

Press statement by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)

NCPE Annual Conference 2023

The 2023 Annual General Conference of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) gave an overview of the NCPE's work and the new research study on patriarchy and gender stereotypes in Maltese society.

Addressing this Conference, the Minister for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, Hon. Dr. Byron Camilleri maintained that the progress achieved in the sphere of equality in the past years has been significant. However, we still have a long way to go. We need to do more. Several initiatives were undertaken to ensure that everyone can develop their potential and make best use of national resources without discrimination, particularly for those groups in vulnerable situations. The Government is also committed to strengthen the NCPE's functions and remit as the NCPE is at the heart of the national infrastructure for equality and a first point of contact for victims of discrimination.

Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Ms Rebecca Buttigieg reiterated the Government's commitment to strengthen equality for all and referred to the legislative provisions, measures and policies that were implemented for the benefit of different groups in society. Moreover, she said that the work undertaken in 2022 by the NCPE is an important contribution towards equality, and in view that discrimination and prejudice are very often fuelled by gender stereotypes, the NCPE's research study provides a valuable empirical overview of how such stereotypes can impact women and men in their daily life.

In her speech, Hon Graziella Attard Previ, Spokesperson for Equality, Children's and Human Rights, said that although conceptually, there seems to be a general consensus on the need to channel efforts to bring about gender equality, the Gender Equality Index 2022 revealed that progress to realising gender equality continues to move at a glacial pace. She drew emphasis on the importance of knowledge and the gender pay gap in the journey towards gender parity, stressing on the need of identifying the causes and consequently determining effective and possible solutions.

During an Awarding Ceremony presided by Minister for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, **10** organisations were certified with the

NCPE Equality Mark for the first time, and a total of **33** organisations were recertified as a confirmation of their commitment towards equality in the policies and practices at their workplace. Out of these 33 organisations, **15** were re-certified for the first time, **13** were awarded their second re-certification and **5** received their third re-certification. In total, there are currently **139** organisations with the Equality Mark award employing more than **32,500** employees in equality-certified conditions.

The investigation of complaints is a vital function of the NCPE to ensure that individuals live a life of dignity free from discrimination. In 2022, 12 investigations were initiated. NCPE Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera explained the NCPE's investigations' procedure of cases of alleged discrimination and gave an overview of the initiatives undertaken in 2022 to promote equal treatment. Particularly, 133 training sessions for over 2,800 participants were provided, alongside an enhanced commitment towards communications through different traditional and social media, events, and conferences. In 2022, the NCPE continued reviewing and contributing to the development of national and international policies and legislation.

The results of the NCPE new research study titled: 'The prevalent gender roles perceptions and attitudes among adults living in Malta' were presented by Prof JosAnn Cutajar from the Faculty for Social Wellbeing Gender and Sexualities, and Prof Liberato Camilleri from the Faculty of Science at the University of Malta.

Overall, the findings showed that participants tended to uphold progressive perceptions, especially regarding gender roles in the public sphere, but some traditional gender role expectations emerged, particularly in relation to unpaid care work. Moreover, misogyny and toxic masculinity are issues that warrant much more attention through education, training of professionals and awareness raising. Different institutions need to work in tandem; underlying ideologies about gender roles need to be addressed whilst the earner-caregiver model needs to be facilitated.

The NCPE will continue working to further strengthen equality for all groups in Maltese society.

14th June 2023