

## Press Statement

### Sexist comments hinder women's participation in public life

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is hereby expressing its concern regarding the recent degrading, sexist and insulting comments that appeared on social media.

Sexist comments create a climate of intimidation, fear and insecurity. Specific groups of women, for example young women, politicians, journalists or public figures, are often the target of sexist abuse. Indeed, around 63% of women journalists in the EU have been confronted with verbal abuse<sup>1</sup> while 58% of female politicians from 45 European countries have been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks.<sup>2</sup>

Sexist hate speech is not only a form of violence against women and girls, but it also widens gender inequality by hindering women's full participation in public life. Women in Malta are underrepresented in several spheres of life, especially in decision-making positions within public institutions. Whilst corrective measures are being undertaken to address this imbalance, the use of abusive language against women risks undoing the positive impact of these efforts.

Everyone has the right to participate in public life without fear of intimidation due to personal characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and race/ethnic origin. In this context, the NCPE reiterates that there should be no place for misogynistic language in a democratic society founded on equality.

**15<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-channel/stop-sexism>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2018-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-europe>