

PRESS RELEASE:

NCPE's 12th Annual Conference

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is reviewing the work undertaken in 2015 at its 12th Annual Conference with the main highlight placed on the Mentoring Programme. This nine-month initiative addressed the low percentage of women in high positions as it matched women aspiring to hold leadership positions with 30 professionals in high-level jobs with the objective of empowerment for decision-making positions.

Addressing this Annual Conference, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Hon. Helena Dalli, explained that a number of important developments concerning equality took place over the past year highlighting government commitment to an agenda that mainstreams equality and human rights in all spheres of life and to a policy framework that tackles discrimination, social exclusion and violence. Dr Dalli highlighted the work in hand to widen the remit of NCPE for it to develop into a Human Rights and Equality Commission. The government also took landmark initiatives recognising LGBTIQ rights in Malta. More importantly, the actions undertaken further safeguard equal treatment and equal opportunities for all citizens, and challenge deep-rooted discriminatory beliefs against minority groups.

Minister Dalli referred to the low female participation rate in the labour market that has registered significant progress in the last years. This is the result of a number of measures implemented to attract women to the labour market, most important among these being the introduction of free childcare for parents in work or in education.. In fact between October and December 2015 the female employment rate reached 50.7%. This is an increase of 2.9%, over the same period of 2014.

The Equality Mark Certification was presented by Minister Helena Dalli to seven (7) newly certified organisations and to another nine (9) organisations that were re-certified by NCPE. These organisations and entities truly foster equal treatment in their work policies and practices.

In an overview of NCPE's work undertaken in 2015, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera explained how the Equality Mark Certification entered its sixth year and continued to empower companies to safeguard gender equality. By the end of 2015, there were 61 certified companies and government departments/entities in total, with over 16,000 employees working in equality certified conditions.

The investigation of cases of alleged discrimination in employment and in the access to or the supply of goods or services is an essential element of NCPE's work. Ms Laiviera emphasised that for justice to be effective, NCPE strives to hear such cases in the least time possible.

During 2015, 82 training sessions were carried out with 1,300 participants. Renee Laiviera explained that these included employers, who were informed of their rights and responsibilities regarding equal treatment, and were thus empowered to prevent or curb discrimination at the workplace as well as in society at large.

Highlighted was work on the online Directory of Professional Women to urge more professional women to register as well as various research studies.

During the Conference, NCPE's Senior Policy, Mainstreaming, Training and Legal Executive Stephanie Borg Bonaci, explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and outlined some case studies.

NCPE's Senior Projects Executive, Annalise Frantz, explained that the Mentoring Programme consisted of 96 hours of one-to-one support with the mentees, who kept a journal of experiences detailing their journey throughout this process. This Mentoring Programme proved to be an overall positive experience for all stakeholders – mentors, mentees and NCPE. Success stories were presented by mentors and mentees illustrating how mentees used this experience to its full advantage, including success in obtaining the desired job. Workshops with the Conference's participants followed by discussing the way forward for the Mentoring Programme.

NCPE's Annual Report 2015 can be accessed from www.equality.gov.mt

For more information contact NCPE on equality@gov.mt or on 2590 3850.

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