



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

FLASH REPORT

Country:	Belgium
Title:	Flemish Government drops out of Unia
Date:	11 October 2019
Expert:	Emmanuelle Bribosia and Isabelle Rorive
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Unia will not remain the Inter-federal Centre for Equal Opportunities in the years to come
Grounds of discrimination:	Race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation
Field of application:	All fields
Source:	Policy development
Applicable law:	Cooperation agreement between the federal authority, the Regions and the Communities aimed at creating an Inter-federal Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and Discrimination in the form of a joint institution, in the sense of article 92bis of the Special Act of 8 August 1980 on the Reform of the Institutions (2013)

Content

Case/law/policy development: The newly formed Flemish Government announced, on the 30th of September 2019, that it will drop out of Unia (the Inter-federal Centre for Equal Opportunities).

Key points of analysis: After months of negotiation following the elections that took place in May 2019, a coalition agreement was reached in Flanders on the 30th of September which includes its withdrawal from Unia.

Bart de Wever, the chairman of the Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA), a leading right-wing political party in Flanders, announced the Flemish Government will set up its own equality body. In any case, the Cooperation agreement which binds Unia and the Flemish Government remains valid until March 2023.

This measure can be explained by the fact that the Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA), a leading right-wing political party in Flanders, had regular conflicts with Unia during the last legislature. Furthermore, the N-VA which had gained many votes from the Vlaams Belang (VB), a far-right, populist nationalistic political party, with repeated xenophobic tendencies, lost ground to the VB in the last elections.

Unia fears that the creation of a Flemish equality body will lead to a lack of clarity and confuse citizens over the role and the competence of the various institutions competent to fight against discrimination. Moreover, the Flemish Government is currently responsible for 10% of the financial resources of Unia and this loss of income will have harsh consequences on the running of the centre.

Internet link source: article (in French) : <https://www.unia.be/fr/articles/unia-reagit-a-la-decision-de-la-flandre-darreter-leur-cooperation>.