Equality For All Academic Action Alliance

Concept Note

27 July 2025

Summary

Pursuant to the publication of *Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* ("the Practical Guide"), the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), the Equal Rights Trust (ERT) and the Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality & Anti-Discrimination Law (BCCE) have engaged in a consultative process with academic researchers and law professors to launch the ***Equality for All Academic Action Alliance*** ("the Alliance").

The purpose of the Alliance is to support and strengthen national efforts to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation through bringing together law faculties, legal clinics, research centers, student groups, networks of academics and practitioners, and any other academic entities to provide technical, legal and research support in response to the needs of equality activists worldwide.

With the aim of shaping the Alliance's structure, objectives and practical framework, OHCHR, the ERT and BCCE have organized **three rounds of consultation meetings between October 2024 and June 2025**. A first round of global consultation meetings was held online in **October 2024**, leading to the elaboration of a first consultation paper that was subsequently circulated for comments (*i.e.* version no. 1 of the consultation paper). A second round of consultation was held in **December 2024** in hybrid format (Aix-Marseille University/online). A last round of validation meetings was organized online in **June 2025** to collect inputs on the pre-final version of the concept note.

This concept note builds on key insights collected during the three rounds of consultation meetings, as well as inputs from a core group of academic professors and researchers involved in the project since its inception and written inputs shared by academics by email. **The official launch of the Alliance will take place on 2 July 2025.**

→ **For queries or questions relating to the Alliance, please reach out to**: **equalityforall.alliance@gmail.com**. You can also add in copy Laura Cahier (laura.cahier@gmail.com), Claude Cahn (claude.cahn@un.org) and Jim Fitzgerald (jim.fitzgerald@equalrightstrust.org).

Background: Global consultation process (October 2024, December 2024, June 2025)

(a) Consultation phase no. 1 (October 2024)

On 7 and 9 October 2024, OHCHR, the ERT and BCCE hosted a first round of global consultation meetings, inviting law university researchers and legal academics to start initial discussion on the prospect of establishing a global alliance of universities supporting efforts to advance the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation ("CADL") worldwide.

Around 35 participants coming from different universities around the world joined the first round of consultation. The October consultation provided an opportunity for the partners to share initial inputs, advance collective thinking about the nascent project, and hear views by participants on its relevance and development, especially on the following main matters:

- Identification of needs to be addressed by the Alliance, including to improve public and community engagement with anti-discrimination and equality law;
- Expected short-, medium- and long-term impacts of the Alliance;
- Format and scope of collaboration among universities, law clinics, research centers, and other academic entities;
- Possible areas of engagement and activities.

The consultation meeting was particularly valuable for gathering inputs and expression of interest from 35+ participants. As a result of this first phase, multiple points received consensual approbation, while further aspects to be discussed during the next consultation phases were identified by participants. Points agreed or advanced during the October consultation meetings included:

- Consensus on the significant role played by academia in advancing research, expertise, knowledge and engagement regarding the adoption and reforming of CADL, in particular at country level where legislative and political situations and prospects vary significantly;
- Consensus on the relevance and added value of setting up a multi-university alliance that would constitute a global platform for sharing knowledge and supporting efforts relating to national equality law reforms, and that would be led by academic entities (in particular - but not only - law faculties, legal research centers and clinics, law professors and students);
- Consensus on the importance of establishing solid foundations for the Alliance, including through the possibility of hosting the Alliance under the umbrella of the Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality & Anti-Discrimination Law (BCCE).

(b) Consultation phase no. 2 (December 2024)

On 10 December 2024, OHCHR, the ERT and BCCE hosted the second phase of global consultation in hybrid format. Around 25+ participants coming from different universities worldwide joined this second consultation meeting.

During consultation phase no. 2, the discussion focused on a series of practical and technical aspects, including:

- Governance of the Alliance (Appointment of Board Members; Number of Board Members; Requirements for the composition of the Board; Chair of the Board; Role and functions of the Board; Frequency of meetings of the Board);
- Size and composition of the Alliance (Type of Members; Number of Members; Thematic Expertise and Discipline of Members; Process for becoming Member; Diversity of the Members);

- Potential activities of the Alliance (Legal research and expert contribution; Communication and advocacy; Hosting events; Annual conference; Elaboration of an online course on CADL; Expertise exchange, including cross-border, a non-exhaustive list)

In the course of consultation, it was affirmed that:

1) There is a space and need for such an Alliance;
2) That no such formation currently exists; and that
3) The Alliance sits in a space between, on the one hand, BCCE (which focuses on frontier research into equality law areas); and, on the other, GAJE which networks human rights legal clinics generally.

