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National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

2006

MESSAGE

The establishment of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality has ensured that gender issues are now firmly at the forefront of national policy-making. The Maltese Government is committed towards mainstreaming gender equality and meeting the demands placed on the country by European standards and, most importantly, by Maltese society itself.

This third annual report highlights the Commission's endeavours throughout the past year; a year characterised by work on numerous EU funded projects, together with other initiatives promoted by the Commission at the local level. Awareness-raising and information, always an important dimension of the Commission's work, have been steadily disseminated across all levels of Maltese society, with target groups ranging from children to adults, employees in the public and private sector, employers, ministries and the general public.

The concept of gender mainstreaming entails that the equal opportunities factor is included in the design, application, analysis, and monitoring of all policies, measures and actions undertaken. NCPE has, over the past three years, developed a comprehensive framework of measures in the promotion of gender mainstreaming and social cohesion. Networking and cooperation with international and national inter-agency cooperation has been widened, with the result that coordination of input in such areas as social inclusion, employment, health, social protection and education amongst others, is already in place.

This year also witnessed some significant steps taken by Government in this area. The recent Budgetary measures are testimony of the commitment of the Government for the achievement of genuinely equality-based democracy. Family-friendly measures previously applicable only to the civil service have now been extended to public sector employees, thus reaching a further 13,000 families. This reform was a major breakthrough in the reconciliation of familial and professional responsibility. Furthermore, tax incentives and reductions, and measures towards

entrepreneurship are instrumental in the facilitation of female representation in the economic sector.

There are still many tough challenges ahead, yet NCPE accepts them with confidence and poise, keeping in mind that through the achievement of gender equality, both men and women, as well as families and society in its entirety will benefit. Malta is a society which is ripe for progress. Ultimately what women want is what men want. Both of them want dignity and respect.

Dolores Cristina
Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity
February 2007

FOREWORD

Equality should be experienced and not just talked about it. Legislation alone will not change reality, but it is essential to stimulate change. It is the different audiences and actors that make legislation work and overcome institutional discrimination – it is the task not only of equality bodies, but also of NGOs, legislators, business partners, trade unions, and legal staff. As can be seen from this extensive annual report, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women (NCPE) is working hard to become a promoter of change in Maltese society, but it cannot do so alone – it is working closely, in ongoing process, in conjunction with various partners in order to reach its objectives.

NCPE, for its first term 2004-2006, agreed to focus its policies on practical actions in order to ensure that the execution of its mandate is built on solid foundations. 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. The importance of good practice has been highlighted through the various projects that are now underway and which are slowly changing public attitudes and behaviour.

Our priorities for 2006-2008 will consolidate the results of the research projects and policies we are undertaking and streamline our initiatives. We are now focussing on outcomes and positive action programmes, often working at a local level: schools, local councils, and with the private and public sector.

It is expected that NCPE will shortly take on the role of monitoring authority with respect to other grounds of discrimination, besides gender. In this regards, the NCPE Commission has agreed that the priorities for the next two years should include:

- **An audit of present situation, amendment of laws and implementation of an inclusion policy across all grounds.**

This will assess the situation in Malta with respect to discrimination on grounds of gender, and eventually other grounds, assessing Maltese legislation and implementation of an inclusion policy across all grounds in all areas of decision making, be it monetary, infrastructure, employment, health, education, and environment.

- **Capacity building of NCPE**

NCPE's work is growing fast and more staff will be needed to undertake the work being envisaged. The legal arm of NCPE needs to be strengthened both as a support unit as well as vis-a-vis investigative role. This will be even more essential when the other grounds of discrimination are brought under its remit. NCPE should also consider other support services to the clients. Amendments to the Equality for Men and Women Act have already been suggested to the legislators, and are imperative in order to give more powers to the Commission for it to be more effective in this mandate, and not just act as a sanctioning body.

- **Training, education, awareness-raising and media**

Continuous training, education campaigns and awareness raising are ongoing processes and funds will be sought to support these initiatives

- **Widening of network with other entities national and international e.g. local councils, NGOs, government bilateral agreements to be honored**

We will liaise and network with other commissions and authorities in order to promote gender mainstreaming at all levels of decision making. Our projects also mirror the important interaction with several entities and other authorities. We acknowledge the huge role of NGOs in this regard through their various initiatives. We have also always found the great assistance of various

Embassies and High Commissions in Malta for expertise and assistance in focus giving an international dimension to our work.

In particular in 2007, we look forward to working with the national coordinating committee set up to implement the EU Year of Equal Opportunities for all. In addition we will continue to participate in various committees at an EU Commission level and other international levels and contribute to the ongoing discussion on the new PROGRESS work programme.

Despite the fact that the members of the Commission are fully active in their various other spheres of expertise and full time commitments, the members of the Commission, past and present, have been functioning on an excellent level, with very good collaboration both among the members as well as with the executive arm of the Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those former members of the Commission who had to resign due to other commitments namely Mr Winston J Zahra and Dr Miriam Camilleri and welcome our two new members Ms Therese Bugeja and Mr Joe Farrugia, who bring with them wealth of experience in their respective areas. These complement those areas of expertise of the other members of the Commission namely Ms Grace Attard, Mr Mario Mallia, Dr Myriam Spiteri Debono and Dr Fr Vanni Xuereb. Special thanks to the executive arm of the Commission lead by Ms Sina Bugeja, who have always shown a great deal of commitment and initiative in implementing our policies.

Attitude is the real discrimination - more holistic thinking is needed. In the year of the 4 Rs: Rights, Representation, Recognition, Respect, Maltese society has only to gain from the benefits of diversity and inclusion, that will bring about flexibility in a globalised economy, more innovation, an open mind, and a more just society for all.

**Janet Mifsud,
Commissioner
February 2007**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As planned, 2006 has been a very visible year for the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality. Besides the numerous requests from various TV and radio stations to take part in discussion programmes, NCPE held no less than thirteen (13) conferences and twenty (20) seminars in the last twelve months. While most had a targeted audience, the possibility for the general public to attend was also publicised.

Complaints

The first part of the Annual Report 2006 focuses on the Complaints received. The obligation 'to work towards the elimination of discrimination between men and women' emanates directly from the Equality for Men and Women Act, Cap. 456 article 12 (f). The report indicates in detail the complaints received and therefore a clear picture of what the public is finding problematic can be pieced. It is these complaints that lead NCPE to push for specific policy changes. However, it has to be acknowledged from the outset that the number of complaints received do not reflect the full extent as many an individual asks for directions to lodge a complaint but eventually does not do so. This could be due to a number of reasons including lack of empowerment and possible fear of victimization.

Projects

NCPE has now carved a name for itself when it comes to project implementation. In fact currently, NCPE is working on six projects and has submitted proposals to lead or to be a partner in another four. The aim of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is to use the available funds to study and propose changes to the current local situation. Furthermore, the EU co-funded projects as well as the UNESCO-funded project and the PKP-funded project all have a similar strategy that is, to raise awareness and sensitize further the public at large on the issues of equality. It is not presumptuous to state that equality is definitely on the national schema. Of course, NCPE will never claim to have done this alone and

the past contributions of previous commissions together with valid input from other organisations will always be acknowledged. However, it can also categorically be stated that NCPE's work is an integral part of recent changes.

Training

In 2006, NCPE has taken on the responsibility to further offer training to the members of the Equality Committees set up in all Ministries as well as to specific groups requesting further capacity building. In fact the training material has been developed in accordance with the requests received. Moreover, training possibilities have been explored and utilized where appropriate. The CFTC programme titled 'Regional Training Programme on Equality Issues for Good Governance in the Maltese and Cypriot Public Service' highlighted in the report is one such example. It was also very encouraging to see how the Equality Committees mentioned earlier actually created a ripple effect within their Ministries and elsewhere after indicating a number of Good Practices during one particular conference.

Research

Research has been placed high on NCPE's agenda for more than one reason. It is becoming increasingly evident that unless scientific evidence is used as the basis for future planning and direction giving, the necessary social changes cannot be guaranteed. While investigating and exploring what other European countries are doing or have done is a must as part of the background documentation, our social and cultural factors cannot be ignored nor minimized nor taken for granted as they will play yet another crucial role in planning the changes of the status quo. Over the past few years since its inception, NCPE has invested in research to ensure that the real issues are well identified and documented. Knowing where the limitation lies is the first step towards its elimination. NCPE is constantly exploring more research proposals that could help piece the picture together – all for the betterment of our society. In the words of Thorstein Veblen, (1857 – 1929) '*the outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow where only one grew before ...*'.

The road is long and winding but not insurmountable with the committed team that is growing and developing, the future is mapped. On behalf of all those who have actually improved their situation through the work of NCPE, I would like to extend my thanks to the Commissioner, the members of the Commission both past and present, and all the members of staff. May 2007 prove to be as fruitful as 2006.

Sina Bugeja
Executive Director
February 2007

Complaints and Requests for Information

Throughout the year under review, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has received 37 official complaints, apart from the continuous work done on complaints opened beforehand.

Data regarding complaints was compiled every quarter. Complaints were received from various sources mainly from employees from the public sector, non-governmental organisations and private companies, as well as from the general public.

Whilst the number of new complaints may appear rather low, it does not reflect the reality of the demands on NCPE's services and intervention. Much less do these figures effectively represent the reality of the extent of discrimination on the basis of gender in Malta.

NCPE acknowledges the fact that many individuals call NCPE regarding their complaints as well as asking for information about the procedures followed by NCPE in such circumstances. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that they are empowered in every possible way to present their complaints, these fail to present their official complaints, due to a myriad of reasons.

From our experiences, it can be said that, one of the main issues of concern for complainants, which may act as deterrent for them to pursue their complaints officially, is a certain fear of repercussions at the place of work, following any action that is taken by NCPE. This very real fear of clients can be justified, however one must note that according to Cap. 452, Employment and Industrial Relations Act, Article 28:

28. It shall not be lawful to victimise any person for having made a complaint to the lawful authorities or for having initiated or participated in proceedings for redress on grounds of alleged breach of the provisions of this Act, or for having disclosed information, confidential or otherwise, to a

designated public regulating body, regarding alleged illegal or corrupt activities being committed by his employer or by persons acting in the employer's name and interests.¹

In fact, discussions are currently underway to also include a clause in the law which provides for protection against victimisation for all individuals who present a complaint to NCPE, in Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act, in addition to other proposals intended to further strengthen this Act which governs NCPE's remit.

Moreover, another problem that NCPE has encountered with complaints, is the fact that many individuals are not empowered enough to take a stand for their rights. In fact, when working with clients, NCPE ensures that they are encouraged to go all the way with their complaint, nevertheless more often than not these still do not materialise. In fact, in reflection, many times complainants refuse to give details about themselves, in spite of the fact that NCPE assures full confidentiality and only involves those who have a legitimate right to be involved.

Throughout 2006, most complainants have utilised the NCPE official complaints form in order to present their complaint. The fact that this form is tailor-made to cater for most of the information which is needed by NCPE to proceed on any given complaint makes the form user-friendly. Besides, the process of opening the files and getting things started has been facilitated significantly. The complaints form can also be easily accessed on NCPE's official website www.equality.gov.mt and also from local council offices throughout Malta. Moreover, when a client informs us that he/she has particular difficulty in accessing the form, it is sent by post to ensure that the complainant has all the tools in place to report discrimination.

