

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**Tackling the Gender Pay Gap**

The benefits of closing the gender pay gap were highlighted in a conference organized by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) that discussed the principle of equal pay for women and men from different perspectives.

NCPE's Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, stated that this is the first public event organized to discuss the gender pay gap in Malta. Ms Laiviera explained that the gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's pay, based on the average difference in gross hourly earnings of all employees. This difference reflects ongoing discrimination and inequalities in the labour market which, in practice, mainly affect women. NCPE's Commissioner outlined how figures show that on average, women in the EU earn around 16% less per hour than men and that the gender pay gap varies across Europe. In Malta, in 2012 the gender pay gap was 6.1%.

In her opening remarks, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties Hon. Dr Helena Dalli, said that the Government is committed to continue working for equality between men and women and to address the gender pay gap by taking further initiatives that enhance equality in the workplace. Minister Dalli referred to the provision of free childcare for all children of parents in work and parents in education launched in April 2014. Through this scheme, more than 3,800 children made use of this childcare service by the end of December 2014.

Minister Helena Dalli mentioned the Breakfast Club as another initiative that was also launched in April 2014, and was availed of by 950 students daily between September and December 2014. Various measures were also announced in the Budget 2015 that enhance greater flexibility at the workplace for both the employers and employees and that continue to foster work-life balance, such as the increase as from 1<sup>st</sup> January in the maternity leave benefit and in the maternity benefit rate for women in self-employment.

The causes of the gender pay gap were analysed by Dr Anna Borg<sup>1</sup>. Dr Borg brought forward a number of supply-side and demand-side theories in order to evaluate the causes of the Gender Wage Gap. Dr Borg argued that the gender pay gap is the result of direct, but largely indirect discrimination, which is influenced by traditional gender roles and gendered work-life choices that seem to sustain this gap.

Ms Joslyn Magro<sup>2</sup> and Ms Maristelle Darmanin<sup>3</sup> from the National Statistics Office explained how the gender pay gap is calculated. Statistics show that during the past years, a decrease was registered in the gender pay gap in Malta.

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The pension gap between men and women in Malta was discussed by Dr JosAnn Cutajar<sup>4</sup> in a presentation which also focused on the women who are less likely to have a pension and the effect that this can have on the individual and on society.

Ms Maria Borg Filletti<sup>5</sup> delved into the ways how the principle of equal pay between men and women can be strengthened.

Two panel discussions shared experiences of employers, as well as of stakeholders and an NGO respectively on how they promote and safeguard the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Ways how to work towards equality at the workplace were discussed, including the measures that can be taken to prevent and combat the gender pay gap and how wage transparency can be encouraged.

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