The main points agreed during the December consultation meeting include :

- The Alliance should be led by a Board composed of a limited and manageable number of members, and due consideration should be paid in its establishment to ensure geographic (regional) and thematic diversity;
- In addition to law faculties, legal clinics, research centers in the field of law and justice, law professors and students, the Alliance's membership should also be opened to non-legal/interdisciplinary research centers, faculties, clinics or other academic institutions where relevant (*e.g.* depending on the thematic of work, expertise required, and relevance of an interdisciplinary approach);
- Considering that one of the Alliance's goals is to provide support for national equality law movements, members of the Alliance should be invited to collaborate with institutions and actors outside of academia, including (but not limited to) civil society movements engaged in equality law reform, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), independent equality bodies, and NGOs;
- Considering the diversity of academic entities and of their respective organizational framework, the Alliance should have a flexible structure;
- While reserved to institutions rather than individuals in their personal capacity, membership to the Alliance should be as flexible as possible to accommodate the diversity of institutional arrangements at the level of universities.

(c) Consultation phase no. 3: final validation meeting (June 2025)

Following the two consultation phases conducted in October and December 2024, the final consultation and validation phase (no. 3) took place online on 11 June, 2025. Two meetings were organized on the same day to accommodate the different time zones. The meetings were attended by around 25+ academics. The meetings aimed to validate the pre-final version of the concept note and prepare for the official launch of the Alliance in July 2025. The pre-finalized structure and organizational framework of the Alliance were presented and discussed, and participants offered inputs ahead of the official launch. In addition to the online meetings, written submissions were also received by email. The inputs have been included in the final version of the Concept note where relevant at this stage. Further questions will remain to be addressed, in particular by the interim board during the first year of the Alliance (*e.g*. possible annual fees for members).

1. Mission statement and overarching objectives of the Alliance

1.1. Background

The Alliance is the result of efforts by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Equal Rights Trust (ERT) to promote and support civil society efforts – particularly those at national level worldwide – to advance the development of comprehensive anti-discrimination law at national level.

The Alliance is born of a recognition that certain university communities – at the center of which sit university-based legal clinics and students, but in principle also including other types of academic entities, including from other disciplines – constitute an as-yet under-tapped, potential series of civil society communities for advancing equality law at national level.

The Alliance has also grown out of a pragmatic recognition that – in an age of stress on human rights funding support –, communities of law students and academics, as well as students and academics from other disciplines, are available and eager to become involved in pro bono work in support of advancing comprehensive anti-discrimination law at national level.

The Alliance has no dedicated core funding. The success or lack of success of the Alliance in the coming years will test the question of whether there is scope for the formal linkage of university institutions and communities worldwide to advancing equality law – drawing together their own existing resources, and potentially supplementing them with resources to which they can access – without a permanent dedicated secretariat.

1.2. Mission statement

The **Equality for All Academic Action Alliance** ("the Alliance") is a global platform connecting academic stakeholders and students – in particular, universities, faculties, legal clinics, research centers, networks of academics and practitioners, pan-university groups of researchers, academic researchers and students in the field of law as well as other disciplines as relevant – with national equality law movements. The Alliance aims to support efforts to advance the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level in response to the needs of equality activists and movements. Acting in response to demands from and in coordination with equality law movements, the Alliance seeks to support communities, activists, law- and policy-makers and any individual, movement or institution involved in equality law adoption and reform at national level, including by providing academic expertise, advancing knowledge building and sharing, and promoting legal education concerning equality and anti-discrimination law.

1.3. Objectives of the Alliance

A long-term initiative, the Alliance aims to pursue the following overarching objectives:

1. Develop a global network of academic entities committed to supporting the advancement of equality law adoption and reform worldwide;
2. Conduct efforts to advance the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level, in response to demands from equality law movements and in coordination with these movements;
3. Facilitate community engagement, communication and public outreach efforts relating to equality and non-discrimination, with grassroots communities and constituencies in various regions and languages across the world, including in the online sphere;

4. Build and share expertise on strategic anti-discrimination work at national and community levels, especially in contexts where there are opportunities for equality law reforms.

1.4. Values of the Alliance

- **Inclusion:** There can be no equality where some are excluded. The creation of an equal world requires the elimination of all forms of discrimination on all grounds, and effective measures to remove barriers and address the legacies of discrimination for all. The Alliance and its members promote a comprehensive, inclusive and intersectional approach to discrimination, its legacies and its consequences.