Apart from complaints initiated before, complaints filed during 2006 included:

- Discriminatory depictions on the basis of gender in books

¹ Cap. 452, Employment and Industrial Relations Act (2002)
<http://www.gov.mt/frame.asp?l=1&url=http://www2.justice.gov.mt/lom/home.asp>

- Gender discrimination in job opportunities
- Unfair treatment at the workplace, based on gender
- Provision of reduced hours for teachers
- Discriminatory working conditions
- Offensive advertisements
- Fixed-term contracts within the Malta Public Service
- Discriminatory provisions within Cap. 16 Civil Code
- Unfair dismissal from employment
- Family-friendly measures for employees in a higher grade
- Provisions regarding Widow's pension
- Change in working conditions which are hindering work-life balance
- Sexual harassment
- Citizenship
- Marriage leave provision in Public Service Management Code
- Provision of flexibility and Family-friendly measures
- National Insurance Contributions
- Parental Leave (Public Service)
- Flexible working hours
- Sickness benefits during pregnancy
- Discriminatory social security benefits

Family-Friendly Measures

During 2006, NCPE has made particular pressure in the field of family-friendly policies. One of the main objectives of NCPE is to:

b) to identify the needs of persons who are disadvantaged by reasons of their sex and to take such steps within its power and to propose appropriate measures in order to cater for such needs in the widest manner possible;

In view of this, various initiatives were taken to mainstream the importance of the implementation of family-friendly measures, not only within the Public Service but also in the private sector. In addition, the number of complaints and requests for

information concerning such measures prompted NCPE to take concrete action to highlight the importance of work-life balance, achievable also through the introduction of such policies.

Considerable achievements in this field had already been made through the implementation of the Collective Agreement for Public Service Employees (2005 – 2010). In fact 2006, saw the government further enhancing its commitment towards gender equality and family-friendly measures through the implementation of a policy whereby the current family friendly policies available for all public service employees were extended to all employees in the public sector, that is, including all entities utilising public funds. Such measures include having the same rights to reduced hours, parental leave, career breaks and flexitime, amongst others. This measure is a vital breakthrough since around 13,000 families may benefit from this extension.

NCPE has and still is carrying extensive work to promote the introduction of family-friendly measures also throughout the private sector. Cap. 452, Employment and Industrial Relations Act provides only for 14 weeks maternity leave, 3 months parental leave and emergency time off. Unfortunately, to date, employers in the private sector are not law-bound to provide further measures, although it must be said that through NCPE's intervention on specific complaints, a number of negotiations have been carried out while in other cases discussions in this regard have been initiated. Generally speaking, the private sector showed willingness to discuss further, better retention of staff.

Fixed-Term Contracts

Another area on which NCPE has focussed particularly during this year, which has also been a recurring theme in a substantial number of complaints received, is the current conditions laid out in the contracts of employees working for a fixed term. The main aspect of concern for NCPE is the fact that employees working on such terms are not allowed to avail themselves of any family-friendly measures, except maternity leave. This is resulting in a number of problems for workers who have

the need to reconcile between their work and family responsibilities. Action has been taken by NCPE in this regard and various discussions are underway. NCPE is of the firm belief that even though, it may appear difficult to provide reduced hours, parental leave or career breaks for employees on fixed-term contract, in view of the limited timeframes of employment, through careful negotiation and more flexibility in each case, solutions can be found to cater for the needs of both the service as well as the employee seeking to strike the right balance between work and family responsibilities.

NCPE Decisions Regarding Complaints

It is very important to note that NCPE deals with each complaint individually and according to the circumstances pertaining to the complaint arrives to a conclusion or takes the necessary action. However it is important to highlight the fact that NCPE has a specific remit to which it must adhere, as highlighted in Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act².

In fact, in order to enforce its position with respect to any given complaint, NCPE resorts mainly to the above-mentioned Act. Nevertheless, other references to enforcing gender equality are also quoted including Article 14 and Article 45 of the Constitution of Malta³ as well as various articles from Cap. 16 The Civil Code⁴.

Following the issuance, during 2005 of the “Sexual Harassment: A Code of Practice”, it is also very important to note that following its continuous dissemination, NCPE is pleased to see that a fair amount of companies are in fact putting a sexual harassment policy into practice. Furthermore, through collaboration between NCPE and the Management and Personnel Office (MPO); in April 2006, the Malta Public Service has issued a document entitled, “*The Public Service: Guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment and the procedures to be followed in cases of sexual harassment.*” which is modelled on the document

² Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act;

http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/Legislation/English/Leg/VOL_14/Chapt456.PDF

³ The Constitution of Malta; http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/legislation/english/leg/vol_1/chapt0.pdf

⁴ Cap. 16, The Civil Code; http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/legislation/english/leg/vol_2/chapt16.pdf

published by NCPE. This action also paved the way for more companies from the private sector to realise the importance of having such a policy in place as according to Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act:

Article 9 (2) (a) Persons responsible for any work place, educational establishment or entity providing vocational training or guidance or for any establishment at which goods, services or accommodation facilities are offered to the public, shall not permit other persons who have a right to be present in, or to avail themselves of any facility, goods or service provided at that place, to suffer sexual harassment at that place.

(b) It shall be a defence for persons responsible as aforesaid to prove that they took such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent such sexual harassment.

In addition, NCPE's *Sexual Harassment: A Code of Practice* is the main tool referred to and relied upon by NCPE whenever dealing with cases of sexual harassment as well as to make recommendations with respect to this issue.

During 2006, in fact, the Complaints Subcommittee has met 15 times. A substantial number of these meetings consisted of sessions where information was sought, as to the procedures followed by NCPE with regards to specific complaints, including complaints of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The NCPE complaints sub-committee makes a significant effort to ensure confidentiality and to keep information regarding sexual harassment/discrimination and other complaints confidential without compromising the enquiry. In addition this year, a decision was taken whereby a meeting is held every six months, with all the Commission members, to keep all members updated regarding the complaints received and actions and decisions taken by the sub-committee.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

It can be said that this year was no exception in the numbers of requests for information received. Large amounts of requests for information were received and acted upon by all members of NCPE staff. These numbers and the amount of work involved, are not really reflected in the actual numbers of requests recorded. In fact, NCPE is currently devising ways and means through which every single request may be recorded and taken into account. In fact it is being considered to introduce a policy whereby each request should be submitted via email to facilitate this. This is being done in order to determine the amounts and frequency with which the general public request specific information more than other, in order to be able also to quantify the amount of work involved in dealing with these requests as well as to help NCPE identify the priorities for future action and policy making, shaped upon the requests of the public.

These requests come from a variety of sources including:

- Public service employees
- Human resource managers both from the public service as well as the private sector
- Members of the Gender Equality Committees of the Ministries
- The media
- The general public

Although these requests for information cannot be considered as full-fledged complaints, many times they are actually the starting point for presenting an actual complaint and also help NCPE in taking steps with the relevant authorities to amend particular situations where gender inequality still persists. In fact, the requests for information cover a myriad of subjects. Inter alia one finds:

- family friendly measures (maternity leave, reduced hours, parental leave, flexitime)
- EU projects

- provisions re: Maltese legislation in connection with equality, including Cap. 456, Equality for Men and Women Act, and Cap. 452 Employment and Industrial Relations Act.
- EU Directives dealing with discrimination and gender equality
- NCPE's procedure for dealing with complaints
- Statistics regarding various subjects
- Flexitime and its management
- Discriminatory practices in marriage separation proceedings
- Gender Inclusive government forms
- Pensions and other social security benefits.
- Employment conditions
- sexual harassment
- various publications and leaflets

Parliamentary Questions

During 2006, NCPE replied to thirty-nine (39) Parliamentary Questions, which dealt with the following issues:

- 16386 - Consultancy
- 16399 – Mobile Phones
- 16412 – Hospitality
- 16425 – Directors/Chairpersons
- 16490 – Taxes/Tariffs
- 16616 – Public Entities
- 16625 – Workers
- 16653 – Public Entities
- 16894 – Travel
- 17032 – Contractors
- 17083 – Purchase of Cars

- 17096 – Travel
- 17157 – Fuel
- 17309 – Initiatives in Gozo
- 17465 – Cars
- 17632 – Car Rentals
- 18304 – Purchase/Rentals of Property
- 18420 – Lawyers/Notary
- 18366 – Mobile Phones
- 18829 – Property
- 18831 – Property
- 18835 – Call for Applications
- 18836 – Officials’ Travelling Abroad
- 18839 – Maintenance of Government Cars
- 19196 – Travel
- 19252 – Fuel
- 19265 – Cars
- 19759 – Employees in the Public Service
- 20027 – Consultancy
- 20240 – Cyberspace Solutions Ltd
- 20516 – Reports
- 19861 – Cylinder Capacity of Cars
- 20863 – Car Rental
- 21386 – Car Rental
- 21390 – Hospitality
- 21409 – Advertising Agencies
- 21501 – Travel Delegations
- 21741 – Contracts
- 22298 – Employees

All the necessary information was given within the timeframes stipulated.

The Library

During 2006, seven 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. All nine individuals were students, and the most frequently borrowed books were related to the topics of domestic violence, gender equality in the media, women and health, women and employment, politics and sexual harassment at the workplace. During 2006, there were 242 new entries, which were included in the library system. Currently the library consists of 5813 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

The official website of NCPE www.equality.gov.mt has been running for a year now since its official launch on 6th January 2006 during the NCPE Annual Conference and has succeeded in the intent of providing the general public with accessible and updated information about the NCPE, its services and its ongoing projects as well as provide a link through which information can be easily requested and downloaded.

The website has 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*

Links are provided for legislation on gender equality and protection from discrimination.

- *Projects*

This section provides a brief description about each project that is currently being carried out by NCPE or in which NCPE is a partner.

- *In the Media*

In this section one finds an archive of articles and letters that were sent to the various newspapers since 2004.

- *Contact Us*

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

- *Links*

In this section there are 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.

Facilitating Equality Through Education

A **website** was created for this project, www.fete.org.mt. The website is aimed at persons active in the fields of education and gender equality. It also has an online forum where discussions on topics related to reports of this project and other emerging themes related to the subject are put forward. Additionally information

on every partner of the project and also on events/activities related to this project is found on the website.

Another website was launched on the 16th November 2006 during the 'FETE' Final Conference, www.ugwali.com , which is aimed for children/students. The scope of this website is to disseminate further the information related to the project. It creates the possibility for children to share their daily adventures and also to submit their drawings on the site. This site also has educational games which can be downloaded, and fact sheets and information on the D'Ugwali Family. The D'Ugwali Family has been created by NCPE in order to be able outline the gender stereotypes and roles which exist.

EQUAL Website

NCPE has added on to its present website <http://equality.gov.mt>. Information and the objectives of another EU co-funded project, EQUAL No. 4 – '*Promoting EQUAL Opportunities through Empowerment*' can be found on the additional pages annexed to the website of NCPE. An outline of the key objectives of this project and a list of the National activities organized as part of this project can be found in these pages. NCPE is the lead development partner of **GenderRole**, which is the name of the National Development Partnership composed of thirteen entities, information on these entities is also found in these annexed pages.

PROJECTS

This year NCPE has continued to strengthen its outputs through its good use of projects part-financed by various funding sources including the European Social Fund, Community 5th Programme of DG EMPL, EQUAL, Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, UNESCO and the PKP fund of the Royal Dutch Embassy in Malta. In fact, during 2006, NCPE worked on a total of 12 different projects that were at different levels of development/implementation. In addition, as part of the National Action Plan for 2007-2013, NCPE has developed its strategy and advanced its project proposal intentions for the forthcoming ESF funding period.

For the second year running, NCPE has been successful in acquiring funding for its project entitled *Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities* through a highly competitive closed call for applications, which is funded directly by the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities within the European Commission. NCPE was also successful in securing funding for the continuation of its gender mainstreaming strategy through the financing of its new ESF project entitled *The Gender Aspect from a Legal Perspective*.

