



National Commission
for the
Promotion of Equality

NCPE
2005

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

ANNUAL REPORT

2005

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Message

Glancing through the second annual report of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, it is obvious that a great deal of work and innovative projects have been carried out over the two years of the Commission's existence. The Commission has steadily gained itself a high profile in matters of discrimination and gender-equality awareness. Even at ground-roots level, where it is most necessary to make the Commission known, the past year has seen an increased awareness of the work and role of NCPE, with a corresponding rise in the number of complaints and phone calls that it receives and personal contacts established.

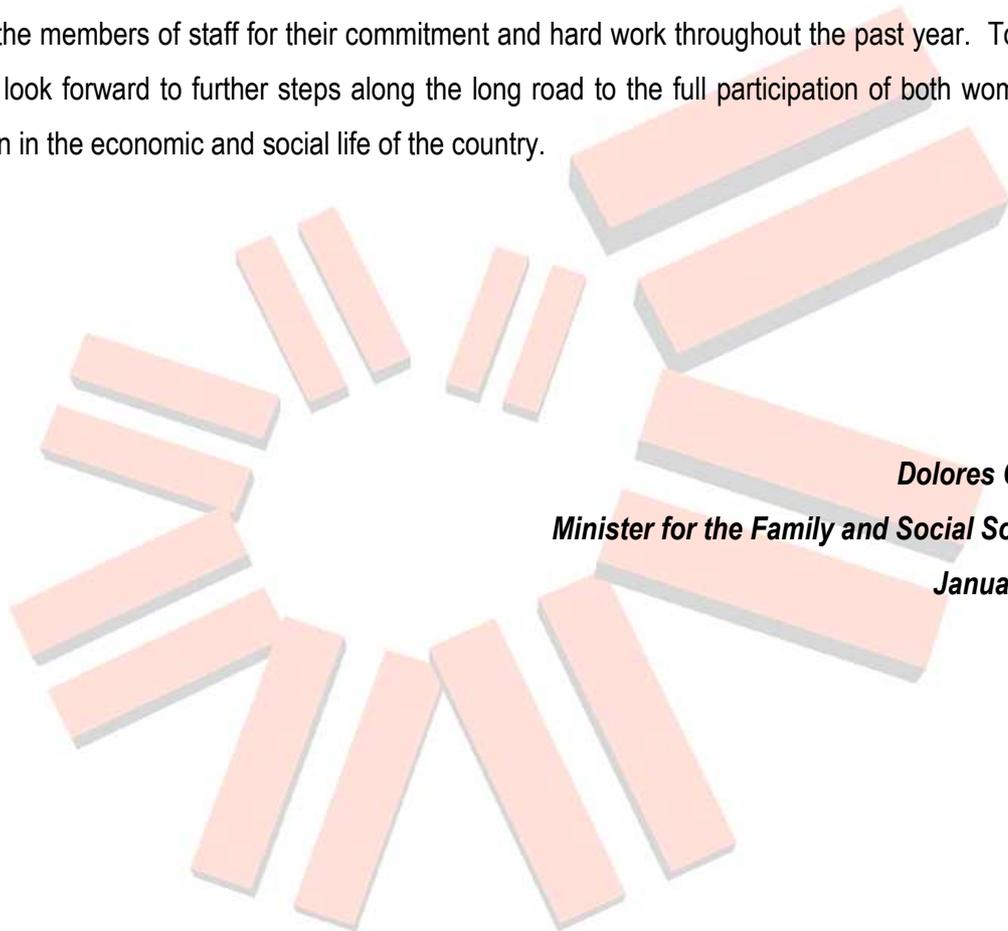
Gender mainstreaming is the main tool that legislators and administrators alike can and should use in order to promote equality at all levels: as far back as 1999, Cabinet had already approved a plan of action in favour of gender mainstreaming with regards to all projects and legislation. The Commission's constant promotion of this concept is leading to steady but significant changes. The Commission is a front-runner in this endeavour, setting the pace for other government entities and an example to the private sector.

It is a firm commitment of the Maltese Government to reach a balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions in the public and private sector and to promote gender balance in the social dialogue. Although there is still much work to be done - recent EU and UN data on posts at decision-making levels, shows that Malta still lags behind when it comes to implementing a gender balance at high levels – NCPE has surely left its mark in this respect. As always, stereotypes, indirect discrimination, cultural factors and life choices are major obstacles which are being tackled, and slowly but surely overcome. Such measures as childcare facilities, family-friendly working conditions, reduced and flexible hours, maternity, parental and special leave, the code of practice on sexual harassment, are all important instruments in achieving equality.

Apart from the gains made in the field of gender equality, major advances have also been made in promoting anti-discrimination and diversity in general; the various grounds are now being harmonized and are expected to be integrated through NCPE. The Commission's projects aim at addressing the present and future shifts in Maltese society, as reflected by changes in demographic trends. NCPE has highlighted the necessity of moving beyond legislation and

policies, and focusing on practical inclusion and community participation, an approach which is sure to involve a much wider sector of the population. This is a challenging task that the Commission has set itself, but one which I am sure it is well able to accomplish.

My thanks go to the Commissioner, the members of the Commission, the Executive Director and all the members of staff for their commitment and hard work throughout the past year. Together, we look forward to further steps along the long road to the full participation of both women and men in the economic and social life of the country.



Dolores Cristina
Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity
January 2006

NCPE

Foreword

Two Years on.....

The affirmation of the Beijing Declaration in 2005, on its 10th Anniversary, confirmed that the empowerment of both women and men are essential prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental progress. However this can only be achieved if we understand the local context, the social and cultural constraints. It also entails comprehending the differential perspectives, roles, needs, interests of women and men and Maltese society is no exception.

Gender attributes and characteristics, including the roles that men and women play and the expectations placed upon them, vary widely among societies and change over time. The fact that gender attributes are socially constructed means that they are also amenable to change. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women (NCPE) is now two years old and was set up precisely as a promoter of this change in Maltese society.

The terms of reference of NCPE under the law are vast and wide encompassing and in fact there are over 12 items listed in the law, ranging from:

- Identification, establishing, monitoring and updating policies related to issues of equality for men and women,
- Identifying the needs of persons who are disadvantaged by reasons of their sex,
- Liaising between, and ensure the necessary co-ordination between, government departments and other agencies,
- Keeping direct and continuous contact with local and foreign bodies,
- Carrying out general investigations with a view to determine whether the provisions of this Act are being complied with,
- Investigating complaints and, where deemed appropriate, to mediate with regard to such complaints.

NCPE, for its first term 2004-2006, agreed to focus its policies on practical actions in order to ensure that the execution of these terms are built on solid foundations. Over these 24 months these actions have taken a variety of forms and strategies in order to ensure that all men and women in Malta, whatever their economic, educational and social standing, are made more

aware of the policies that NCPE is promoting and co-ordinating and that all Maltese society can participate in these changes.

We have managed to obtain key international funds such as EU co-funded projects under ESF and EQUAL funds to assist in formalising projects in order to catalyse change by working towards sensitising the Maltese public to the issue of gender equality and also to show how Maltese society can benefit from the promotion of equality. We are also glad to announce that we have just been awarded a UNESCO project to investigate the gender gap in gender and science, which in the next few months will assist the newly set up NCPE Gender and Science subcommittee in identifying obstacles and barriers and promote science as a career for all, irrespective of gender.

However our interactions did not remain on formal level. We have also reached out to individuals by personally answering numerous queries, especially individuals who have been discriminated against by reason of their gender. Various concrete proposals have in fact been put forward to the authorities in order to formalise the complaints procedures as a legal notice, and to ensure that the remedies recommended by the Commission are enforced.

The next years will see the consolidation of this ongoing work and will involve the development of gender indicators for the local scenario, in order to monitor data concerning the relations between Maltese women and men pertaining to their access to, and control over resources, benefits and decision-making processes. Strategies and instruments will be developed in the formulation of alternative work arrangements and studies will be undertaken on gender implications in the taxation system, social security and the reasons for the black economy. NCPE will assist the authorities in ensuring that gender mainstreaming forms part of the analysis, formulation and monitoring of ALL policies, programmes and projects.

We would like to see more entities developing, supporting and disseminating mentoring projects for women and the role of men in ensuring gender equality. I personally would also like to focus on a study that will assess the gender dimension in the key role that unpaid and voluntary work plays in the Maltese economy.

Our remit is never ending and it is an on-going challenging task, where we can never rest on our laurels. NCPE's resources have increased over the last 24 months but certainly it is far from enough. The members of the first appointed Commission and the Executive Director and her

staff have worked extremely well together. Every single member of the Commission was instrumental in the formulation of policy and strategies and forging the way ahead and each one brought his or her expertise in the various tasks undertaken, despite their numerous personal commitments. May I take this opportunity to thank them all individually for their dedicated work throughout this year. Finally, last but certainly not least, I would like to thank all the staff at MFSS and Minister Cristina for her continuous and consistent support throughout these two years. She has certainly personally epitomized gender equality for Maltese society and our tasks would have certainly been far harder without her constant encouragement.



***Janet Mifsud,
Commissioner
January, 2006***

NCPE

Executive Summary

Introduction

Two years into the life of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality has left a group of individuals with an accelerated process of growth because of their work within and around the Commission; many positive individual experiences of persons who utilized the services of NCPE; more national awareness on the subject and definitely some very important national changes.

The Output ...

2005 has not been a straightforward year, but a very interesting one, in the sense that the deliverables were beyond expectations. Major decisions vis-à-vis new initiatives were taken during this year and the second Annual Report gives great detail of the work carried out. Every viable opportunity that could raise the profile of gender equality nationally that presented itself was assessed and acted upon. In fact during 2005, NCPE had five EU co-funded projects that were up and running. The first three are led by NCPE while in the last two, NCPE forms part of a European partnership.

These are:

- Gender Mainstreaming: the way forward
- Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment
- Facilitating Equality through Education
- Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes
- Gender News Good News

Another project is a UNESCO project titled 'The Gender Gap in Science and Technology in Malta' which will be launched in early January 2006 and will give a better picture than the one currently available of the status of science and gender in Malta.

Implementation of the Law ...

A very important remit of NCPE is to ensure that Act 1 of 2003 [Cap 456] is in fact implemented. To this effect, besides the monitoring and interventions that NCPE does on a regular basis, it also receives complaints regularly from individuals who feel that they have been discriminated against because of their gender and their family responsibilities. NCPE Complaints' Sub Committee

meets on a regular basis to assess and investigate complaints received and clients are advised on the best way forward. This year NCPE has also prepared a Complaints Procedure Form which facilitates the interaction and allows the complainants to think through their issues well and give all the necessary and relevant information.

The Public Service's new Collective Agreement was considered by NCPE as a very positive way forward as it has improved the work arrangements that allow for parents to be good parents and for children to consider the needs of their elderly parents. Many of the complaints received, in fact were from Public Officers who were struggling with achieving a healthy work life balance and this Collective Agreement has included numerous recommendations put forward. Of course NCPE does not claim that it was the only responsible organization for this, but it definitely helped push things in the right direction. NCPE acknowledges the very important work carried out by MPO in this regard.

While NCPE is pleased with the improvements in the conditions of work of public officers, it is still very concerned with the situation in some entities in the private sector. NCPE is striving to pass a clear message that the improved working arrangements can be advantageous to all involved and especially to the employers as employees tend to be more loyal towards a company that understands their personal situation. Ample scientific research is available to one and all to prove this point but unfortunately, there are still those who, even though their circumstances allow, have not developed alternative work practices to monopolise ICT for better work life balance. NCPE will continue to push this idea forward.

EU Directives ...

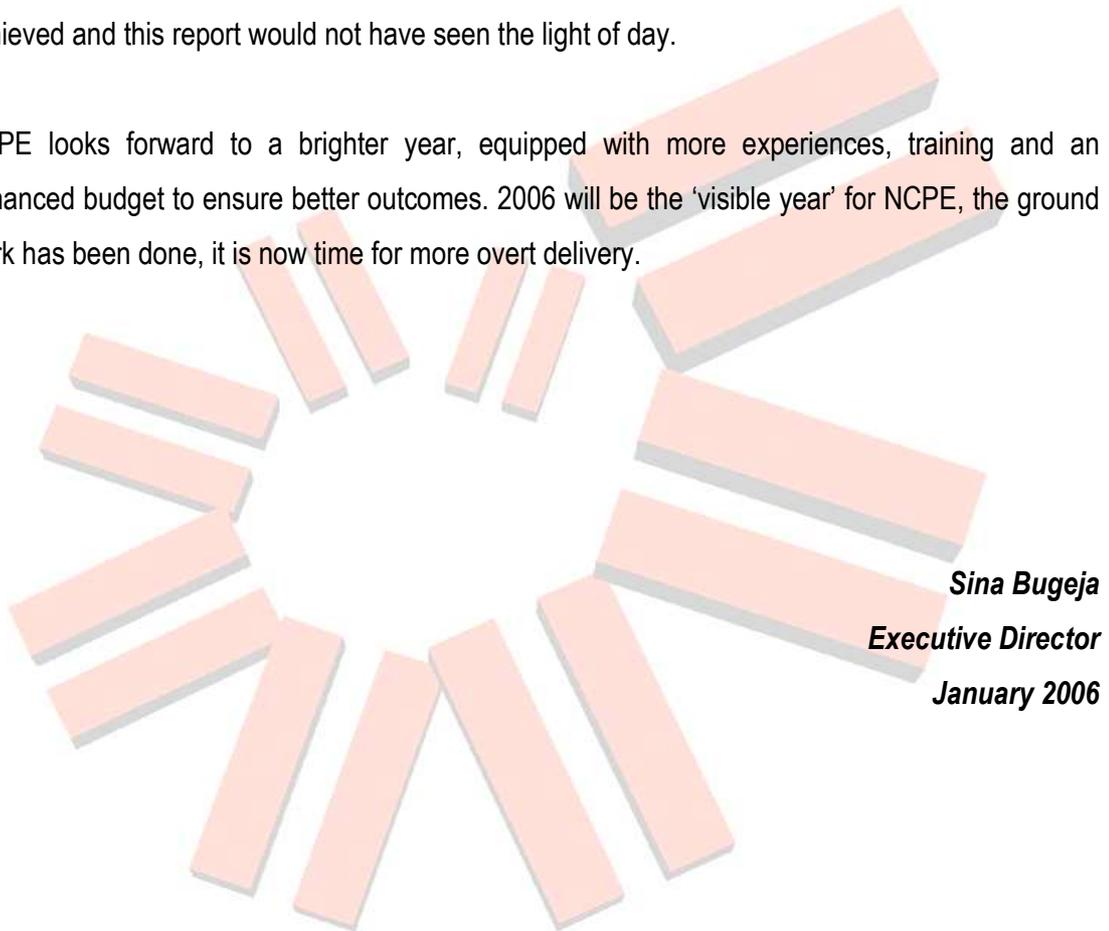
During 2005 NCPE has contributed directly to at least ten Proposals, Decisions or Communications of the European Parliament. This has given NCPE hands on experience on how the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission actually function. This direct contact has also contributed to the understanding of Malta's position vis-à-vis the European context and contributed for better comprehension of pan-European decisions and their possible effects on small economies.

The attendance of NCPE to meetings both locally and internationally has definitely widened the horizons of the Commission but has also contributed to Malta's placement on the map. The lead has been taken in many a discussion and salient decisions improved because of this very valid

contribution. The sharing of information and ideas on equal footing has been a process of maturity for all concerned.

This is also an excellent opportunity to thank the Commissioner and the Members of NCPE as well as all the staff members without whose contribution, the deliverables would not have been achieved and this report would not have seen the light of day.

NCPE looks forward to a brighter year, equipped with more experiences, training and an enhanced budget to ensure better outcomes. 2006 will be the 'visible year' for NCPE, the ground work has been done, it is now time for more overt delivery.



