



PRESS RELEASE:

Final Conference - Project co-financed by the PROGRESS Programme in 2010, VS/2009/04/05 - *Strengthening Equality beyond Legislation*

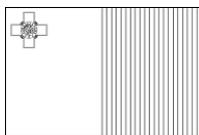
The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) concluded one of its EU co-financed projects entitled “*Strengthening Equality beyond Legislation*”, aimed at reaching out to specific target groups to sensitise and stimulate specific action by stakeholders as their contribution towards a *de facto* equal environment.

A conference organized by NCPE at the end of this project outlined the various initiatives taken, namely the implementation of further legislation on non-discrimination through awareness raising, training, and research; the development of a national policy to combat discrimination and promote equality beyond legislation; and the dissemination of information on EU and national policy and legislation in the non-discrimination field.

Opening this conference, NCPE’s Executive Director Dr Romina Bartolo, emphasized the importance of implementing and enforcing legislation on non-discrimination. Dr Bartolo specifically mentioned the practical ways that were used as part of this project to implement and enforce such legislation. Through the training sessions conducted as part of this project, Dr Bartolo said that NCPE reached out to various stakeholders and entities on issues related to equality and discrimination.

VS/2009/04/05- Strengthening Equality Beyond Legislation included three main actions: research, training and awareness raising. The research components included analysing underreporting of discrimination; reviewing the national minimum curriculum from an equality perspective; analysing the preferred media of minorities to use in future campaigns; and developing a National Action Plan on Racism and Xenophobia.

The research component that analysed underreporting of discriminatory incidents found that most people do not report such incidents. The reasons for underreporting are lack of knowledge about where to report, embarrassment or fear of further persecution, lack of faith in authorities or feelings of powerlessness. This research also identified the most effective means to encourage people to report, which are education, media attention and retraining of staff in several entities.



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Moreover, the National Minimum Curriculum was reviewed from an equality perspective. This involved an analysis of the content that is being taught in schools, ensuring that the Curriculum is not only inclusive but it also promotes inclusiveness as a vital part of the development of a society in which all groups are considered to be equal and are hence treated with respect and dignity.

The main outcome of the pilot study on the preferred media of minorities highlighted that the most preferred medium to reach out to African minority in Malta was that of training or information sessions. To this end, NCPE carried out two information sessions at Hal Far Village Tent and at Marsa Open Centre. Immigrants were provided with information on anti-discrimination issues, access to healthcare, access to work and employment rights.

As part of this project, a National Action Plan on Racism and Xenophobia was compiled. This strategic document, which is the first action plan on the subject, aims to provide direction to anti-racist measures for the next three years. It seeks to build upon and achieve full potential of the legal framework that already exists on racism as well as the various initiatives that were undertaken by a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

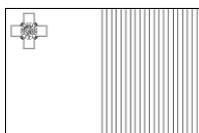
On the other hand, the training component of this project included cross-organisational training with various entities in the field, as well as training to educators, parents and youths. Furthermore, targeted training was provided to media organisations.

Other project activities included awareness raising campaigns on the internet and newspapers, an equality in schools competition, training for school children using forum theatre that helped them widen the anti-discrimination message in schools; and an interdiversity seminar for youths.

The outcomes emanating from the training sessions and research activities feed into the development and implementation of EU legislation and policies.

For more information contact NCPE either by email on equality@gov.mt or by phone on 2590 3850.

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