Gender Mainstreaming – the Way Forward ESF No.23

Gender Mainstreaming – the Way Forward which was the first European Social Fund co-financed project that was awarded to NCPE following Malta's entrance in the EU has now been concluded. The main aim of the project was 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 as well as family-friendly measures. To this end, the project embarked on research into the introduction of family-friendly measures at the work place; gender pay review; career paths and conditions of work of graduates; and a teleworking pilot project. In addition to this research, the project also provided for an awareness raising campaign and the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the public service and other sectors.

In practice, following the groundwork carried out during 2005, this year the project was jam packed with deliverables that gradually but steadily were coming out through conferences; training sessions; small group meetings; and through TV, radio and print media publicity during the two implementation phases. Extensive coverage of the research that was carried out and the informative materials that were developed is provided in the *Research* and *Awareness Raising* sections respectively.

The first implementation phase of this project was focused on the conduction of research, namely, (1) family-friendly measures at the workplace, (2) gender pay review, (3) a tracer study of graduates, and (4) teleworking. During this phase, wide dissemination of knowledge was carried out on:

- Cap.456 Equality for Men and Women Act with particular emphasis on employment issues;
- The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and its request for information and complaint system;

The second phase of the project was subsequently characterised by:

- organisation of 5 conferences and 3 training sessions that delivered the knowledge that was learnt from the research.
- Publication of the research results
- undertaking a second stage publicity campaign including TV and Radio PSAs, and printed materials.

Further to the above, extensive work was carried out to promote the principle of gender mainstreaming at all time during the implementation of the project. This work is reviewed in the *Gender Mainstreaming* section.

Promoting Equal Opportunities Through Empowerment *EQUAL No.4*

This EQUAL project No. 4 entitled 'Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment' is part 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). 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 Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM); and General Workers' Union (GWU)

The different stages of the project were as follows:

1. Compilation of Information

Information about the local development partners, including the training and employment opportunities in different fields offered by the development partners has been compiled and printed. This information has been distributed during the seminars that were organised for the inactive population.

2. Dissemination of Information through the Media

Television and radio programmes, and PSAs were aired to disseminate information about role models and the publicity of the available education, training, and labour market opportunities. The TV and radio series 'Nahdem...U Kif!' was aired in March, April and May 2006. Sign language interpretation was offered during all programmes. (see further details in section Awareness- Raising)

3. Local Council Seminars for the general public

These seminars were divided into four regions including Northern, Central and Southern Malta, and Gozo. The aim of these seminars was 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 were used as examples of change and success. During the local seminars, a questionnaire was disseminated to the participants of the seminars to elicit feedback (see further details in section Awareness Raising)

4. Meetings with Employers

A seminar with employers, HR managers and their representatives will be organised to assess the sensitivity of employers to the barriers women face when seeking employment and the priority attributed by the industry to these barriers.

5. Formulation of Policy

The last phase of this project, which is planned to take place in 2007, 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.

Transnational Partnership

As an integral part of the EQUAL project, transnational partnerships were developed.

EMPOWER

The aim of this project is to 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 Transnational Cooperation Partnership (TCP) members.

During this year two other trans-national meetings were organised. The second trans-national meeting was organised in Lithuania in March, while the third trans-national meeting was organized in Malta, in September.

AGender

The aim of this project is to tackle age and gender discrimination. The objectives are 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 and nationally. The partners involved in this project include Portugal, France and Malta.

The first trans-national meeting of the project AGender, in 2006, was organised in Malta, while the second trans-national meeting was organised in Lisbon, Portugal.

Facilitating Equality through Education (FETE) VP/2004/019

Facilitating Equality through Education was successfully submitted in 2004 in view of the *Programme relating to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality* annual restricted call for proposals. The call for proposals' priority for 2004 focused on the 'role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and family life'. NCPE had therefore deemed fit to address the issue of the imbalance of roles through the sphere of formal education. In fact, the scope of this project was to help develop a culture that allows both men and women full and free aspiration to a career and family life.

The project aimed at correcting 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 and capabilities. To achieve this objective policymakers, teachers and students alike, were sensitised to the need of greater gender equality, as well as the responsibility of men and fathers in carrying out a number of tasks that are still believed to be women/mothers' responsibility. To this aim the Department for Curriculum Management and the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta became partners to the project and contributed to the project's implementation. A series of training seminars to current and prospective teachers on the principles of

gender equality and work/life balance were organised. Through the use of examples, the teachers discussed 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 were sensitized to use gender neutral language in their presentations of work and family responsibilities. Greater detail about teacher training is available under the ***Training Initiatives section***.

Further to the local partnership, NCPE has also developed a transnational partnership with the Coalition for Gender Equality (Latvia) and National Machinery for Women's Rights (Cyprus) to analyse the current education policies in the three partner countries and identify best practices and other positive measures that are enhancing equality in the sphere of education. Each trans-national partner built a team of experts to conduct a study to review the education policy in force in its respective country, and assessed the policy's strong points and shortcomings in relation to the principle of gender equality. The trans-national partners also reviewed the textbooks and national curricula to assess whether they need to be revised or substituted with others that are carefully designed to portray a work/life balance for both men and women. The outcomes are dealt with in greater detail in the ***Research section***. This transnational partnership met three times during the course of the project. During 2006, the partnership met in February for the Second Steering Committee meeting and in November for the Final Conference during which the results of the project were disseminated. A detailed report of the conferences is available in the ***Conferences section***.

Towards the end of the project, the deliverables of the project consisting of a colouring book, games CD, stickers, bookmarks and other promotional material promoting equality were distributed to school children under a marquee that was set up over a period of three days. The public was invited to attend a one hour interactive theatre session that covered various aspects of family life and aimed to instill in the audience a model of a symmetrical family also held under the marquee in Freedom Square, Valletta.

Gender Equality - a Responsibility of Both Sexes VP/2004/019

This Cypriot led project entitled *Gender Equality - a Responsibility of Both Sexes* was successfully submitted by the Machinery for Women's Rights (Cyprus) with respect to a 2004 European Commission call for proposals that looked at "the role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life".⁵ In line with the guidelines of the call, this project's approach was to promote gender roles free from stereotypes in primary and secondary schools on very similar lines to those of the Maltese project (Facilitating Equality Through Education) highlighted above. NCPE was a partner in this project.

NCPE was invited to form part of the transnational partners and this invitation was gladly accepted as the project outcomes fitted in with NCPE's objectives and it also helped NCPE learn from the approaches to project implementation that are adopted by other organisations. The other transnational partners in this project were the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) (Greece) and Provincia di Rovigo (Italy).

The first meeting for this project was held during November 2005 in order to clearly lay out the responsibilities and duties of each partner organisation. Each country was expected to organise a conference aimed at teachers and other persons involved in the field of education and disseminate knowledge on the practices that emanate out of each partner country.

The first conference meeting was held in Malta, and proved to be a great success with over 100 headteachers and teachers attending the conference. The conference focused on the work of the Curriculum Management Department, the Faculty of Education's teacher training on gender equity, shared parenting, and the Cypriot educational system. (see also **Gender Equality – a Responsibility of Both Sexes** conference *in section NCPE Conferences*). Similar meetings were

⁵ This was the same call in which NCPE successfully submitted *Facilitating Equality through Education*.

held in Athens (Greece) and Rovigo (Italy) during which meetings a conference was organised for teachers and practitioners in the field to promote the aims of the project. The final conference was held in Cyprus, in which the best practices, research results and tools developed were presented to the public in detail. (see also Gender Equality – a Responsibility of Both Sexes final conference *in section International Conferences*).

The Gender Aspect from a Legal Perspective ESF No.46

The Gender Aspect from a Legal Perspective is a 75% European Social Fund co-financed project was approved during April 2006. It has a budget of €290,000 available for its implementation with a start date of October 2006 and will last until September 2007. It aims to increase the participation and advancement of women in the labour market primarily through the correction of structural barriers in a number of Codes and Acts in Maltese Legislation which are hindering women from entering, staying and/or advancing in the labour market. It intends to complement this activity through the provision of training and dissemination of the results.

The project has four (4) components which consist of:

- a) A study of current education, employment and training, social security and taxation, criminal, civil and family legislation;
- b) Development of recommendations for gender mainstreaming of Maltese legislation to promote equality in all spheres and activities;
- c) Provision of training sessions for legislators and individuals/entities that provide legal services (especially legal drafting);
- d) Provision of training sessions for human resource managers in both public and private sectors on the principle of gender mainstreaming and relevant EU and Maltese legislation.

The key objectives of *The Gender Aspect from a Legal Perspective* are:

- To embed the principle of gender mainstreaming in a number of Codes and Acts of Maltese Legislation dealing with education, employment and training, social security, taxation, criminality, and family

- To further the development of gender mainstreaming at a national level;
- To lay the foundations for an increase in female participation in society in general, particularly in the labour market;
- To sensitise legislators, providers of legal services and human resource managers to the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

This project will produce three toolkits that will be developed specifically for legislators and providers of legal services; and human resource managers to disseminate the results of the project and complement the training sessions that will be provided.

Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Training VT/2006/009

During 2005, two members from NCPE had joined a group of 6 Maltese trainees on multi-ground equality as emanating out of Dir 2000/43/EC and Dir 2000/78/EC and participated in a pan-European project entitled *Capacity Building Civil Society Dealing with Anti-Discrimination* which has provided training for the 6 Maltese trainers with the aim that they in turn disseminate the knowledge learnt in the national training programme to civil society. A national training programme was subsequently delivered at the University of Malta, with many of the equality and non-discrimination NGOs being represented.

This year, the Human European Consultancy Group in partnership with the Migration Policy Group again prepared a submission in view of the VT/2006/009 – *Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Training* call for proposals and approached NCPE to act as the Maltese coordinator of the submission. Their project proposal envisaged anti-discrimination, and diversity management training to be delivered in 31 European Countries (all EU-25, EU candidate countries, and EAA countries).

On a national level, the project is intended to deliver two two-day seminars to promote anti-discrimination among NGOs and Trade Unions (one session during 2007 and another during 2008). The aim of the seminars is to provide additional capacity building on the material covered during the *Capacity Building Civil Society Dealing with Anti-Discrimination* project and to therefore progress the

knowledge of anti-discrimination further. Similarly with regard to diversity management training, the project aims to deliver a one-day seminar during 2008 in every country on diversity management aimed mainly for employer organisations, large companies and SMEs.

In November, the EU Commission selected this proposal as the best proposal from the tenders received, and NCPE's role in the project was therefore formalised through a contract with Human European Consultancy. The project has a lifetime of 18 months, and will be launched during January 2007, concurrently with the launch of the Year of Equal Opportunities. This project is likely to attract a wider audience than *Capacity Building Civil Society Dealing with Anti-Discrimination* and should therefore help to raise the national awareness of non-discrimination and diversity management further.

Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities VP/2005/021

During April of this year, NCPE has successfully submitted a second application in view of the *Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality* of DG Employment annual restricted call for proposals. This year's call for proposals priority theme was 'the promotion of gender equality, particularly in local development'.

In line with this priority theme, NCPE has developed the *Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities* project, which is intended to disseminate the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in local development through educational and publicity campaigns that will be carried out at Local Council level. The intention is to make ordinary citizens aware of the difficulties and limitations that gender roles and stereotypes create in everyday activities, and install in society the aspiration for the achievement of gender equality. To achieve this objective, Local Councils organisations that operate on a local and/or regional level, religious institutions and ultimately the citizens themselves will be sensitized to the principle of gender equality and made to work together to create added value to their communities.

