



Equality Matters

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

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Issue 3

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Message from the Editor



This edition is marking NCPE's 10th anniversary. Throughout these years, equality has been placed and steadily maintained on the national agenda through numerous initiatives taken by NCPE. The 10-year timeline presented below highlights the main developments that NCPE has gone through which extended NCPE's remit and widened its scope and responsibilities.

This newsletter also features:

- ⇒ an overview of the work NCPE carried out in 2013,
- ⇒ information about our website and library; and
- ⇒ useful advice on:
 - preventing and combating sexual harassment, and
 - the value of equality.

You can also read about the awareness-raising activities that NCPE organised earlier this year. As usual, enjoy the game on the last page!

I trust that you will find this newsletter interesting and useful.

Maria Theresa Portelli
PR & Communications Officer, NCPE

The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity.

John Hume



10 YEAR CELEBRATION

NCPE is marking its 10th year since its inception. The following is a 10-year timeline highlighting the main developments extending NCPE's remit and widening its scope and responsibilities.

Establishment of NCPE by Chapter 456, Equality for Men and Women Act – Addressed non-discrimination on the basis of family responsibilities and gender in employment, education and vocational training as well as in banks and financial institutions

NCPE started to tackle equality in goods and services on the basis of gender

Way Forward
A process has been initialised to widen NCPE's remit to encompass Human Rights and Equality, so it will act as a national human rights institution as well as an equality body in line with the provision established by European Directives on equal treatment



NCPE's remit has been extended to include equal treatment in the provision of goods and services on the basis of race and ethnic origin

Chapter 456 was amended and NCPE's work was extended. Now covering gender and family responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, religion / belief, racial / ethnic origin and gender identity in employment, education or vocational training and by banks or financial institutions



2013: An overview of NCPE's work



On 29th May 2014, NCPE organised its **10th Annual Conference** during which NCPE's Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, gave an overview of the work that the Commission carried out in 2013. Last year, NCPE continued working to uphold and advance equal treatment in different spheres in society promoting equal opportunities and safeguarding equal rights to everyone.

The investigation of complaints is one of the core functions of the Commission with 53 complaints being lodged with NCPE in 2013. NCPE investigated 22 complaints of alleged discrimination on the grounds of gender, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation and age. The alleged discrimination of another 31 complaints did not fall

within NCPE's remit, which covers gender and family responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin and gender identity in employment, banks and financial institutions and education and vocational training as well as racial/ethnic origin and gender in the provision of goods and services and their supply.

The Commission has submitted and continues to work on a number of policy recommendations, including surnames of spouses, cohabitation legislation and amendments to strengthen CAP 456, Equality for Men and Women.

Adverts in local newspapers and online media are reviewed with the aim of preventing and combating discriminatory portrayals. In 2013, NCPE intervened in 58 cases of discriminatory job adverts –

- 43 cases involved discriminatory adverts for vacant posts in employment and gender discrimination in education and vocational training
- 13 involved discrimination on the basis of age in employment
- 2 job adverts were considered discriminatory on the basis of both gender and age.

The Equality Mark is awarded to organisations that demonstrate a commitment to foster gender equality at the workplace and in their provision of goods and services. The success of the Equality Mark meant that there were 15,757 employees in 54 private companies and government entities working under equality certified conditions in 2013.

Various initiatives are being implemented with the aim of enhancing the gender-balance in decision making positions and empowering more women to take up these positions:

- the Directory of Professional Women
- a mentoring programme and training for women aspiring to hold decision-making positions
- research studies on this subject matter.

A set of initiatives was drafted in 2013 to raise further awareness on violence against women and girls, addressing distinct forms of violence against women, and the circumstances and needs of victims of violence and of professional people who work with these victims. NCPE carried out over 50 hours of training throughout 2013, with over 860 participants, on subject matters related to equality and non-discrimination to raise further awareness in this regard and to empower stakeholders to foster equal treatment.

A more detailed overview of NCPE's work in 2013 can be found on our Annual Report 2013 at:http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Pages/Our_Publications_and_Resources/NCPE_Annual_Reports.aspx

Copies on CD of Annual Report 2013 can also be obtained from our offices at Gattard House, National Road, Blata I-Bajda.

Logging on to our Website

One of the main channels through which NCPE spreads its messages for equality is through its website www.equality.gov.mt. Throughout the years, this website has been developed in a more user-friendly and approachable manner and is updated on a regular basis.

