



# Equality Matters

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

Issue 7

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## Message from the Editor

We are pleased to send you another issue of *Equality Matters* with the latest updates of our work and with other topical issues related to equality.

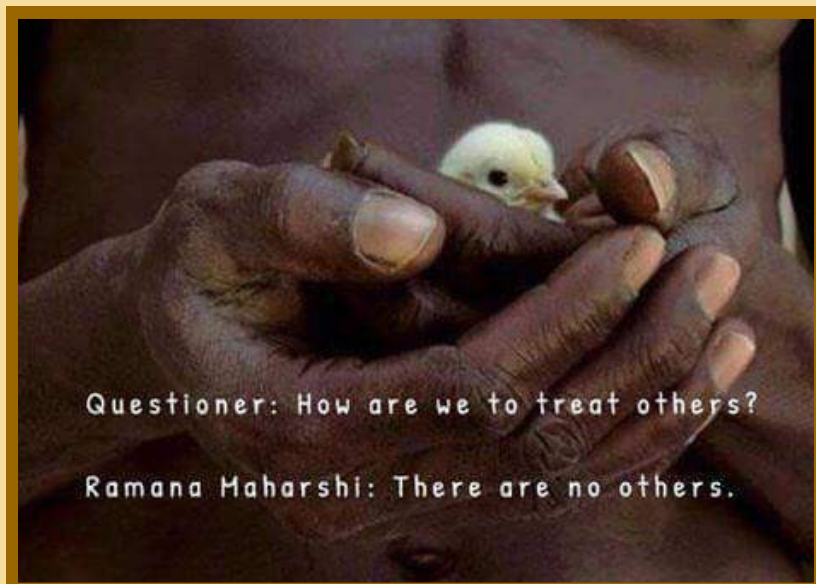


The first quarter of this year for NCPE was marked by the Conference for International Women's Day and NCPE's commitments in relation to the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union resulting in the adoption of the Council Conclusions, on enhancing the skills of women and men in the EU labour market, during the March EPSCO Council. You can read more on these two activities on Pgs 2 and 6 respectively.

In this edition, you can also read on and have a look at the photos of our 13th Annual Conference and of another two activities that NCPE is currently organising as part of its project '*Equality Beyond Gender Roles*'. Complaints' investigation is an ongoing commitment for NCPE – on Pg.5 you will find a complaint that involves alleged discrimination at the workplace on the basis of gender and family responsibilities.

An overview of statistical data related to the Judiciary in Malta is being presented in this issue. And finally, enjoy the game on the last page!

*Maria Theresa Portelli*  
Officer (PR & Communications), NCPE



## NCPE marking International Women's Day

Encouraging more women to take up decision-making positions in the labour market and in politics as well as the effects of the media on gender stereotypes were discussed during a Conference organized by NCPE to mark International Women's Day. The theme chosen for this Conference was *Fejn qegħdin? Fejn irridu nkunu?* (Gender Equality: Where do we stand? Are we there yet?).

NCPE's Commissioner, Renee Laiviera, explained that the aim of this Conference was to shed more light on the current situation in Malta in terms of the representation of women and men in decision-making in the labour market and in politics, as well as on the role of the media on gender stereotypes.

Opening the conference, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Dr Helena Dalli, highlighted the Government's commitment to foster equal opportunities. Minister Dalli referred to the encouraging supportive measures and practices that are available and that encourage more women to enter the labour market. Regarding gender stereotypes in the media, Minister Dalli explained that stereotypes are one of the most persistent causes of inequality between women and men in all spheres and at all stages of life, influencing people's choices in both professional and private life. The elimination of negative gender stereotypes is essential to achieving gender equality and the media are central to pushing forward this change.

