

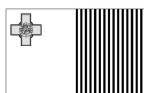
Press Release – Press Conference Launching NCPE’s ‘Equality Mark’

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) today launched the ‘Equality Mark’ as part of an EU co-financed project entitled ESF 3.47 – *Unlocking the Female Potential*.

NCPE shall be identifying and awarding organisations that demonstrate a commitment towards gender equality, certifying them as true equal opportunities employers. A feature of this certification is the Equality Mark logo, which organisations can use in their publications and documentation. Additionally, certified organisations shall be promoted locally such that their practices are showcased as a quality standard for other employers to emulate and for job seekers to look out for.

NCPE developed a set of equality principles for organisations to withhold in collaboration with employers and its partners in the project, namely the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC), Foundation for Human Resource Development (FHRD), General Workers Union (GWU), Malta Employers Association (MEA), and Union *Haddiema Magħqudin* (UHM). In order to be awarded the Equality Mark Certificate, employers need to: implement an equality and sexual harassment policy; take measures to endorse equal opportunities in recruitment as well as other employment practices; and ensure incentives for career and personal development are awarded according to skills and capabilities not determined by gender or civil status. Moreover, employers need to show commitment towards implementing family-friendly measures and work-life balance options for men and women with caring responsibilities, among other initiatives.

There are numerous benefits for the organisations which will become equality certified employers. Several surveys carried out in various countries have shown that organisations that promote gender equality in their practices demonstrate a marked competitive edge over other businesses in their sector. This has been



attributed to a number of factors, including the fact that a gender balanced workforce meets more successfully its customers' needs and expectations due to its reflection of the market; accession of the full talent pool during recruitment ensuring the best employees; and encouragement of organisational loyalty, which reduces costs through staff retention. The employer awarded the Equality Mark will ultimately become an 'employer of choice'.

The 'Equality Mark' is part of NCPE's 'Unlocking the Female Potential ESF 3.47' project which is co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund. The project is based on the national priority to facilitate female employment by providing indirect incentives for work. The Equality Mark is complemented by research activities to understand, among other factors, the life prospects of teenage parents; the expectations and opportunities of entrepreneurs and contract workers; the relevance of economic independence for the Maltese female; the skills of the inactive population; and the factors effecting Gozitan women in their perception of employment.

For more information on the Equality Mark certificate, log on to www.equality.gov.mt or contact NCPE either by email on equality@gov.mt or by phone on 2590 3850.

