

NPCE calls for more responsibility in public statements concerning migrants

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) augurs for more responsibility in public statements concerning migrants, particularly from persons in the public eye, in the coming year. Discussing issues connected to migration, its dynamics and its management is essential in a democratic society and this discussion will certainly continue taking centre stage in 2019. However, these discussions should always be based on the belief that migrants are persons with human rights and dignity as everybody else, and that they are an integral part of our society.

Migrants are, too often, dehumanized in public discourse, notes the NCPE. Depicting migrants in stereotypical ways, and making wild generalizations about their experiences and behaviour, or seeing their mere presence in a locality as a “problem”, leads to whole social groups becoming considered as a threat simply because of their skin-colour or cultural background. Such depictions, especially when these are promoted by public figures, have a very negative social impact since they reinforce social distance, exacerbate social tensions and hinder the path towards inclusion. Whilst challenges brought about by migration should be acknowledged and addressed, an alarmist discourse, that does not match the reality on the ground, creates a negative and hostile environment for everyone.

In 2019, NCPE would like to see a debate on migration that includes a level-headed discussion about problems and concerns in this area, but that also recognizes the social, cultural and economic contribution of migrants in Malta.