- **Justice:** Equality is not only a value. It is a right. We all have a right to participate in all aspects of life on an equal basis, without discrimination. While our rights are inalienable, they can only be realized through the enactment and implementation of law: laws are necessary to guarantee and secure justice. The Alliance thus focuses on supporting the development, adoption and implementation of comprehensive equality laws.

- **Solidarity:** Progress towards equality requires solidarity between and among those exposed to discrimination as well as from society-at-large. The Alliance and its members embrace the value of diversity and work to ensure the equal participation of all who experience discrimination.

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration – between groups and across borders and disciplines – is essential for comprehensive equality. Working together to identify problems and develop solutions - sharing resources and expertise - also results in better outcomes. The Alliance and its members aim to connect and collaborate with all those, in various places, sectors and disciplines, seeking to advance equality through law.

- **Optimism**: The Alliance recognizes that eliminating discrimination and its consequences involves working against powerful social forces. We know that securing the adoption of laws can take years and their implementation even longer. Experience shows that, with partnership and perseverance, change can and will come. The Alliance and its members focus on achieving sustainable, systemic change, and on making a genuine contribution to steps along those paths, even recognizing that university communities – and in particular student communities – may be temporary.

- **Do no harm:** The Alliance recognizes that advancing equality carries with it ethical responsibilities to avoid causing or perpetuating harm. The principle of “do no harm” underpins the Alliance’s approach, reminding that any activity must be guided by empathy, humility, an awareness of context, commitment to ethical reflection, and close collaboration with national equality law movements. The Alliance is committed to inclusion and participation of the voices of those most affected by discrimination, ensuring that its actions do not reinforce marginalization or create new barriers.

2. Governance and organizational aspects of the Alliance

The governance and organizational arrangements of the Alliance are set out below, for an initial period up to July 2026. Nonetheless, based on practical necessities or complexities that may arise in the course of the Alliance’s activities, **these arrangements can be refined or amended by the interim board between July 2025 and July 2026 and, after this period, by the Alliance’s Members during the annual general meeting** (online).

2.1. Interim Board (July 2025-July 2026)

An **interim board composed of 7 members** (indicative) will be established after the official launch of the Alliance to coordinate the governance of the Alliance for its first year. The interim board will be active from July 2025 to July 2026, and will play a critical role in ensuring a structured start of the Alliance. Its main responsibilities include :

- Drafting the Terms of Reference (ToR) for both the Members of the Alliance and individuals appointed to the Alliance's Board. The ToR should ensure clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the Alliance's Members and Board;
- Reviewing and approving membership applications submitted during the first year of the Alliance's activities by academic entities, thereby helping to shape a diverse and engaged community from the outset;
- Developing modalities of work and a list of projects that can be started by Members of the Alliance, and coordinating the activities conducted during the first year;
- Defining and developing the specific framework of the Alliance's online presence, publicity and visibility (see below section 3.5);
- Reflecting on the relevance, possibility and practicality for applying to funding, or establishing dues and fees for members of the Alliance (see below section 2.4);
- Organizing the first elections of the Alliance's Board.

The interim board will be composed of academics involved in the development to date of the Alliance, as well as representatives of OHCHR and ERT. Academics will constitute the majority of the interim board.

The transition period will terminate in July 2026, with the election of the first Board of the Alliance.

2.2. Board of the Alliance

A Board composed of a limited number of academic members will govern the Alliance starting in July 2026.

a) **Number of Board Members:** The Alliance's Board is composed of 7 members (indicative) to ensure efficiency in the decision-making process. The number of Members in the Board could be extended later on, if this is deemed necessary by the Board itself.

b) **Appointment/election of Board Members:** Board Members are elected by Members of the Alliance for a 4-year term. With the view of ensuring a staggered renewal process, the election of board members takes place every two years -- *i.e.* at each election, 3 or 4 members of the board are replaced or re-elected, allowing for continuity between elections. As a result, each board member serves a four-year term, thereby ensuring greater stability within the governance structure.

   The election process is organized as follows:
   - A few months before the election date, a **candidacy period** opens: eligible individuals can declare their candidacy. Individuals interested in this role should submit an online application, including *inter alia* a short biography, personal statement explaining why they are interested in joining the board, and indicating (a) their regional belonging, and (b) their areas of work (thematic).
   - Eligibility: eligibility to run for the board position is reserved exclusively for individuals who are representatives of members of the Alliance.

