

Press Statement:

Ensuring freedom from harassment and discrimination at the workplace

With reference to the current debate on public comments of a sexual nature by a high-ranking ETC official towards his sub-ordinate, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) asserts that such comments are never acceptable. Such behaviour is condemnable not only at CEO level but at all levels.

The Equality of Men and Women Act, Cap 456 of the Laws of Malta, was enacted to promote equality for men and women in Malta. One of the functions of the NCPE is to ensure that, at the workplace, all women and men are treated in a manner which respects their fundamental rights and dignity as defined by law. These rights include freedom from discrimination and harassment, bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment and victimisation.

It is the primary responsibility of officers in senior management positions to ensure an environment that promotes equality and respect for the rights and dignity of each and every individual working within the organisation. Moreover, it is their responsibility to guide individuals, within the organization, who may be victims of discrimination and harassment, to seek redress from authorities established by law for such purpose, such as the NCPE, and as such, they have the added duty to be upstanding role models in this regard.

The NCPE is of the view that all private and public entities are to have a tailor made harassment and equality policy in place. Furthermore, all entities should also provide training to staff and management in this respect to make them fully aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour or otherwise at the place of work and in interactions with colleagues. NCPE can offer guidance to organisations in relation to such policies and relevant training.

Thursday 13th August 2015