

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**NCPE's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

NCPE's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference focused on three main issues this year: the work programme carried out in 2016; challenging traditional roles of women and men in Maltese society and the award of the Equality Mark.

19 organisations were newly certified with the Equality Mark while another six (6) organisations were re-certified by NCPE. These organisations truly foster equal treatment in their work policies and practices.

Opening this Annual Conference, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera, referred to the strengthening of NCPE's remit and its envisaged transformation into a Human Rights and Equality Commission. Ms Laiviera referred also to measures and structures which resulted in Malta experiencing an increase of 6% in the participation of women in the labour market in the last three years. These included the introduction of free childcare for parents in work or in education, and the Maternity Leave Trust. Ms Laiviera explained how NCPE was very actively involved in preparations for the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union on matters related to equal treatment.

In an overview of NCPE's work undertaken in 2016, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera said that 2016 was an eventful year for NCPE focusing on work to further promote and safeguard equal treatment in different spheres of society. In effect, a two-year campaign was launched in order to continue challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes that confine women and men in various ways in contemporary society.

NCPE also continued to investigate complaints of alleged discrimination, provide feedback to policies and documents from national and international entities, and deliver several training sessions with various stakeholders on the grounds of equality defined in its remit. In fact, in 2016, NCPE gave 48 training sessions with over 1,100 participants. Renee Laiviera concluded that NCPE is looking forward to take on board the widening of its remit whereby NCPE will be transformed into a Human Rights and Equality Commission (HREC) answering directly to Parliament.

During the Conference, NCPE's Manager (Policy & Training) Stephanie Borg Bonaci, explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and outlined some case studies.

A presentation on gender stereotypes was another highlight of this year's Annual Conference that was delivered by Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Director, Cottonera Resource Centre and Senior Lecturer, Gender Studies, Faculty of Social Wellbeing, University of Malta), emphasising that challenging the traditional roles of women and men in society can be a key factor in promoting and strengthening gender equality, but also in preventing and



eradicating gender discrimination. Workshops followed with participants discussing how such gender stereotypes can be addressed.

NCPE will be taking on board all the comments and suggestions highlighted during this conference in order to strengthen its work in the coming years.

NCPE's Annual Report 2016 can be accessed from [www.equality.gov.mt](http://www.equality.gov.mt)

**Tuesday 2nd May 2017**