

Press statement by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)

NCPE's Online Annual Conference 2020

NCPE's Annual Conference 2020 highlighted NCPE's work to reach various milestones in the field of equality. During 2019, the NCPE investigated alleged cases of discrimination, created awareness-raising campaigns, delivered training sessions to stakeholders, gave input and contributions to policies and legislation, and provided assistance to the general public.

Addressing this Conference, Minister for Justice, Equality and Governance Hon. Edward Zammit Lewis congratulated the NCPE for the work undertaken during the past years to promote equality and address discrimination within the Maltese society. Hon. Zammit Lewis referred to the Equality Bill and the Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill tabled in Parliament in 2019, and that are currently being discussed both at Parliamentary Committee stage with all the relevant and interested stakeholders. Once the Equality Bill becomes law, Malta will be in a much stronger position to address discrimination and inequality in the different spheres of public life and grant effective remedies to victims of discrimination.

Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms Hon. Rosianne Cutajar said that the progress achieved in the sphere of equality in the past years has been significant. In relation to gender equality, Malta registered a considerable increase in the number of women participating in employment in the past years, with the female employment rate reaching 66.7% in 2019 from 54.3% in 2014.¹ Various initiatives were taken to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, empowering more parents, particularly women, to enter or remain in employment, including free childcare and various support structures. Moreover, the Government has always strived towards a more inclusive society and this can be seen by furthering the rights of the LGBTIQ community. Hon. Cutajar reiterated the Government's commitment to ensure that Malta stays at the forefront of inclusion and diversity.

NCPE's Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera gave an overview of NCPE's work in 2019. The NCPE continued to disseminate information on rights and responsibilities related to equality through training to 890 participants in different sectors, and an enhanced commitment towards communicating through different means including articles and press statements, participation

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tesem010/default/table?lang=en>

in TV and radio programmes, infographics on social media, events and conferences. The NCPE also provided input and contributions to policies and legislation.

Ms Laiviera explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and outlined two case studies: one on alleged discrimination on the basis of gender, and the other on alleged discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin.

Targeted awareness on gender equality at the workplace is reinforced through the Equality Mark Certification whereby the NCPE continues to certify organisations whose commitment to gender equality goes over and above the legal obligations. During an Awarding Ceremony presided by Minister Zammit Lewis and Parliamentary Secretary Rosianne Cutajar, 14 new companies were awarded the Equality Mark certification, 6 companies first recertification and 8 companies second recertification. For the first time ever, 9 companies received a certificate for participating in the Equal Pay Tool pilot-testing exercise. The aim of the Equal Pay Tool is to check the organisation's equal pay for work of equal value between women and men during Equality Mark audits.

Ms Joana Micallef, PGEI Project Promoter, outlined the NCPE's set of initiatives to address the gender gaps throughout the life cycle as part of the EU co-funded project Prepare the Ground for Economic Independence (PGEI). The Project's main objective was to inform the relevant target groups on the gender pay gap, the gender pension gap and inactivity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected countries all over the world and impacted the lives and well-being of many people. In light of this, the NCPE carried out a survey on the distribution of unpaid domestic work between women and men during COVID-19. Mr Andre' Callus, Executive (Policy and Training) gave a presentation on NCPE's survey outcomes. The survey finds that during COVID-19, inequality between women and men in the hours spent doing household tasks and childcare was reproduced and exacerbated.

Concluding the Conference, Ms Laiviera outlined that the 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 2019 can be accessed from www.ncpe.gov.mt

19th October 2020