An outline of the current situation of women in decision-making positions in the labour market and in politics was presented by Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Director, Cottonera Resource Centre and Senior Lecturer, Gender Studies, Faculty of Social Wellbeing, University of Malta), highlighting the need for a constant commitment to encourage more women to take up such positions. The effects of the media on gender stereotypes were addressed by Dr Brenda Murphy (Acting Head of Department & Senior Lecturer, Gender Studies, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta), emphasising that the way women and men are portrayed in the media can be a key factor in promoting and strengthening gender equality, but also in preventing and eradicating gender discrimination.

Following these presentations, two panels made up of stakeholders, MEPs, academics, and media professionals, among others, discussed the pertinent issues raised during the Conference. MEP Dr Alfred Sant reiterated that gender quotas are the way forward to balance the gender component in Parliament.





# Activities: Equality Beyond Gender Roles

## (I) Theatre in Education

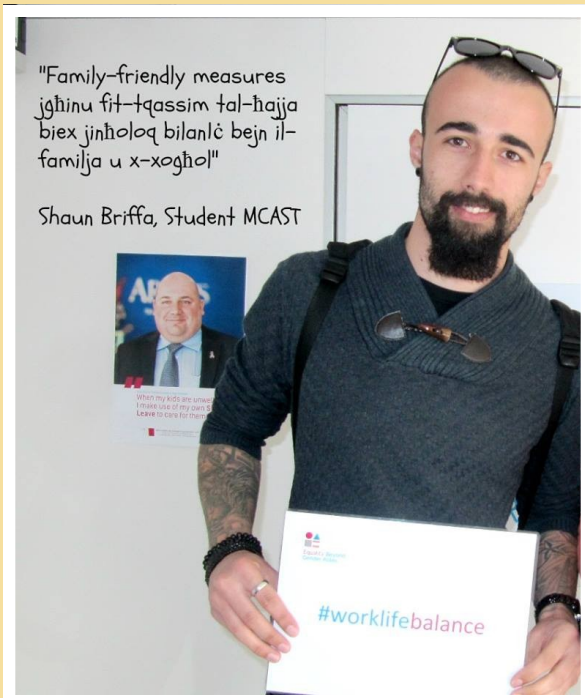
As part of the *Equality beyond Gender Roles* project, NCPE is aiming to raise awareness amongst students of different ages, primarily in schools, on breaking gender stereotypes, on the importance of gender equality, work-life balance and sharing domestic and caring responsibilities.

In collaboration with the Drama Unit, NCPE is carrying out drama sessions in secondary schools around Malta and Gozo. A number of actors are performing 5 different scenarios, portraying different roles within family settings. Such sessions are instigating thought and discussion amongst youth, related to gender stereotypes, gender equality and the sharing of domestic and caring responsibilities among family members.



## (2) Roving Van

As part of *Equality Beyond Gender Roles* project, a roving van exhibition is visiting post-secondary and tertiary schools in six different locations around Malta and Gozo, to compile ideas and thoughts from male students on the subjects being tackled by the project. Focus is being directed on men, since studies show that men are less likely than women to create a work-life balance and to juggle domestic and familial duties.





## NCPE's Investigations: Alleged discrimination at the workplace on the basis of gender and family responsibilities



The complainant alleged that she was being discriminated in the context of her family responsibilities in the arrangements of her working conditions. In particular, it was alleged that the employer's refusal to extend the complainant's reduced hours contract for a further period following her return from maternity and parental leave in the interim period before going out on maternity leave for her second pregnancy was discriminatory in her regard, both on the basis of her sex as well as on the basis of family responsibilities.

On a preliminary basis, NCPE's Commissioner noted that whilst reduced hours are not mandated by law and hence there is no legal obligation on employers in this regard, working a reduced hours timetable is in line with policies adopted by the Government of Malta in an effort to further promote equality between men and women.

Following the investigation, the Commissioner noted that whilst the employer argued that the complainant's role was irreplaceable and it was not possible for it to be covered by her colleagues, during the company's testimony it was confirmed that the complainant's colleagues could in fact take over her responsibilities.