- Vote: all individuals who act as representatives of the Alliance's Members cast their votes through an electronic voting system. The voting invite will be addressed to the representative of the Alliance members. Voters will be able to distribute multiple voting: one for each seat that is renewed.
- Results of election: simple majority (whoever gets the most votes wins).

c) **Requirements for the composition of the Board:** A key aspect in the composition of the Committee is to ensure geographic, gender and thematic diversity, as well as other aspects of diversity. In submitting their application to the board elections, applicants are asked to indicate (a) their regional belonging, (b) their areas of work (thematic), and (c) any other aspects relating to diversity, representation and inclusion. It is recommended that the composition of the Board includes members from the Global South regions, and is reflective of the diversity gender, languages, and legal traditions, including common law, civil law, mixed systems, and customary legal orders. This pluralistic approach is crucial to ensure that the Alliance remains globally relevant and inclusive. Voters are invited to pay due consideration to diversity during the voting process.

d) **Chair of the Board and Secretariat of the Alliance**: The Chair is elected by Members of the Board internally. The Chair of the Board will serve on a three-year term, with possibility to renew for three years and – in principle exceptionally – one additional year (with a maximum of 7 years total). When selecting the chair of the Board, specific consideration by Board Members should be given to ensure gender balance and geographic diversity as well as any other diversity aspects throughout the years.
   - **Secretariat of the Alliance:** The Secretariat will be provided by the affiliated academic institution of the Chair of the Board. Secretariat rotates with Chair every three years (or longer if Chair is renewed, with a maximum of 7 years as detailed before).
   - In the event of some crisis or circumstances that hinder the Chair from fulfilling their role, the Board may collectively decide to suspend or cancel a Chairperson, appoint a different Chair, or take any other measures as relevant.
   - Should it be considered relevant to facilitate the governance of the Alliance, the Board may adjust or change these terms.

e) **Role and functions of the Board:** The Board's main role and functions include:
   - Coordinate the Alliance's activities, ensuring alignment with its mission and making strategic decisions to achieve the objectives of the Alliance, including as concerns focus areas, collective projects, key initiatives, or partnerships;
   - Review applications for membership on a rolling basis and admit new members to the Alliance;
   - Oversee the coordination among Members of the Alliance as well as the development of the Alliance;
   - Take care of administrative aspects of the Alliance, through the Secretariat hosted by the Chair of the Board (see below);
   - Liaise and coordinate directly with OHCHR and the ERT.

f) **Frequency of meetings of the Board:** the Board will meet online on a regular basis (to be determined later by the interim board). *Ad-hoc* sessions might be considered depending on the Alliance's needs.

g) **Voluntary service**: Representatives of academic entities serving in the Board act in a voluntary capacity. Membership to the board is not remunerated.

2.3 Membership to the Alliance

Thought of as a long term-initiative, the size of the Alliance is expected to evolve based on the needs and projects, and there should be no predetermined quantitative limitation in that regard. The Membership criteria for joining the Alliance are detailed below:

a) **Type of Members:** Membership to the Alliance is open to academic entities only, rather than individuals acting in their personal capacity. Considering that universities, law clinics, research centers, and academic departments, and any other forms of academic entity vary significantly in structure, size, student participation, and the type of legal work they undertake, the Board of the Alliance should adopt a **broad and flexible approach in admitting new members.**

- **Academic entities are members of the Alliance (not individuals)** : Membership to the Alliance is open to universities, law faculties, departments, research centers or law clinics, networks of academics and/or practitioners, pan-university groups of researchers, among others, as well as any further academic entities in other disciplines with an interest in advancing the missions of the Alliance. There are no predefined criteria based on the size or resources of an academic entity to become a member.

- **Individual representatives of academic entities:** Each member of the Alliance is represented by an academic individual responsible for both acting as its liaison within the Alliance and coordinating activities at the level of their respective academic entity. The identification of the individual representatives is decided internally by academic entities themselves, and it should be indicated at the time of applying to the membership. In cases where the designated individual is no longer able to represent the academic entity—due to changes in role, availability, or other relevant circumstances—the academic entity may appoint a new representative by notifying the Secretariat of the Alliance.

b) **Number of Members:** There are no predetermined limitations regarding the numbers of members of the Alliance, considering that it aims to be inclusive and ensure diversity, including as concerns thematic expertise, geography, languages, and legal traditions.

c) **Thematic Expertise and Discipline of Members:** Membership is primarily open to academic entities (legal clinics, research centers, departments, etc.) in the legal discipline, although academic entities conducting non-legal and/or interdisciplinary work can also become members of the Alliance, to the extent that they are willing and able to the contribute to the achievement of the Alliance's objectives.

