

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

NCPE SKIN Project Launch Conference 2023

The promotion of racial equality is the main objective of a new EU co-funded project being launched by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) in partnership with the Aditus Foundation, ‘Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination’ (SKIN). The main aim of this project is to identify the needs of, and discrimination faced by vulnerable groups, namely migrants and Muslims.

Addressing this Launch Conference, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Ms Rebecca Buttigieg, said that racial inequalities can impede the dignity, life opportunities, prosperity, and well-being of affected communities. In this regard, much work has been undertaken in Malta to combat racism. The Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023 is a testament to the Government’s commitment to addressing different forms of racism and promoting intercultural inclusion. Moreover, earlier this year, the Government launched a public consultation on the second policy and national action plan on integration.

Hon. Buttigieg explained that the NCPE’s initiatives, including those that will be undertaken as part of the SKIN’s project, are in line with the Government’s commitment to continue working to strengthen equality by raising awareness about discrimination and its adverse effects on individuals and society at large.

In her address, NCPE Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera stated that according to the 2018 study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 38% of respondents in Malta experienced discrimination based on ‘ethnic or immigrant background’ in the 12 months before the survey. Ms Laiviera reiterated that the race and ethnic origin of an individual should not determine their treatment in relation to employment, education, financial services and the provision of other goods and services.

In this context, the NCPE has been actively working towards creating a society that upholds equality and fights discrimination, including racial discrimination. Besides promoting racial

equality, the NCPE as an equality body, can investigate complaints on the grounds of race and ethnic origin in employment, education, banks, and financial institutions, as well as on access to and supply of goods and services as part of its remit.

Ms Annalise Frantz, NCPE Manager (Projects) gave an overview of the activities that will be carried out. These include a campaign to educate and raise awareness on racism, and three capacity-building sessions for the NCPE staff. Moreover, focus groups will be held with migrants and members of the Muslim community whilst training will be given to four specific target groups: institutions and public entities, shop stewards, migrants, and members of the Muslim community

In his presentation, Dr Neil Falzon, Aditus Director, underlined the importance of actively engaging with migrant advocates and migrant-led groups. Dr Falzon touched upon the challenges faced by such groups in gaining access to decision-making spaces and suggested methods for inclusive and real dialogue.

The participants worked in workshops focusing on the topics of racial stereotypes, and measures and initiatives to address and eliminate racial discrimination, which will be taken on board during the development of this project.

The NCPE will continue working to implement these initiatives with the aim of further promoting racial equality in society at large.

20th July 2023