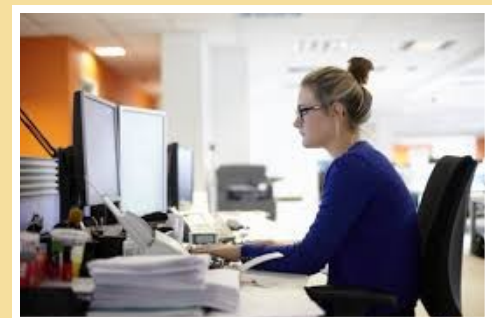
To justify the refusal to allow reduced working hours to the complainant, the employer argued that there was an increased workload in certain company sections, other than in those where the complainant worked; however, the company failed to explain how the increase in workload

in other sections of the company could or did affect the workload in the complainant's section, thereby justifying the company's refusal.

Another reason mentioned by the company as a justification for their refusal, was that they had to adhere with strict EU-mandated deadlines. In this respect, the Commissioner argued that the complainant's colleagues could have taken on the complainant's responsibilities, and that work could have been distributed in such a manner so as to cater for such deadlines.

Moreover, the Commissioner noted that the company's argument that it could not train another person to temporarily cover the complainant's responsibilities because it did not have time to adequately train such person owing to the level of expertise involved, did not hold water, as the complainant had already been on maternity and parental leave before, and subsequently also on reduced hours, entailing that the company had already dealt with the complainant's absence from work.

On the basis of the above, **the Commissioner found enough evidence to prove the occurrence for discrimination against the complainant.**



If you are being treated unfairly and you want to know how you can  
file a complaint with NCPE,

log on to <http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Pages/Complaints.aspx>

## **Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU: Council Conclusions on “Enhancing the Skills of Women and Men in the EU Labour Market”**

### **Adopted at EPSCO Council in March 2017**

Member states are called to:

- Give priority to addressing barriers to women and men’s participation in the labour market when implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy, paying special attention to the importance of skills
- Step up efforts to mainstream the gender perspective into their national skills and labour market policies, paying particular attention to the specific disadvantages faced by women in the labour market and over the life course
- Combat gender discrimination, segregation and stereotypes in education, training, vocational training and career guidance
- Continue analysing early school leaving from a gender perspective and address the various challenges that hinder educational attainment, particularly among girls and boys who are in vulnerable situations or belong to marginalised groups
- Address the gender gap in employment among workers close to retirement by adopting an intersectional approach
- Provide and make accessible gender-sensitive targeted advisory services to low-skilled inactive women and men
- Take steps to further facilitate the recognition of qualifications and of informal and formal skills and to promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Provide care leave for parents, including paternity leave, and facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and private life through the provision of quality, affordable and accessible care services to assist persons with caring responsibilities
- Combat precarious employment, and upgrade working conditions by enforcing the applicable legislation
- Encourage and incentivise companies in all sectors to provide more training at work and opportunities for education and training to both women and men
- Foster dialogue with the social partners, women’s organisations and civil society organisations, in order to enhance cooperation on combating pay discrimination and precarious job conditions
- Consider taking steps to ensure that public procurement contracts do not lead to precarious employment situations for women and men

## NCPE's 13th Annual Conference

This year's Annual Conference focused on three main issues: the work programme carried out in 2016; challenging traditional roles of women and men in Maltese society and the award of the Equality Mark.

19 organisations were newly certified with the Equality Mark while another six (6) organisations were re-certified by NCPE. These organisations truly foster equal treatment in their work policies and practices.

In an overview of NCPE's work undertaken in 2016, NCPE's Commissioner Renee Laiviera said that 2016 was an eventful year for NCPE focusing on work to further promote and safeguard equal treatment in different spheres of society. In effect, a two-year campaign was launched in order to continue challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes that confine women and men in various ways in contemporary society.

