



Equality Matters

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

September 2013

Issue 2

Message from the Editor



The time has come for NCPE to present you with another issue of its e-newsletter which aims at further promoting equality-related issues in Malta.

This second issue features information on our 9th Annual Conference and the work that NCPE carried out in 2012. A new initiative which NCPE is currently working on is the Mentoring Programme on which you will find more details on

page 4. An interesting interview, this time with NCPE's Executive Director, Dr Romina Bartolo is also featured in this edition. You can also read an update on the Equality Mark and enjoy the game which includes words that appear throughout this newsletter.

I augur that this newsletter will be another informative one for you.

Maria Theresa Portelli

PR & Communications Officer, NCPE

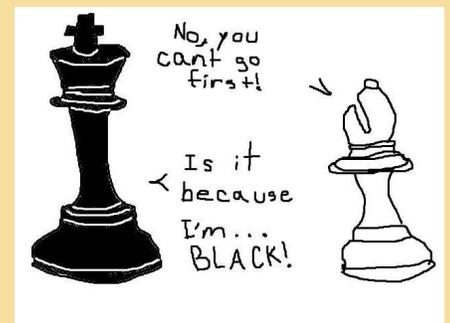
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The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

The United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) promotes equality in the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life irrespective of race and ethnic origin. ICERD calls for the condemnation and eradication of:

- Racial discrimination in all acts, practices and policies;
- Racial segregation;
- Incitement to racial discrimination and ideas based on racial superiority or hatred;
- Racial discrimination in political rights, civil rights (marriage, owning property, etc...), economic, social and cultural rights (work, housing, health, social security, education and training, cultural activities) and the right of access to any place or service intended for use by the general public (hotels, restaurants, etc...); and
- Prejudice which may lead to racial discrimination, particularly in teaching, education, culture and information.



NCPE's 9th Annual Conference

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality held its 9th Annual Conference on 24th July 2013. This Annual Conference highlighted the main developments that were achieved throughout 2012 as well as the way forward in relation to achieving *de facto* equality in society at large.

Addressing the conference, Hon. Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Dr Helena Dalli, said that giving all women the opportunity to achieve their full potential is at the heart of the Government's approach to economic growth. The Minister said that while some results have been achieved in recent years, this is far below the European standard, and far below what is expected. She said that the employment rate of women in Malta is still the second lowest in the EU, after that of Greece, the gender pay gap still exists, and family-friendly measures are still widely unavailable and inaccessible to women with children.



NCPE's 9th Annual Conference
24th July, 2013
Photos—DOI—Reuben Piscopo

During the conference, NCPE's Executive Director, Dr Romina Bartolo, gave an extensive overview of the initiatives and measures carried out by NCPE in 2012. With regard to the Equality Mark Certification, an additional two organisations – *Simonds Farsons Cisk plc* and *Food Chain Ltd* - were certified during the said conference as true equal opportunities employers in relation to gender.

Besides, a presentation and discussion on NCPE's complaints was delivered by the NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera. This presentation delineated NCPE's complaints procedure, from the receipt of a complaint to the investigation of these complaints. A few case studies on complaints received by NCPE were also presented and discussed.

We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race.

Kofi Annan

Overview of NCPE's work throughout 2012

An overview of the work NCPE carried out throughout 2012 was delivered during its 9th Annual Conference.

Throughout last year, the Commission's remit was extended to include not only equal treatment based on gender and family responsibilities, but also equal treatment based on sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, race and ethnic origin, and gender identity in employment, education and vocational guidance, and banks and financial institutions. NCPE also works to safeguard equal treatment based on race and ethnic origin, and gender in the provision of goods and services.

Throughout 2012, there were 17 new complaints lodged with NCPE. Some of the complaints included sexual harassment cases, discrimination on the basis of gender and family responsibilities, unfair dismissal due to religious beliefs, discrimination on the basis of age, discrimination in the access to an interview; and racial discrimination.

Moreover, in 2012, NCPE received requests for information on various issues related to equality both from national as well as international entities.

Last year, NCPE continued to give various training sessions and concluded three EU co-funded projects. Moreover, NCPE intervened in 60 cases of gender discriminatory adverts, of which 55 contained discriminatory text and 5 non-balanced gender images. These adverts were related to employment and educational opportunities.

With regard to the Equality Mark Certification, 19 companies/entities were certified in 2012, representing 2,021 employees. Thus the total number of companies certified with the Equality Mark now stands at 53.

