

Press Statement

Legal amendments to ensure gender balance in Parliament – a leap towards gender equality in Malta

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) welcomes parliamentary developments that will lead to gender equality in practice within the political sphere. The *Constitution of Malta and Various Laws (Amendment) Bill* currently at the second reading stage, will “*amend the Constitution of Malta to introduce temporary positive measures necessary and reasonable in a democratic society to ensure de facto equality between men and women in politics and also the amendment of the General Elections Act to increase the number of electoral commissioners and ensure equal representation between sexes.*”¹

This important initiative is a historical development. This proposal is the outcome of the *Gender Balance in Parliament Reform* that aims at addressing the current democratic deficit due to the severe and persistent underrepresentation of women in the political sphere. For decades, Malta has consistently lagged behind other countries when it comes to gender balance in Parliament as evidenced by the European Institute for Gender Equality’s 2020 Gender Equality Index and the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report. The latest 2020 data show that women’s representation in the Maltese Parliament stood at a mere 13.4% compared to the European (EU 28) average of 32.8%².

Positive measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between women and men are already enshrined in Article 45 (11) of the Constitution of Malta which ‘*provides for the taking of special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women, and in so far only as such measures, taking into account the social fabric of Malta, are shown to be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.*’

Positive measures are clearly necessary to break the *status quo* and address gender inequalities stemming from historical and structural barriers experienced by women in society. The implementation of the proposed measures will be instrumental towards the strengthening of a democratic society with the equal participation of women and men in the highest national decision-making institution.

¹ <https://www.parlament.mt/en/13th-leg/bills/bill-no-119-constitution-of-malta/>

² https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_parl_wmid_natparl



National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

The NCPE looks forward to see this initiative become a reality for the well-being of the whole of Maltese society.

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