d) **Process for becoming Member of the Alliance:** The process for applying to membership of the Alliance is two-fold: (a) through an open online call for interest (applications revised by the Alliance's board on a rolling basis), and (b) through an invitation-based process sent directly by the Board. OHCHR can recommend the Board to invite certain academic entities to join the Alliance. This approach seeks inclusivity by welcoming interested institutions/academic entities, while also enabling strategic outreach. Interested academic entities should express their interest through an online form (see annex 1). The applications and invitations are approved on a rolling-basis by the interim Board (from July 2025 to July 2026) and then by the Alliance's Board (starting from July 2026) during its regular meetings or on an *ad hoc* basis.

e) **Diversity of the Members of the Alliance:** A key aspect and added value of this Alliance is its global nature and reach; specific attention should be paid as concerns thematic, geographic, and other aspects of diversity in the membership to the Alliance (including, among others,

institutions working with Indigenous and minority legal systems). In order to ensure this diversity, the Board can prospect and identify academic entities to invite them to join the Alliance as Members. OHCHR can also recommend certain academic universities to be invited by the Board.

f) **General Annual meeting of the Alliance's Members**: Members of the Alliance are convened to a General Annual Meeting at least once per year. The General Annual Meeting takes place online. It serves as a platform for reviewing progress, sharing updates, discussing strategic directions, and strengthening collaboration among the Alliance's members. The Secretariat of the Alliance will be responsible for organizing the meeting and providing advance notice to all member representatives.

g) **Rights and obligations of the Alliance's Members** *(to be further detailed at a later stage in the Terms of Reference elaborated by the interim board)***:**

- **Voluntary participation:** Academic entities join the Alliance in a voluntary capacity. Academic entities can decide to withdraw from the Alliance at any point, by notifying the Board of the Alliance.

- **Compensation and costs:** Participation to the Alliance is not remunerated.

- **Attribution of statements:** Members may not speak or act on behalf of the Alliance as a whole, unless authorized to do so by the Board on an exceptional basis. Likewise, the Alliance may not speak or act on behalf of the Members.

- **Accessibility:** The Alliance is committed to ensuring that members can participate in the Alliance on an equal basis. Members of the Alliance are asked to notify the Secretariat of any accessibility issues which may prevent or limit participation for themselves or others and to request reasonable adjustments where they are needed.

- **Acknowledgement**: The expectation is that the Members of the Alliance – representatives and affiliated institutions – can be recognized and named as Members of the Alliance. If a Member does not want to be named, they should notify the Board of the Alliance through its Secretariat.

- **Consent by academic entities:** The Alliance and its Board will not sign any form of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or further bilateral agreement with involved academic entities. It is the responsibility of the representatives from academic entities to obtain any necessary internal approvals or institutional consent as required by their respective governance structures. The Alliance assumes that by participating, representatives have secured all needed authorizations from their institutions. A ToR will however be developed during the first year of the Alliance to ensure alignment in objectives, practices, and values among the Members of the Alliance.

2.4 Possible dues and fees for Members to ensure sustainability of the Alliance

As the Alliance grows, it may require dedicated funding and coordination to sustain its activities and ensure its impact, effective functioning and long-term sustainability. The interim board will, during the first year of activity, reflect on the possibility of introducing membership annual dues or fees. These contributions would support the administrative activities that are necessary to coordinate activities, facilitate communication, and sustain the Alliance's day-to-day operations. While no decisions have been made, members will be encouraged to consider how they can contribute to a shared budget,

recognizing that administrative support is essential to achieving the Alliance's mission efficiently and on the long run. Such contributions would follow a principle of "payable if able to pay," asking for dues from members and institutions that are financially able, while ensuring no barriers to participation for those who are not. The interim board will also explore the question of how such dues can be received and managed, given that the Alliance lacks an independent administrative identity.

2.5 Role and relationship with OHCHR

The initiative to form the Alliance stems from OHCHR and ERT's commitment to the promotion, development and advancement of independent civil society working to support equality law worldwide. As such, the partners are committed to working with the Alliance in the long term, in particular to facilitate engagement between the Alliance members and national equality movements. Following the interim board period, the Alliance will be led by its academic members, especially through the Board. The relationship of OHCHR with the Alliance is defined as follows:

- From July 2025 to July 2026, OHCHR is Member of the interim board on an equal basis with other Members of the interim board;
- OHCHR remains actively engaged with the Alliance, but not in a leadership capacity after interim period (July 2025-July 2026);
- OHCHR commits to long-term engagement with the Alliance, but cannot make any resource commitment beyond participation in the transitional board;
- The precise branding of OHCHR in the Alliance remains to be determined during the interim period.

3. Scope of activities and further aspects of this Alliance

3.1. Activities undertaken by the Alliance and its Members

A variety of potential activities may be undertaken by the Alliance's members with the aim of advancing the mission and purposes of the Alliance (as detailed previously). The Board and Members of the Alliance should aim to conduct these activities in response to needs and demands from with equality law movements, and should seek to collaborate with the communities, activists, law- and policy-makers and any individual, movement or institution involved in equality law adoption and reform at national level.

