

Recognising achievement and celebrating differences were the key messages, NCPE Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, highlighted at the event organised at Europa House on the 3rd March on the occasion of International Women's Day. Ms Laiviera said that this Day is an occasion for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await present and future generations of women.

The Hon. Minister Dr Helena Dalli supported this event with her presence and her opening speech. She announced that on Wednesday 5th March there will be the first reading of the Bill to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Today's event purposely brought together women MEP candidates. The aim was to provide a specific space to 'Get to know' them, and to learn what and who inspired them to contest the European Parliamentary Elections. The areas that they would like to follow at European level were also outlined. The candidates also highlighted their vision and the difference that they each intend to make if they are elected.

Women are different, this is why NCPE this year also chose to present the life stories of seven women. Each unique in her own way as an individual, in terms of experiences, aspirations and challenges, and contribution within society. Through these stories, the importance of the equality mainstreaming strategy was highlighted. NCPE Commissioner emphasised the dangers of a one-size fits all approach, even in the case of women and gender equality; women enjoyed diversity .

Key issues highlighted throughout the morning include the fostering of financial independence through employment; the satisfaction resulting from involvement in voluntary work ; the enthusiastic engagement of youths in the political sphere ; the values of perseverance and courage.

Concluding this event, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera, called on the importance that policy makers, social partners, trade unions, business and you as an individual, need to 'stop and think' before assuming that an action/measure/policy is effectively addressing women's needs. On this International Women's Day, Malta and Gozo, would be enriched, if each responsible actor is enabled and aware of the difference they can bring about by recognising differences among women as a non-homogeneous and taking regard for it to achieve equality of outcomes.

Monday 3rd March, 2014