

Press Statement**NCPE urges Government and Opposition to move forward with the equality and human rights reform**

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) expresses its disappointment at the halt to the Bill establishing the National Human Rights and Equality Commission (NHREC) following yesterday's vote in Parliament, and urges the Government and the Opposition to move forward with this much-needed reform in Malta's equality and human rights sector.

Since 2004, the NCPE has acted as Malta's equality body to the best of its abilities. However, the shortcomings of the current legal framework on equality have been apparent for decades. For this reason, the NCPE has consistently called for the establishment of a new Commission with a stronger legal framework that retains, strengthens and widens the equality mandate while also taking on the closely related human rights mandate, which is currently absent in Malta.

The NHREC Bill would have strengthened the Commission by making it answerable to Parliament, thereby reinforcing its independence; established a more coherent and robust equality framework that addresses shortcomings in current equality legislation; extended its remit to include human rights; and enhanced its functions and powers to promote equality and human rights and investigate related breaches.

The enactment of this Bill would not have detracted from the Commission's current mandate or work. Rather, it would have enhanced its capacity to address different grounds and areas of discrimination through stronger independence, increased resources, and a more robust institutional framework.

The NCPE continues to believe that the adoption of this Bill's provisions would strengthen what truly matters: accessibility to a stronger Commission that can effectively safeguard and promote equality and human rights for everyone in Malta.

The establishment of a National Human Rights and Equality Commission has been under discussion since 2014, with various rounds of consultations, as well as a previous Parliamentary process that also came to an end, with the dissolution of Parliament ahead of the 2022 general election.

The NCPE underlines the urgent need to finally overhaul the legal framework that is essential for protecting people from discrimination and guaranteeing their human rights, and urges all parties to deliver this reform.

23rd July 2026