

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**A new starting point from which to challenge discrimination ...  
A Symposium on Multiple Discrimination**

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) identified multiple discrimination as a concept that offers new insights into the experience of discrimination and that holds new potential for policies to combat discrimination. As part of its *'Think Equal'* project co-financed by the European Union, NCPE is working to promote deeper understanding of this concept among academics and professionals with a view to stimulating a focus on multiple discrimination in national policy and organisational practice.

A Symposium organised as part of *'Think Equal'* project, offered insights into the concept and the experience of multiple discrimination. Discussions delved deeper into the practical implications of multiple discrimination for equal treatment legislation, for professional practice in making adjustments for diversity in the provision of services to groups experiencing inequality, and for academic practice and research.

In his introductory comments, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport Hon. Clyde Puli, explained how this Symposium aimed to contribute towards the development of EU and national legislative framework by giving professionals the opportunity to present their opinions and to debate issues related to multiple discrimination. The Hon. Puli said that unfairness and inequality can be eradicated by the proper identification and recognition of the unfortunate occurrence of discrimination.

Mr Niall Crowley, moderator and external consultant of *'Think Equal'* Project gave an overview of the concept of multiple discrimination and its implications. Following a call for Papers issued earlier this year, keynote experts delivered a presentation during this Symposium on different aspects of multiple discrimination. Dr Erica Howard, from the Law Department of Middlesex University, focused on legislation covering multiple discrimination. Dr Howard quoted a study entitled *GendeRace* carried out in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and UK which highlighted that there is a clear impact of gender on experience of race or ethnic origin discrimination. It also resulted that there is a distinct lack of data on multiple discrimination.

Discrimination faced by Muslim Women in Europe was tackled in another presentation delivered by Ms Frederique Ast from the Legal Department of the French Equality Body and Ms Riem Spielhaus from the Centre for European Islamic Thought. Both Speakers explained how Muslims and particularly Muslim women wearing the *hidjab* face a rise of discrimination in Europe especially in the aftermath of 9/11. They examined how this identity shapes their experience of discrimination and to which extent discrimination on the ground of religion reinforces sexism.

Two Speakers from the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD), Ms Vickie Gauci and Ms Marianne Debono, presented the way how gender and disability issues can be linked since these grounds are rarely combined. The Speakers emphasised that KNPD feels that a discussion of the extent of double discrimination may help this problem come to the fore of policy discussions both in the gender equality and disability rights fields.



Following these presentations, representatives from various institutions and bodies debated the myriad aspects presented on multiple discrimination. In her concluding remarks, NCPE's Executive Director Dr Romina Bartolo reiterated that NCPE recognises the importance of addressing the concept of multiple discrimination which in a way is a new concept and there has been little debate on it. It was for this reason, said Dr Bartolo, that NCPE came up with this Symposium which is the first national symposium covering all six grounds of discrimination.

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