The Alliance's Board can propose strategic activities and is responsible for handling the coordination of activities led by members of the Alliance. In addition, the Secretariat can maintain a list of activities, which Members of the Alliance can consult and select from based on their interest and capacities. The activities can be conducted by one member of the Alliance, or by various members through a collaborative approach. The Board can also share specific calls for contribution to the Alliance's Members. Based on its work in relation with the Practical Guide and involvement with national equality movements, OHCHR can propose relevant activities to the Board.

In addition to the list of activities proposed by the Board and the Alliance's Secretariat, Members of the Alliance are invited to suggest activities and conduct them – in particular, with the involvement of students – according to the specific needs identified at local and national levels. They should seek to do so by answering needs from national equality movements and working in collaboration with these movements. Members of the Alliance have the flexibility to engage in relevant activities based on available resources, the number of students involved, the expertise they have, or pressing issues of interest within their communities and at national level.

Some examples of activities include (non-exhaustive list):

a) **Legal research and expert contribution**: Members of the Alliance may conduct academic research and provide expertise on specific topics relating to the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level, including through a legal or interdisciplinary perspective. Activities of legal research and expert contribution should seek to support efforts by equality movements and activities, law- and policy-makers, or any further institutions (*e.g*. equality bodies or NHRIs) involved in efforts to adopt or reform comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level. These activities may include *inter alia* research focusing on certain aspects or benefits of adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination law, on the prospects for reform in specific contexts and countries, on the legislative framework relating to anti-discrimination and equality in certain national jurisdictions, for instance. The outcomes of such activities could include *inter alia* legal briefs, memorandums, and legal and policy papers, academic articles, or any other form of contribution as deemed relevant.

b) **Communication and advocacy**: Members of the Alliance may wish to conduct communication activities to support wider community engagement and public outreach relating to equality and non-discrimination law reform, in particular with grassroots communities and constituencies in various regions and languages, including in the online sphere. This could include the creation of public and communication products, including social media products and/or campaigns (*e.g*., Tiktok, Instagram, LinkedIn, X), podcasts, series of videos, webinars, and any further communication products supporting activists, individuals and communities involved in anti-discrimination and equality work at national level. Another type of activities can include the translation of the Practical Guide or other products relating to the Practical Guide (e.g. two-page briefs) into non-official UN languages - including minority or indigenous languages[1]. These activities should aim at raising awareness among diverse stakeholders on different issues relating to CADL, and increasing civil society engagement with the adoption and implementation of such legislations.

c) **Organizing and/or Hosting events**: The Member universities may be interested in hosting conferences, seminars, or workshops relating to comprehensive anti-discrimination legislations. During these events, the Members of the Alliance can share their respective expertise on the topic, promote the Alliance's initiatives and expand its outreach, and collaborate, discuss and engage with non-academic stakeholders involved in efforts relating to the adoption and reform of CADL.

d) **Legal Education on equality and anti-discrimination:** Members of the Alliance may conduct legal education activities to support the advancement of knowledge-sharing as concerns comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including among students as well as further individuals who are interested in this theme (including civil society, professionals, policy- or law-makers involved in law reform at national level). Members can contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge, learning methods, research, and resources related to anti-discrimination legislations. Such activities can help raise awareness, share knowledge on CADL, and promote the importance of elaborating and implementing robust legal frameworks for combating discrimination at national level. For instance, Members could develop and make available an online course on CADL, or a summer school open to students, and any other individual interested in supporting equality law movements; develop model curriculum on comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation for law schools; or, elaborate multilingual teaching materials, among others. The Practical Guide developed by OHCHR and

[1] For projects involving the translation of the Practical Guide to any non-official UN languages, an official authorization will have to be requested. Please reach out to Claude Cahn (claude.cahn@un.org) with the Secretariat of the Alliance in copy (equalityforall.alliance@gmail.com) for further information.

the ERT could serve as a baseline for developing these legal education initiatives, while inputs with a comparative legal approach could be provided by Members to enrich the content of this course and ensure comparative approach.

3.2. *Collaboration of Members with other non-academic entities and equality movements*

In accordance with the values of the Alliance, partnership, consultation and collaboration between members of the Alliance and extra-university entities – be they government, National Human Rights Institution, civil society, grassroots community and/or human rights defenders – is encouraged. In cases where a member of the Alliance is working cross-border and supporting movements outside the country of the given university institution, such collaboration and partnership approaches the status of a requirement (with due regard to national conditions).

