

Give due importance to non-discrimination in the Public Administration Bill

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) calls on Parliament to amend the Public Administration Bill so that this gives due weight to non-discrimination and equality in its provisions. The NCPE is tasked by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta to ensure non-discrimination and promote equality in several spheres, including employment and the provision of goods and services.

The Bill currently being discussed in Parliament makes only one reference to non-discrimination in the *First Schedule, Code of Ethics for Public Employees and Board Members*. Carrying out functions in a non-discriminatory manner is a fundamental value of public administration and this should be reflected in the relevant legislation. In fact, the Act currently in force includes three references to non-discrimination and, most importantly, the obligation “...to avoid discrimination...” is included in Article 4 of the Act which outlines the values of the public administration.

In the envisaged new Act, such an obligation should be strengthened rather than weakened. Further to the obligation to avoid discrimination, the new Act should also include an equality duty on public administration to strive for the inclusion of different social groups in the carrying out of its functions.

A legislative framework that gives sufficient importance to equality and non-discrimination is essential for having a public administration that leads by example in this area, and that respects and promotes the founding values of our country as enshrined in the Maltese Constitution.