

## Statement

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is closely following developments related to the Civil Union legislation, including media coverage of different opinions. The NCPE notes with concern that recent claims and statements against the recognition of same-sex families may lead to unequal treatment of persons based on their or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The NCPE promotes the **right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**, and calls on the relevant authorities to ensure the right of persons, regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity to hold and practice religious and non-religious beliefs. Government and relevant authorities should also ensure that the expression, practice and promotion of different opinions, convictions and beliefs with regard to issues of sexual orientation and/or gender identity are undertaken in a manner compatible with human rights.

The NCPE recognises that whilst everyone has the **right to freedom of opinion and expression**, the rights and freedoms of others should be respected, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The NCPE calls on all concerned to ensure that the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression shall not violate the rights and freedoms of persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

The NCPE believes that everyone has the right to found a family (including access to apply for adoption or assisted procreation), regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. **The NCPE encourages the Government to take all necessary legislative, administrative and other measures to ensure that no family may be subjected to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.**