

**NCPE's Annual Conference 2022**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Villa Arrigo, Naxxar**

**Proceedings**

**Welcoming remarks - NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera**

- During this conference, we will present the work carried out by the NCPE in 2021 and have the Equality Mark Awarding Ceremony.
- Despite progress achieved, many challenges remain towards enhancing equality and combating discrimination.
- People may be discriminated against because of one or more grounds that are part of, or are perceived, as part of their identity.
- As suggested by the participants during last March conference, we will have the opportunity to delve deeper into the topic of intersectional discrimination during today's Conference, through a presentation by Prof JosAnn Cutajar followed by actual stories of persons who went through or witnessed intersectional discrimination.

**Opening address - Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Ms. Rebecca Buttigieg**

- Equality has been high on the Government's agenda
- Gender corrective mechanism – implemented for the first time this year to increase the participation of women in politics
- More work needs to be done to safeguard equality
- Once enacted, the Equality Bill will facilitate equal treatment across all spheres of life – following consultation
- The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities
- I would like to thank Ms Renee Laiviera and her team for their work

**Opening address - Minister for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, Hon. Dr. Byron Camilleri**

- Various government initiatives contributed to equal opportunities in the everyday lives of people and measures have been taken to enhance equal opportunities in the labour market, including the free childcare scheme, the breakfast club, and the Klabb 3-16 after-school programme.
- Moreover, for the seventh consecutive year, Malta has retained its first place among 49 EU countries on the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index.
- We look forward to the NCPE's findings of the research study currently being carried out on discrimination experienced by the LGBTIQ+ community following the recently adopted legislation in the context of the EU co-funded project *Empowerment for Diversity*.

**Equality Mark Awarding Ceremony**

- During this Awarding Ceremony:
  - **19 organisations** will be newly certified with the Equality Mark
  - **37** will receive their re-certification
- The Equality Mark is awarded to organisations that make gender equality one of their values and whose management is based on the recognition and promotion of the potential of all employees: both women and men, and persons with caring responsibilities.
- The NCPE provides guidance to organisations in implementing the necessary measures needed for the Equality Mark certification, such as drafting an Equality Policy and a Sexual Harassment Policy and putting in place or improving the availability of family-friendly measures.

### **Investigations Report 2021 - NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera**

- PowerPoint Presentation available [here](#)

### **NCPE Promotion of equality 2021 - NCPE Commissioner, Ms Renee Laiviera**

- PowerPoint Presentation available [here](#)

### **Intersectionality - Prof JosAnn Cutajar, Department of Gender & Sexualities, UoM**

- PowerPoint Presentation available [here](#)

### **Discussion: Sharing experiences of intersectional discrimination**

- **Moderator** – Prof JosAnn Cutajar
- **Panel members:**
  - Ms Karen Buttigieg – a lecturer and a mother to a son with a disability
  - Mr Dali Agrebi – a member of MGRM and Tunisian refugee
  - Dr Ibtisam Sadegh – an anthropologist and lawyer
  - Ms Gledis Mallia – transgender with disability
- **Prof JosAnn Cutajar:**
  - Do you experience intersectional discrimination?
  - What are your reactions to these experiences?
- **Ms Karen Buttigieg:**
  - My experience of parenting is different from other parents because I am parenting a child with disability.

- While we have learned the value of female participation in the workforce, there is still a patriarchal idea that women are expected to take on the role of the primary care giver.
  - On the other hand, mothers of children with disabilities in many ways are expected not to work.
  - Services like childcare or breakfast clubs do not offer specialised care for children with disabilities.
  - This places mothers like me in the awkward position of having a financial requirement to work due to the increased care needs of children with a disability, but on the other hand, facing the expectation not to have a paid employment but to care for their children due to diminished childcare options.
  - Sometimes, I have to take my son with me to work because there are no resources at school (shortage of LSEs).
  - These issues make me feel angry at these injustices.
  - I have a support system – I work, I am doing a PhD, I am involved in NGOs
  - Issues do not stand alone. Each Ministry, each NGO, they all work on their own – this is not intersectionality.
- **Mr Dali Agrebi:**
    - As a gay man and an asylum seeker, I often face double discrimination from different marginalised communities.
    - Being in a community that is racist and a community that is homophobic.
    - As a gay person, you are seen as a foreigner and a refugee. I am made to feel like I am not actually part of the LGBTIQ community.
    - Meanwhile when you are living in containers in Hal Far, it's also a difficult decision to be yourself because the community is homophobic.
    - I ask myself am I going to end up being discriminated against because of my skin colour today or is my community going to turn against me if I come out to them?

- Malta prides itself on having the most advanced LGBTIQ rights in Europe. This is a lie. Gay people are scared to come out.
  - I faced challenges in accessing these rights because of my asylum status.
  - When gay people live in a country where they are criminalised and scared to come out, they are still asked to prove that they are gay when asking for asylum, and very often they aren't believed. How on earth can I prove that I am gay to an asylum officer?
  - Whether it is through being a refugee or being gay, either way, your rights are eliminated.
  - My reaction is to speak-up. To change mentality, you need to change the laws first.
  - If the government is still humiliating migrants in front of the court, they are showing that you can mistreat migrants.
  - I form part of the MGRM community – we are trying to advocate for change.
- **Dr Ibtisam Sadegh:**
    - I receive discrimination for not fully belonging to one category – I am an academic and a lawyer
    - I am privileged in many ways
    - People keep telling me that I am not Maltese when I state my name (Arabic surname)
    - As a result of direct discrimination, I have learnt to feel different. I feel upset, ashamed, and helpless. I feel helpless which is not the right way to feel as a lawyer.
    - In Malta, we often link rights with status.
- **Ms Gledis Mallia:**
    - I have time on my hands – I do not work, and I feel alone.
    - I want to find employment.

- I experienced discrimination when going to the housing authority because I am transgender.
  
- **Prof JosAnn Cutajar:**
  - We all need to come together to bring a more holistic and inclusive approach.
  
- **Participant's comment:**
  - I used to work in a retail store, and I had long hair. I had a hair clip and the manager told me to remove it because only women can wear hair clips. I felt bothered.
  - Today, I feel blessed with my current job as I can now express myself.
  
- **Ms Laiviera:**
  - There has to be a valid reason to dress in a particular way.
  - We all have our biases; we are never neutral, but the most important thing is to be aware of our biases.

**Closing remarks – Ms Laiviera**

- Thank you all for participating in today's Conference, and thank you to all the speakers

**9<sup>th</sup> June 2022**