NCPE also continued to investigate complaints of alleged discrimination, provide feedback to policies and documents from national and international entities, and deliver several training sessions with various stakeholders on the grounds of equality defined in its remit. In fact, in 2016, NCPE gave 48 training sessions with over 1,100 participants. Renee Laiviera concluded that NCPE is looking forward to take on board the widening of its remit whereby NCPE will be transformed into a Human Rights and Equality Commission (HREC) answering directly to Parliament.

During the Conference, NCPE's Manager (Policy & Training) Stephanie Borg Bonaci, explained NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and outlined some case studies.

A presentation on gender stereotypes was another highlight of this year's Annual Conference that was delivered by Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Director, Cottonera Resource Centre and Senior Lecturer, Gender Studies, Faculty of Social Wellbeing, University of Malta), emphasising that challenging the traditional roles of women and men in society can be a key factor in promoting and strengthening gender equality, but also in preventing and eradicating gender discrimination. Workshops followed with participants discussing how such gender stereotypes can be addressed.



Equality Mark Awardees 2017

## New Publication: NCPE's Annual Report 2016

NCPE's **Annual Report 2016**, with an overview of the work that NCPE carried out in 2016, is now out. In this yearly publication, NCPE showcases its initiatives, projects and all its work to combat discrimination towards a more equal society.

*Annual Report 2016* comprises information on NCPE's investigations of complaints alleging discrimination as per NCPE's remit; on the ongoing delivery of training; research studies focusing on specific topics; and awareness-raising campaigns targeting different contexts and groups in society.

The *Report* also provides an overview of the most important developments that occurred in 2016 in the area of equality and non-discrimination together with a statistical review of gender-disaggregated statistics in the spheres of employment, public administration, the judiciary, politics and education thus providing an insight into the development of gender equality in Malta.

Other sections of *Annual Report 2016* present the Equality Mark and provide further information on NCPE's conferences and seminars. The final section of the report looks at 2017 that will be another eventful year for NCPE, with the transformation of NCPE into a Human Rights and Equality Commission (HREC). Work that forms part of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU will be in full swing and the project *Equality Beyond Gender Roles* [referred to on Pgs 3 & 4 of this newsletter] will continue to be developed to its full completion in 2017.



Find Annual Report 2016 on NCPE's website:

[http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/  
Our\\_Publications\\_and\\_Resources/Annual\\_Reports/NCPE%20AR%  
202016%20Lo%20res.pdf](http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Our_Publications_and_Resources/Annual_Reports/NCPE%20AR%202016%20Lo%20res.pdf)

For a hard copy, email NCPE on [equality@gov.mt](mailto:equality@gov.mt) or call 2590 3850



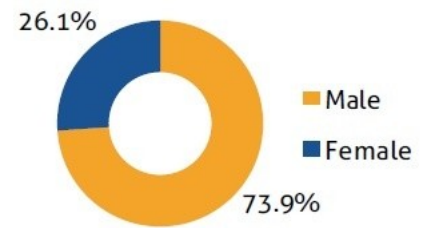
## Statistics:

### The Judiciary\*

The percentage of women judges is relatively low.  
However, there is a majority of women magistrates.

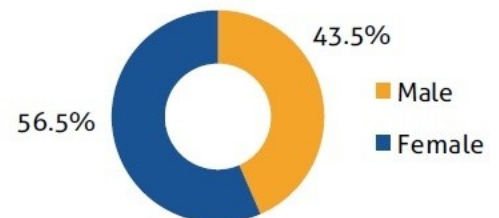
#### Bench of Judges

	2014	2015	2016
Males	16	16	17
Females	5	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>



#### Bench of Magistrates

	2014	2015	2016
Males	10	9	10
Females	11	12	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>



\* Statistics compiled from correspondence with the Courts of Justice as at December 2016

## Game ... Word search

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

DECISION-MAKING

JUDICIARY

MEDIA

POLITICS

PRESIDENCY

REDUCED HOURS

ROVING VAN

SKILLS

STATISTICS

THEATRE

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and its upcoming events contact us on:

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Promotion of Equality*

