

PRESS RELEASE:

**NCPE's 10th Annual Conference:
Further work to safeguard and promote equality**

Equality has been placed and steadily maintained on the national agenda through numerous initiatives taken by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) in the past ten years. NCPE's Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, stated this at NCPE's 10th Annual Conference organised today.

In her opening address, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Hon. Helena Dalli, emphasised that in 2013, the Government affirmed its commitment to further promote equality opportunities and give greater prominence to the area of human rights. In this regard, Minister Dalli said that work is in progress for NCPE's remit to be widened to become a Commission for Human Rights and Equality, acting as a national human rights institution as well as an equality body in accordance with the provision established by European Directives on equal treatment.

Minister Helena Dalli presented the Equality Mark Certification to more organisations and entities that truly foster equal treatment in their work policies and practices irrespective of the employees' gender or family responsibilities. Three (3) new organisations were awarded the Equality Mark today, namely: Public Broadcasting Services Ltd, Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilità and Medicines Authority. Another six (6) organisations were re-certified the Equality Mark after two years of their initial certification: National Statistics Office, Adpro-Instruments, Melita plc, Chetcuti Cauchi, Nexia BT and FTI AS. Through the Equality Mark certification there are presently over 15,600 employees in 54 private companies and government entities working under equality certified conditions.

In an overview of NCPE's Annual Report 2013, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera said that the investigation of complaints is one of the core functions of the Commission with 53 complaints being lodged with NCPE in 2013.

The Commission has submitted and continues to work on a number of policy recommendations, including surnames of spouses, cohabitation legislation and amendments to strengthen CAP 456, Equality for Men and Women.

Various initiatives are being implemented with the aim of enhancing the gender-balance in decision making positions and empowering more women to take up these positions. These include the Directory of Professional Women, a mentoring programme and training for women aspiring to hold decision-making positions, and research studies on this subject matter.

In 2013, a set of initiatives was drafted to raise further awareness on violence against women and girls, addressing distinct forms of violence against women, and the circumstances and needs of victims of violence and of professional people who work with these victims.

Ms Renee Laiviera also highlighted that NCPE carried out over 50 hours of training throughout 2013, with over 860 participants, on subject matters related to equality and non-

discrimination to raise further awareness on equality and non-discrimination and to empower stakeholders.

During the Conference, NCPE's Senior Policy, Mainstreaming, Training and Legal Executive Maria Borg Filletti explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination, and outlined some case studies. A consultation process through workshops was carried out for participants to express their opinions and experiences on discrimination in the context of NCPE's strategic plan.

Concluding the 10th Annual Conference, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera reiterated that throughout 2013 NCPE continued working to safeguard and promote equal treatment in different spheres in society promoting equal opportunities and safeguarding equal rights to everyone.

For more information about the work performed by the NCPE, or to report any discrimination, please contact NCPE on equality@gov.mt or on 2590 3850.

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