To achieve this objective and to ensure that the project effectively promotes and disseminates values and practices of gender equality in every locality, it will take the initiative to develop tools (such as training presentations and promotional materials) in order to entice the citizens to discuss the roles of women and men in public and private life. Concurrently with the training sessions that will be organised to target the members of organisations that operate on a local or regional level, NCPE will invite popular singers, musicians and performing artists to be part of the project and deliver gender equality messages during events that are organised by local councils.

In addition to the national project, the project intends to conduct a research study to seek good practices in the promotion of gender equality in other European Mediterranean States, in order to promote them widely as success stories in the fight for equality and against discrimination. The intention behind this objective is to assess the level of commitment of different countries and their different governmental levels of implementation ranging from the national to the local and to bring a number of solutions to problems of stereotyping and gender discrimination to the attention of the respective authorities. NCPE has 4 transnational partners to this part of the project, namely Dipartimento per i Diritti e le Pari Opportunità (Italy); Comissão Para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres (Portugal); Governmental Office for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia (Croatia); and Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) (Greece).

During July, the European Commission informed NCPE that it had chosen its project proposal and that the budget that available for it amounted to €480,626.51 (Lm206,333) The implementation of this project started during December of this year and will come to an end during February 2008.

Women in Development VP/2005/021

Women in Development (W.in.D) was submitted by Dipartimento per i Diritti e le Pari Opportunità (Italy) as the lead partners, and NCPE was invited to become a

partner. This project was submitted to the same restricted call for proposals to which NCPE submitted *Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities*.

W.in.D is characterised by three main phases:

- a) a research component named 'European comparative analysis of the context and of the experiences carried on local development processes' which will look at the strategies supporting female participation in local development processes; and the strategies supporting the introduction of the principle of gender mainstreaming into local development processes in the partner countries and the rest of the EU member states
- b) the outcomes of the research will then lead to the 'design and implementation of a "European intervention model"'. The scope of this model is support female participation in local development processes and the introduction of the principle of gender mainstreaming into local development
- c) the 'design and production of guidelines' in the form of a Best Practices Manual

The role of NCPE in this project is mainly to conduct research for best practices on a local level that could be implemented in other parts of Europe to ensure greater gender mainstreaming. NCPE will also be expected to participate actively in Steering Committee meetings and also deliver a panel discussion with representatives of various local organisations on ways and means to take forward the principle of gender mainstreaming and fully implement it into their organisational structures and the provision of goods and services.

The First Steering Committee meeting for this project was held in Rome on 27th October at the office of the Dipartimento per i Diritti e le Pari Opportunità, during which meeting the project outline was discussed, and the delegates agreed on a

tentative time schedule for the expected deliverables (see also First Steering Committee Meeting of W.IN.D. *in section International Conferences*).

Mosaic - One in diversity VP/2006/006

In October, NCPE submitted a project proposal entitled *Mosaic - one in diversity* to the National Implementing Body (Malta) in view of the VP/2006/006 which was a call for proposals for entities that wanted to carry out a project during the Year of Equal Opportunities. In this project proposal NCPE acts as the action leader along with another 9 partner organisations, together forming the Mosaic Network. This network is a loose union of Maltese organisations coming from a wide array of non-discrimination grounds, and consist of – Commissioner for Children’s Office; European Network Against Racism (ENAR); Federazzjoni Maltija għall-Organizzazzjonijiet Persuni b’Dizabilità; Kunsill Nazzjonali ta’ I-Anzjani (KNA); Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh (KNŻ); Malta Confederation of Women’s Organisations (MCWO); Malta Gay Rights Movement (MGRM); National Council of Women (NCW); and the National Youth Information Centre (NYIC). Furthermore, all six areas of discrimination as highlighted by the European Union are part of this network.

The main objectives of this project are:

- to address the fears and misconceptions that lie behind discrimination
- to increase awareness of discrimination and its negative effects on individuals and society at large
- to organise a campaign on the promotion of equality and non-discrimination equally covering all six recognised grounds of non-discrimination
- to create an equality platform in order to strengthen the reaching out effect of the various partners that it shall comprise, and to help them reach a wider audience while minimising duplication of work and increasing cooperation between the various organisations
- to have a multiplier effect created through the train the trainers sessions organised on the principle of non-discrimination and the right to equality for all

Importantly, this project will be coordinated democratically by the various organisations that are participating in the Mosaic Network, ensuring that there is equal representation of each ground of equality and fair say of each and every organisation participating in the network.

Moreover, *Mosaic - one in diversity* is directed towards the delivery of a direct campaign with high visibility. In fact, this project proposal lays down a campaign intended to be delivered in close proximity to both persons in decision making and the general public. Furthermore, the approach adopted for the said delivery is two pronged:

- a) providing for the provision of train the trainers sessions, and capacity building for both staff and volunteers of the organisations participating in the Mosaic Network;
- b) the dissemination of information through the media, through visibility on Diversity Days (various dates on which the various grounds of equality will be celebrated), and forum theatre sessions, as well as through informative publications aimed at addressing fears and misconceptions that are commonplace in Maltese society.

Should this project be given the green light, it should run all through 2007 and provide a good basis for future actions in this sphere. It should also set the foundation for the creation of a healthy network of governmental and civil society organisations working to promote equality and non-discrimination.

**UNESCO Project: The Gender Gap in Science and Technology in Malta:
evaluating the problem and tackling the issues**

The project in caption, which is financed by UNESCO, is a joint effort between NCPE, the University of Malta and the Employment and Training Corporation. This project has two main aims. The first target is the collation of coherent statistics and other information about the gender differences in the field of science and technology. Most of the information about such differences in this field is

already in existence, however it is scattered around various entities like ETC, the National Statistics Office, the University of Malta, MCAST and the Education Division. During the last months, ETC has collected data regarding the number of men and women employed during the last 5 years in the field of science and/or technology. Moreover, further data was also collected regarding the number of students who sat for exams at SEC and Advanced level, produced by MATSEC Board, also for the last 5 years. Additional data will also be gathered regarding the number of students who register for work as well as the graduates at different levels in the same field, from MCAST and the University of Malta.

The second scope of this project is to raise awareness about this subject among the general public especially among female students and their parents. The aim was to reach this audience mainly through meetings organized during April, where female students from various secondary schools participated. The female participants were at the stage of choosing their optional subjects. During these meetings the students were informed about the various opportunities existing in Malta and the EU. In addition they also had the opportunity of learning from first-hand experiences of women already working in the field.

Training Programme on Equality Issues for Good Governance in the Maltese & Cypriot Public Service *CFTC*

The project was part financed by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, was originally submitted during 2004 and intended to provide technical assistance on gender issues and gender mainstreaming to NCPE and members of the Equality Committee of each Ministry. Towards the end of 2005, NCPE was contacted and informed that the Commonwealth intended to support the project. Following extensive discussions with Commonwealth Secretariat officials, the scope of the project was amended to allow for the provision of training with a multi-ground approach to equality. Additionally, the project was changed into a regional project thus also catering for the provision of training to Cypriot participants.

The training seminar was delivered during December and it was attended by a good number of Ministries' Equality Committee representatives and Cypriot Public Service officials (see **Training Initiatives Section**)

Identifying the Best Practices to Implement the Race and Ethnicity Directives
PKP – Royal Dutch Embassy

During the first months of 2006, NCPE has successfully submitted a project proposal that is intended to develop tools and disseminate knowledge on the Racial Equality Directive (Dir 2000/43/EC).

The project in fact, seeks to produce bilingual toolkits intended to be distributed to a selected number of senior officials in the public, parastatal and private sectors and governmental committees to widen the knowledge base well beyond the current Equality for Men and Women Act, in order to inform them about the new areas of multi-ground equality. The toolkit will also be distributed to Members of Parliament, Members of the Judiciary and Permanent Secretaries as well as the media in order to increase sensitivity of the need for equality.

CEDAW

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality was entrusted with the write-up of the Fourth CEDAW Report for Malta. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. CEDAW is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Malta, as a country signed to this convention in 1991. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and binds the countries which accept the Convention to undertake and comply with the measures adopted at a national level to end discrimination against women in all its forms. NCPE is submitting feedback on 16 of the above-mentioned articles.

The report will be finalised and made available at the beginning of the year 2007. The report is a review comprising articles which deal with a number of fields in the social sphere, amongst which education, employment, political and public life, prostitution, economic and social benefits, health, marriage and family life, stereotypes and special measures. The report which is made up of policies, legislations, and research analysis will enable all interested stakeholders to review their situation analytically and work on the identified problems, so that social cohesion is ensured.

Reference to laws, regulations, amendments, projects undertaken at a national and international level and reforms was made. The main issues which were highlighted through the research undertaken to compile the CEDAW report were the inception of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality which emanated out of the Equality for Men and Women Act 2003, and is currently the national machinery responsible for gender equality issues. Since its foundation back in 2004, NCPE has been entrusted with several plans of action which are putting the promotion of equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes and traditional roles to the forefront. Gender mainstreaming which denotes considering

gender issues in every decision and at all levels was also highlighted since it is the backbone of the achievement of equality.

Although the road to achieve *de facto* equality is still long and winding, the achievements accomplished since 2004 describe a success story. Today, awareness on gender issues is spiralling to a rich degree, policies are being reviewed, organisations are working towards being gender sensitive, media portrayal is acknowledging its responsibility, and gender equality has become a priority on the national agenda.

The reforms which were mentioned in the Budgetary reform for the year 2007 were a breakthrough in the elimination of barriers which women face in taking an active part in political, social, cultural, and public life. The Government has confirmed its commitment to achieve social cohesion and sustainability through the enforcement of family-friendly measures, tax incentives, and strategies enabling women to be represented. The initiatives adopted safeguard not only women's interests, but the whole society would benefit when its human assets are contributing to meeting the demands placed on the country.

The CEDAW report looked at every article, and through the use of statistical data, segregated by sex highlighted the gender concerns which are more prominent presently. Representation of females in Malta is still at the bottom of the list when compared to other countries. This implies that voices on women's issues are still left abridged. This phenomenon poses a challenge to Maltese society which the Government in liaison with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, and other entities is committed to minimise and address, with the intention of being the builders of a new society where both men and women achieve respect and freedom of choice.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming 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 has carried out extensive work in order to mainstream gender equality in all factions of life. Among such work one can mention:

- Information was researched in order to be inserted in the submissions of NCPE for an ERDF project. In fact, a document was submitted to the relevant authorities in relation to the same.
- Discussions were also held in order to analyse possible future projects for the NCPE regarding mainstreaming and other issues.
- Work was also done on the drafting of a new ESF project.
- A meeting with the Health Equality Committee members during which the best way forward to implement gender mainstreaming was discussed. A subsequent meeting was then fixed, together with high-level officials from the Ministry of Health, to discuss the drafting of mainstreaming strategy for the Ministry of Health.
- A presentation on Gender Mainstreaming was delivered for the ESF conference held in February 2006.
- A thorough analysis was carried out of the Pensions Final Report and Supplementary Paper on Female Incentives.

- The Equal Opportunities Policy for the Office of the Prime Minister was reviewed.
- The Gender Equality Roadmap was reviewed and a list containing recommendations emanating from it was also drafted.
- The National Strategic Reference Framework was reviewed.
- The Gender Perspective for the ESF OP 2007-2013 was drafted.
- Literature for a toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality was compiled.
- Training sessions were delivered during ETC empowerment skills training course (NCPE functions/Gender Mainstreaming/Sexual Harassment)
- Training on sexual harassment was provided to the staff of the Malta Financial Services Authority
- Meetings were held with the public service authorities in which equality measures were discussed.
- NCPE liaised with the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment (Equality Committee) for meetings to be held with all legal officers and legal drafters within the different departments in the Ministry. A meeting was therefore held on the 18 April 2006 with the said officers of the Ministry, during which the relative policy and legal obligations for gender mainstreaming were underlined. A practical example of how to implement gender mainstreaming was illustrated. During this meeting, it was suggested that the NCPE should carry out a gender analysis of the current Education Act and a number of other policy documents pertaining to the educational field (particularly the document entitled 'For All

Children to Succeed' and the document on Early Childhood Education), and therefore highlight any issues that could be included in the new Education Act which is being drafted by MEYE. The NCPE therefore undertook this task and prepared a report which was presented to the said officers. The report was also circulated electronically for consideration for those officers who were absent for the meeting, particularly the Policy Officer at MEYE.

