

PRESS RELEASE:

NCPE's 14th Annual Conference

Promotion of equality, investigations of alleged cases of discrimination, the Equality Mark award and a focus on equality at the workplace were among the areas discussed at the 14th Annual Conference of The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) held on 29th May.

Addressing this Conference, Minister for European Affairs and Equality, Hon. Dr. Helena Dalli highlighted government initiatives and developments concerning equality taken over the last year. During Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU equality was one of the main objectives in the field of employment and social policy.

Minister Dalli referred to landmark steps that strengthened equality for LGBTIQ persons, such as the introduction of civil marriage for same sex couples, which contributed to confirm Malta's first place in the ILGA rainbow index for the third consecutive year.

The consultative council on women's rights was launched to facilitate dialogue between the government and civil society to further promote women's rights. The government is also committed to empower more women to enter or remain in the labour market to sustain the consistent increase in female employment, 9.8% in the last four years reaching 56.7% in 2017.

To conclude Dr Dalli said that the Ministry is working so that NCPE becomes a National Human Rights and Equality Commission strengthening its remit and sanctioning powers. This legislation is expected to start being debated in Parliament during this year.

Seven (7) newly certified organisations were awarded The Equality Mark by Minister Dalli whilst another (14) fourteen organisations were granted re-certification. This award is given to companies that truly foster gender equality in their work policies and practices. Over 21,650 employees in 85 companies now work in equality certified conditions.

Renee Laiviera, NCPE Commissioner, presented the work carried out by NCPE in 2017. Focusing on the work during the Malta Presidency of the Council of the European Union, NCPE had the opportunity to participate more actively in matters related to equality at a European level. Particularly, NCPE actively contributed to the drafting of the Council Conclusions on '*Enhancing the Skills of Women and Men in the EU Labour Market*' and their adoption, which took place in March 2017. NCPE also participated in the meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming that was held in Malta.

Investigation of complaints of alleged discrimination, continued during the last year, as a crucial aspect of NCPE's work. Ms Laiviera explained that NCPE gives feedback to policies and



documents from national and international entities and provides training to various stakeholders, which in 2017 amounted to 63 training sessions for 1,300 participants.

The relevance of the role of men in gender equality was the rationale of a set of initiatives undertaken by NCPE in 2017. The objective of this work was to challenge gender stereotypes and to highlight the benefits of family-friendly measures for women and men through the project *Equality beyond Gender Roles*. Ms Laiviera also gave details on the PayM€qually campaign that disseminated information to different stakeholders and the general public on the gender pay gap on both the traditional as well as the social media.

During the Conference, NCPE's Manager (Policy & Training) Stephanie Magro Gazzano explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and outlined two case studies: one on unfair treatment on the grounds of race and ethnic origin, and the other on alleged discrimination in the supply of goods and services on the grounds of gender.

Safeguarding equality in the workplace was addressed by Ms Michelle De Giorgio (HR and Admin Manager, Adpro-Instruments Ltd) who emphasised the proactive measures that employers should take to make the workplace inclusive for everyone by addressing the needs and barriers faced by different social groups and the measures required to actively prevent and deal with discrimination and harassment. Workshops followed with participants discussing this topic. The issues raised during these workshops will be taken on board by NCPE as part of its regular consultation process to strengthen its work to promote equality and non-discrimination at the workplace.

NCPE's Annual Report 2017 can be accessed from www.equality.gov.mt

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