Various sections are featured, mainly with the latest news and events of the Commission, and information about the rights and obligations of the general public, employers and service providers. In addition, soft copies of documents and publications issued by NCPE can be downloaded. Information related to the procedure of how to report a case of discrimination by lodging a complaint is also included.

This website can provide you with the relevant information on equal treatment and on NCPE's work whether:

- you are interested in equality
- carrying out research on this subject matter
- you are looking for information on steps you can take if you are discriminated against
- and more.

www.equality.gov.mt

Visiting our Library and Documentation Centre

The Library, situated at NCPE's premises in Blata I-Bajda, includes a wide range of books, periodicals and journals that are available to the general public who may need to carry out research or consult these publications. The majority of the resources available are linked to themes related to equality on all grounds. The library also includes resources related to politics, the media, health, religion and European Union issues, to mention a few.

NCPE regularly expands its library resources with new books and publications with the total number of publications now exceeding 7,000 documents.

The Library also hosts a database of local newspaper articles that are related to equality and discrimination. For a quick reference, these articles are all filed electronically. This archive serves both as a tool for NCPE's staff to use in their work and to the general public who may be interested to acquire information and features published in local newspapers.

The databases of this Library can be accessed online on http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Pages/Our_Publications_and_Resources/NCPE_Library.aspx

and those interested to visit our library are advised to set an appointment with NCPE on 25903850 or equality@gov.mt



Awareness-raising Activities



Earlier this year, NCPE carried out two main awareness-raising activities through which it continued celebrating diversity and non-discrimination. '**Celebrating Diversity**' was a multi-cultural event held on Saturday 22nd March in Pjazza De Vallette, Valletta, aiming at promoting cultural diversity through music, entertainment, children's activities and games.

This event was an opportunity for NCPE to reach out to the general public and speak about equality and non-discrimination, and to disseminate publications and promotional material on equality and non-discrimination. African, Arabic and Asian tents showcased craft and artisan products while free food tasters were available for the public throughout the day. An art exhibition was set-up including 3D sculptures and paintings portraying messages of equality and non-discrimination. The performance area entertained the public with music while children were delighted with face-painting and African, Arabic and Asian games.

Video of this event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3-k-mXSLJQ>

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The **Have Your Say! Campaign** which was held throughout March 2014 consisted of a roving video booth where individuals had the opportunity to have their say on:

- instances where they experienced or witnessed discrimination
- their views on the effects of discrimination and
- the benefits of equality and non-discrimination.

The *Have Your Say!* roving booth was situated across Malta and Gozo and stimulated sensitivity on the subject of non-discrimination, equal opportunities and diversity. A minimum of 100 participants have visited the video booth. Around 50 of them referred to racial discrimination, which clearly dominated all other grounds of discrimination.



Video of this event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Q0xmWxuDQ>

Experiences of discrimination recounted in the video booth

'Have Your Say!'

Gender:

"I cannot find a job with my truck-driving license in Malta. Some companies told me that they won't hire me because I am a woman and that would cause problems in a male team. This is not fair".

Sexual Orientation:

"It should be my own private decision who I love and with whom I hold hands with even in public ... without being insulted or judged for it, just as it is normal for heterosexual couples".

Age:

"You are more likely to receive training from your employer if you are young or in the early years of your career (...) Training opportunities seem to decrease once you reach a certain age".



Religion / Belief:

"I pray five times a day, two of these prayers coincide with my work hours. I have regularly asked my employer to schedule my breaks at this time, but he refuses to give me permission, whilst my colleagues are allowed to take breaks to carry out errands without any trouble".

Racial / Ethnic Origin:

"The discrimination I've experienced makes me feel that perhaps I don't belong here. Some people need to be told that difference in colour does not make you any less or more important"

Gender Identity:

"No matter where I go people stare at me, because I'm different, I'm somewhere in between. Sometimes I wished I was invisible. Everyone should be accepted as they are and have the right to live in a self-determined way".



What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a prohibited form of gender discrimination which is essentially defined as 'unwelcome sexual conduct' and is unlawful.

What does it involve?