These partnerships will enrich the Alliance's work by fostering practical and real-world connections with relevant actors involved in equality and non-discrimination work, especially at local and national levels. Based on its work with national equality law movements, OHCHR can suggest possible non-academic entities and equality law movements.

Membership to the Alliance is nonetheless restricted to academic institutions only, with the view that the Alliance remains academia-led and focused on advancing legal education, expertise and research on the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

3.3. Funding aspects

At the moment, there is no dedicated budget for the Alliance. The interim board will, during the first year of activity, reflect on the possibility of introducing membership annual dues or fees (see before section 2.4). The Members of the Alliance, under the supervision of the Board, can explore opportunities to apply for grants and funding from governments, international organizations, universities, foundations, or any other potential donors. Members of the Alliance who wish to apply for funding on behalf of the Alliance as a whole or for projects realized as part of the Alliance's activities should seek authorization to do so from the Board.

3.4. Ethics- and protection-related aspects

a) **Attribution of statements**: The Alliance is not intended to make public statements. Members of the Alliance are not authorized to publish a statement, speak or act on behalf of the Alliance as a whole. The Alliance does not speak or act on behalf of any of its members.

b) **Protection measures:** Efforts to advance equality and anti-discrimination laws may lead to negative interferences or backlash in certain contexts. For instance, the Members of the Alliance may engage with sensitive issues leading to heightened risks of reprisals. Any Member facing reprisals due to its participation in the Alliance or the activities conducted in that context should notify the Board through its Secretariat immediately to discuss appropriate measures to be undertaken.

3.5. Promotion and visibility of the Alliance

From July 2025 to July 2026, the interim board is in charge of defining the specific contours of the Alliance's online presence and public visibility. The following elements will be further discussed:

a) **Online visibility (website)**: The BCCE website could be a platform for the Alliance's online presence, to connect its members, and to engage with broader audiences. BCCE has a large

network of 1000+ members interested and involved in anti-discrimination and equality work across the globe. An alternative option is to create a separate website dedicated to the Alliance.

b) **Branding on OHCHR website:** OHCHR will explore the possibility of creating a separate page on their website during the first year of the project.

c) **Visual identity of the Alliance**: A distinct visual identity, including the creation of a logo, may be elaborated during the first year of the Alliance's activities by the interim board. This visual identity could be used across communication channels, including on social media campaigns. Further discussion of the interim board will focus on the use of this visual identity by the Alliance's Members.

d) **Social media accounts**: Creating social media accounts could be useful to communicate about the Alliance's activities, share updates on projects, and highlight key initiatives. This would also help engage with a broader audience, including equality movements, supporters, and the general public. The management of social media accounts should be coordinated by the Alliance's secretariat.

e) **Public engagement by Members of the Alliance**: Members are invited to promote their participation to the Alliance through their own platforms – including academic journals, institutional websites, social media pages, etc. Nonetheless, Members may not speak or act on behalf of the Alliance as a whole, unless authorized to do so by the Board.

4. Launch of the Alliance

Two conferences organized in July 2025 will mark the official launch of the Alliance, bringing together key academic stakeholders, ERT and OHCHR to present the Alliance's definitive structure, governance model, and strategic vision, mission and objectives. Both events will serve as a platform to outline how the Alliance will operate, including membership criteria, benefits, and the role of the board. In addition to presenting the finalized framework of the Alliance, the conference will be marked by the launch of the call for applications for academic stakeholders who wish to join the Alliance as Members.

(a) 2025 BCCE Annual Conference (Ljubljana, Slovenia; July 2-4, 2025)

Wednesday 2 July, 2025 (10:15am-11:30am): Plenary session "Launch of the 'Equality For All' Initiative: Global Network of Universities in Support of Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation"

Conference will be held in **hybrid format** (in-person and online)

(b) 2025 GAJE-ENCLE Worldwide Conference (Polish Legal Clinics Foundation, Lazarski University's Faculty of Law in Warsaw, Poland ; 23-26 July 2025)

Further details to be provided once the conference program is available.

Annex 1: Membership to the Alliance - Call for expression of interest

The form will be hosted on a google form (equalityforall.alliance@gmail.com) and shared in July 2025.

1. Description of the Alliance

The **Equality for All Academic Action Alliance** ("the Alliance") is a global platform connecting academic stakeholders and students – in particular, universities, faculties, legal clinics, research centers, networks of academics and practitioners, pan-university groups of researchers, academic researchers and students in the field of law as well as other disciplines as relevant – with national equality law movements. The Alliance aims to support efforts to advance the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level in response to the needs of equality activists and movements. Acting in response to demand from and in coordination with equality law movements, the Alliance seeks to support communities, activists, law- and policy-makers and any individual, movement or institution involved in equality law adoption and reform at national level, including by providing academic expertise, advancing knowledge building and sharing, and promoting legal education concerning equality and anti-discrimination law.