- Malta's National Plan for Sustainable Development was analysed and feedback was submitted regarding the said draft.
- A draft amendment to the Social Security Act regarding the 'Social Assistance Female' was reviewed and a report was drafted containing NCPE's considerations, which was then forwarded to MFSS.
- A meeting was held with representatives of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment during which the particular problems of the Ministry were discussed. The Equality Committee members of the said Ministry undertook to appoint a number of other persons on their committee, to propose a 'gender equality link' on their Ministry's website and to prepare gender equality training sessions in all the relevant departments of the Ministry, with the assistance of the NCPE. These initiatives are currently pending approval by the Ministry's Permanent Secretary.
- Meetings were also held with Members of the Co-operatives Board and the OHSA - the Equality aspect within such fields were highlighted. Follow up meetings with other relevant officers were then fixed.
- A clause on 'sexual harassment' for the ETC was drafted. This clause will be put on a sticker and stuck on all ETC transport vehicles.

- A presentation on Gender Mainstreaming was delivered during the ESF conferences of the 28 and 29 of June 2006.
- A presentation was delivered on Maltese Employment Law (ETC_Women in Cottonera project)
- Feedback was given on the new Draft Broadcasting Authority Equality Guidelines
- Feedback was also provided on the ESF Operational Programmes I & II
- The 2007 pre-budget document was analysed and feedback provided
- Malta's Overseas Development Policy was analysed and feedback was provided.
- The EQUAL National Mainstreaming Strategy was also analysed and feedback provided accordingly.
- A monitoring tool on Gender Mainstreaming was prepared
- A presentation was made for ESF Final Conference on the 15 September 2006 regarding Examples of Best Practice for Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Sector

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

As part of the international strategy on sustainable development, the Maltese state is investing strongly on research and innovation and plans of action from various entities have spearheaded the Maltese Government to elaborate and invest more in this sphere. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality adheres fully to the fundamental role which research plays in understanding priority areas, and in benchmarking ideas in order to come up with solutions and with pro-active measures to improve the role of men and women in society.

Internal Research

Gender Quotas: a Key to Equality?

One of the research projects conducted was a qualitative study titled '*Gender Quotas: A Key to Equality?*' The local and European frameworks were reviewed and analysed, and the constraints holding back women's participation in political life were identified. A set of qualitative interviews with key informants representing the three political parties were conducted, and solutions to the lack of female representation in high echelon posts in the political sphere were put forward.

The hurdles which are obstructing women from taking an active part in the political dimension of society are putting a weight on social progress. The study analyses the fact that Malta fares at the bottom of the list in the participation of women occupying a seat in Parliament both locally and in the EU scene. Actions taken by the local parties have so far given some results, but the improvement is too small and the pace of advancement is not proportionate to the changing needs. Research indicates that a grass-roots approach which enhances the value of gender equality and equality of results must be placed at the forefront if progress is to be achieved. Civic participation, open dialogues, and balanced recognition in the higher echelons of society are all vehicles towards equality of results.

Positive actions are a viable solution at times when the situation is stagnant. However the study shows that positive measures need to be accompanied by a strategic vision, a well-defined blueprint for action, and a clear profile of the resources and the time frame needed. Different forms of quota systems were analysed holistically in the course of the study.

It is envisaged that the study will be published later on.

MIIT Report

The Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology has requested NCPE to compile a report giving an outline of the local situation vis-à-vis women and their role in society. The current needs and barriers were identified and several studies conducted by the University of Malta (*Tracer Study: Career Outcomes of Graduates 2004: A Career Guidance Tool*); ETC (*A Look into the Work Aspirations of Inactive Women*); and NCPE (*UNESCO: The Gender Gap in Science and Technology in Malta: Tackling the Issues*) were reviewed, with a focus on women and science. Furthermore, the issue of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace was addressed and the rights and obligations of the employer and employees outlined. The report concluded with the importance of having an equal opportunities policy and the implications thereof. Such policy is an essential tool in providing a clear framework for action and initiatives that the organisation must adhere to in order to ensure equality of opportunities for present and future employees. The report indicates that corporate social responsibility is part and parcel of any institution, and therefore it must be adequately catered for.

Published Research

ESF/ No. 23 “Gender Mainstreaming the Way Forward”

As part of the project ESF/No.23 entitled ‘Gender Mainstreaming the Way Forward’, NCPE commissioned research on the following four main areas related to the objectives of the project:

- (1) family friendly measures at the work place
- (2) gender pay gap review
- (3) career paths and conditions of work of graduates in the labour market
- (4) teleworking pilot project

From the research carried out in the case of family friendly measures at the work place, these type of systems were found mainly to be positive both from the employers’ perspective and as well as for beneficiaries. Non-beneficiaries had positive attitudes and showed a level of interest that augured well for the extension of this type of system. This study also suggests that, caring responsibilities bear a direct influence on the career prospects and consequently on the earnings of individuals. Caring responsibilities are still strongly attached to the role of the female, thus it is the female workers who associate their career paths to their domestic and career responsibilities. This study affirmed how women tend to take up clerical roles and are less likely to occupy senior managerial occupations than men. This study also suggests that men often stay longer with the same employer, and are thus more likely to move up the ladder on the basis of experience and commitment. Men are also more inclined to accept promotion opportunities, contrary to women, since the latter would not be able to increase the number of working hours due to caring responsibilities. In the case of career breaks, women are at a disadvantage since they would lose on training and promotion opportunities. When they actually choose to return to the labour market, age may be another factor that works against women. Furthermore, although many graduates claim to share these responsibilities and duties with their partner, it is women who have the greatest share of responsibility where childcare and daily house chores are concerned. The final component of the study was the

teleworking pilot project; research suggests that teleworking is economically beneficial, generally resulting in improved work performances, diminished absenteeism and improved employee retention. Research also showed that teleworkers felt that on balance, teleworking is beneficial for them as well. It appears that the positive social impacts also outweighed negative ones. The social inclusion dimension seems to be positive on balance. Teleworkers with caring responsibilities felt that teleworking maintained their employment opportunities – which are otherwise unfeasible owing to family or domestic demands. The quality of life dimension also proved to be positive.

FETE

The report 'Facilitating Equality through Education' includes a literature review and analysis of international and EU policies, guidelines and good practices in relation to gender and education; detailed assessment and report of the three partner countries, namely Malta, Cyprus and Latvia in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to existing gender equality education policies; best practices and other positive measures that may be already correcting the gaps between the two genders in education process; recommendations and conclusions.

As part of this research interviews with key persons within the education sector and with the Maltese national partner, mainly the Department of the National Minimum Curriculum and the Faculty of Education, University of Malta were also conducted. The aim of these interviews was to gain a better understanding of educational policies and measures in relation to gender equality.

The results from the research analyses carried out in Malta, Cyprus and Latvia, clearly show that progress has been made in the past decades towards a more gender balanced society. However, gender imbalances can still be found within education systems.

There are three key observations that emerge from the study:

1. Although women are more likely to further their studies than previously, a closer look at the education systems in Malta, Cyprus and Latvia shows that males and females are not always equally represented in the various faculties and institutes making up the post-secondary, vocational and tertiary education. Women are still holding on to the traditional 'caring' fields, such as teaching and nursing and avoiding Maths, Science and Technology (MST). Ultimately, subject choice stereotypes are influencing choices of job careers. Moreover, one of the major concerns related to the feminization of the teaching profession is the lack of male role models for children attending primary and kindergarten schools, which evidently reiterates the problem enrolment in this area.
2. Whilst the majority of the teachers are females, management and decision making roles within the education system, appear to be of a male dominance. Though, statistics show that the number of females in such posts is increasing.
3. Some of the teaching material and textbooks used in schools portray gender stereotypes. Textbooks play a very important part in gender equality. In fact, textbooks can hinder equal opportunities to both sexes if they are gender biased. Gender bias can also be taught 'implicitly' through the language and pictures used in books. To avoid rigidity in sex identity or sex roles, teachers need to choose language (nouns, pronouns and adjectives) that specifically describe the particular person, or use gender neutral language when speaking generically. Sensitivity to gender biased language in educational setting is substantially important as gender roles and stereotypes are also transmitted through language use.

The report was launched during the transnational meeting that was organised on the 16th November 2006.

AGender transnational study

As part of the AGender trans-national study “*Searching for good practices in the area of gender and age management*” each transnational partner, including Malta, Portugal and France, has analysed the national context related to the respective issue. The study will show good practices in Europe in the area of gender and age equality. The Maltese part of the study is entitled ‘*Gender aspects in Malta: Inactive Women over 40 and in the tourism sector*’. The aim of the study for Malta is to focus on three important issues including: inactive women over 40s; women in the tourism sector; and policies and examples of good practices in promoting women at work. Information and data on the three areas identified was extracted from various sources. These include mainly:

- Official statistics published by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Malta;
- Undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations in relevant issues at the University of Malta;
- Research conducted on a national basis which may provide data and information relevant to this study: as well as
- Consultation with official government documents (particularly with respect to policy).

This report mainly highlights the situation of inactive women in Malta and also the participation of women within the tourism industry. The findings show that a number of actions need to be promoted and implemented to increase women’s participation in the labour market and also within the tourism sector. These include amongst others a change in mentality through education, the need for women to promote their skills and abilities and the importance of increasing job flexibility. This report also shows that over the years, Malta has taken several steps to combat gender discrimination although there is still much more that needs to be done. In spite of the fact that the opportunities and emphasis on equality are reflected in the country’s legislation, these are not necessarily reflected in the actual labour market statistics. This means that Malta’s next great challenge is that changes in legislation are reflected in the labour market with an increase in female participation and greater presence in decision-making levels. Moreover, Malta also still needs to take further action to combat age discrimination.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

EQUAL - Training of Inactive Persons

The aim of the seminars was to inform the Maltese public, particularly women, how to be active in the world of work and to encourage individuals that are presently working in the informal economy to gain knowledge of the benefits and to ultimately transfer to the formal economy. The main objectives of the seminars were targeted specifically to individuals who would like to improve their academic qualifications, learn new subjects, and assist their children in their school and academic work and/or individuals who are looking for work or would like to acquire other qualifications with the possibility of advancing in their place of work.

For the purpose of these seminars Malta and Gozo were divided into four regions including Northern, Central and Southern Malta, and Gozo. In total fourteen seminars were organised in Malta, while two seminars were organised in Gozo. Approximately eighty participants attended these seminars.

Various topics were discussed during these seminars including amongst others education and training, how to write a curriculum vitae and apply for a job, law and social security issues, available training and employment opportunities, importance of economic independence and work/life balance, setting up of co-operatives, employers' expectations and the tourism industry. Different speakers from a number of fields were invited during these seminars. In addition, role models that have improved their employment status after they have undergone training and/or sought employment to develop their career were invited to share their experience, thus showing that a similar result may be achieved by the inactive population if they decide to take up this challenge.

