

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

NCPE's E4D Final Conference

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has finalised an EU co-funded project 'Empowerment for Diversity' (E4D) to strengthen equality on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. This Final Conference provided the opportunity to exhibit the overall findings, outcomes, and recommendations of the work that was carried out over a two-year period that sought to address the societal and cultural impacts following the significant changes in the laws that strengthened LGBTIQ+ rights.

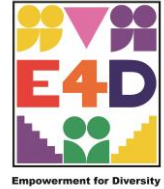
Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Ms. Rebecca Buttigieg launching the Conference, stated that the legislative amendments enacted throughout the years, establishing a strong legislative framework on equality, have left a positive impact on the life of various members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Hon. Buttigieg mentioned that the Government is working to consolidate the institutional mechanisms on equality through new legal provisions that will strengthen the remit of the NCPE for an enhanced promotion and protection of human rights and equality including the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination in Maltese society.

NCPE Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera highlighted that despite the progress, persons in the LGBTIQ+ community still experience discrimination. In fact, as part of this project, the NCPE carried out a research study to analyse the experiences of differential treatment and discrimination experienced by persons who identify as LGBTIQ+ in various sectors of life, such as education, employment, and in the access to and supply of goods and services. This study also sought to carry out a comparative analysis to a qualitative study conducted by the NCPE in 2011, 'LGBT Discrimination Research Report'. While this study reports positive outcomes stemming from the changes in policy and legislation, such as when people are more aware of



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their rights and feel more 'accepted' and thereby 'safer' to be open about their gender identification or their sexuality, the study shows that stigma and prejudice, faced by LGBTIQ+ people, are still present in Maltese society.

This is of concern and the NCPE continues to work to raise awareness on LGBTIQ+ equality. Moreover, the NCPE is empowered by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta to investigate complaints of alleged discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics in employment, education and vocational training as well as by banks and financial institutions.

Ms Annalise Frantz, NCPE's Manager (Projects), gave an overview of the activities that were carried out. In addition to the research study, workshops with members of the LGBTIQ+ community were organised with the aim of discussing the issues faced by the community, identifying the needs to be addressed, and the current deterrents resulting in underreporting of cases of discrimination to respective authorities. The NCPE's participation in the Malta Pride events 2021 and 2022 was highlighted, whereby promo items designed with the project's corporate image were distributed to maximise the exposure of the NCPE's work, particularly on the SOGIGESC grounds amongst the LGBTIQ+ community.

In her concluding remarks, NCPE's Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera, whilst acknowledging the valid work undertaken in this field, stated that this Final Conference was an opportunity for different stakeholders to highlight the priority actions that need to be undertaken in order to continue building an inclusive environment for everyone, not only through further awareness raising but also through strengthening the implementation of policies and laws to ensure that equality is truly a reality for everyone.

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