



PRESS RELEASE:

NCPE is concluding initiatives that address gender-based violence

Throughout the past two years, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) addressed the scourge of gender-based violence by carrying out various initiatives aimed at raising further awareness on different forms of violence in Malta.

In her opening address at a Conference that concluded the EU co-funded project '*Forms of Violence in Malta – A gender perspective*' that was being implemented by NCPE, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Dr Helena Dalli said that the Government condemns all forms of violence.. It is a reality that there are victims and survivors of violence who need a wide range of support and services. Therefore, Minister Dalli emphasised that we should continue to do our utmost to provide care and support for victims in order to provide them with help to overcome the trauma, pain and humiliation they suffer so that they can start living a better life.

Minister Helena Dalli said that the issue of violence against women is one of the two main areas of equality that will be highlighted during the Maltese EU Presidency in 2017. Minister Dalli explained how violence against women is, amongst other things, the result of a power imbalance between women and men in our societies. Hence, Dr Dalli emphasised the importance for women to gain their economic independence to be able to live a stable life, in equal and fair relationships.

In an overview of this Project, NCPE's Project Coordinator Darren Chetcuti explained that through the initiatives carried out NCPE is committed:

- to further spread the message on zero tolerance to violence against women and girls;
- to provide further information to policy makers on the current situation on violence on women and girls, and the respective circumstances and needs at a national level;
- to sensitise professionals who work with victims or perpetrators of such violence;
- to further encourage victims of violence to take action to combat or prevent violent experiences; and
- to raise awareness and disseminate more information on female genital mutilation (FGM).



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The research conducted as part of this project delved into female genital mutilation (FGM) in Malta. This shed more light on the needs of women who experienced FGM, as well as the needs of the healthcare providers working in these fields. Another research study focused on violence and abuse of older women and men which looked at the factors and consequences of the violence suffered by older persons highlighting the gender perspective as well as on violence, harassment and bullying in schools aimed at preventing violence from a young age.

In addition, promotional material was developed on various facets related to violence against women and girls which, alongside the awareness raising campaigns, promoted the value of zero tolerance on violence against women, and further encouraged victims of violence to take action to combat and/or prevent such violence. Moreover, training sessions were held with multidisciplinary professionals and with legal experts on this subject matter to further sensitise them on the circumstances and needs of victims of violence. A seminar was organised for young persons to sensitise them on the different forms of violence.

Concluding the conference, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera stressed that violence against women is an abuse of women's human rights. She emphasised that the cause of violence against women is the historical imbalance of power between women and men in society. Thus its prevention can only come about through the continuous enhancement of gender equality in Maltese society. . In this regard, Ms Laiviera concluded by reiterating NCPE's commitment to utilise the work developed over the last years to further enhance the prevention and protection of women and girls from different forms of violence.

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