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- unwelcome physical contact such as touching, hugging or kissing
- staring or leering
- suggestive comments or jokes
- unwanted invitations to go out on dates or requests for sexual interaction
- intrusive questions about an employee's private life or body
- unnecessary familiarity
- insults or taunts based on your sex
- sexually explicit emails or SMS
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- sexually explicit pictures, screen savers or posters; and
- behaviour which would also be an offence under the criminal law, such as physical sexual assault, indecent exposure, and obscene or pornographic communications.



What does not constitute sexual harassment?

Sexual interaction, flirtation, attraction or friendship which is invited, mutual, consensual or reciprocated. This is due to the fact that for sexual harassment to arise, the sexual conduct in question must be **unwelcome and unwanted**.

Is sexual harassment prohibited regardless of the sex of the parties?

Yes, sexual harassment is prohibited regardless of the sex of the parties. This means that a person can make a complaint if they are harassed by someone of the same sex. For example, sexual harassment can involve a male apprentice who is subjected to comments about his sex life by male co-workers.

How many times does sexual harassment have to be endured before making a complaint?

It does not have to be repeated or continuous to be against the law. One has the right to complain immediately after the occurrence of the first episode.

For further assistance on matters related to sexual harassment, contact the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, NCPE.

The Value of Equality

Equality can have different meanings to different people based on their values, beliefs, life experiences and their views of the world.

Why is equality important?

- Equality safeguards equal opportunities to every person that should lead to equality of outcomes. This creates a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and use their qualifications, skills and experiences.
- Equality impinges positively on the welfare of everyone in society. The lack of equality (discrimination) may affect everyone at some point in time in life.
- Equal treatment enhances inclusion and embraces diversity. Thus, equality enriches us as individuals and holistically as a society.
- Equality promotes equal opportunity where everyone has equal chances to participate in all the areas within society. This is important to challenge stereotypes where various roles or functions are assigned to particular groups of persons within society in a stereotypical way. For instance, when equality is safeguarded, women and men are encouraged to participate in employment, or social or political life irrespective of their gender.
- Through equality society is better able to take into account the circumstances and needs of everyone, including minority groups.



What equality is about:

It is about **OUTCOME** and **OPPORTUNITY**:

Do individuals and groups have equal access to the resources or supports necessary to ensure that they have the same opportunities and outcomes – for example in work or school?

It is about **RESPECT**:

Is respect for difference visible or invisible in society, workplace, community, school or family? Are there stereotypes about particular individuals/groups that cause disrespect?

It is about **PARTICIPATION**:

Who makes the decisions in society/community?

Are some voices absent?

It is about **RELATIONSHIP**:

Does society/community promote and support good relations between diverse groups of people?

We all should know that
 diversity makes for a rich tapestry,
 and we must understand that
 all the threads of the tapestry
 are equal in value
 no matter what their colour.

Maya Angelou



Game

B	G	Y	L	T	H	I	W	C	T	Q	R	Y	S	B
O	C	S	T	C	E	O	N	M	E	X	T	E	B	
L	J	O	L	I	B	E	E	Z	L	V	P	E	P	G
N	Y	A	M	S	N	M	P	A	W	S	A	I	Y	Q
H	E	Y	I	M	S	U	T	S	O	I	R	C	T	V
H	X	T	E	S	U	I	T	H	E	W	T	O	O	F
H	E	A	A	P	O	N	L	R	G	R	I	S	E	C
J	A	R	F	N	G	R	I	N	O	K	C	U	R	A
C	A	M	S	J	S	X	J	T	U	P	I	F	E	M
H	M	H	U	K	B	E	E	E	Y	I	P	R	T	P
A	I	P	R	E	G	N	A	N	C	Y	A	O	S	A
P	Y	R	A	R	B	I	L	V	D	L	T	M	G	I
R	O	V	A	L	U	E	Y	O	T	R	I	C	E	G
N	O	I	T	A	N	I	M	I	L	E	O	B	G	N
X	H	I	E	J	I	B	M	A	B	F	N	H	X	O

- CAMPAIGN
- COMMUNITY
- ELIMINATION
- HARASSMENT
- HEALTH
- LIBRARY
- OPPORTUNITY
- PARTICIPATION
- PREGNANCY
- RELATIONSHIP
- RESPECT
- SOCIETY
- STEREOTYPES
- VALUE
- WEBSITE

For more information on NCPE's services
 and its upcoming events contact us on:

Tel: 25903850
 Website: www.equality.gov.mt
 Email: equality@gov.mt
 Facebook: National Commission for the Promotion of Equality