A number of documents including, amongst others, an information pack regarding the topics discussed during the seminars; ETC job vacancies, list of courses offered by various organisations including ETC, MCAST, MEYE, local councils, NCW and others; and a map indicating the information about the various offices of

the development partners around Malta and Gozo were distributed during the seminars. A questionnaire was also distributed to all the participants in order to elicit feedback regarding the seminars.

The seminars were not a one-off event for the participants. In fact the participants of the seminars are being followed in order to ensure the uptake of courses and/or employment.

Training of Human Resource Managers; ESF/No. 23 “Gender Mainstreaming the Way Forward”

Training sessions were organised on the 28th and 30th June 2006, targeted specifically to HR Managers. The aims of these training sessions were to sensitise on the concept of Gender Mainstreaming and Family Friendly Measures. Additional training was held on the 20th November 2006, this time giving information to the HR Managers on the results of the Research carried out for the project. This training session was also highlighted by the input of an Irish Speaker, Ms. Kathleen Connolly, Head of NDP Gender Equality Unit - Ireland, who explained and outlined the past and present good practices on gender mainstreaming found in Ireland.

ETC training

On numerous occasions throughout 2006 NCPE liaised with ETC, particularly with the Gender Equality Unit, and a number of initiatives were carried out jointly. One such initiative was the training on Sexual Harassment given to the staff of the Employment and Training Corporation in April 2006.

A manual on Atypical Career Choices was also developed by the ETC. NCPE vetted the document and offered recommendations. Moreover NCPE liaised with ETC regarding the drafting of a Code of Practice on Gender Equality for ETC staff. Subsequently, a number of training sessions were held during which all of the ETC staff were given information regarding the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, its functions, and the obligation to gender mainstream. Training

sessions were held on the 23 February 2006 and the 17 May 2006. Training focused on the functions of the NCPE and gender mainstreaming.

On the 27 March 2006 a training session was delivered during ETC empowerment skills training course during which the functions of the NCPE were discussed at length, the concept of Gender Mainstreaming was described in detail, and legislation and procedures regarding sexual harassment were also explained.

FETE – ‘Facilitating Equality through Education’

Various **training sessions** were held in schools in order to sensitise teachers and staff members on the area of gender equality. The aim of each training session was to:

- Explore attitudes towards gender roles.
- To start challenging these attitudes.
- Understand gender development.
- Understand the role of educators in the development of gender stereotypes.
- Develop new ideas about gender roles.
- Develop a strategy to encourage gender sensitivity and equity.

Apart from the above mentioned training sessions, where the Gender Equality Trainer went directly to the schools, another training session was held on the 22nd November which was specifically organised for all Guidance and Counselling teachers.

As part of this Community co-funded project, NCPE organised also an activity week at Valletta, on the 16th-18th November 2006. The activities were held in a marquee which was set up in Freedom Square, Valletta. During this activity training sessions were organised targeting children/students. These training sessions were intentionally structured to target a young audience. This is why each show included some previews of the FETE computer game; training by the actors utilizing some of the role-plays in the DVD; as well as a play with the theme

of the project *'Believe in yourself. There's no task you cannot carry out'*. The show/training session ended with a theme song, written specifically for this event.

On the 29th November another training session was organised this time targeting B.Ed. students. The message passed here was similar to that prepared for teachers. However this time NCPE targeted student teachers, as these represent a portion of tomorrows' educational staff in schools. This training session was made possible with the help of Dr. Carmel Borg, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

Regional Training Programme on Equality Issues for Good Governance in the Maltese and Cypriot Public Service (5th, 6th and 7th December 2006)

As indicated under *Training Programme on Equality Issues for Good Governance in the Maltese & Cypriot Public Service* in the Projects Chapter, the main component of this project revolved around the provision of capacity building training sessions to top governmental officials that are members of the Equality Committees of their respective Ministry. A training seminar was therefore organised on three consecutive days (5th -7th December) during which 26 Maltese and 4 Cypriot participants were exposed to European and national law and a number of equality principles.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Executive Director and the speeches were delivered by Hon Dolores Cristina and Dr Rose-Marie Endeley from the Commonwealth Secretariat. During her speech Hon Cristina stressed how important, good governance, equality and diversity are to her Ministry, and Government's *"commitment towards developing a public service which is sensitive to equality and which tackles problems that may fuel intolerance"*, while Dr Endeley emphasised the importance of developing a work plan to be subsequently adopted by the governments of Malta and Cyprus and promoted in the rest of the Commonwealth States.

Subsequently, the trainers introduced the participants to the development of the principle of equal treatment, the scope of the Prohibition of Discrimination Article in the European Convention on Human Rights and the relevant case-law, Protocol 12 to the said Convention, EU Gender Equality Directives and Regulations, the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive. The participants were also briefed about the Maltese and Cypriot equality legislation and the equality bodies that are in place in both countries.

The training programme presented a detailed definition of gender mainstreaming and the tools that can be used to achieve positive results. The concept of mainstreaming was subsequently applied to equality and diversity throughout, thus also covering racial or ethnic origin, religious or other belief, sexual orientation, disability and age.

During the three-day programme, ample time was dedicated for group discussions and workshops in order to ensure that the participants internalise the concepts and discuss any contentious issues that they could have. Various case studies were also worked out in groups amongst others covering instances of gender discrimination and multiple discrimination.

The main trainer of this training programme was Ms Sakoon Canakiah who was assisted by staff from NCPE, and from the Cypriot Ombudsman's Office.

Becoming Sensitive to Gender Issues

Three training sessions on 'Becoming Sensitive to Gender Issues' were delivered by NCPE to the following schools:

- Marsa Girls' School
- Lorenzo Balbi Primary School C
- Floriana Primary Schools C

The main tool used for this training was a Gender Sensitivity Manual that was created by NCPE, directed towards educators, counsellors, and Heads of Schools.

This manual is broken down in several sections:

- Historical Background
- Gender Beliefs and Attitudes
- Nature/Nurture Debate
- Gender Identity
- Gender Role
- Theoretical Background
- The Role of Educators as Agents in the Sensitisation of Gender Issues
- Teachers' Attitudes
- The Root of the Problem – Sex Stereotypes
- Textbooks
- The Curriculum
- Society's Preference for Boys
- Facts in the Local Sphere – a longitudinal study – 1995 (Fr. Charles Tabone O.P); 2006 (National Commission for the Promotion of Equality)
- Guidelines for Eliminating Sexism from Textbooks
- Eliminating Gender Bias
- Checklist: What is Appropriate?
- Conclusion
- Appendix

The manual will be made available later on in the year 2007.

Training of Police Officers

Considering that the remit of NCPE is to include other areas of discrimination, NCPE has prepared specific material emanating out of requests received by various entities.

Following the delivery of a training session on racial equality provisions in Maltese legislation and EU Directive 2000/43/EC delivered during August 2005, the Police Academy has included a training session on racial equality in all in-service course

and training programmes for new cadets. During 2006, NCPE was asked to increase its delivery to 7 in-service training sessions of one hour each, and 3 cadet training sessions of 2 hours each.

These sessions are built on an interactive model of training and ask the participants to define the concepts of xenophobia, racism and discrimination themselves before the session moves on to look at the legal provisions that tackle racial discrimination and racial hatred in the *Constitution of Malta*, the *Criminal Code*, the *European Convention Act*, the *Employment and Industrial Relations Act* and the *Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations*, and the *Racial Equality Directive*. Subsequent to this legal overview and a thorough description of the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination, the participants are then asked to work out case study in groups to connect the legal and theoretical aspect of the training session with possible cases of alleged racial discrimination/hatred that they may come across.

PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCES

FOREIGN CONFERENCES

High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, 12th – 13th January, Vienna

As is normal during each EU Presidency, the first meeting held is for the High Level Group on Gender Equality. During this meeting the Roadmap was agreed upon by all Member States and a discussion on the health indicators that Austria would like to take forward was held. Finland as the next Presidency discussed the possibility of a Ministerial conference during its term. This meeting was attended by the Executive Director.

Integrating Partnerships, Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming into ESF Programmes for 2007-2013, 19th-20th January, Brussels

This conference tackled the technical aspect of ESF programmes, particularly the motive behind the importance placed on partnerships by the fund, the advantages of integrating partnerships in ESF programmes, and the right approaches to integrate Gender Equality.

Meeting for Promoters 2005, 3rd February, Brussels

This meeting was held for promoters of EU Commission projects emanating out of DG Employment which provided practical information on the administrative and financial requirements linked to project execution.

Convocations of the 34th Meeting of the Steering Committee for Equality between Men and Women (CDEG), 28th – 30th March, Strasbourg

The 34th meeting of the Steering Committee for Equality between Men and Women convened to discuss the preparations for the 6th European Ministerial Conference on Equality to be held in Stockholm on 8-9 June 2006. The meeting also discussed the findings of a questionnaire about women and men in public life, the setting up of a task force to combat violence against women, trafficking in human beings and activities in the field of gender mainstreaming.

DG EMPL – Roadmap on Gender, 4th-5th May, Brussels

A conference was held in Brussels on the Roadmap document prepared by the Gender Unit of DG EMPL and presented to Council in the Spring Summit. This document is one of the leading documents for equality in Europe.

Experts Conference “Closing the Gender Pay Gap”, 22nd May, Brussels

This conference convened to discuss on how the Lisbon agenda quotas may be reached. A review of projects and good practices were also presented by a number of countries.

CoE- 6th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men, 8th-9th June, Stockholm

The European Ministers responsible for Equality between Women and Men met in Stockholm on the 8th and 9th of June for the 6th Ministerial Conference. Hon Helen D’Amato the Parliamentary Secretary for the Elderly and Community Care in the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care, attended. Hon D’Amato gave a speech on the national developments in view of gender equality as a human right. The national report was submitted to CoE.

Towards a Plan of Action on Strengthening the role of Women in Society

EUROMED Regional Preparatory Conference, Rabat, Morocco

14th -16th June, 2006

The Commissioner, Dr. Janet Mifsud attended the Preparatory Conference for the EUROMED Ministerial Conference held on the 14th to the 16th of June in Morocco.

8th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Brussels 6-8th July

This informal meeting aimed at strengthening the integration of a gender perspective into all policies. This meeting was mainstreamed and each thematic area under discussion was looked at from a gender perspective. The meeting concluded that when carrying out reforms it is necessary to assess their impact on

both women and men, so that the solutions will support in a concrete way the reconciliation of work and family life, productivity of work and quality of working life, reduction of health differences between the genders and targeting of health services, and so that families can have the number of children they want.

12th meeting of the Committee set up to implement the Programme relating to the Community Framework strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005),
Brussels, 27th July

This meeting discussed the submissions received in view of this year's open and closed call for proposals. Presentations were made by Austria, Finland and Germany in view of the work that they were scheduled to conduct while holding the presidency of the EU. The conference also discussed the implementation of the 2006 programme and the conferences that were scheduled as part of the Roadmap. Finally the conference provided an evaluation of the strategic framework and an overview of the PROGRESS programme, as well as information on recent developments with regard to gender equality.

28th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, 7th July

The 28th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, looked at gender equality in structural funds; reports from working groups; work programme for 2007; information from the Commission on recent developments; information from the former, current and future Presidencies and the election of the second vice-president.

Meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, Helsinki 25th -26th September

During this Meeting, Ms L Pavan-Woolfe circulated a draft of the 4th annual report on equality between women and men to the Spring European Council 2007, which monitors the developments towards equality in the EU whilst identifying the priority fields for political action. Gender mainstreaming was discussed by the Austrian, the Finnish and the German Presidencies. Indicators on institutional mechanisms

to promote gender equality, indicators for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, the preparation to the 51st session of the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) and information on recent developments were also dealt with.