A long-term initiative, the Alliance aims to pursue the following overarching objectives:

1. Develop a global network of academic entities committed to supporting the advancement of equality law adoption and reform worldwide;
2. Conduct efforts to advance the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level, in response to demands from equality law movements and in coordination with these movements;
3. Facilitate community engagement, communication and public outreach efforts relating to equality and non-discrimination, with grassroots communities and constituencies in various regions and languages across the world, including in the online sphere;
4. Build and share expertise on strategic anti-discrimination work at national and community levels, especially in contexts where there are opportunities for equality law reforms.

2. Process for joining the Alliance as Members

(a) Who can join?

Membership to the Alliance is open to academic entities only, in particular universities, faculties, legal clinics, research centers, academic researchers working with students in the field of law as well as other academic entities in other disciplines as relevant. Academic entities applying to the Alliance should have an interest in advancing the mission of the Alliance, *i.e.* supporting efforts to advance the adoption and reform of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level in response to the needs of equality activists and movements.

Each academic entity is represented by one academic individual who acts as liaison between the Member institution and the Alliance, and as coordinator of the activities led by the Member academic entity he/she/they represent.

There are no predefined criteria based on the structure, size, number of students involved, or resources of an academic entity to become a member. The Board of the Alliance adopts a flexible approach in admitting new members to the Alliance. The Alliance values diversity and encourages participation from academic entities across different regions, languages, legal traditions, and thematic areas.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the individual representatives from academic entities to obtain any necessary internal approvals or institutional consent as required by their respective governance structures. The Alliance assumes that by participating, representatives have secured all needed authorizations from their institutions.

(b) Membership details

- Participation to the Alliance is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time through notification to the Alliance's Board;
- Each Member is represented by one academic individual who acts as liaison between the Member institution and the Alliance, and as coordinator of the activities led by the Member academic entity he/she/they represent. In cases where the designated individual can no longer represent the academic entity due to changes in role, availability, or other circumstances, the academic entity may appoint a new representative by notifying the Secretariat of the Alliance.
- Members will be convened to a General Annual Meeting taking place online at least once per year. The Alliance's Secretariat is responsible for organizing the meeting and providing timely notice to all member representatives.

(c) How to join?

Interested academic entities are invited to complete and submit the form below. Requests to join the Alliance are reviewed on a rolling basis by the Alliance's Interim Board (July 2025–July 2026), and by the Alliance Board thereafter. Accepted members will be contacted directly by email by the Secretariat of the Alliance.

3. Membership Application Form

Information about the academic entity

1. Name of the academic entity*
2. Type of academic entity (e.g. university, law faculty, clinic, research center, interdisciplinary department, etc.)*
3. Address of the academic entity*
4. Brief description of the academic entity and its main activities* (300 words max.)
5. Website or online presence (social media) of the academic entity (if available)

Information about the representative of the academic entity

6. First and last name of the representative (*i.e.* the academic individual who serves as coordinator and liaison between the academic entity and the Alliance)*
7. Title/position of the representative*
8. Email address of the representative*
9. Phone number of the representative (with international dialing code)*

10. Brief biography of the representative (300 words max)*

Information about the academic entity's participation to the Alliance

11. Please briefly describe the academic entity's work and relevance to the Alliance's mission* (300 words max)

12. Please provide information on the thematic and/or geographic focus areas of the work conducted by the academic entity, and specify past or ongoing work related to equality and anti-discrimination themes (if any) (300 words max)*

13. Please describe any specific contributions the academic entity would like to bring to advance the Alliance's objectives, or any specific project that the academic entity would be interested in conducting (if any) (300 words max) (optional)

14. Please provide a brief description of the individuals (other than the individual representative of the academic entity) who will be involved in the Alliance's activities at the level of the academic entity, especially students, as well as any other individuals (e.g. professors, researchers, legal clinic members, etc.) (200 words max)*

15. Additional comments or information (optional)

Consent

By submitting this form, the applicant confirms the following:

- ☐ They agree to be contacted by the Alliance's Secretariat.
- ☐ They confirm that they have obtained all necessary internal approval to participate in the Alliance on behalf of their academic institution.

For any questions regarding the Alliance, this form, or accessibility needs, please reach out to the Secretariat of the Alliance at : equalityforall.alliance@gmail.com.