Sina Bugeja
Executive Director
January 2006

NCPE

Preamble

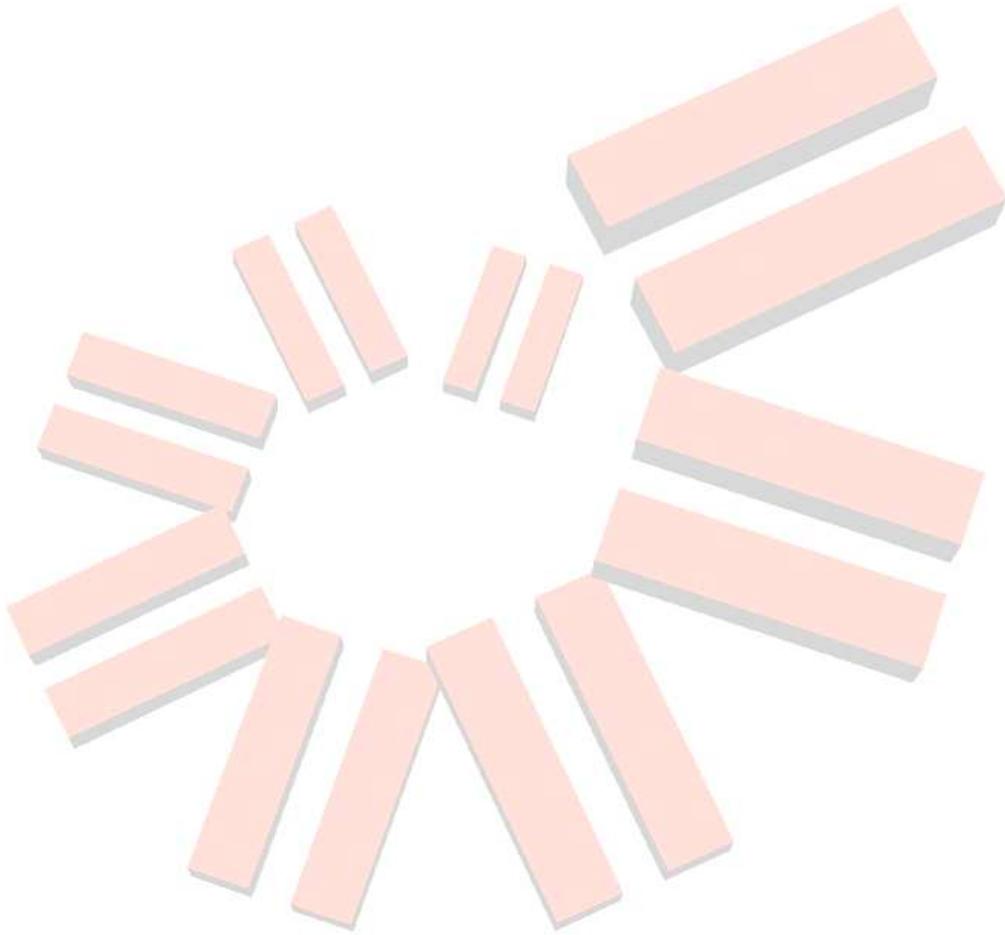
The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality [NCPE] met 10 times in 2005 and worked in accordance with its terms of reference as established in the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003). During the meetings, NCPE discussed policies and strategies which were then implemented by the executive arm of the Commission. Reports of the various activities and meetings held were also presented. The staff and members of the Commission were also involved in preparing reports on various EU and national documents and also gave presentations to various entities such as Social Affairs Committee in Parliament, NGOs. The NCPE was also invited to participate in various conferences on a national and international level.

NCPE is also actively taking part in suggesting proposals aimed at ensuring gender equality in the amendments to the Social Security Act, which are currently being drafted by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity [MFSS]. In addition, in conjunction with the relevant government departments/entities, the gender requirements in the Lisbon Agenda and Malta's National Development Plan for Economic and Social Cohesion are also being continuously assessed. An ongoing exercise is being undertaken in which all legislation and government forms are now being monitored in order to make them more gender inclusive and thus eliminate all forms of written discrimination, especially in the nomenclature and terms being used.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is in its second year of appointment with Dr Janet Mifsud as the Commissioner and Ms Grace Attard, Dr Miriam Camilleri, Mr Mario Mallia, Dr Myriam Spiteri Debono, Rev Dr Vanni Xuereb and Mr Winston J Zahra as its members.

NCPE has been extremely busy over the past twelve months where innumerable meetings were held with various ministries, departments, public entities, private organisations, church organisations and NGOs and the concept of equality was discussed in as much detail as was required in the particular situation. NCPE has also been on the foreground with organising training seminars on issues pertaining particularly to its remit. All these points and many others are presented in detail in the following pages.

The Executive Director of NCPE is Ms Sina Bugeja, while Mr Silvan Agius, Mr Johann Caruana, Ms Gertrude Farrugia, Ms Sylvana Galea, Mr Brian Galea, Ms Antoniella Gatt, Ms Maria Grima, Dr Roberta Lepre and Mr Robert Micallef are members of staff.



NCPE

Complaints

During 2005, the Complaints Sub-Committee of the Commission met 12 times. A substantial number of these meetings consisted of sessions where information was sought, according to the procedures and protocols established by NCPE. This information referred to specific complaints, including complaints of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The NCPE complaints sub-committee makes a significant effort in order to ensure confidentiality and to keep information regarding sexual harassment/discrimination and other complaints confidential without compromising the enquiry. In fact the pertinent information is shared only with those directly involved in the case.

Throughout 2005, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality received 55 complaints. A variety of complaints were received from different quarters. Complaints were received mainly from employees, from both the public sector, and private companies, as well as from non-governmental organisations working in the area of gender equality.

In addition, work continued on those complaints filed during 2004, which were of a more detailed nature and needed a longer time frame to resolve. In fact the complaints originally filed in 2004 are now totally resolved.

It is also important to note that a large number of complaints received both in 2004 and during 2005, came from public service employees, who complained mostly regarding:

- The limitation of the reduced hours clause to parents of children under 8 years of age. Many requested that this is extended until children were 12 years of age.
- Parental leave which enforced parents to take a whole year off work (not parts thereof).
- Sexual harassment cases
- Discrimination in the granting of adoption leave

Following several representations by NCPE and other entities on these matters, it is most favourable to note that, in fact in, the Collective Agreement for Public Officers 2005 - 2010, agreed in October 2005, appropriate action was taken with respect to the above-mentioned complaints which resulted in the implementation of more favourable family-friendly measures for all Public Officers. Moreover, the Collective Agreement also included provisions which

highlighted the importance of creating a flexible work environment, in order to help parents balance better their work and family-life.

The procedures undertaken to handle complaints have also been improved. A standard form has been prepared for the submission of a complaint, in order to standardise information being collected, and facilitate the process of presenting a formal complaint. All the necessary details for the submission of the complaint are now compiled in a simple and comprehensive manner which makes it much easier for the public to provide the correct information and also facilitate investigations.

Sexual Harassment

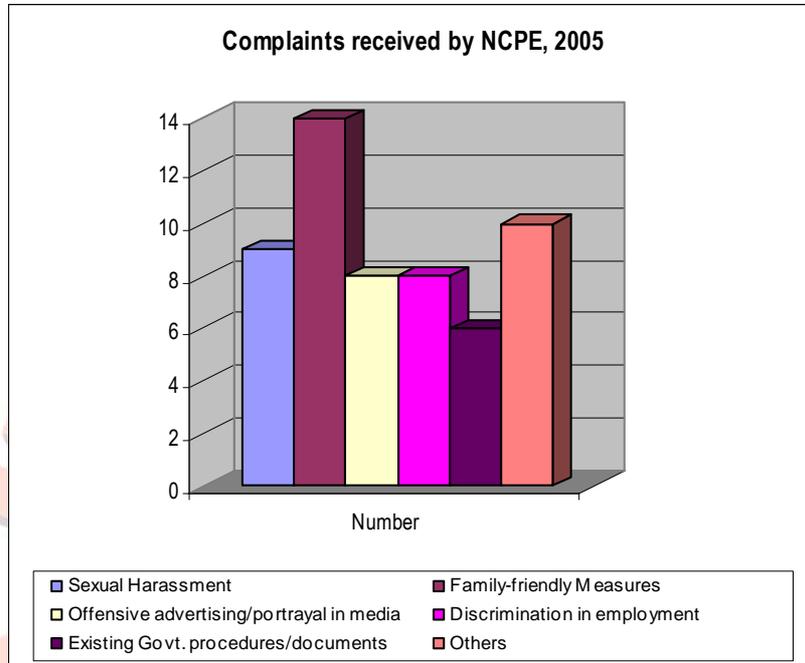
This year, the Complaints Sub-Committee has again intervened in a number of cases of sexual harassment. In fact, NCPE has dealt with several cases where sexual harassment was on a one to one basis. Furthermore, it has also dealt with cases where behaviour amounting to sexual harassment was rampant throughout the workplace, thus creating a hostile work environment to individuals who repudiate such behaviour.

Others

NCPE also achieved satisfactory results in various cases where the general public complained on discriminatory advertising and discriminatory content in programmes aired on local media including TV and radio, and job adverts on the internet and in newspapers. Moreover, NCPE intervened in assisting parents who found it difficult to manage their working hours due to their family responsibilities, and liaised with employers and heads of departments in order to implement flexible working hours, whilst keeping in mind the exigencies of the workplace.

NCPE has also been working throughout the year, in order to promote flexibility within the private sector. Results to date have been mixed and it must be acknowledged that much more work still needs to be done in order to effectively implement flexibility measures throughout all the labour market and not just in the public sector. This will not only help employees balance their life, but will, in the long run, result in better productivity as employees will be more loyal and motivated and employers will also understand that such circumstances can be turned into win-win situations.

Another successful outcome following numerous complaints received, was the amendment to the Addolorata Ordinance, which up to a few months ago still contained elements of gender discrimination. Following NCPE's intervention, this Ordinance has now been amended and the said discrimination has been eliminated.



Although, officially NCPE has intervened on 55 complaints, a much larger number of individuals than the registered 55, were helped by the Commission, but nevertheless did not officially put forward the complaint.

NCPE

Requests for Information

During the last year NCPE received around 150 requests for information of various degrees, which covered subjects including:

- Family friendly measures (maternity leave, reduced hours, parental leave, flexitime);
- Provisions re: Maltese legislation in connection with equality;
- Equality on government boards and committees;
- NCPE's procedure for dealing with complaints;
- Equality for Men and Women Act;
- Employment conditions;
- Rights of women;
- Social security provisions;
- Sexual harassment;
- Equality in the provision of courses;
- Women's participation in politics;
- The setting up of childcare centres;
- Theses on gender equality legislation;
- Directory of Maltese Professional Women;
- Racism;
- Statistics;
- Domestic violence;
- Various publications and leaflets.

Requests for this information came from university students, public service employees, ministries, gender focal points, secondary school students, NGOs, and members of the general public.

Parliamentary Questions

During 2004, NCPE replied to twenty-seven (27) Parliamentary Questions, which dealt with the following issues:

- Assistant/support care workers employed with Governmental entities
- Car Hire/Purchase
- Chief Executive Officer salary
- Consultants
- Danger allowance provided to employees
- Disciplinary action against Employees
- EU funded projects
- EU Funds administration
- Grants to NGOs
- Green Leaders
- Industrial Actions
- Injuries at the Place of Work
- Mobile Phones
- Money spent on hospitality
- Number of employees that have made use of services provided by Sedqa
- Reappointment of Directors
- Remuneration and benefits of Chairperson and Director
- Student Workers during summer months
- Support Line
- Telephone Bills
- Travel
- Workers

All the necessary information was given within the timeframes stipulated.

Questionnaires and Surveys

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has replied to various questionnaires from different entities, both national and international, on a wide range of topics including:

- Malta's progress on the Millenium Development Goals,
- Violence against women including domestic violence,
- Sexual offences, including war crimes
- European demographic trends
- Data protection

The Library

During 2005, various persons made use of the NCPE library either by borrowing books and journals or photocopying excerpts of material found in the library according to their research needs. Most individuals who used the library were students, and the most frequently borrowed books were related to the topics of domestic violence, human rights, gender equality in the media, women and employment, politics and sexual harassment at the workplace. During 2005, there were 230 new entries, which were included in the library system. Currently the library consists of 5571 books, journals and articles covering various subjects but mainly consisting of literature related to gender issues. One can also access the library on-line by applying for an e-ID either at the Department of Social Security or at any district office of the Department of Social Security, and at the Local Councils. An e-ID and a password is issued in order to access all services offered on-line by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

Website

In 2005, the NCPE commissioned a new and user friendly website in order to enhance its accessibility and interaction with the general public and other entities that may require its services. This website provides the general public with updated information about the remit and functions of NCPE, the services it provides and information about ongoing projects. It will also provide a link through which relevant information can be easily requested and downloaded.

The website consists of various sections including:

- *About Us*

This section provides information about the NCPE, the members of the Commission and the Mission Statement and Objectives

- *Services*

This section provides information on the services provided by NCPE such as the provision of information, and access to the library. Furthermore, one can learn about the

procedures of NCPE in handling complaints and download a Complaints Form in order to present a case in front of the Commission.

- *Quality Service Charter*

This section provides all the information about how NCPE can be contacted and the procedures and practices of NCPE in handling requests and complaints.

- *Resources*

Here one can access and download various resources including the Annual Reports and other documents such as the *Sexual Harassment – a code of practice*.

- *Legislation*

The relevant legislation on gender equality and protection from discrimination can be downloaded.

- *Projects*

This section provides a brief description about projects that are currently being carried out by NCPE. During the development of the various projects, links will be created to specific websites and partners' websites.

- *In the Media*

In this section one finds an archive of articles and letters that were sent to the various newspapers since NCPE's inception.

- *Contact Us*

This page provides a link between the public and NCPE through an online form and other contact details of the Commission.

- *Links*

In this section one finds various links of interest regarding gender equality such as gender neutral language use, links to international equality and non-discrimination websites and EU Gender Directives.

Every page on the website contains the phrase "Every task can be done by both women and men". This phrase is included in order to give the message that it is the abilities of the individuals that count and not their gender.

Gender in the EU Context

During the year 2005, NCPE gave its feedback on various proposals made by EU bodies. Furthermore, NCPE prepared and presented Memoranda and Instruction Notes defining Malta's position to be taken during the various' committees' meetings. The work done by NCPE during 2005 included the preparation for discussion concerning the following documents:

- 1. Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Decision 2001/51/EC establishing a Programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality and Decision No 848/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community action programme to promote organizations active at European level in the field of equality between men and women**

The Community Action Programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001–2005), the fifth action programme in this field, was adopted by the Council on 20 December 2000 to run from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005. It supports the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001–2005). Another Community Action Programme with the objective of promoting organisations active at European level in the field of equality between men and women was recently established by the European Parliament and the Council on 29 April 2004 and runs from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005 with a budget of 2.2 million Euros. Both Programmes come to an end simultaneously at a time of major changes for the construction and functioning of an enlarged European Union. The proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision on a Framework Programme on the financing of actions in the employment and social field will cover the same period as the new financial perspectives that is 2007 to 2013. Therefore, for the transitional period until the adoption of a new Framework Programme along the lines set out above, it was essential to ensure the continuity of Community assistance for the promotion of gender equality and to avoid any disruption of the mechanism currently in place in support of the objectives laid down in Article 13 of the EC Treaty. Therefore the principles and objectives as well as the areas of intervention of the Community framework strategy on gender equality, which coincide with those set out in Decision 2001/51/EC and the Annex thereof, are to remain fully valid for this transitional year.

2. Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS)

This Decision establishes the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, named PROGRESS, to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields. It shall run from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013.

3. Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men.

This report makes reference to the demographic changes with an ageing population and a shrinking working population, which continue to be a major challenge in the EU after enlargement. The tension between combining family and professional life, partly due to lack of child care and insufficiently flexible working conditions, appears to be contributing to the postponement of having the first child and to low fertility rates in most Member States. However, experience shows that Member States having comprehensive policies to reconcile work and family life for both men and women show higher fertility rates as well as higher labour market participation of women.

The report therefore states that integration of a gender dimension into policies will contribute to attaining the overall Lisbon objectives. There is a need for new initiatives to increase employment in order to meet the challenge of an ageing society, including providing adequate pensions for women and men. Particular attention must be paid to mobilising the full potential of female employment and to boosting labour market participation of older women and immigrant women who have the lowest employment rates.

4. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Institute for Gender Equality

In line with the objectives of the Social Agenda, the European Council has recognised the need to promote equality between men and women by increasing public awareness, pooling resources and promoting the exchange of experiences between Member States. In this context, the European Institute for Gender Equality is considered as being of primary importance in contributing to the achievement of these aims.

Therefore, this Proposal is the result of numerous discussions and the developments that followed. This Proposal also takes into account the findings of recent evaluations on the functioning of other Community agencies, particularly those acting in areas of social interest.

5. Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

At the Nice European Council in 2000, the Heads of State and Government called for the enforcement of equality related rights between the sexes, *inter alia*, by adopting a Directive, based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty, on promoting gender equality in areas other than employment and professional life.

On 5 November 2003 the Commission presented a proposal for a Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services. This proposed Directive would complement the legislation already in place to combat sex discrimination in the employment field and, for the first time, would extend the principle of equal treatment between women and men beyond the employment area. The Commission has decided to respond to the Nice European Council's request, insofar as it relates to the non-employment area, by means of a step-by-step approach and the adoption of this Directive was the first step in that process.

NCPE has also analyzed methods of transposing Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

6. Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Platform for Action (PfA), which was adopted by consensus at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, calls on Governments, the international community and civil society to take strategic measures with regard to 12 critical areas of concern: Women and poverty, Education and training of women, Women and health, Violence against women, Women and armed conflicts, Women and the economy, Women in power and decision-making, Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, Human rights of women, Women and the media, Women and the environment, the Girl-child.

The Council of the European Union stressed the importance of strengthening the link between the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Copenhagen Declaration and Action Programme, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals and emphasises the need to adopt, at European level, a coherent approach towards these different objectives which are reinforced mutually.

The Council, therefore urged the Member States and the Commission to ensure that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action are fully integrated in the preparation for, and the outcome of, the September Summit and that a gender perspective is fully integrated at the high-level review of the Millennium Declaration in order to empower women and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

7. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions : 'Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all - A framework strategy

This Communication sets out a forward-looking strategy to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all in the EU, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation.

It takes into account the results of a public-wide consultation carried out by the Commission in 2004, on the basis of a Green Paper concerning Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU. It builds on experiences gained at the EU level since the introduction of a specific legal basis in 1999 (Article 13 TEC) empowering the Community to take action to combat discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. Finally, the framework strategy takes into account the results of several studies that have been carried out in this area on behalf of the European Commission, Member States, civil society organisations, and other international organisations.

8. Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) Towards a Just Society

In its Communication on "Working together for growth and jobs – a new start for the Lisbon strategy", the Commission underlined that "renewed growth is vital to prosperity, can bring back full employment and is the foundation of social justice and opportunity for all".

It will be difficult to achieve the ambitious Lisbon strategic objectives if large groups of the EU population are excluded from jobs, training and other opportunities. Eliminating discrimination in order to reap the benefits of diversity is an important element in the development of a more competitive and dynamic economy and society.

Thus the proposal that 2007 be designated European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. The European Year responds to one of the key challenges identified by respondents to the Commission's Green Paper on *Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU*. The vast majority of contributions called for further awareness-raising initiatives, in order to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, as well as informing people about their legal rights and obligations. The global objective of the Year will be to raise awareness of the benefits of a just, cohesive society where there is equality of opportunity for all. This will require tackling barriers to participation in society and promoting a climate in which Europe's diversity is seen as a source of socio-economic vitality.

9. Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast version)

The Commission adopted on 21st April 2004, a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast version)

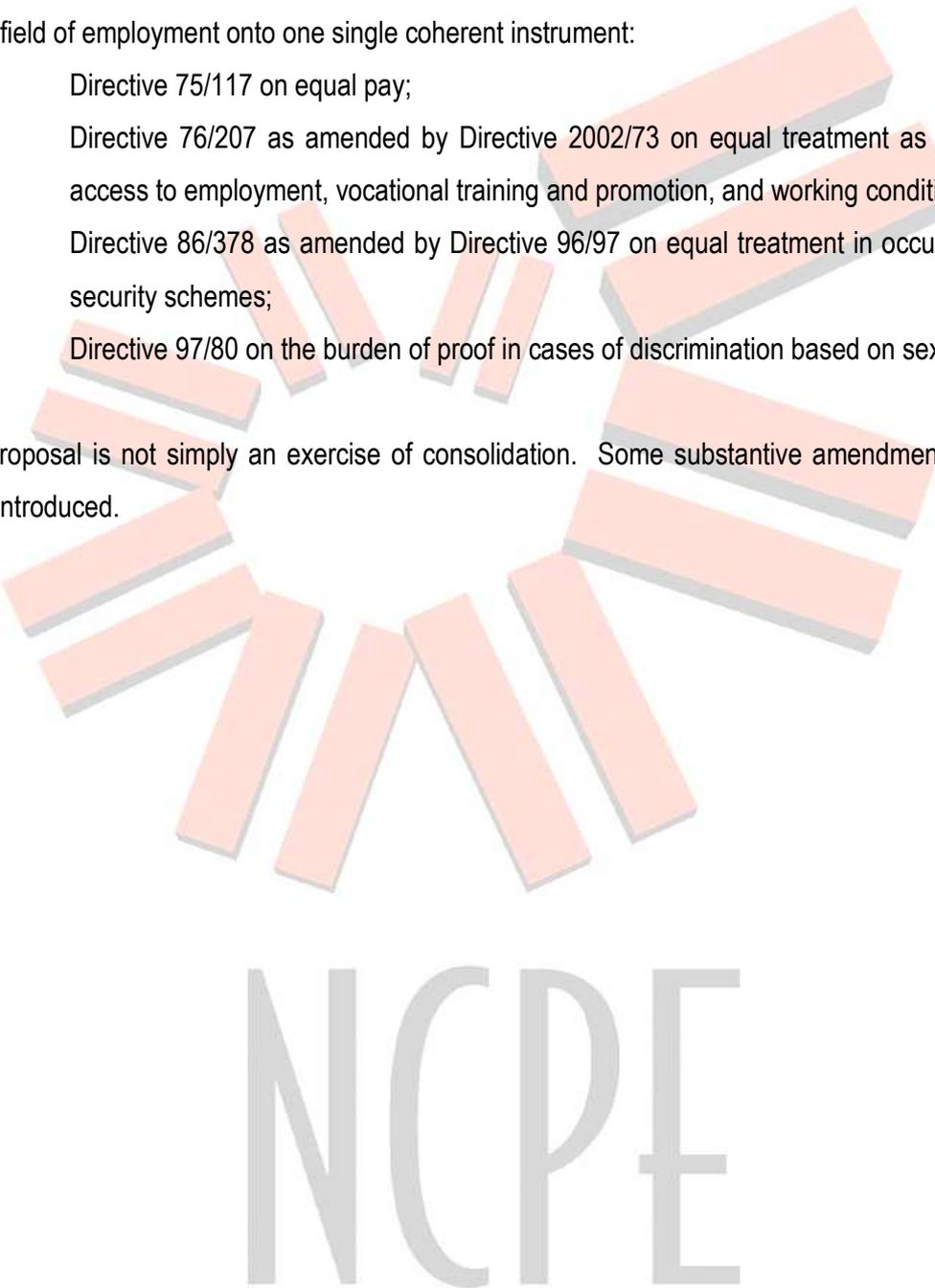
The objective of the proposal is to contribute to legal certainty and clarity in the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the area of employment and occupation by bringing together in a single text the main provisions existing in this field, as well as certain developments arising out of well-settled case-law of the European Court of Justice.

The simplification and streamlining of the Community acquis will facilitate the accessibility and readability of Community legislation both for legal practitioners and the general public and is, as such, an important step in the work on better regulation.

The proposal merges the following six existing Directives on equal treatment of men and women in the field of employment onto one single coherent instrument:

- Directive 75/117 on equal pay;
- Directive 76/207 as amended by Directive 2002/73 on equal treatment as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.
- Directive 86/378 as amended by Directive 96/97 on equal treatment in occupational security schemes;
- Directive 97/80 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex;

The proposal is not simply an exercise of consolidation. Some substantive amendments have been introduced.



NCPE

Gender Mainstreaming

According to EU Directive 2002/73/EC, which came into force in October 2005, gender mainstreaming (GM) should form an integral part of all state and government policies and the gender perspective must be taken into consideration in all areas of decision making. OPM Circular No 24/2000 published in 2000 had already put GM on the national agenda but implementation was rather limited.

Gender mainstreaming has been defined in varied ways and in various documents. One of the most comprehensive definitions states that GM is the promotion of a “strategy for making women’s, as well as men’s concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

NCPE carried out background and foundation work through its Gender Liaison Officer and this consisted of intensive research on gender mainstreaming, both from an academic point of view as well as from a European and local policy perspective.

On a dissemination level, the gender focal points previously established within the ministerial departments, are now functioning within a broader gender equality committee within each Ministry, set up at the end of 2004. The role of NCPE’s Gender Liaison Officer includes, amongst others, liaising with and advising these Committees on mainstreaming measures that can be adopted. For this purpose the Committees have also been given a set of terms of reference.

The first meeting with the Gender Equality Committees was held on 23rd February 2005 at Guzeppi Despott Hall, Floriana. The main aim of this meeting was to introduce the NCPE and its responsibility, and to further discuss the roles of these Equality Committees within their respective Ministry/Department/Entity/ Organisation. The importance of establishing a good communication system between all Gender Equality Committees and NCPE was emphasized. This should be done in order to ensure that each policy is gender inclusive and that information is disseminated to every employee, at all levels, in all Ministries.

The complaints procedure was also explained in detail to all participants. The confidentiality clause was particularly highlighted, as well as the importance of adhering to the timeframes in which the respective authorities are asked to reply to NCPE, following complaints made, in accordance with the provisions found in Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act. Reference was also made to the “Sexual Harassment - A Code of practice”, NCPE’s publication and the fact that it is of utmost importance that each entity should encompass a sexual harassment policy among its regulations. The obligations and role of the employers in preventing sexual harassment at the workplace was also explained.

Another aspect discussed during this briefing session was gender equality in the media, and its importance due to the media’s immense impact in our society. The Committees were also informed about the provisions of Cap. 456, ‘Equality for Men and Women Act’, which states clearly, that it is unlawful to ask questions regarding marital status or family responsibilities during an interview for employment.

The Directory for Maltese Professional Women was also described and its function was discussed with all present.

On 11th and 12th April 2005, the ‘National Centre of European Documentation and Information on behalf of the Italian Department of Community Policies – Presidency of the Council of Ministers’, together with the Staff Development Organisation within MPO, and NCPE organised training sessions on gender equality. All the gender equality chairpersons or their representatives were invited to attend this training.

On 27th April, NCPE officially launched the “Sexual Harassment - A Code of Practice” during a seminar organised together with the Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD). This seminar was very well attended by various Human Resource Managers in both public and private sectors as well as Gender Equality Committees members.

During another meeting in July, the Executive Director of NCPE met with high level public officers in order to explain the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming in view of the requirements of “EU Directive 2002/73/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions”. This Directive creates a legal obligation to mainstream

gender equality within the sphere of employment and occupation. The Executive Director also referred to this new legal requirement within the context of the Lisbon Agenda and Malta's National Development Plan for Economic and Social Cohesion.

A further meeting with the Chairpersons of the Committees or their representatives was held on 2nd September 2005 at Ċentru Fidma Soċjal. This meeting focused mainly on the importance of mainstreaming gender equality. Reference was made to the EU Directive 2002/73/EC which was due to come into force in October 2005 and OPM Circular No. 24/2000. This Circular places an obligation on Permanent Secretaries, Directors General, CEOs and Managers, Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Sections or Units for gender mainstreaming in all policy areas. The importance of mainstreaming gender issues was again highlighted within the context of the Lisbon Agenda and Malta's National Development Plan for Economic and Social Cohesion. The presentation then proceeded with an outline of the key prerequisites for achieving gender mainstreaming which include:

- appropriate institutional arrangements
- awareness raising
- training
- expertise
- commitment from the top
- incentives to build ownership
- resources
- representation
- culture/Institutions

During this meeting the concept of multi-ground equality was also introduced and information given on the training scheduled for the successive months with respect to the recent EU Equality Directives which include race, religion/other belief, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, and ethnicity.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Embassy organized a half-day Multi-Ground Training Session on 28th October 2005, which was held at the Music Hall, St. James Cavalier, Valletta. The training's objective was to communicate information about the obligations set out in Directive 2000/78/EC, and Directive

2000/43/EC by creating a body for the Promotion of Equal Treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, and religion or belief.¹

The training was delivered by a Dutch expert, Ms Willemien Ruygrok, who addressed the participants on the particular forms of discrimination on various grounds and on policies that could be adopted to promote equality.

Apart from these formal meeting, NCPE also had a series of individual meetings with each Committee in order to assist them in the implementation of the terms of reference given to them. The activities of each individual Ministry are now to be analysed from a gender perspective and measures undertaken in order to promote equality.

In addition various national legislations and documents are presently being reviewed and recommendations are being made to the authorities, by which the equality aspect could be further strengthened. The following are the key documents that have been prepared and forwarded for implementation.

- A thorough analysis and review has been undertaken of the Equality for Men and Women Act and the requirements of EU Directive 2002/73/EC. This has resulted in a set of recommendations, which have been presented to the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity .
- The Income Tax Act has been analysed from a gender perspective.
- Revisions to the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development Act have been recommended to the authorities in order to introduce a gender perspective in the social partners forming part of the MCESD council, which is to date lacking.
- A further document entitled, "Making Work Pay" was also prepared and given to the Minister, for her consideration. This document outlined *inter alia* the financial barriers, which hinder Maltese women from joining or re-entering the labour market. These include the cost of childcare, the relatively high national insurance contribution and other

¹ Since the National Commission for People with Disabilities (KNPD) already handles cases of discrimination of disability, this ground was not covered in these session

fiscal barriers such as loss of entitlement to social security benefits, the discriminatory practices pertaining to part-time work, as well as the 'glass-ceiling' barriers.

- NCPE has also begun a thorough review of the Social Security Act in order to mainstream its provision and update it according to more recent legislative and policy developments in this field.
- NCPE has carried out specific activities in relation to the consultation process for Malta's National Reform Programme for achieving the targets of the Lisbon Strategy. NCPE contributed to a conference, where an overview was given of all the guidelines of the Lisbon Strategy and the best ways to implement the said strategy. Furthermore, the methods in which to address the above-mentioned guidelines were discussed amongst the participants. As a result of this, proposals for concrete measures in response to the above guidelines were compiled by NCPE and discussions held with the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU), which is the entity responsible for the National Reform Programme. NCPE's recommendations included the integration of a gender perspective into all the relative measures.
- NCPE analysed the Pre-Budget Document entitled 'A Better Quality of Life 2006-2010' and submitted recommendations as formal feedback sent to the Office of the Prime Minister in October 2005.
- In connection with ESF projects, NCPE has also drafted its input for the Structural and Cohesion Funds Programme 2006-2013 (NSRF) in order to ensure that an adequate allocation for gender issues is made within this programme and also gave feedback on a Questionnaire on Regulatory Management Capacities. This initiative was particularly welcomed due to the fact that a proper assessment of the regulatory capacities on a national level could result in more capacity building for the NCPE as well as the relative Equality Committees within the Ministries.