Case study (NCPE Complaint) - Sexual harassment in employment

NCPE Commissioner was asked to investigate a case of sexual harassment at the place of work. The complainant alleged that when going to the bathroom at work, a black gadget (which was believed to be a camera) was found facing one of the toilets. The complainant further alleged that this gadget was put there by a colleague and that this amounted to sexual harassment.



Citing the relevant provisions of the Equality for Men and Women Act, Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta the Commissioner held that the complainant managed, both through the evidence rendered as well as on the basis of the evidence tendered by witnesses brought, to establish preliminary facts from which it could be inferred that such sexual harassment had taken place. Furthermore, the alleged harasser admitted to the Commissioner the wish of purchasing a similar camera in the past and that he had often filmed colleagues at work as a 'joke'.

The Commissioner thus concluded that, on the basis of the circumstantial and corroborating evidence brought by the complainant, the alleged harasser did sexually harass the complainant by placing a camera in a cubicle in the bathroom at the place of work. NCPE forwarded this case to the Commissioner of Police as required by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta.

A Mentoring Programme for Women aspiring to hold Decision-Making Positions

Mentoring is defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge. This professional relationship has the aim of enhancing the mentee's professional and personal growth.

NCPE will implement a Mentoring Programme with the aim of mentoring women aspiring to hold decision-making positions by professional mentors (preferably women) who occupy high-level jobs through an ESF co-funded project 'Gender Balance in Decision-Making'.



The Mentoring Programme will see mentors occupying positions in politics, private and public sector management and decision-making positions offering job-shadowing opportunities to, and meetings with, the mentees. This will provide a unique opportunity for the mentee to spend time with a professional mentor in a decision-making position in the mentee's field of interest.

A rather innovative activity for Malta, in the field of empowering women in taking up decision-making positions, the Mentoring Programme will seek to address the gender imbalance in these roles. An increase in the female participation rate is possible through the long-term effect of comprehensively addressing the current labour market distortion with regard to women in decision-making positions. The wider the spectrum of female representation within the different sectors and levels of business, the more role models will be available, and the more issues such as work/life balance would be addressed.

The mentee will be observing the day-to-day activities of the mentor in order to be better equipped for decision-making positions. The mentees will be women who seek to occupy management-level positions or enter the political arena (which include contesting local, national and European elections). Women from University, MCAST, other educational institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations and the general public will also be among the chosen mentees. Prior to the commencement of the mentoring period, training will be provided to both mentors and mentees. This brief training programme will focus on the skills required for decision-making positions, and on topics such as leadership and supervisory skills, assertiveness and communication skills, as well as outlining the mentor-mentee relationship and other relevant information.

An information session regarding the Mentoring Programme will be held in the coming weeks. Interested persons who wish to participate in the information session and/or the Mentoring Programme are encouraged to contact NCPE on 2590 3850 or via email on equality@gov.mt.

Interview with NCPE's Executive Director, Dr Romina Bartolo

Who is Dr Romina Bartolo?

My University studies enticed me to become active in NGOs including those working on human rights and equality – an enriching experience which set the base for my work at NCPE.



children by eradicating as much as possible discriminatory practices.

What do you love about your job?

I like the fact that every day is different and that I can be creative in what I do depending on the target audience. It is a role that keeps you in touch with people and on the fast track all the time.

What does your role of Executive Director of NCPE consist of?

The Executive Director administers and leads the executive arm of the Commission, and thus follows the policies established by the Commission. To this end I lead a team of persons who strive to make a difference by actively involving themselves in issues that affect society at large.

What do you think about the developments in the different grounds of equality in Malta? What are the remaining challenges to the achievement of equality in Malta?

Development on some of the grounds have been faster and wider than on others. Since NCPE has had an extension to its remit fairly recently, we have been able to work on some issues more than on others and we would like to focus more on those grounds that we did not cover until last year. As partners of Equinet (the umbrella organisation for European Equality Bodies) we have the opportunity to work with our colleagues in different EU Member States and share good practices in order to make equality happen.

What does equality mean to you?

All persons have a right to the same opportunities in order to be able to achieve their full potential irrespective of their gender, religion/belief, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or age. Unfortunately many people have pre-conceived ideas on what career a person should follow, how a person should act or what rights a person should have. We need to raise awareness on the beauty of diversity in order to ensure a better future for our

**What we have to do...is to
find a way to celebrate our
diversity and debate our
differences without fracturing
our communities—**

Hilary Clinton



News from other Institutions



First Gender Equality Index:

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) launched the first Gender Equality Index for the European Union. The Gender Equality Index provides scores for each Member State, including Malta, and presents an EU average in each of the following critical areas of gender equality: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health.