29th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women 13th October

The 29th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women discussed gender equality in research; reports from working groups; a document prepared by the Working Group on the EU network of women in economic and political decision-making positions and the gender pay gap; the work programme for 2007; information from the Commission on recent developments; information from the former, current and future Presidencies.

Women and Gender Equality - Towards Progressive Policies (Experts Meeting), 5th - 6th October, Helsinki

This meeting looked at various aspects of the discrepancies that still exist between women and men, thus trying to find policy solutions to them. It also addressed numerous topics ranging from social inclusion to violence while referring to the EU policy direction, and seeking EU-wide solutions.

Informal Meeting of the Ministers of Gender Equality, 6th - 7th October Helsinki

The main discussion in this meeting focused on the current situations of all Member States where government representatives presented relevant information. Malta was represented by Hon. Clyde Puli, Member of Parliament.

European Platform of Women Scientists, 20th October, Brussels

Dr Janet Mifsud, NCPE Commissioner, attended this meeting organised by the EPWS which addressed the important subject of women's under representation in science. The role of the EPWS is in fact to build a structural link between women scientists and research policy makers, and thus to make the voice of women scientists heard. This conference achieved its aim as it was an excellent

networking event that provided Maltese women scientists with an excellent forum for mixing with their international colleagues.

Progetto W.in.D Steering Committee Meeting, 26th October, Rome

This first steering committee meeting was held in Rome and aimed at providing detail about Progetto W.in.D and its obligations on the partner organisations. It was explained that as part of this project, NCPE is expected to submit a research report on the good practices found on a local level and hold a panel discussion in Malta with employers and other relevant partners. NCPE is also expected to contribute to the project by attending other Steering Committee Meetings that shall be organised during the execution of the project.

Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes, Fourth Conference, 27th November, Rovigo

A one-day day conference emanating out of this project was held in Rovigo, Italy. A presentation about the current state of affairs of gender and education in Malta was delivered, highlighting the good practices and the areas that need attention. The main aim of this conference was to draw the attention of students and teachers alike to the need to take gender considerations in education seriously as it was a driving force behind the perpetuation of the current system or a move towards a more equal and inclusive society.

Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes, Final Conference, 29th November, Nicosia

A one-day conference concluding the Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes project was held in Cyprus. During this conference a number of good practices with regard to the sphere of education were identified. And following the presentation of country reports, the Cypriot leaders of the project showed the statistics and research results that were carried out during the project execution, and also presented the materials that were developed.

Convocation of the 36th Meeting of the Steering Committee for Equality Between Women and Men (CDEG), 29th November – 1st December, Strasbourg

This CDEG Meeting addressed the following points:

- Follow-up to the 6th Ministerial Conference on Equality Between Women and Men (Stockholm, 8-9 June 2006)
- Follow-up to the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Skopje, 22-23 January 2003)
- Activities in the field of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making
- Activities to protect women against violence
- Activities in the field of Gender Mainstreaming
- Follow-up to the monitoring by the Committee of Ministers of compliance with commitments by member States in the theme “Equality between women and men”
- Activities to combat Trafficking in Human Beings
- 51st Session of the commission on the Status of Women (New York, 26 February – 9th March 2007)
- Activities for 2007
- Revised Terms of Reference of the GDEG in accordance with the Committee of Ministers Resolution Res (2005) 47 on Committee and Subordinate Bodies, the Terms of Reference and Working Methods
- Elections

AGENDER 2nd Steering Committee Meeting, 13th - 15th December, Lisbon

The second AGENDER trans-national meeting was held in Lisbon, Portugal, where the partners of this project - namely Portugal, France and Malta - discussed the progress of their national projects. The visit included a:

Steering meeting committee – 13th December

During the coordination meeting the main topics that were discussed included the trans-national study, the third trans-national seminar to be organised in France and evaluation.

and a

Trans-national seminar – 14th December

During the trans-national seminar the Maltese delegation presented a section of the national trans-national study, which referred to the topic of the role of women in the Tourist Industry in Malta. The presentation was followed by a discussion with the participants.

Meeting between Commissioner Spidla and the representatives of the national equality bodies designated in accordance to Dir 2002/73/EC, 19th December, Brussels

During this meeting, Commissioner Spidla asked about the competences of the equality bodies that emanate out of Dir 2002/73/EC. Furthermore, the meeting looked at the provision of independent assistance to victims of discrimination, and the conduction of independent surveys concerning discrimination, publishing of independent reports and suggestions for recommendations. The meeting also asked the equality bodies about what their specific needs are, and how they envisage the setting up of a permanent network of equality bodies.

LOCAL CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

NCPE Meetings

The Commission continued to meet on a regular basis. During 2006, a total of 11 meetings were held at the premises of NCPE. Duties and policies emanating from meeting were dealt with accordingly.

Apart from these, the Complaints Sub-Committee also met on a regular basis 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. Further details can be found in the chapter Complaints and Requests for Information.

NCPE Second Annual Conference, 6th January, University of Malta

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) held its Second Anniversary Conference on 6th January including the presentation of the Commission's Annual Report for 2005, and the launch of its website. www.equality.gov.mt

The conference was inaugurated by Hon Dolores Cristina, Minister of the Family and Social Solidarity. In her key-note speech the Minister spoke of Government's commitment to reach a balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions in both the public and private sector to promote gender balance in the social dialogue.

Following the Minister's introductory speech, Dr Janet Mifsud, Commissioner NCPE, highlighted the key elements of the Commission's terms of reference and how the Commission's working strategies have developed. Ms Sina Bugeja, Executive Director NCPE, gave an overview of the 2005 Annual Report highlighting the Commissions' constant efforts to ensure that the Equality for Men and Women Act is in fact implemented. An NCPE member of staff closed the first part of the conference by giving a brief introduction to the new NCPE website.

The second part of the conference was taken up by two workshops, in which participants discussed the role of men in gender equality, and alternative work arrangements. Ms Anna Borg (ETC) and Prof Godfrey Baldacchino (UOM) were the main speakers in the workshops.

Consultation Seminar on the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2008, 31st January, Westin Dragonara Resort

A Consultation Seminar on the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2008 was held as part of consultation process to tackle poverty. NCPE gave its input in the workshop on Access to Rights, Services, Goods and Resources.

MNPN Workshop, 15th February, Waterfront Hotel

An informal discussion was held to highlight the situation of women in Malta and as a preparatory meeting prior to International's Women Day. The main points highlighted included the fact that schools in Malta finished very early leaving a major problem with child caring / minding. This clashed directly with the impetus currently in progress to encourage women to enter the workforce. Serious discussions and decisions are in order on this matter.

Women's Day Celebrations, 8th March, St. James Cavalier

NCPE held an informal meeting to facilitate networking between the Commission, equality organisations and professional women in order to promote further gender equality balance among decision-makers.

The Challenges and Benefits of Telework in Malta, 16th March, Mediterranean Conference Centre

NCPE staff attended this conference organised jointly by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), together with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MITI). This conference introduced the benefits of Telework and addressed concerns the participants had regarding the implementation of this form of alternative work arrangement. During the conference, the results from an ETC-funded research on Telework were presented.

PPCD Conference on Evaluation, 10th May, Mediterranean Conference Centre

The Executive Director attended the PPCD's conference on Evaluation at the Mediterranean Conference Centre where a number of points were raised including one by Ms. Bugeja highlighting the fact that when projects are written by an organization, it is never aware of other projects that are being submitted by other entities aiming at the same cohort. This point alone is confounding the outcomes and results as there have been a number of projects aimed at the same population with possible consequences that affect the outcomes.

The Reggie Miller Foundation - 'Taht Lenti', 16th May Corinthia Palace, Attard
NCPE representatives attended the conference called 'Two Years into Membership: Malta's Accession into the EU'. Particular focus was given to European matters and how these have affected Malta in the past two years.

'Gender Mainstreaming - The way forward', 2nd June Dolmen Hotel, Bugibba
The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) held its third ESF Conference on 2nd June where the researchers presented the key issues of two components:

- Gender Pay Gap
- Tele-working

Broadcasting Authority – National Conference on Quality Children's Programmes, 8th June, Conference Centre Pope John Paul II, Attard
NCPE representatives attended a Conference on Quality Children's Programming organized by the Commission for Children in conjunction with the Malta Broadcasting Authority. The Gender Aspect was placed high on the agenda for consideration.

'Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes' Conference, 20th June 2006 - Radisson SAS, St Julian
NCPE held a half-day conference titled **'Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes' Conference** as part of the 'Gender Equality – A Responsibility of Both Sexes' Project that is led by the National Machinery for Women's Rights (Cyprus), in which several foreign partners namely from Italy, Greece and Cyprus participated.

The main belief behind this project is that gender equality cannot be achieved solely as a result of women's efforts. Men should equally share the responsibility of this cause and should be engaged actively in effort for equality. This conference thus focused mostly on two core issues:

- shared parenting
- stereotype free education.

ETC – Manual For Employers, 22nd June Westin Dragonara Hotel, St. Julians
NCPE participated in an ETC conference during which the Manual for Employers was launched. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality had assisted ETC in writing up this manual.

Family Values in the EU and Malta, EDRC Conference, 19th September

This conference was held by the European Documentation and Research Centre of the University of Malta. The work shop titled 'Work/Life Balance' was chaired by the Executive Director while the rapporteur was a member of NCPE staff.

3rd Women in Sports Seminar, 24th August

The Commissioner and the Executive Director had a meeting with representatives of the Malta Olympic Committee (MOC); namely Dr L Attard and Ms MT Zammit on the 3rd Women in Sports Conference to be held in October.

HCIMA (Hotel and Catering International Management Association) Conference, 24 November

NCPE presented a paper highlighting the current levels of female employment in the Tourism Industry and focusing on the need to ensure a proper balance between work and family responsibilities in all sectors.

AWARENESS RAISING

NCPE has given top priority throughout the past year to raising awareness about gender equality. In fact an opportunity was never missed to issue press releases, to appear on TV and radio programmes as well as to write articles and letters in newspapers continuously. Nevertheless it must be said that much of the promotion of NCPE and gender equality has been through EU funded projects which contained an important element of awareness-raising since NCPE firmly believes that only through awareness raising and education can gender equality be achieved.

Below is further detail about the tools used to raise awareness through each project.

Projects

Gender Mainstreaming - the way forward' (ESF 23)

NCPE has printed material in conjunction with the dissemination of the '*Gender Mainstreaming – the way forward*' project. A number of folder packages containing conference programmes, fact sheets, writing pads and NCPE ball pens were printed. All the resources were printed on recycled paper. This way of raising awareness has been found to be effective.

An advertising campaign on buses intended to promote the NCPE's services with the general public was initiated in January 2006. The four bus back adverts and 13 inside bus adverts (see picture below) were in circulation for 12 months, until December 2006. They will be subsequently substituted with an equivalent amount of adverts promoting the results of the project.

The
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)
is there to:-

- ✓ Promote Gender Equality in all areas of society
- ✓ Ensure that the provisions of the law are adhered to;
- ✓ Provide advice and assistance to people who were discriminated against on grounds of gender or family responsibilities;
- ✓ Inform, educate and promote gender equality policies;
- ✓ Cooperate with similar organisations in other countries

We are here to help you. If you need help or advice, **contact us on: 2590 3850**

NCPE
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Tel: www.equality.com.mt

Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004 - 2006
Project partially funded by the European Union
European Social Fund 2004

‘Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment’ Publicity - EQUAL

Information about the EQUAL project that was researched in the first part of the year 2006 was collated in an information pack that was distributed during the local council seminars. NCPE also compiled information about the various offices of the development partners around Malta and Gozo. This information was ultimately printed on a map that was also distributed during the local council seminars.