As part of its awareness raising initiatives, NCPE also gave various presentations on gender mainstreaming throughout the year to various public entities, civil society organizations and private companies.

NCPE also interacted with the ETC regarding a Manual for Employers, a Code of Practice on Gender Equality for ETC staff, as well as a manual on Atypical Career Choices.

NCPE has also been involved in the scripting of role plays for various TV programmes, where issues such as sexual harassment and gender discrimination were discussed.

Directory of Maltese Professional Women

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is currently re-designing the Directory of Female Maltese Professionals. This Database is a vital tool in the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In line with Government's commitment to achieve *de facto* equality, this Directory will be the main reference tool which will provide the names of women with specific qualifications and experience in various fields, in order to address the existing gender imbalance in the private and public sector.

This database in fact will form a vital link in the promotion of gender equality in decision making levels, so for instance these names will be submitted for the consideration of the relevant government ministries, to form part of possible boards and committees.

This Directory is based on the previous Directory of Maltese Women compiled by the various Advisory Commissions set up specifically for the advancement of women. However, the updating of the information available will now be the responsibility of the individual herself. It is envisaged that this system will be up and running in the forthcoming weeks. The women who are interested will need to apply for an e-ID from local councils or from the Department of Social Security in order to be able to fill in the form online and update the information whenever it is necessary.

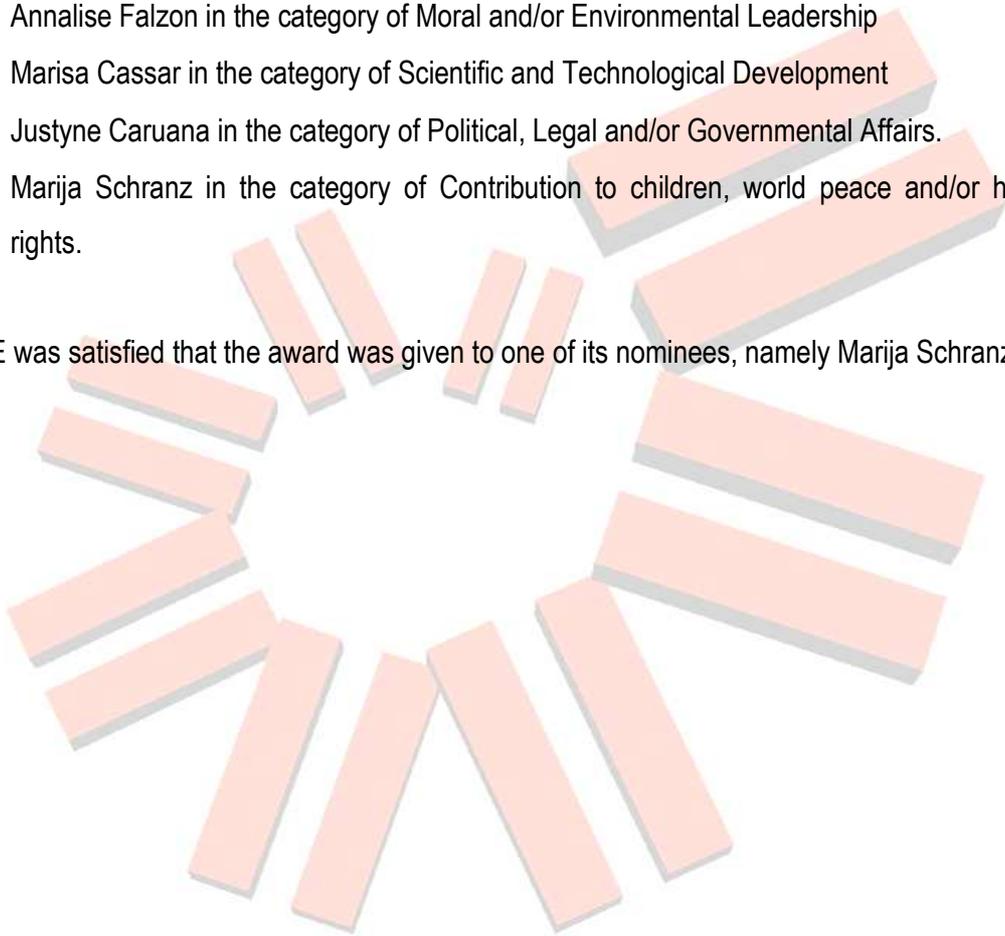
Another feature of this Directory is that only authorized personnel of NCPE who will have access to the details supplied by each applicant apart from the applicant herself. This is done in order to ensure the utmost confidentiality and in line with the Data Protection Act. As soon as the whole system is functioning, an advert will be issued in the local newspapers and other media.

Nominations for The Outstanding Young Persons Award, 2005

In August 2005, the NCPE submitted nominations for The Outstanding Young Persons (TOYP) Award 2005, organised by the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Malta. The candidates nominated by NCPE were:

- Lara Tonna in the category of voluntary leadership
- Annalise Falzon in the category of Moral and/or Environmental Leadership
- Marisa Cassar in the category of Scientific and Technological Development
- Justyne Caruana in the category of Political, Legal and/or Governmental Affairs.
- Marija Schranz in the category of Contribution to children, world peace and/or human rights.

NCPE was satisfied that the award was given to one of its nominees, namely Marija Schranz.



NCPE

Projects

This year NCPE has started the implementation of the ESF and Equal Projects which had been applied for during 2004. Moreover, NCPE has successfully applied for another project under the Closed Call VP/2004/019 issued by the European Commission. These projects are a great help in increasing the resources and research capacity of NCPE as well as in implementing and monitoring pilot and other projects.

1. ESF No. 23 'Gender Mainstreaming - The way forward'

NCPE is currently implementing "Gender Mainstreaming - The Way Forward", which is co-financed by the European Social Fund.

The project aims to increase the participation and advancement of women in the labour market primarily through the identification and promotion of measures towards the advancement of a work-life balance. It addresses the working environment in the public and private sectors to provide opportunities for women to take up employment in these sectors. In this way, women will be able to remain in the place of work increasing their opportunities for career advancement particularly in the context of the need to create a more gender-balanced representation at decision-making levels.

It should also sensitise the social partners to the cost-effectiveness and other benefits, such as smoother work processes/relations, and increased productivity, that may arise due to the introduction of family-friendly provisions.

This project targets specifically women and Human Resource Managers. The project is divided into the following components, namely:

- Research into the introduction of family-friendly measures at the work place;
- Gender Pay Review
- Tracer study to follow the career path and conditions of work of graduates in the labour market;
- Teleworking pilot project

- Gender mainstreaming
- Publicity Campaign

Research into the introduction of family-friendly measures at the work place

This component entails an evaluation study within private local companies to identify the benefits of a family-friendly working environment. The aim of this study is to analyse how such measures meet the needs of both employers and employees by identifying changes registered in the organisational performance. The results shall be used to put forward recommendations that shall benefit both management and operational staff in the private sector. Benefits, particularly the cost benefits, shall be publicised at management level especially amongst Human Resource Managers to produce a family-friendly model that may be implemented by companies. It is envisaged that the study will be published by September 2006.

Gender Pay Review

This aspect of the project will focus mainly on a quantitative analysis of employee posts and salaries, thus analysing and identifying possible barriers to equal opportunities and equal pay. The publication of the findings of this project which is planned for September 2006 as well, will make recommendations with regards to possibilities to eliminate the barriers mentioned above, since it is a well known fact that, although the laws of Malta provide for equal pay for work of equal value, discrepancies still exist in pay between men and women.

Tracer study to follow the career path and conditions of work of graduates in the labour market

This study aims at evaluating the chosen career paths of women and men graduates. The aim of this study is to detect the reasons for their career choice in order to demonstrate whether such choice was a real choice or a more viable course of action. For instance the question as to the choice to study towards a particular career path is made with any preconceived ideas that such a choice will provide more acceptable working conditions which could be more practical for one sex rather than the other. The study is going to be undertaken amongst female and male graduates employed both in the public and in the private sector to obtain a representative sample of the population. Moreover, it is envisaged that this study will highlight how the absence of family-friendly arrangements may discriminate against women who, in Maltese society, still often carry the majority of the family responsibilities and due to this cannot benefit from career opportunities as much as their male counterparts. In fact according to the Eurostat Labour Force Survey, the

situation of Malta is that the male employment rate stands at 74.5% (first quarter 2005) and ranks sixth in all European countries, whilst on the other hand the female employment rate stands at 34.5% and is the lowest rate in Europe.

Teleworking

This part of the project entails the identification of the benefits of flexible working arrangements and how to overcome any possible limitations. This study will assess the benefits of flexibility by identifying the outcomes of work processes before and after its implementation. NCPE chose four government employees to tele-work within the home environment. However, in order to have a representative study, the research consultants will be monitoring companies that are already running the tele-working system for any advantages and/or limitations according to different work settings to contemporarily meet employee and organisational requirements. The findings will be published and according to these findings, recommendations will be made so that these measures can be adapted to the needs of different work settings.

Tenders

In line with the requirements for EU co-funded projects, the following ESF Tenders were issued during 2005:

Name of Contract
Employment contract for the engagement of a Project Coordinator for NCPE
Employment contract for the engagement of a Gender Liaison Officer for NCPE
Service contract for the engagement of Research Consultants for NCPE
Service contract for the Engagement of Publicity and Public Relations Service Provider for NCPE
Service contract for the undertaking of two telephone surveys for NCPE
Service contract for the provision of venues and refreshments for NCPE
Service contract for the engagement of a Research Supervisor for NCPE
Supply contract for the purchase of computers and printers for NCPE
Service Contract for the VPN and Internet Connection for NCPE

Publicity Campaign

As part of the publicity campaign, a telephone survey was conducted by MISCO where it resulted that without any particular publicity efforts, 33% of respondents were aware of NCPE's existence. These results show that, nevertheless, a planned campaign is necessary for the role of NCPE and its functions to become known to the general public. The work on the dissemination

of information, which commenced in December 2005 consists mainly of billboards, posters, bus-wraps, leaflets, adverts on TVM and Radju Malta. It is envisaged that next year another survey will take place in order to be able to assess the effectiveness of this' year's publicity campaign.

All the above components of this ESF project are expected to contribute to:

- **Enhancing Social inclusion:** the more women are encouraged to enter, remain in or return to the labour market, reliance on state aid will be reduced. Through N.I. payments, women will be eligible to benefit from social security provisions that offer more long term financial security.
- **Promoting Lifelong learning:** flexibility shall enable women to pursue their education as a lifelong process. This shall in turn further increase their prospects for advancement in the public sphere
- **Increasing Adaptability:** develop women's potential within the different fields/skills that are necessary to meet the labour market requirements.
- **Assisting Entrepreneurship:** all the above increase productivity prospects thus encouraging the further development of enterprises in Malta such as SMEs.
- **Promoting Gender Equality:** women tend to be found more in situation of poverty or among the "at risk" groups; therefore this enables them to pursue their financial security, advancement and a better standard of living.

NCP E

2. EQUAL No.4 'Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment'

Aim of the Project

This project is partly financed by the European Social Fund of the EU. The aim of this project is to reach out to the inactive segment of the Maltese population, particularly women, and encourage them to be part of, remain and advance in the labour market by promoting the uptake of opportunities in different fields. In addition, the project aims to encourage unemployed/inactive individuals working in the informal economy, mostly females, to participate in the formal labour market.

The 'Development Partnership' (DP) entitled **GenderRole** is led by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), in carrying out the EQUAL No.4 'Promoting EQUAL Opportunities through Empowerment' project.

The development partnership includes the following organisations:

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE)
- Malta College of Art, Science and Technology (MCAST)
- Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)
- Cooperatives Board
- Department of Local Government (DLG)
- National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD)
- Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)
- National Council of Women (NCW)
- Malta Employers' Association (MEA)
- Malta Federation of Industry (FOI)
- Union Faddiema Magħqudin (UHM)
- General Workers' Union (GWU)

The above mentioned Partners collectively establish 'the Development Partnership' (hereinafter referred to as 'The DP').

The contributions and responsibilities of each local development partner have been agreed upon and all the partners have decided on what area of the project to focus their input. A work plan

outlining the main responsibilities of each development partner was produced. The work plan also includes the project's objectives and the tasks to be carried out by each development partner within set time-frames, against which to monitor progress.

As a part of the project, NCPE together with the development partners, have opted that one of the most effective ways of achieving the above is through the use of role models, who have improved their employment status after having undertaken training and/or sought employment to develop their career. These role models will share their experiences, thus showing that similar results may be achieved by the inactive population if they decide to take up this challenge.

In view of this NCPE has initiated contact with the proposed role models, out of which a number of the proposed role models will be selected to take part in the publicity campaign that will be launched by NCPE. During this campaign, the role models will participate during the Local Council seminars, TV and radio programmes, and Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

The different stages of the project are as follows:

a. Compilation of Information

NCPE has compiled the relevant information with the local development partners, on the training and employment opportunities in different fields offered by the development partners.

Tenders

In conjunction with this project, the following EQUAL Tenders were issued during 2005:

Name of Contract:
Employment contract for the engagement of a Project Coordinator for NCPE
Service Contract for 'Publicity and Public Relations of the NCPE EQUAL Project on TV, Radio, Print Media, Bus Shelter Adverts and Website Development.
Service Contract for the provision of venues and refreshments for NCPE
Service contract for the employment of a Researcher for the trans-national project <i>AGENDER</i>

b. Dissemination of Information through the Media

NCPE has developed a proposal for the TV and radio programmes and submitted it to the competent authorities. This entails the production and viewing of a series of TV/Radio programmes focusing on the dissemination of information about the role models and related education/training/labour market opportunities.

NCPE has also started the initial preparation for the broadcasting of the TV series, radio programmes and PSA's. The subjects and/or areas that will be tackled on the TV and radio programmes were compiled. These TV and radio programmes are set to commence in February 2006. The programmes will include the exposure of each development partner and role models. They will also incorporate the publicity of the training and employment opportunities offered by the development partners in the different fields.

c. Local Council Preliminary Meetings and subsequent Seminars for the general public

NCPE has developed a work plan of the project covering the initial preparation of the Local Council public seminars. In fact, all the local councils in Malta and Gozo have been contacted and four preliminary meetings were held to explain to the local councillors the aim of the EQUAL project and their role in this project. NCPE explained that the role of the Local Councils is to give feedback and guidance on how the inactive population could be reached and enticed to participate in the local council seminars.

Various issues were discussed during the meetings including the provision of childcare during the local council seminars, the setting of the dates for the seminars according to the particular needs of the local councils concerned and ways of how to encourage individuals to participate in the seminars, such as sending a letter to inactive individuals. Publicity including distribution of posters, announcement of the commencement of the local council seminars by the parish churches and others were considered. Moreover during the meetings other issues were raised including: employment and training possibilities in the areas of the local governments, the development of a database (personal information and contact details of the participants) and the organisation of focus groups to elicit feedback.

It can be said that following these meetings, the commitment of the local councils was very evident and encouraging.



Seminars will be held in four regions: Northern, Central and Southern Malta, and Gozo. The aim of these seminars is to describe in more detail the information disseminated through the media and to explain how one could go about taking up the opportunities available in the different fields.

