

TECHNICAL SUPPORT INSTRUMENT PROJECT

Upholding equality and non-discrimination by equality bodies regarding the use of artificial intelligence in public administrations

Duration: 5 September 2024 – 4 October 2026



Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

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by the Council of Europe



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NON-DISCRIMINATION OMBUDSMAN

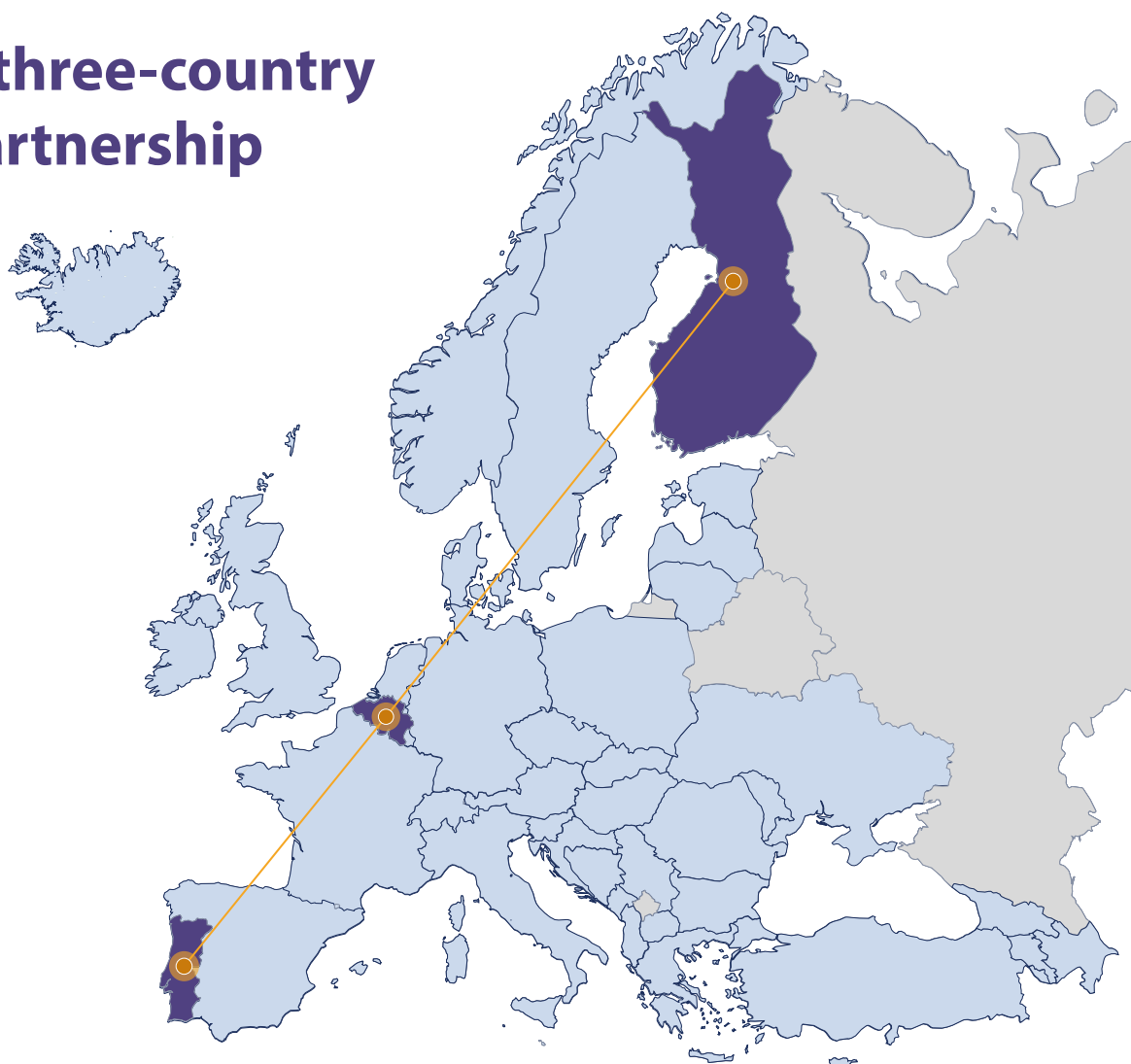


COMISSÃO PARA A CIDADANIA
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What was the project about?

In the context of increasing deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) in public administration and new AI regulation in Europe, this project — funded by the European Union through the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) and implemented by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission — strengthened the administrative capacity of the equality bodies of Belgium (Unia), Finland (the Non-discrimination Ombudsman) and Portugal (the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, CIG) to respond to the impact of AI on discrimination and equality. Through this project, the three equality bodies increased their readiness to uncover and address discrimination in public administration's deployment of AI in line with the EU and Council of Europe standards and national legislation and advance understanding of public administration and regulatory bodies of the risks and opportunities of AI in upholding non-discrimination and equality.

A three-country partnership



Project at a glance

3

European tools and publications published analysing legal and policy context and providing recommendations on AI and equality

12

National guidance documents developed for Belgian, Finnish and Portuguese equality bodies

27

Events organised on raising awareness on preventing and addressing algorithmic discrimination

370+

Public officials and professionals trained on AI and equality

1 150+

Professionals reached via project events

10 300+

Views and impressions reached via project communication through the Council of Europe websites and social media



What did the project achieve?

