounir Satouri (Verts/ALE), Saskia Bricmont (Verts/ALE)

(1 April 2025)

Subject: Withdrawal of the Horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive

The announcement that the Horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive is being withdrawn from the 2025 Commission work programme has raised serious concerns regarding transparency and institutional accountability.

In June 2024, the Belgian Council Presidency introduced a compromise proposal for a new Council directive on equal treatment, garnering broad support among Member States. The Polish Council Presidency has since prioritised negotiations on this directive.

Given these developments:

1. Does the Commission intend to propose alternative legal measures to comprehensively tackle discrimination in the EU?
2. How does the planned withdrawal align with paragraph 9 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, which requires the Commission to provide reasons for withdrawing a legislative proposal, along with subsequent steps and a precise timetable?
3. In their hearings, Commissioners Lahbib and McGrath committed to strive to achieve the necessary unanimity in the Council. Yet, while the lack of unanimity in the Council was never a reason to abandon the proposal in the past, Commissioner Lahbib stated, during a hearing in Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on 18 February 2025, that the reason for the planned withdrawal was the 'lack of foreseeable agreement'. In the light of the above, what was the real reason for the withdrawal, and what has the Commission done recently to address the stated 'lack of foreseeable agreement'?

Submitted: 1.4.2025

Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission

(21 May 2025)

1. Striving for equality for all and equality in all of its senses continues to be central to the Commission's work to comprehensively tackle discrimination in the EU. This is why the Commission is fully committed to continue leading efforts at the EU level to do more for everyone to live freely, thrive and lead, regardless of who they are, particularly with the new strategies to be adopted on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) equality, anti-racism and gender equality, the full implementation of the Strategic framework for Roma equality ⁽¹⁾, the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities ⁽²⁾ and the recent adoption of the Roadmap for women's rights ⁽³⁾.
2. In line with the interinstitutional agreement on better law making ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission provided the reasons proposing the intended withdrawal in the Annex IV of the 2025 Commission work programme, together with a time indication ⁽⁵⁾. The Commission will take due account of the positions of the European Parliament and the Council before deciding on the withdrawal of the proposal.
3. The proposal for the Equal Treatment Directive ⁽⁶⁾ file has been under discussion for almost 17 years and almost every Presidency has placed the file on the agenda of the Council, including the comprehensive efforts to arrive at a compromise text of the Belgian Presidency during the first half of 2024. However, despite all these efforts and the Commission comprehensively supporting the legislative process, it has not been possible to reach the required unanimity and there is no clear prospect that unanimity could be reached in the foreseeable future.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1813.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030_en.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_681.

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinst/2016/512/oj/eng.

⁽⁵⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/7617998c-86e6-4a74-b33c-249e8a7938cd_en?filename=COM_2025_45_1_annexes_EN.pdf.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52008PC0426>.