Role models from various areas will be used as examples of change and success.

d. Meetings with Employers

This part of the project will take place in the year 2006. In fact this fraction of the projects entails a meeting with employers and their representatives, which will be organised in order to assess the sensitivity of employers to the barriers women face when seeking employment and the priority attributed by the industry to these barriers.

e. Formulation of Policy

The last phase of this project, also to take place in 2006, involves the formulation of policy recommendations to the Government to increase equal opportunities including gender equality based on the experiences of the role models, the outcomes of the seminars for social partners and ultimately on the project's outcomes.

f. Trans-national Partnership

NCPE conducted discussions with the MFSS EU Unit vis-à-vis the Trans-national Cooperation Agreement (TCA) as part of this project. Following these discussions, NCPE has received various requests by European entities interested in becoming trans-national partners to the Maltese project.

The national DPs were informed about the partnership possibilities and they were asked to attend a meeting, during which they identified the two trans-national projects that they preferred. The DPs chose "What women want" from Italy, and 'Revalorisation of Work to Promote Equality' from Portugal.

Following this decision, an NCPE representative attended a meeting in Lecce, Italy where the Italian partners and the other partners of their project – namely Northern Ireland, Lithuania, Spain and Malta - discussed the TCA and developed a common project named EMPOWER (TCA I.D. Code 3980).

During the same week, the Portuguese partners and their French project partners visited Malta in order to develop the second TCA to the Maltese project. This TCA will focus of gender and age discrimination, and was named **AGender** (TCA I.D. Code 3795).

Therefore, two Trans-national partnerships **AGender** and **EMPOWER** were developed as part of the EQUAL project.

EMPOWER

The aim of this project is identify methods that allow the removal of real and perceived barriers of marginalized and/or weak groups, particularly women, by promoting equal opportunities for disadvantaged women entering the labour market. The partners involved in this project include Italy, Spain, Northern Ireland, Lithuania and Malta. The results of these projects will be transferred between TCP members.

In November, NCPE representatives have attended a meeting in Belfast, Northern Ireland where partners, namely Northern Ireland, Lithuania, Spain and Malta - discussed the roles and responsibilities of each partner and developed a time plan of the project EMPOWER (TCA I.D. Code 3980).

Moreover, during this meeting the trans-national study that will be conducted by Possibilities (NI) was discussed. In their study Possibilities (NI) will consider lone parents and employment from the perspective of other member states, including Malta. This study will highlight different approaches and models of practice which may be replicated domestically to the benefit of lone parents.

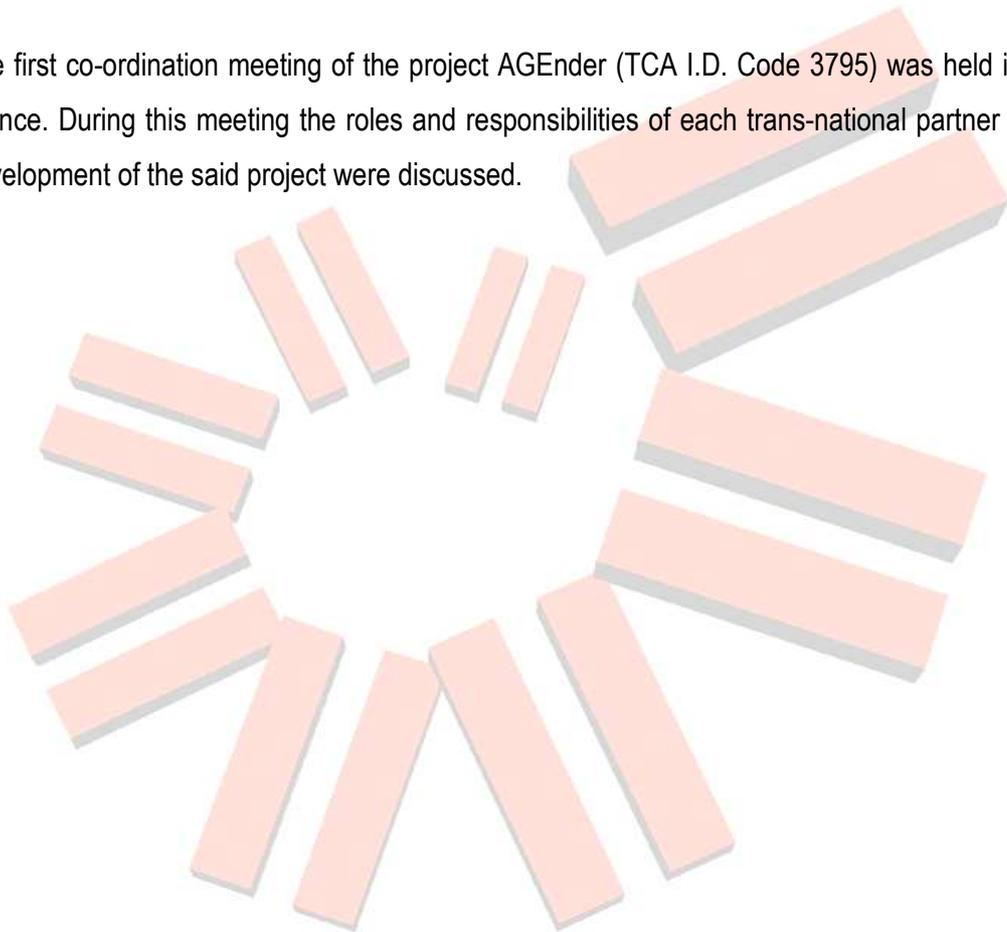
A training toolkit will be developed for use by all the DP's involved in the trans-national partnership. The toolkit will be made widely available through the use of a website and a CD ROM.

Therefore, this trans-national partnership will add value to the national project in that it will expose NCPE to various projects regarding issues that are high on its agenda, including the needs of single parents, and the need of women living in a depressed area amongst others. The tool kit and the other products produced by this trans-national partnership will help NCPE to disseminate the information locally and to progress the agenda of equality.

AGender

The aim of this project is to tackle age and gender discrimination. Furthermore, the aim of this project is to increase the employment rate of senior people, particularly women, by promoting good practices in the area of gender equality and age management in Europe. The partners involved in this project include Portugal, France and Malta.

The first co-ordination meeting of the project AGender (TCA I.D. Code 3795) was held in Paris, France. During this meeting the roles and responsibilities of each trans-national partner and the development of the said project were discussed.



NCPPE

3. Gender News Good News

Gender News Good News is an EU funded project being co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour in Italy, with partners from Spain, France and Malta. The local partners are NCPE and ETC.

The main objective of 'Gender News Good News' is to work with individuals involved in the media from the four partner countries namely France, Italy, Malta and Spain to do away with current stereotypes and raise awareness on the importance of reconciliation between work and family life. For the purpose of this project, media has been defined as communication on TV and radio, scriptwriting and business communication in companies. The effect of the raised awareness of the participants will reflect in production of programmes that move away from the stereotyped situations depicted currently and creates space for other concepts and ideas to be integrated in productions.

Italy is the lead partner and every country is represented by one or more organisations. NCPE together with ETC are the Maltese partners in this Community Initiative.

A core group made up of representatives of all the organisations taking part meets on a regular basis to plan the way forward and evaluate the developments. The training aspect of the project focuses on two workshops that, amongst other things, will show examples of good and bad practices of reconciliation in all countries participating, which in turn will contribute directly to the discussion on the subject.

NCPE, along with the other Maltese professionals from the media sector, participated in a number of meetings and workshops, where they were being exposed to good and bad practices vis-à-vis the gender portrayal in the media from the four countries taking part. During the months in between the workshops, the participants worked on developing a set of guidelines on the reconciliation of work and family life. These guidelines will be made public at the end of the project, in early 2006.

4. Facilitating Equality through Education

This project is funded under the closed call of the gender equality unit within DG EMPL in the EU [VP 2004/19]. The scope of this project is to correct the gender roles and stereotypes that form part of the formal education process, and that leads primary and secondary school students to aspire for work and private life roles influenced by their gender rather than their interests. This project targets policy-makers, teachers and students. Its objective is to sensitise the need of greater gender equality, as well as responsibility of men and fathers in carrying out a number of tasks that are still associated to women's/mother's traditional role. The trans-national partners in this project are Cyprus and Latvia, represented by the National Machinery for Women's Rights in Cyprus and the Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia. The Maltese partners include the Faculty of Education (University of Malta), and the Department of Curriculum Management within the Division of Education.

The project will analyse the current education policies to identify their strengths and weaknesses in relation to equality. It will then identify good practices and other positive measures that may be already correcting the gaps between the two genders in the education process and mainstream them to the policies of the other partners. It will also identify possible blocks that are hindering the full implementation of gender equal policies in the field of education.

Research

As an internal evaluation, this project aims to formulate a questionnaire to be carried out amongst primary and secondary students both in the initial stage and at a later stage after the publicity campaign. The questionnaire is going to assess the perceptions of the children regarding the roles of men and women as both in the domestic sphere as parents and in their professional careers.

Tenders

The following Tenders were issued during 2005:

Name of Contract
Employment contract for the engagement of a Project Coordinator for NCPE
Employment contract for the engagement of a Gender Analyst for NCPE
Employment contract for the engagement of a Researcher for NCPE
Service contract for the undertaking of a questionnaire for Research Purpose
Service contract for Publicity and Public Relations of NCPE "VP/2004/19 <i>'Facilitating Equality through Education'</i> " on Graphic & Web Developments
Service contract for the provision of accommodation, venues and refreshments for conferences and seminars for NCPE

Pedagogical Tools

A service provider is currently developing two websites for this project. One of the websites is restricted to the project partners whilst the other one is intended for the children. Other tools will target gender equality in all spheres of life including the domestic life and the participation in the labour market. Moreover this project entails also the production and printing of stationery, for example book marks, posters etc. that will be disseminated throughout an activity week due to be held at the end of next year.

Seminars

The project will also provide training seminars to current and prospective teachers on the principles of gender equality and work/life balance. Through the use of examples, the teachers will discuss gender issues that merit attention, and the need for the attentiveness to allow boys and girls to have equal access to all educational tools. Moreover, they will be sensitised to use gender-neutral language in their presentations of work and family responsibilities.

Trans-national Partnership

The first trans-national meeting was held in November 2005, where experts from the countries were brought together to produce policies which Malta, Cyprus and Latvia will publish at an EU level. These policies will then be transposed according to the social, cultural and political context of each partner country.

By the next trans-national meeting, due to be held in 2006, each partner must identify the national structures to implement the legal framework, identify the institutes that are researching in this area, create the links that could provide Network Channels, and identify the barriers in order to provide solutions. All the researched policies will be published and disseminated during the forth quarter of 2006 in a final report.

5. The Gender Gap in Science and Technology in Malta - Tackling the Issues: UNESCO project

In Malta, women scientists are under-represented in the key positions of scientific research. It is felt that the factors leading to this under-representation must be addressed as unutilized or under-employed qualified women and are a country's wasted investment. This is a national project and the local partners are NCPE, ETC and the Gender Issues Committee at the University of Malta.

Data Collation

The first part of this project will be the collection of data with respect to gender perspectives in science careers and the uptake of science courses by tertiary students. This will entail the building of a database on a national level collecting all available data including also job status, job mobility, present employment or otherwise of these persons, as well as data related to family responsibility. It is envisaged that the analysis of this database, will then uncover the underlying factors behind the under-representation of women in science in Malta.

Media and Promotion Campaign

Another part of this project will entail dissemination and a media campaign will be launched. This campaign will assist in publicising the benefits resulting from policies promoting equal opportunities. Moreover, it is envisaged that this campaign will also push forward the elimination of gender stereotypes for jobs associated with science. The aims of this campaign include:

- Attracting more girls/women into science and technology
- Identifying factors that would facilitate the retention of women in the science and technology field
- Enabling the progression of women in the area
- Attracting back the women experts in the field who due to various reasons had to leave

6. Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes

NCPE is one of the trans-national partners to this project which is led by the National Machinery for Women's Rights (Cyprus).

On similar lines to 'Facilitating Equality through Education', this project is aiming to correct stereotypes on the roles of men and women through education. Likewise, it is concentrating its efforts on creating a discussion in schools and specifically targets children aged five to sixteen. The intention of this project is to bring the change through a bottom up approach and therefore it will empower the children to write a script for a television programme portraying men and women equally sharing the burden of work and family responsibilities. The selected script will be screened on Cypriot television.

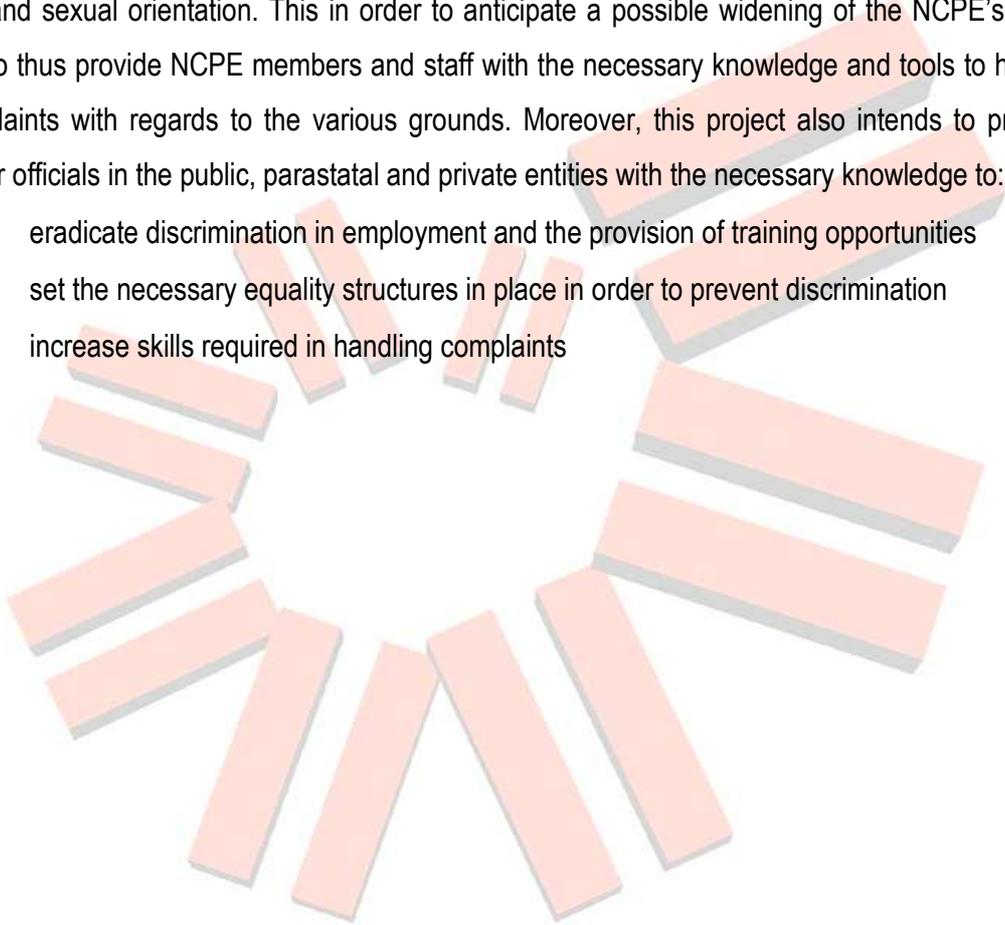
On a trans-national level, this project will be organising conferences in Malta, Greece, Italy and Cyprus to provide further awareness to the need to teach children the principle of gender equality and thus the equally important roles of fathers and mothers in the family and on the place of work. These conferences will also serve to bring together stakeholders from the different participating countries to further the dissemination of good practice.

