

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**A new project promoting racial equality**

The promotion of racial equality is the main objective of a new EU co-funded project being implemented throughout this year by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE). JUST/2011/PROG?AG/1902 *I'm Not Racist, But...* is a project co-funded by EU PROGRESS funds. The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Malta and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Malta are partners in this project.

Opening a conference launching this new project, NCPE's Executive Director Dr Romina Bartolo highlighted the vision of this project aimed to develop a clear understanding of the situation of ethnic minorities and housing. Dr Bartolo explained that this project also aims to empower the African minority to get their voice heard, to advocate for their rights and to report discrimination; and to raise awareness on racial discrimination and promote cultural diversity.

In his address, Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family Chris Said said that through the project *I'm Not Racist, But...* NCPE continues to raise awareness and spur development in the area of equality. Minister Said mentioned the complaints lodged at NCPE from both the private and the public sector in relation to allegations of discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic origin in the provision and supply of goods and services. Namely, in 2010 NCPE received complaints concerning allegations of racial discrimination in access to visa and in access to bars and clubs.

Minister Chris Said emphasised that although NCPE has continued raising awareness on racial equality with the aim of empowering more persons on their rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis discrimination in various economic and social spheres, the rate of complaints coming in to NCPE is very low. In order to study the reasons for this under reporting, reiterated Minister Chris Said, a study was carried out by the '*Strengthening Equality Beyond Legislation*' project which looked into the reasons why people do not report incidents of discrimination to relevant authorities.

Outlining the main activities of *I'm Not Racist, But...*, NCPE's Projects Executive Lara Bezzina explained how the African Minority will be given training in empowerment and reporting discrimination. Video clips on racism will be produced and disseminated. An Anti-Racism Day will raise awareness on the relevant issues. A research study delving into the housing experiences of ethnic minorities and the concerns of property owners and their representatives will be carried out.

A representative from the Migrants Network for Equality gave the migrants' perspective of this project.

**Friday 4th May, 2012**