The domain of work focuses on participation of men and women in the labour market, segregation and quality of work. Money has two sub-domains: financial resources measuring pay gaps, income and pensions; and the economic situation measuring poverty. Knowledge delves into educational attainment, segregation and lifelong learning. The domain of time covers economic activities, care activities and social activities. Power entails political, social and economic sub-domains. Health will take into account status (healthy life years and life expectancy), behaviour (such as drinking and smoking) and access to health care. Areas of violence and intersecting inequalities are also considered as critical areas, but treated separately as they adopt a different perspective.

The Gender Equality Index demonstrated that the European Union is only halfway towards a gender-equal society, with an average EU score of 54 (where 1 stands for no gender equality and 100 for full gender equality). The lowest score is in the area of power in decision-making, with an average score of only 38 at EU level: further confirming that the EU Member States need more women in decision-making. The greatest distance from gender equality is apparent in the representation of women and men on boards of the largest quoted companies, with an EU average score of only 23.3.

2010	Malta	EU-27
INDEX	41.6	54.0
Work	55.0	69.0
Money	68.2	68.9
Knowledge	34.0	48.9
Time	37.5	38.8
Power	18.7	38.0
Health	93.2	90.1

Table 1: The domains and scoring of the Gender Equality Index

News from other Institutions



EU LGBT survey:

The EU LGBT survey, published by the Fundamental Rights Agency, was conducted online in the 27 EU Member States and Croatia between April and July 2012. This survey is the largest of its kind to date and represents the most wide-ranging and comprehensive picture available of the lived experience of LGBT people residing in the EU and Croatia. Looking across the survey as a whole, the majority of respondents were men, gay, young and highly educated. The results show that LGBT persons in today's EU society regularly suffer from not being able to be themselves at school, at work or in public. Many therefore hide their identity and live in isolation or even fear. Others experience discrimination and even violence when being themselves.

Key findings:

- Almost half (47%) of all respondents said that they had felt personally discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation in the year preceding the survey.
- Over 80% of respondents in every EU Member State recall negative comments or bullying of LGBT youth at school.
- Two thirds (67%) of all respondents said they often or always hid or disguised that they were LGBT during their schooling before the age of 18.
- Of the respondents who had visited a café, restaurant, bar or nightclub in the year preceding the survey, one in five had felt personally discriminated against at that location in the past year because of being LGBT.

A quarter of all EU LGBT survey respondents had been attacked or threatened with violence more than three times in the past year.

Table 2: Key findings of the EU LGBT survey



Women on Boards—European Commission proposes 40% objective:

The European Commission is taking action to break the glass ceiling that continues to bar female talent from top positions in Europe's biggest companies. The Commission has proposed legislation with the aim of attaining a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies, with the exception of small and medium enterprises.

Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, said that with this proposal, the European Commission is answering the strong call of the European Parliament for EU action to bring about gender equality in corporate boardrooms. Mr Barroso explained that the European Commission is asking large listed companies across Europe to show that they are serious when it comes to gender equality in economic decision-making.

Update on the Equality Mark

Two organisations – *Simonds Farsons Cisk plc* and *Food Chain Ltd* - were certified during NCPE's Annual Conference held last July. Organisations certified with the Equality Mark are considered as true equal opportunities employers in relation to gender and hence will be using the Equality Mark logo on their publications and documentation.



Although the ESF project through which the Equality Mark was funded ended in December 2012, NCPE has continued auditing companies leading to the awarding of the Equality Mark. Since 2010, 53 companies/entities have been certified with the Equality Mark.

Organisations / entities interested to obtain the Equality Mark can log on to www.equality.gov.mt for more information or contact NCPE.

Game

R	V	E	Q	G	G	Y	M	B	M	I	S	F	D	S
E	E	H	V	E	N	O	Q	E	G	E	K	I	P	N
C	F	N	I	B	D	I	N	M	I	R	S	I	R	O
N	L	H	O	E	U	T	N	T	E	C	P	H	E	I
E	I	E	E	I	O	Z	I	I	R	G	N	H	J	T
L	N	R	A	R	S	L	Q	I	A	L	M	J	U	U
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C	O	N	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	P	B	C	Q	N
N	S	N	O	I	S	I	C	E	D	W	R	A	E	R
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TRAINING
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