NCPE

7. Capacity Building in the area of Multi-Ground Equality

During this year NCPE has submitted a project under the Twinning Light Initiative envisaged to provide training in regard to the area of multi-ground equality, and specifically in regard to the grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation. This in order to anticipate a possible widening of the NCPE's remit and to thus provide NCPE members and staff with the necessary knowledge and tools to handle complaints with regards to the various grounds. Moreover, this project also intends to provide senior officials in the public, parastatal and private entities with the necessary knowledge to:

- eradicate discrimination in employment and the provision of training opportunities
- set the necessary equality structures in place in order to prevent discrimination
- increase skills required in handling complaints



NCPE

Sexual Harassment - Code of Practice

In April 2005, the “Sexual Harassment - Code of Practice” was launched during a conference held specifically for employers and human resource managers.

The publication of this Code of Practice was an initiative of NCPE, following the substantial amount of complaints received regarding sexual harassment during 2004. The same complaints gave NCPE an insight of the general public's, including employers', outlook on sexual harassment, including perceptions as well as misconceptions in connection with this subject. Thus, the need was felt for a document which clearly defines what constitutes and also what does not constitute sexual harassment. The Sexual Harassment - Code of Practice provides an insight on how to deal with such occurrences, as well as a means to combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

This code also provides employers with a clear interpretation of what the law states in connection with this issue and the various ways in which sexual harassment may be perpetrated in a work environment. Moreover, the code of practice, also gives information regarding the procedure which needs to be undertaken by a victim of sexual harassment in order to present such a complaint and also the employer's liability in ensuring that the sexual harassment ends with immediate effect. Moreover, employers are given instructions on what measures need to be taken in order to make certain that such episodes stop, are not repeated and the injured party is not further victimised. Furthermore, in this code of practice, employers are given examples of preventive measures which can be taken in order to avoid the harassment from happening, examples of remedial measures that can be taken when sexual harassment occurs as well as examples of disciplinary measures that can be taken towards perpetrators of sexual harassment. The Sexual Harassment - Code of Practice also highlights the role of NCPE, as stipulated by the Equality for Men and Women Act - Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta. Finally, Addendum III of the Code of Practice provides employers with a Specimen Sexual Harassment Policy, which provides the groundwork for employers to implement such a policy and amend it according to the situation of the different working environments.

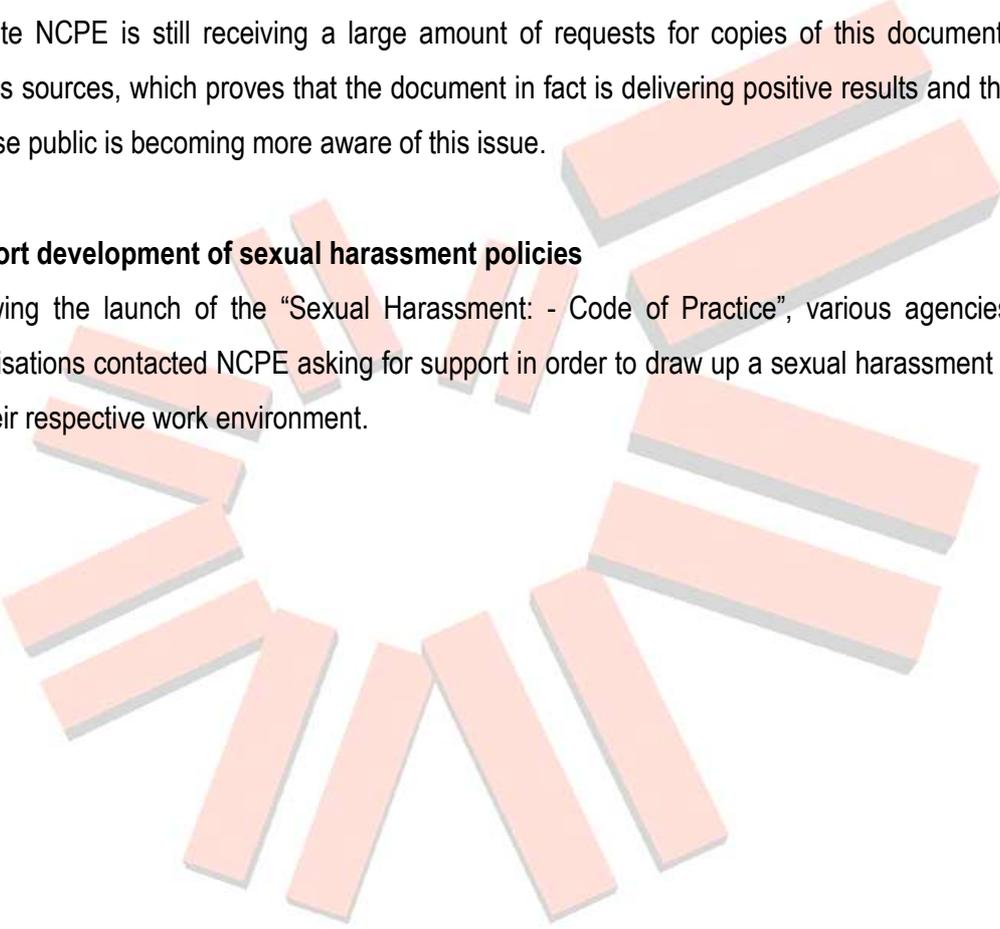
The Sexual Harassment - Code of Practice was co-sponsored by two of the major trade unions in Malta: the General Workers Union and the Union Haddiema Maghqudin. This action is seen as a

very positive sign that the issue of the elimination of sexual harassment from the workplace is high on the agenda of Malta's two largest unions. A substantial number of copies have been circulated, to agencies, to the public service and sector and to the general public. Various other organisations and entities including all factories within all industrial estates, all schools, banks, authorities, commissions, other companies and SMEs were also given copies.

To date NCPE is still receiving a large amount of requests for copies of this document from various sources, which proves that the document in fact is delivering positive results and that the Maltese public is becoming more aware of this issue.

Support development of sexual harassment policies

Following the launch of the "Sexual Harassment: - Code of Practice", various agencies and organisations contacted NCPE asking for support in order to draw up a sexual harassment policy for their respective work environment.

A large, faint watermark of the NCPE logo is centered on the page. The logo consists of a stylized sunburst or fan shape made of several rectangular bars radiating from a central point, positioned above the letters "NCPE" in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

NCPE

Gender Equality Clause

Following the original submission made in 2004, this year NCPE revised the gender equality clause in order to follow the layout of the General Conditions of the Department of Contracts. This clause is to be included in every tender document issued. This is being done in order to ensure that gender mainstreaming is promoted in all spheres, in line with the horizontal priority given to equality by the EU. Moreover, this is in accordance with the EU Directive 2002/73/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

The full text of the revised gender-equality clause is as follows:

Equality in Employment

- 1 The Service Provider shall ensure the application of the principle of gender equality in the carrying out of the Contract, and shall thus, inter alia, refrain from discriminating on the grounds of gender, marital status or family responsibilities. This entails that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on the grounds of gender in the conditions, including selection criteria, for access to all jobs or posts, whatever the sector or branch of activity, and to all levels of the occupational hierarchy. The principle of equal pay for the same work or work of equal value shall apply.*
- 2. In carrying out his/her obligations in pursuance of this contract, the Service Provider shall therefore be bound to encourage a balanced distribution of the sexes in the different occupational levels. Without prejudice to the above, the Service Provider must therefore clearly show the organigram of the company and the distribution of the personnel in the different occupational levels. He/she must prove that all due diligence has been taken by his/her organisation in order to promote equality and avoid discrimination.*

Participation in Conferences/Seminars/Fora

As the national authority responsible for gender equality in Malta, and in line with its terms of reference, NCPE is invited on numerous occasions to represent Malta, attend and contribute to relevant gender related international and EU conferences. These conferences also serve as extremely useful networking fora for liaising with other authorities and as well as assist in establishing contacts for good practise in the area of gender equality.

1. Conferences and Meetings Overseas

High Level Gender Meeting, 11 January, Luxembourg

NCPE was represented at this High Level Meeting on the Beijing Platform of Action, which focused on gender mainstreaming in the European Union states. This meeting dealt with the follow-up of the previous meeting regarding the Beijing + 10, the draft report on equality between men and women of the Spring Summit 2005, the Troika Meeting, the gender mainstreaming initiatives during the Luxembourg Presidency and forthcoming Presidencies and information on recent developments.

Gender and Media Conference 12 – 14 January, Latvia

A Maltese delegation made up of six persons, including NCPE representatives and representatives from various media entities, participated in the conference “Mass Media in (Re) distribution of Power” held in Riga, Latvia. The aim of the project was to promote gender balanced participation in the media at national and European level, and by challenging existing media stereotypes, in order to reach the situation whereby both genders become motivated and enjoy equal opportunities to participate in decision-making on media issues important for the whole society.

During the conference the Maltese delegation contributed through its numerous interventions and presentations. During the meetings it became clear that the Maltese legislation on gender equality is more advanced than that of the Baltic States and in fact many colleagues asked for further detail about the Maltese law, particularly with respect to the manner in which it regulates advertising.

EU Member States Gender Meeting, 18 January, Brussels [DG Development]

The Executive Director, NCPE, attended this meeting, during which information was given regarding the progress made during the last decade and the remaining challenges to fulfill the Beijing goals. The agenda of this meeting focused on two main areas: The way forward for EU strategies on gender equality in development cooperation; and Reinforcing the Beijing + 10 Agenda in the preparation for the MDG Summit. Dr Fransen highlighted that one of the main challenges for the EU is to define a collective European Union (EU) vision and to translate it into action shared by the EC and the Member States. The main aim is to enable the EU to take on a leadership role in the achievement towards the goal of gender equality.

EU Ministerial Conference, 4 February, Luxembourg

This Conference was attended by a delegation, lead by the Hon Minister Ms Cristina and also included a representative of NCPE. It focused on the draft of the Beijing +10 common declaration regarding the institutional mechanisms, methods and tools for gender equality. Areas addressed in this conference included:

- the positive affirmation of Ministers' position to the Beijing +10;
- the importance of the role of men and fathers in mainstreaming equality;
- the role of women in resolving conflict and promoting peace;
- necessity for the EU to gender mainstream all policies;
- change in law from "promotion of equality" to "ensuring full equality in practice";
- implementation of gender mainstreaming through of EU funds.

EQUAL Mainstreaming Conference 'Free Movement of Good Ideas', 25-26 February, Warsaw , Poland

Three representatives of NCPE, including the Commissioner, formed part of the 12-person Maltese delegation that attended this conference, with the subject 'Free Movement of Good Ideas'. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of good practices tested under EQUAL. New approaches and models to prevent unemployment, the integration of disadvantaged groups and promotion of social integration were amongst the issues that were discussed during this conference. This conference was an opportunity for policy makers, policy advisors and implementing bodies to become aware of good practices tested under EQUAL, which can help and adapt policies and practices. Participants discussed the relevance and integration of good practice in policy at local, regional, national and European levels.

49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (Beijing +10) – 2-4 March, New York

The NCPE Executive Director was the Maltese representative in the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Malta together with other countries reaffirmed their position regarding the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a means to achieve gender equality and to fully commit themselves for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They also discussed policies emanating from the Spring Council objectives in order to increase employment as a means to challenge an ageing society and to provide adequate pensions for women and men.

European Commission Project Capacity Building Civil Society_Dealing With Anti-Discrimination (Vt/2004/45) Programme Training_The Trainers Sessions 21-22 March, Istanbul, Turkey

This is a project co-ordinated in Malta by The Faculty of Law, University of Malta. NCPE representatives formed part of a delegation of 6 Maltese experts working in the field of equality and non-discrimination who attended these training sessions. The aim of the seminars was to provide the participants of each delegation with the knowledge and skills required to train NGOs on the EU Equality Directives – 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC.

26th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men: 23rd May, Brussels

The Commissioner attended this meeting in Brussels during which various issues were tackled including:

- the reports from Working Groups such as the working group on anti-discrimination and Gender Equality, to which Malta formed part of the core working group;
- information from the Commission such as the Gender Institute;
- the recasting of gender equality directives;
- the preparation of a Commission Communication on gender equality;
- the Commission's green paper on demographic change;
- the follow-up on gender budgeting and reform of the structural funds.

Convocation of the 32nd Meeting of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG): 8-10th June, Strasbourg, France

During this meeting, the draft Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings was discussed. The meeting highlighted activities in the field of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, follow-up to the recommendation on the protection of women against violence, activities in gender mainstreaming and information of the Council of Europe activities' in the field of equality between women and men. The Executive Director represented NCPE during this meeting.

Gender Equality: A Key to Change: 9-10th June, Madrid, Spain

This two-day conference focused on the need to further the gender mainstreaming agenda and presented a number of examples of good practices in the field of gender equality. Prominence was also given to examples of effective EQUAL projects and innovative ideas that have left their impact in their respective country and across Europe.

“Mainstreaming diversity: opening the debate with the whole of society” Conference: 27-28th June, Luxembourg

The Commissioner attended this meeting on the 27th June. The opening session of this meeting was presented by Christiane Martin, Government Commissioner for Foreigners, Marie-Josée Jacobs, Minister for Family and Integration in Luxembourg, Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Claude Moraes from the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup of the European Parliament. The workshops focused on:

- (1) non discrimination and integration: a means to accelerate integration efforts?
- (2) Involving the regional/ local authorities,
- (3) the media: an active role in the fight against discrimination?
- (4) Young people as actors in the fight against discrimination.

On the 28th June 2005 there were two round table discussions on Mainstreaming Diversity and Multiple Discrimination.

11th Meeting of the Committee set up to Implement the Programme Relating to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005) 6th July, Brussels

The Commissioner attended the Programme Committee meeting on July 6th, 2005. Points tackled during the meeting mainly focused on: the Implementation of the Work Programme 2005 and Work Programme 2006, and on the External evaluation of the Programme and the Framework Strategy.

'Transposition of Directive 2002/73 on the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment for Men and Women' – Meeting of Governmental Experts 11th July, Brussels, Belgium

The Executive Director represented NCPE during this meeting for governmental representatives, which discussed in detail the transposition of Directive 2002/73/EC regarding the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women. The meeting also discussed the salient issues of the Directive, in particular vis-à-vis equality bodies, right of associations to engage on behalf or in support of complainants, obligations relating to social dialogue, and dialogue with non-governmental organisations, compensation and reparation. In view of the equality bodies discussion, Malta explained the process of mediation in the law, while in regards to the obligations relating to social dialogue discussion, Malta mentioned local developments such as the issuing of the *Sexual Harassment: a Code of Practice* document as an example of social dialogue with the Public Sector, Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.

Conference "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations": 12th July, Brussels, Belgium

The aim of this Conference was to explore answers to the issues raised in the Green Paper. A political round table discussion was held with four different workshops which focused on work-life balance, active ageing, integration of migrants and birth rate as a matter of public concern. The debate focused on the policy responses that are needed in areas such as family policy, work life balance, active ageing, migration and integration and the role of the EU to allow our societies to cope with demographic change in a successful way.

High Level Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming 30th September, London, UK

The general discussion during this meeting focused on the UK Presidency and the subsequent ones. The UK Presidency has focused on the fact that they believe that 'justice is achieved

through economic independence' and as such was chosen as the central theme in the Ministerial Meeting held in Birmingham in November.

'What Works for Women: meeting the challenges, sharing the solutions', Birmingham

This conference highlighted examples of good practice of what works for women from around the EU, and the developing world, and discussed how such examples can help us to achieve both social and economic objectives, including gender equality. Furthermore, it discussed the situation of women in the EU member states and looked at how women can be empowered further to reach full equality in the workplace.

Euromed Women's Conference Barcelona + 10, Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona, 24th-25th November 2005

The goal of this conference was to promote the active role of women in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to emphasize the need to introduce the gender perspective with defining Euro-Mediterranean policies.

This conference had various targets including the establishment of the Women's Forum to ensure women's participation in the guidance of Euromed policies, and the adoption of a series of conclusions at the end of the gathering that will be presented as a contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Gender Equality being organised by the European Commission in 2006.