Additionally, NCPE compiled relevant information that was printed on the:

- Leaflets to publicise the Local Council Seminars
- Posters to publicise Local Council Seminars
- Bus Shelter Adverts

www.equality.gov.mt

bilanċ bejn ix-xogħol u l-familja

Naħdem... U Kif!
 Programm edukattiv dwar il-bilanċ bejn ix-xogħol u l-familja, edukazzjoni u taħrig, i-ghazla għall-karriera tiegħek, u aktar!

TVM - Nhar ta' Etoġha fis-18.10 b'ipolizzjoni nhar ta' Ħemis fis-10.30
 Education 22 - nhar ta' Oimgha fit-08.15
 Programm tar-Radju - Radju Malta 1 - nhar ta' Ħemis fit-15.30
 Joandar ukoll fuq Sirius TV - Nhar ta' Ħemis fis-19.30 | Super 1 - Nhar ta' Ħemis fis-19.30 | Net TV - Nhar ta' Ħemis fis-19.45

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promoting
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
 through empowerment

Programmi ta' Inizjazzjoni Komunitarja
 Ewel Malta 2004-2009
 Proġetti ta' Finanzjar mill-Unjoni Ewropea
 Fund Bejgħi Ewropeu (FBE)



The TV and radio publicity campaign of this project started in March 2006. In fact, the television and radio programmes, 'Naħdem...U Kif!', and the Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were aired on the local media starting on 1st March 2006. The aim to publicise these programmes was to disseminate information about the role models as well as the available education, training, and labour market opportunities.



A series of seventeen weekly television programmes ‘Naħdem...U Kif!’, each one lasting 30 minutes, were aired on TVM with a repeat on Education 22. These programmes were aired with accompanying sign language to guarantee accessibility to all. Moreover, a series of seventeen weekly radio programmes of the duration of 60 minutes each were being aired live on Radju Malta. The radio programme was meant to complement the TV programmes. The themes being discussed during the television and radio series included education and training, self-esteem, job search, cooperatives, IT, entrepreneurship, law and social security amongst others.

The TV and radio programmes and Public Service Announcements [PSAs] were also informing the general public about the local council seminars that were to start in April.

Moreover, seventeen different television spots of the duration of ten minutes each were also aired. These TV spots can be classified as an extension of the TV programmes and were aired on Net TV, Super One TV and Smash TV. These TV spots promoted the main objectives of the project, and highlighted the main points discussed during the TV programmes. The TV series ‘**Naħdem...U Kif!**’ was nominated for best educational programme and best original script. The TV series was also repeated on TVM every Saturday at 19:10. Moreover, a number of the 4-minute daily “Tikka” programmes have focused on the topics discussed during the TV programme ‘**Naħdem...U Kif!**’. The fact that ‘Tikka’ is aired directly before the 8 o’clock news, made it an ideal spot with extremely high viewership. The topics spoken about in this programme included amongst other things sexual harassment, the setting up of cooperatives, and entrepreneurship.

NCPE has compiled information to promote equal opportunities through empowerment that was printed on:

- Leaflets to Publicise Local Council Seminars –
 - four leaflets were designed according to the geographical region in which the leaflets were distributed. The leaflets were handed

out to a variety of localities to promote the local council seminars, and to entice persons to contact NCPE to enquire about the seminars, and attend such seminars.

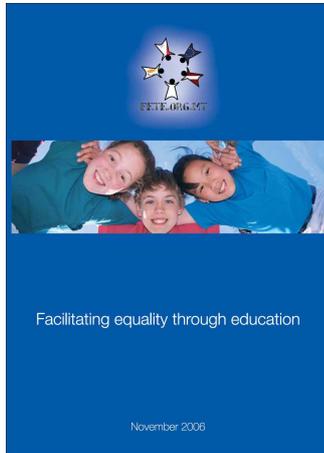
- Posters to Publicise Local Council Seminars –
 - two different posters advertising the Local Council seminars were designed and distributed. The posters together with the leaflets were distributed to all Local Council offices, all bank branches, all health centres, all post offices, all government schools, all faculties at University, all Parish Churches, ETC, Job Centres, the Department of Social Security, and all Government Ministries to publicise Local council Seminars.
- Bus Shelter Adverts –
 - bus shelter adverts were used to promote the Local Council seminars. They were effective in targeting a large mass of the population, especially women who do not drive and who use public transport as their primary means of travelling. Bus Shelter adverts were designed and displayed around the Maltese Islands for a period of 20 days during April 2006 just prior to the commencement of the Local council Seminars.

During April 2006, documents containing the information material that were distributed during the seminars were also finalised, designed and printed. These documents included:

- a. Five A4 leaflets that included basic information about the topics to be discussed during the five weekly seminars.
- b. A 20-page booklet containing basic information about the EQUAL project, the GendeRole partnership, and the organisations that it comprises.
- c. A 20-page booklet containing a list of courses that are offered by the development partners of the project and a brief description of each.
- d. A map indicating the offices of the development partners around Malta and Gozo.
- e. An A4 folder that contained all the documents specified in above.

The above mentioned documents were written in the Maltese language.

Facilitating Equality Through Education



The final report of the research into the current situation of Malta, Cyprus and Latvia has been published. This document gives a thorough picture of how the situation is in the three countries under review and provides an indication of how this could be improved if the best practices identified are mainstreamed. This document emanated from the research component of Facilitating Equality through

Facilitating Equality through Education Activity Week

In addition to the document highlighted above, NCPE organised the Facilitating Equality through Education Activity Week which was held on the 16th, 17th and 18th November. The activities were held under a marquee which was set up in Freedom Square, Valletta, and consisted of a repeated theatre show intended to stimulate discussion on gender roles and stereotypes. In fact, each show included some previews of the FETE computer game; training utilizing some of the role-plays developed for this project and recorded on DVDs; as well as a play specifically targeted for a young audience. The show ended with a theme song, written specifically for this event. This activity was advertised on Xarabank and on a number of children's TV programmes. The children that attended this activity were provided with copies of a colourings book, book marks, stickers and the games on CD-ROM.



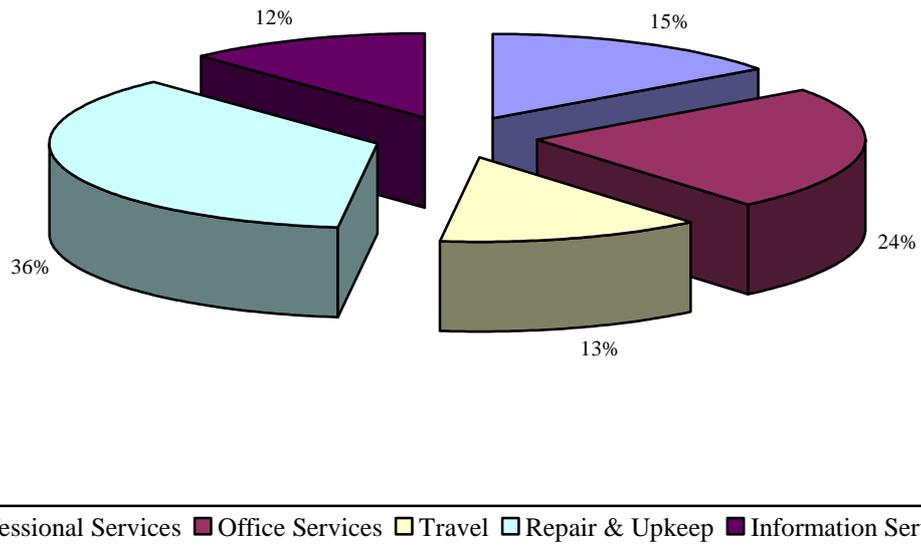
GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EU CONTEXT

During the year 2006, NCPE has given its feedback on various proposals and documents issued by EU bodies. Furthermore, NCPE has 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 2006 included the preparation for discussion concerning a number of issues, amongst which, the Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action - Draft conclusions on Women and Health, the Implementation by the Member States and the EU Institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action – Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms : Draft Council Conclusions, the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Year for Equal Opportunities, the EU Action Plan 2006-2010 for a Strategy to Measure Crime and Criminal Justice, the EESC Information Report of the Sector for External Relations on the Future economic, educational, social and cultural support for young people under the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular by promoting exchanges and joint EU-Mediterranean partner country initiatives, and the draft of Council Conclusions on Men and Gender Equality. Furthermore, regular feedback was required on a regular basis covering the above topics in relation to a number of meeting including Social Questions Working Party Meeting, EPSCO and COREPER meetings.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

At the beginning of the financial year, the government allocated to the Commission a budget of Lm100,000. 78% (Lm61,293) of the total budget related to Staff salaries and Honoraria, 20% (Lm15,292) was for maintenance and operational expenses, while the remaining 2% (Lm1,881) related to purchasing of equipment. An analysis of the operational expenses is better explained by the figure below.

Operational & Maintenance Expenses

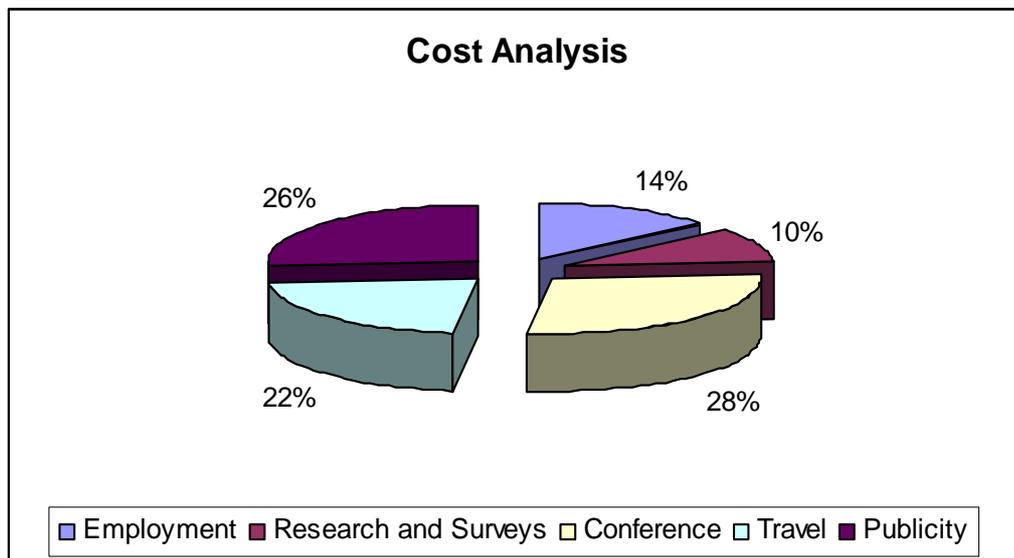


The above figure clearly shows that more than a quarter (36%) of the operational expenses accounted to repair and upkeep (Lm5,505). This expense mainly related to the refurbishment expenses that took place during the year under review for the Commission's new premises. 24% related to information services (Lm3,670), while the remaining 40% related to travel (Lm1,988), professional (LM2,294) and office services (1,835).

During the financial year under review the Commission also succeeded in making use of EU Funds. The following is a table highlighting the various projects which the Commission participated in and their respective budgets for year ending 2006.

Name of Project	Budgeted Amount (2006) Lm
Facilitating Equality Through Education	121,331
ESF	78,236
Equal	49,478
Commonwealth	5,900
Unesco	1,675

Below is a graphic representation (expressed as a percentage of total costs) of how the above mentioned funds were used in order to meet the respective objectives of the various projects.



The expenditure reported for the operational period under review was in line with what had been budgeted. This was only attainable through continuous monitoring and review when needed by all staff concerned.