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ANALYSIS, GUIDANCE AND EXCHANGES

The project produced a range of European publications for the use of equality bodies, human rights organisations and public authorities, alongside country-specific analyses and practical guidance for the project beneficiaries, the equality bodies of Belgium, Finland and Portugal.

Available public publications:

Legal protection against algorithmic discrimination in Europe: current frameworks and remaining gaps, published in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Portuguese, and Swedish.

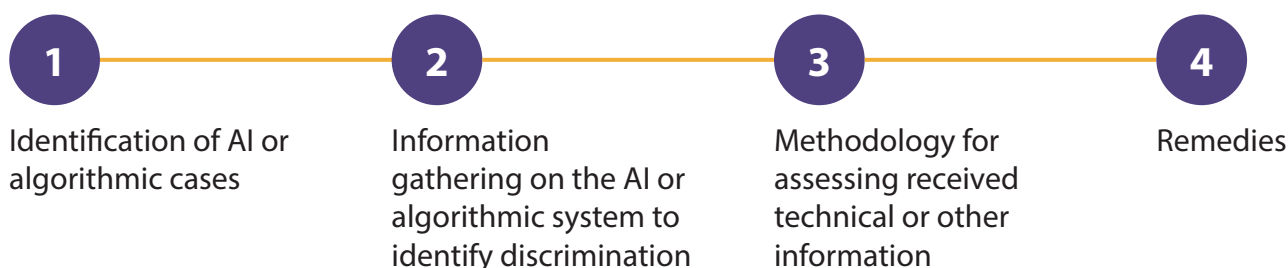
The report includes comprehensive analyses of existing European legal and institutional frameworks to identify strengths, challenges and remaining gaps regarding algorithmic discrimination and AI governance.

European policy guidelines on AI and algorithm-driven discrimination for equality bodies and other national human rights structures, published in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Portuguese, and Swedish.

The policy guidelines support equality bodies and human rights organisations in understanding their evolving responsibilities within the changing AI regulatory landscape; provide practical recommendations for implementing and leveraging legal tools on AI, including the EU AI Act, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI, and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and other relevant European standards; and assist equality bodies in advising policymakers, regulators and other public authorities on equality, non-discrimination and human rights in the context of AI.

European assessment methodology on algorithmic discrimination, published in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Portuguese, and Swedish.

A practical methodology to assist equality bodies and others in identifying, assessing and responding to algorithmic discrimination cases across different public administration contexts. The methodology is divided in four steps:



STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

"A very comprehensive, very well-researched course that I highly recommend!"

Course participant, Belgium

A comprehensive training programme on AI and anti-discrimination was developed for staff of equality bodies, public administrations, market surveillance authorities and other national stakeholders.

Overall, more than 370 professionals in Belgium, Finland and Portugal were trained on how AI impacts equality and can lead to discrimination, how to apply European and national regulatory frameworks, and how to identify, prevent, and combat discrimination in AI systems.

Two editions of the training, consisting of five core European training modules for all countries and three tailored national training modules, one for each beneficiary country, were implemented in each project country.

The public authorities who completed the course, provided following information:

Regarding the most useful aspects of the course:

"The regulation of artificial intelligence and related case law were presented in great detail. The background materials and examples from various countries were also interesting."

Course participant, Finland

Regarding how they will apply the course content:

"In the context of assessing the implementation of public policies, evaluating the impact of those policies, and formulating technical recommendations for improving processes."

Course participant, Portugal

What does the partners say about the project?

"The growing use of AI makes it one of the most significant equality issues of our time. Addressing it requires new expertise, anticipatory impact assessment, proactive supervision and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders. This project supported us in this path."

Rainer Hiltunen, Non-discrimination Ombudsman, Finland

"The project made it possible to train people on the aspects of algorithmic discrimination in the use of AI systems, to learn about the regulatory architecture of human rights and AI both at international and national level, and to create instruments that could facilitate the CIG's work in the context of the assessment of discrimination complaints."

Carina Quaresma, President, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

"As AI transforms our societies, addressing algorithmic discrimination has become a critical challenge for equality bodies. This project has significantly strengthened our expertise and enhanced our capacity to protect fundamental rights. We are deeply grateful for the support we received."

Patrick Charlier, Co-director, Unia, Belgium

What's next?

The **Council of Europe**, in partnership with the EU and other stakeholders, continues co-operating with equality bodies and public authorities to support non-discriminatory development and deployment of AI and algorithmic systems in line with the Council of Europe and EU standards and policies. Please see the QR code for more information and contacts.

Building on the project results, **Unia, Belgium, Non-discrimination Ombudsman, Finland and CIG, Portugal** will continue working with public authorities and stakeholders to ensure that the application of AI in their countries respect fundamental rights, equality, and non-discrimination.



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The project is co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the European Commission, the Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities (Unia, Belgium), the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (Finland), and the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (Portugal).

Find the project website
and publications through
this QR code.



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