2. Local Conferences and Meetings

NCPE Meetings

The Commission continued to meet on a regular basis. During 2005, a total of 10 meetings were held at the premises of NCPE. Duties emanating from meeting were dealt with accordingly.

Apart from these, the Complaints Sub-Committee also met on a regular basis in order to discuss new and pending complaints, to seek information from persons regarding specific complaints as well as to decide on the best ways forward to conclude or suggest changes depending on the complaints received.

In addition meetings for the executive staff were held on a regular basis throughout the year.

“Tred Unions u l-Gender f'Malta: Programm ta' riflessjoni ghal min jahdem ma', u ghal haddiema nisa” 13-14 January, Malta

An NCPE representative attended this seminar organised by ETC. Prof G Baldacchino addressed this seminar, during which trade unions and other local entities active in the field of gender equality were invited to discuss the current state of affairs with regards to the participation of female workers in the labour market and their organisation in trade unions. In addition to NCPE, representatives from the GWU, UHM, UCC, MUMN, MUT, and the ETC also participated in the seminar. These representatives took part in workshops in which, amongst other issues, discussions were held regarding the reasons why female worker participation in trade unions in Malta is still relatively low. The aim of the workshops was to identify possible action, which could be taken up in order to address this problem.

Gender and IT Conference, MCST, 21 January

The Gender and IT Conference was organised by ETC, MFSS and NCPE and was attended by more than 50 participants. Dr Jane Millar, who was one of the main speakers, gave an excellent presentation on the UK experience. An ETC representative made a presentation which brought to light the employer's perspective on this issue. The NCPE representative, stressed the importance of using gender inclusive advert in the promotion of software and other computer related material.

Work Life Balance Seminar – NSO Open day, 27 January

The Executive Director made a presentation entitled ‘Work/life Balance is Everybody's Issue’ during the Work Life Balance Seminar organised by the National Statistics Office. A discussion ensued on which various contrasting viewpoints were raised with respect to the provision of family-friendly measures.

Launch of the Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations [MCWO], 28 January

The Commissioner was invited to address the launch of a new umbrella NGO, the Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCWO). The positive aspect about this organisation is that several NGOs, such as UHM, GWU MAS, Maltacom female employees, Soroptimist International and others, have come together to be Malta's affiliated partner with the European Women's Lobby.

NCPE 1st Anniversary Conference – 18th February, New Dolmen Hotel

NCPE organised a First Anniversary Conference in order to outline the work and achievement of the Commission during 2004 and to present its strategies for 2005.

For this conference, NCPE invited various government entities, private companies, non-government organisations, women's organisations, trade unions, local councils, media organisations, church authorities, banks and other entities.

The Commissioner, opened the conference while the Executive Director presented the Annual Report. She also outlined the set-up of NCPE, the number of complaints received from various sources and the complaints procedure. She also mentioned various issues being addressed by NCPE, including offensive advertising, sexual harassment, employment conditions, the various requests for information received, gender equality in the EU context and also highlighted the various projects undertaken that are co-funded by the EU.

A key note address was delivered by Dame Joan Harbison, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. Her trip to Malta was sponsored by the British High Commission. She delivered a presentation on 'Gender and Equality: the Northern Irish Experience'. Presentations on 'Gender Issues in Employment and Collective Agreements' were delivered by Dr. Charmaine Grech (GWU) and Mr Pierre Fava (MEA). Dr Brenda Murphy (UOM) and Ms Joanna Spiteri (Broadcasting Authority) delivered presentations on 'Gender Issues in the Media'.

Three workshops were organised where participants discussed issues regarding:

- NCPE Complaints and Procedures
- Employment and Collective Agreements
- Media and Advertising

Towards the final part of the conference, the results from workshops were presented by the workshops' Chairpersons, which were followed by the conclusion of the conference.

Gender and Science Committee Meeting - 4th February

The NCPE Commissioner chaired the first meeting of the Gender and Science Committee and directed the group towards forming a list of objectives. The Committee decided to hold regular meetings and communicate frequently in order to be more effective in reaching their objectives.

MCESD Civil Society Committee meeting on Pensions - 7th February

MCESD held a meeting regarding the White Paper 'Pensions: Adequate and Sustainable' published by the Pensions Working Group. An NCPE representative took up the task of going through, the White Paper and highlighting any issues of relevance in order to present these comments, on behalf of NCPE, to the relevant authorities.

International Women's Day - 8 March

As part of the activities of International Women's Day, the NCPE held meetings with various authorities of Malta, including the President of the Republic, the leaders of the three main political leaders and the Archbishop. The Commission also took this occasion to present the first NCPE annual report.

Employment Issues – EU Development and Implications – Malta Employers' Association, 30 March

The Executive Director, informed the participants regarding the functions and role of NCPE according to the Equality for Men and Women Act. Furthermore, the Executive Director also outlined the Commission's set-up and gave information regarding the existing provisions on employment emanating from the Equality for Men and Women Act and the Employment and Industrial Relations Act.

Women and the Pension Reform – How will it affect you? – Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCW), 30th March

An NCPE representative attended the above-mentioned seminar during which the proposed pension reform was looked at from a gender perspective. This seminar provided information and opened discussions regarding the proposed reforms to the Pension System and their impact on women.

Equality Discussion at Mriehel Junior Lyceum Girls' School: 6th April

The Executive Director was invited to contribute to a forty-minute equality discussion at the Mriehel Girls' School between girls from this same school and boys from another secondary school. It was interesting to note that while the girls were more open to the new challenges that life will be presenting them with, the boys were more set in the old stereotyped way of clear cut segregation between male and female roles. However, by the end of the discussion, it was clear that all participants were questioning the status quo.

“Meeting the Challenges of Racism and Xenophobia”: 14th April

Two NCPE representatives attended this conference, which was organised by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the Jesuit Faith and Justice Centre (CFJ). The goal of this conference was to raise awareness and understanding of international and local manifestations of racism and xenophobia, as well as to propose specific policy measures to combat them. The conference provided some of the information and instruments necessary to establish and implement policies and action plans to combat racism and xenophobia. It also allowed participating organizations and individuals to contribute to the fostering of a dialogue which underlines human dignity, tolerance and respect for diversity.

“Sexual Harassment at the Workplace: What the employer needs to know”: 27th April

During this seminar, the NCPE’s Sexual Harassment: a Code of Practice manual was launched officially. This seminar was organised jointly by FHRD and NCPE, and was directed specifically at employers and human resource managers. The seminar highlighted the measures to be taken to prevent, eliminate and deal with sexual harassment problems at the workplace. The necessity for the implementation of a sexual harassment policy was highlighted to all participants, also in view of the provisions in Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act. The launched manual also provides a specimen policy of this nature, in order to further aid employers in the implementation of the said policy, as well as to assist in the sensitization of their respective work environment to issues related to sexual harassment.

“Sexual Harassment: A Code of Practice” - presentations to UOM, OPM and MFSA

The Executive Director presented the Sexual Harassment - a Code of Practice to three further entities as follows:

- the Manual was presented at the University of Malta, where the salient points of the document were highlighted and sexual harassment issues were discussed with B. Communications students.
- the Manual was presented at the Staff Development Organisation, where again sexual harassment issues were discussed with employees of the Office of the Prime Minister and the contents of the manual were outlined.
- at Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA), where again the Manual was presented, this time to heads and deputies of MFSA.

EQUAL Seminar: 23rd May

Two NCPE representatives, have attended a seminar regarding the 2nd Round of 'EQUAL', which was organised by the EU Affairs Unit at MFSS in conjunction with the French and German National Support Structures. The French and German representatives presented case studies of good projects that they have witnessed during the 1st Round of EQUAL. The Maltese EQUAL projects of Round 2 were also presented. The EQUAL Project 'Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment' was presented by a representative of NCPE.

“Working for an Inclusive Society” Le Meridien Phoenicia, 15th September

Members of NCPE attended this conference organised by the EDRC that regarded the area of equality in general, based on the principles and grounds of protection endorsed by the European Union. Prof Mark Bell, Prof Anthony Kerr, Prof Sacha Prechal, Ms Isabelle Rorive, Mr Richard Whittle, and Ms Gay Moon presented papers regarding various topics ranging from the EU's Framework Strategy, the legislative and judicial experience of Ireland, achievements and trends in the EU, racial and religious discrimination, the EU disability policy, and the enforcement of Equality Directives.

Social Affairs Committee Meeting, MFSS 4th October 2005

The Executive Director was invited to the Social Affairs Committee to scrutinise three EU documents concerning the MFSS, including a document entitled *Memorandum on a Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Equality between Women and Men, 2005 (COM (2005) 44 Final)*.

Ethical Business Power: Win-win with Corporate Social Responsibility, InterContinental Malta, St Julians, 11th October 2005

This conference discussed the integration of corporate social responsibility measures in the organisational strategies of businesses. It discussed the aspect of equality, and how diversity can actually be profitable for business. Presentations on good practice models of CSR were made by a number of speakers and were followed by a discussion.

'Gender Equality' GWU Seminar 17th October 2005

NCPE participated in this seminar which tackled gender equality in employment and training. During this seminar an NCPE representative presented a paper entitled 'Gender Equality - the Implementation of the Directive'.

'Competitiveness and the Lisbon Agenda – A Small-States Perspective' Conference'

Foundation of International Studies, Valletta, 18th-19th October 2005

This conference discussed the Lisbon Agenda, and brought together the perspective of the government, the business community, trade unions and civil society. It tackled several subject matters including the role of government in promoting competitiveness; the fostering of entrepreneurship and the promotion of investment; productivity and the promotion of employment; and social cohesion, environmental protection and competitiveness.

Gender Equality Training for Social Workers *Centru Hidma Socjali 9th November*

Following an invitation by the Social Workers' Union, the Executive Director provided a session of training regarding the principle of gender equality, and explained how social workers can better incorporate this principle in their daily duties.

'Gender and the Digital Divide' Seminar, CHOGM People's Forum *Mediterranean*

Conference Centre, Valletta, 21st November 2005

An NCPE representative attended this seminar regarding gender and the digital divide which was organised as part of the CHOGM People's Forum. It discussed the digital divide in the field of research, the European Union and Malta in relation to the gender balance, and sought to find solutions to how the divide can be narrowed.

NCPE

Media Input

1. Press Releases

International Women's Day 2005: Presentation of the Annual Report 2004 (8th March)

The NCPE issued a press release in the occasion of the presentation of the Annual Report 2004 to the Prime Minister on Women's Day. The Commissioner underlined the set-up of NCPE as well as the functions of the NCPE emanating from the Equality for Men and Women Act. She highlighted also the fact that NCPE identified a Five Stranded Framework of Priorities for Action for the 2004-2006, which are –

- raising public awareness of NCPE roles and information about sexual harassment laws,
- appointing procedures and guidelines for handling complaints and an adjudicating board to handle complaints,
- liaising and networking with other commissions, authorities and NGOs,
- undertaking a feasibility study on the implication of introducing targets/quotas with respect to gender, and
- monitoring existing legislation and collective agreements with respect to gender streamlining laws.

Setting Up of a Gender and Science Sub-Committee (25th April)

Due to the small number of women professing in the field of science and scientific research, NCPE deemed important the setting up of a Gender and Science sub-committee to address the gender imbalance in this field. This sub-committee is composed of members coming from a broad spectrum of backgrounds, whose objective will be to tackle the “country’s hidden investment that from the economic point of view must not go wasted”, and thus ensure that unutilized and under-employed qualified women are conferred the position and role that they deserve. Thus, Malta’s position as a competitive force in the European Research Area will be reinforced.

Adverts for Vacancies (9 June)

In view of the fact that for over a year NCPE had drawn the attention of all Editors on the provisions of Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act, in connection with gender equality in the advertisement of vacancies for employment, the Commission issued a press release in order

to highlight yet again these provisions. In this press release, NCPE expressed gratitude towards the Editors of all local newspapers for their cooperation with NCPE, and again reaffirm the utmost importance of adhering to the law both vis-à-vis the text as well as with regards to any accompanying images of job vacancy descriptions. In this press release, the Commission also emphasized the fact that considering the time that elapsed since the coming into force of the Equality for Men and Women Act, all concerned were by then fully aware that discriminatory advertising was not acceptable. Therefore, in this press release, NCPE notified all concerned that as from the date of the press release onwards, NCPE was going to proceed by the virtue of the powers conferred to it by law.

2. TV and Radio Appearances

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality participated in various programmes including Sellili, Mona Lisa, Donne, Bondiplus, 22 am, Qalb in-Nies, Sejjahtli and Xarabank as well as radio programmes on RTK, including Inwar and Radju Malta 1. Basically, during all programmes the role and the work of the NCPE was discussed. Moreover, NCPE also highlighted the process of presenting a complaint to NCPE, as well as gave information regarding the provisions of Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act especially regarding sexual harassment, equal opportunities in employment and discriminatory advertising.

3. Articles in Newspapers

‘Achieving gender-balanced representation in decision-making positions’ – The Malta Independent, 13th April 2005.

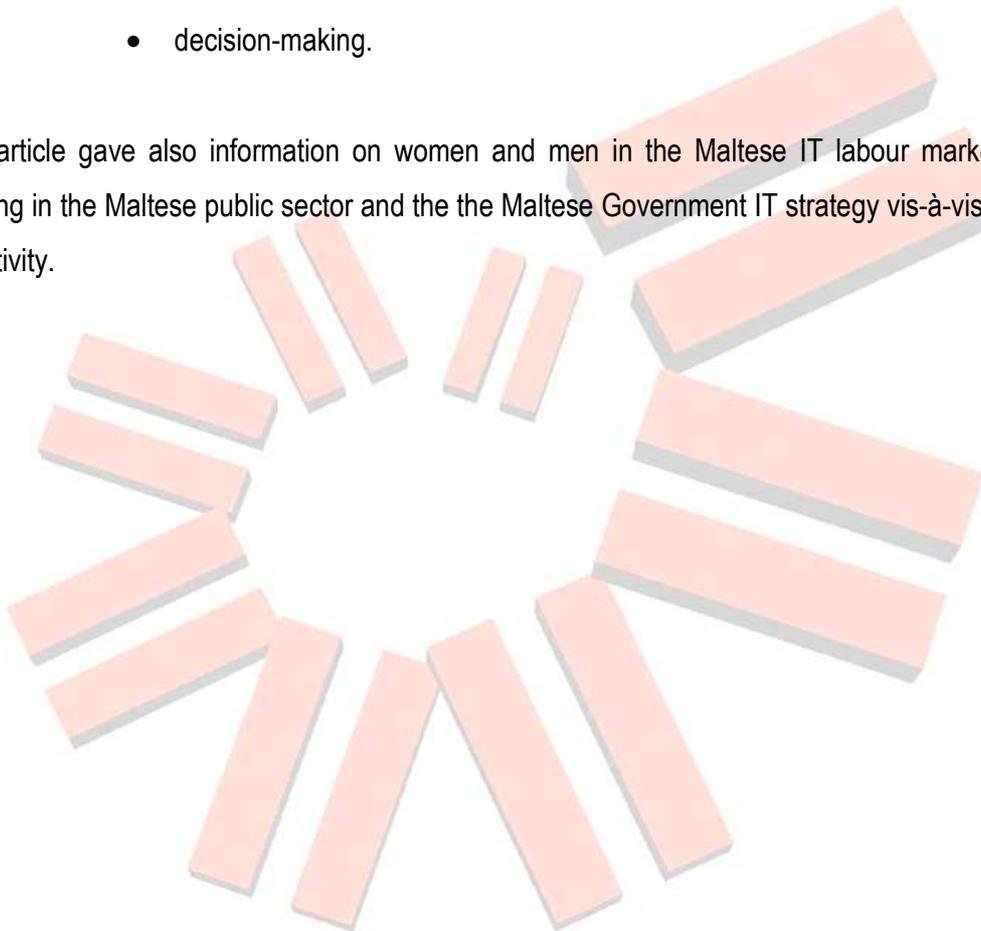
This article discussed quotas and presented various arguments both in favour as well as against quotas. Furthermore, the need for increasing the number of women in decision-making posts was also tackled and examples of good practices from various EU countries were given in this regard. Part of the article also focused on strategies to improve the position of women within the political sphere. In view of this, the article also explored the views of each of the three main political parties in Malta with respect to quotas in order to achieve gender equality.

