

Press Release:

Gender equality in decision-making

A report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010, published recently by the European Commission, gives an overview of the gender balance in business leadership. This is the first annual report presented after the adoption of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Commission's new Strategy for Equality between Women and Men.

The report describes recent developments in gender equality in the EU and presents statistics on all areas covered, as well as recent new developments in the Member States, including Malta. It establishes a state of play for the five priority areas of the Women's Charter and the Strategy, among these is the area of gender equality in decision-making. The report reiterates that the higher up the hierarchy, the fewer women there are. The percentage of women in key political and economic positions is roughly unchanged from last year.

The *Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010* established the percentage of members of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted companies for last year. In Malta, two percent of the members of the board of directors of the largest nationally registered companies in the stock exchange are female. On the other hand, gender balance is more evident in government appointed boards. In effect nearly 25% of the members of government appointed boards are female.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) believes that safeguarding equal treatment between men and women in leadership and decision-making positions is fundamental to ensure equality of opportunities for both genders. To this effect, NCPE is carrying out a research analysing what produces the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass cliff' in Maltese society. This research which forms part of an EU co-funded project entitled *ESF 3.47 Unlocking the Female Potential*, is identifying and analysing the main factors hindering women from occupying managerial positions in employment.

NCPE encourages more gender equality in employment, in decision-making positions and in public life, among other important sectors of society. To this end, NCPE believes that all members of society, irrespective of their gender, should be encouraged to develop their talents and abilities in order to sustain equality of opportunity for all.

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