Gender and Information Communication Technology – The Malta Independent, 15th June 2005

This article focused on the gender digital divide in terms of:

- female access to the internet
- women in the IT labour market
- decision-making.

This article gave also information on women and men in the Maltese IT labour market, teleworking in the Maltese public sector and the the Maltese Government IT strategy vis-à-vis gender sensitivity.



NCPE

Training of NCPE Staff

Ongoing training of the executive staff at NCPE is essential in order to ensure that they are being provided with updated skills pertaining to gender policy and antidiscrimination requirements. This training is being encouraged and provided in a number of ways – both as a group effort as well as ongoing individual training in more formalised courses.

Training Programme on Gender Equality - Staff Development Organisation and the Italian Department of Community Policies

This training programme, which was facilitated by Mr Corrado Sesselego, a professional researcher and co-ordinator was held on 11th and 12th April 2005. All members of NCPE attended this training session. The topics tackled during this training included:

- General principles guiding EU gender equality policy
- The Lisbon Criteria for male and female employment
- EU gender equality directives: an overview
- Gender equality in employment and public relations
- Loss of skills with the current males and females employment patterns
- Italian success stories - practical methods to address employment gender
- Gender pay gaps
- Gender portrayal and the principle of equality in the media
- Good and bad examples of gender portrayal - visual, audio and print media

Multi-ground Training: Malta - Netherlands Partnership

This training aimed at disseminating information to all NCPE staff about the obligations set out in Directive 2000/43/EC and Directive 2000/78/EC, which is about equal treatment of persons irrespective of gender, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, and religion or belief and disability. During this training various issues regarding different types of discrimination were highlighted and discussions were held accordingly. This training aimed at ensuring that NCPE staff is sensitised to the issues listed above through various exercises and workshops performed during this training.

EU Directives and Gender Mainstreaming

The Gender Liaison Officer delivered this training to all members of NCPE staff, in which she explained the provisions found in EU Directives more specifically about EU Directive 2002/73/EC. During this session, a few of the definitions found in this directive were highlighted, namely the definition of direct and indirect discrimination, the definition of harassment and sexual harassment and the definition of victimisation. The Gender Liaison Officer also drew attention to issues like bullying etc. which are health and safety issues. Moreover, the new directive also provides for the protection of witnesses, more emphasis on gender mainstreaming and dialogue in this respect with the social partners as well as monitoring of workplace practices, collective agreements and the promotion of examples of good practices.

European Structural Funds

A number of training sessions were organised by the SDO and Managing Authority regarding the European Structural Funds (ESF). These included the Structural Funds Database and the E.U. Funding 2007 - 2013. Two members from the NCPE staff attended the two above-mentioned courses held on the 30th March and on the 25th and 26th April 2005.

- **Structural Funds Database, Managing Authority**

The European Social Fund Structuring Programme focused on the administrative side of the ESF project. These included training on the standard filing procedure, the processing of invoices and the running including filling up and updating of the Structural Fund Database.

- **EU Funding 2007 - 2013**

The training programme EU Funding 2007 - 2013 focused on possible future EU projects that can be funded by the ESF programme during the period of 2007 - 2013.

Training the Trainers Sessions - 21- 22 March, Istanbul

Two members of NCPE staff attended the Training the Trainers Session, which focused on the implications of EU Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC. This training aimed at providing the necessary skills for the provision of a similar "Train the Trainers" Seminar in Malta. (see also page 48).

Diploma (Social Studies) Gender and Development

A member of NCPE staff is currently following the second and final year of the Diploma in Social Studies (Gender & Development). This Diploma helps to create a deeper and more critical awareness of the role and participation of women and men at home, work and society. It also enables participants to comprehend issues related to gender and in/equality of opportunity as well as to promote self-assertion presentation and communication skills amongst participants. The Diploma course includes amongst other subjects:

- Political Science and Gender
- Sociology of Gender
- Economics and Gender
- Psychology of Gender
- Gender and Health
- Gender, Law and Social Policy
- Gender, Education and Training
- Gender, Work and the Economy

Cambridge International College (CIC) Diploma in Office Management/Administration

A member of staff of NCPE has followed the CIC Diploma in Office Management/Administration. This diploma mainly highlighted the importance of office administration for the smooth running of the entire enterprise of which it is part. The main topics dealt with in this course included:

- The functions of the office and of its managers/administrators, activities; technical and human aspects.
- Office environment, commerce and industry, organisational structure. Organisation & Movement studies.
- Office location, layouts and design; features of the working environment, furniture, furnishings, decor, lighting, ventilation, temperature.
- Office activities and responsibilities; information, records, communications.
- Office machines and equipment, computers, word processors, IT, communication systems, filing systems.
- Accident prevention, noise and hazard reduction, health and safety, security.

- Recruiting, inducting, training, controlling, grading, ranking, remunerating, counselling office personnel.
- Oral and written communications, telecommunications, incoming and outgoing mail.
- The reception, receptionists, duties, image and behaviour.
- Forms and business documents, business letters, memoranda, reports.
- Word processing, desk top publishing, computers and computerisation, stationery and printing.
- Financial matters, basic accounting, books of accounts, cashiering, budgets, budgetary control.

Towards Enhanced Customer Relations

Another member of the NCPE followed the course in caption, organized by the Staff Development Organisation (SDO). This course was to enable participants to communicate an attitude of 'quality service' and to provide the skills necessary to create the right impression and show the customers that they really matter. Managing customer complaints and effective suggestive selling were also tackled during this course.

NCPE

Environmental Initiatives

Following Government's commitment to implement eco-friendly initiatives within Departments and Entities, during this year, NCPE has given priority to these issues. In fact, a member of NCPE staff was appointed as Green Leader, with the duty of creating environmental awareness within the organisation. Moreover, according to guidelines given by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in this regard, the Green Leader's responsibilities include:

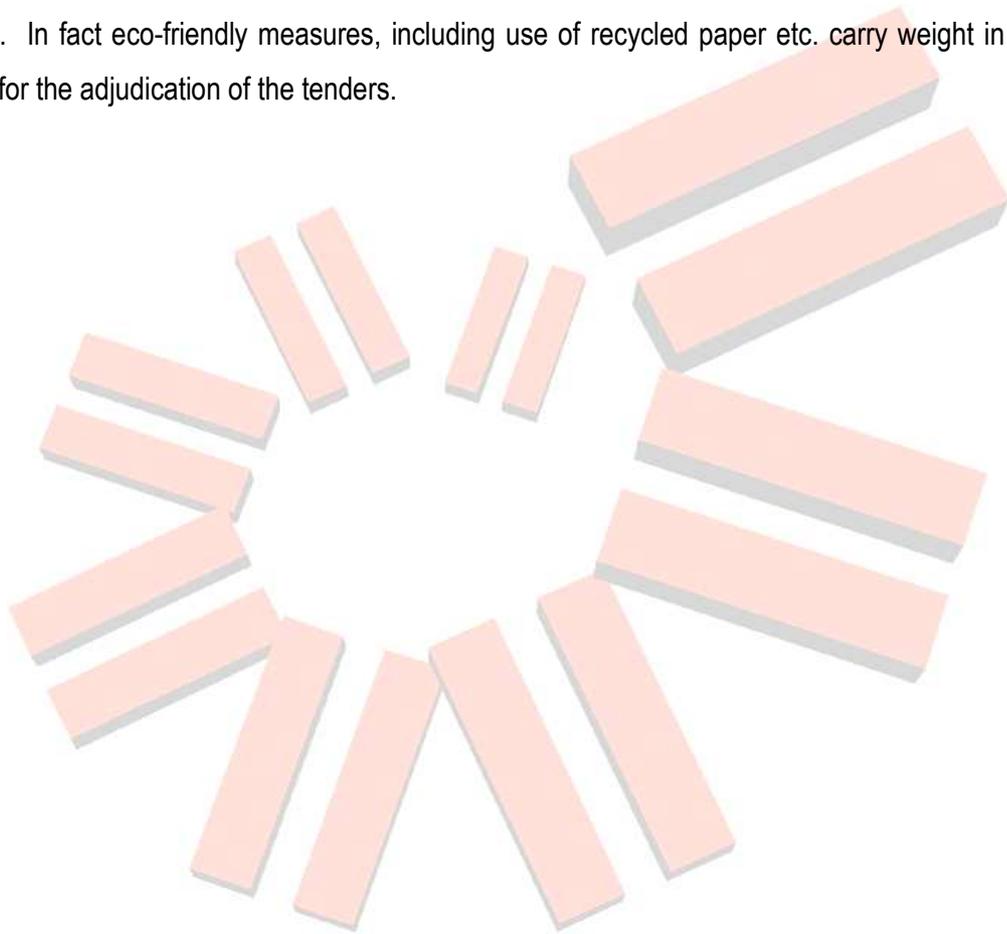
1. to raise awareness of environmentally damaging practices and to promote alternative eco-friendly behaviour;
2. to gather data regarding environmentally-related practices such as paper and energy use;
3. to develop a plan of action to reduce consumption and reuse or recycle materials with measurable goals and a feasible timeframe.

NCPE has sought to implement the above through the introduction of various eco-friendly measures including:

1. Paper:
 - A4 papers printed on both sides
 - Re-use of envelopes
 - Various stationery items used by NCPE are made of recycled material for example: official letterheads
 - Used paper, newspapers and magazines are sent for recycling
2. Other measures:
 - the use of waste separation bins
 - used batteries are put in a specific bin and sent to be correctly disposed of
 - empty ink cartridges and toners are sent for recycling
 - the use of biodegradable bags
 - measures are taken for the reduction of electricity consumption as much as possible

NCPE interacts regularly with WasteServ, in order to implement the above measures. A collection day, each month is scheduled so that WasteServ staff pick up the waste that is to be taken for recycling.

Moreover, NCPE ensures that environment protection is also catered for in the departmental tenders. In fact eco-friendly measures, including use of recycled paper etc. carry weight in the criteria for the adjudication of the tenders.

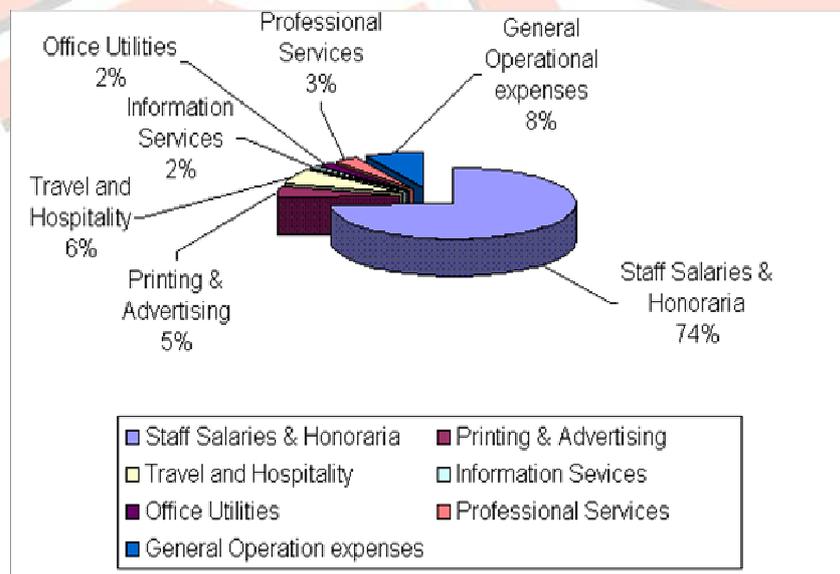


NCPE

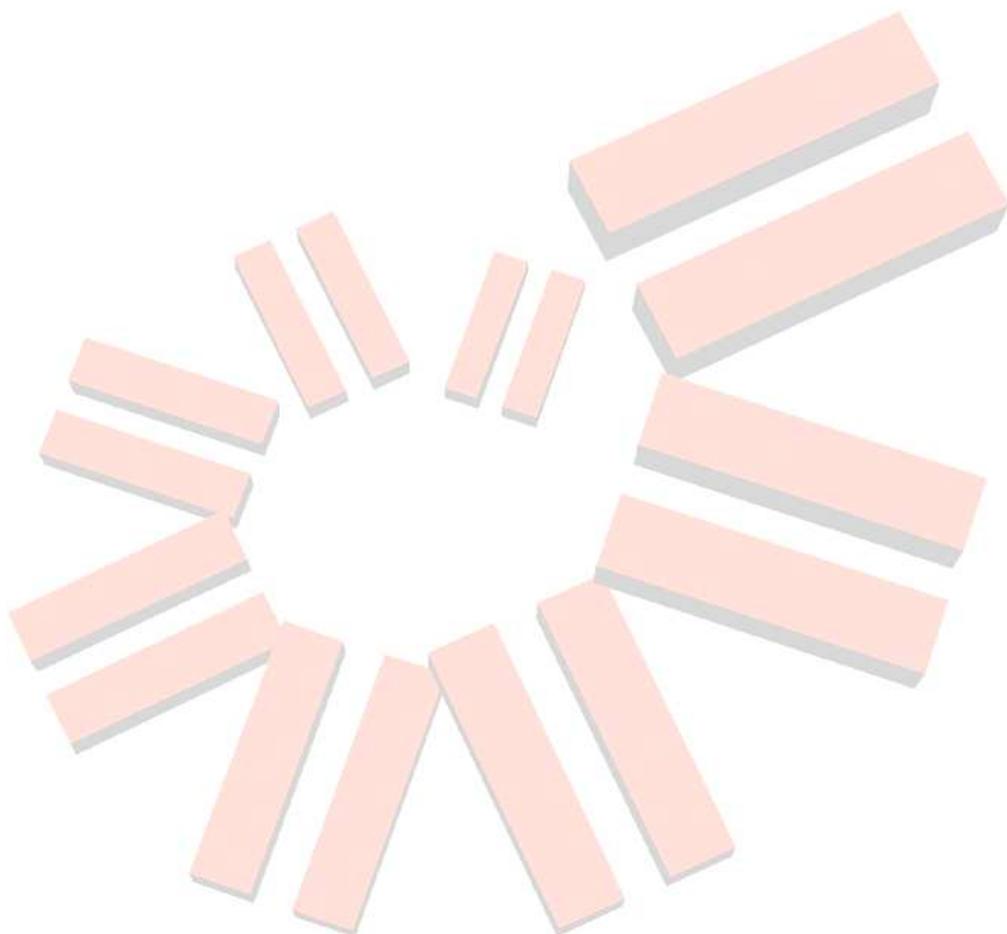
Financial Overview

Government's allocation to the Commission was retained at Lm75,000 during the year under review. Primarily this budget allocation is devoted to cover staff salaries and honoraria. The remaining funds cover the normal operational expenses associated with similar operations. Below is a graphic representation of the main costs of the Commission expressed as a percentage of total costs.

	LM
Staff Salaries & Honoraria	44,298
Printing & Advertising	3,142
Travel and Hospitality	3,879
Information Services	928
Office Utilities	1,158
Professional Services	1,725
General Operational expenses	4,722



The expenditure reported for the operational period under review was in line with what had been budgeted, this was only attainable through the strict controls exercised by management, although it is pertinent to note that the financial constraints place a limit on the output of the Commission.



NCPE

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